

THE FOCI OF PROGRAM PROJECTION AS
RELATED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TOTAL
COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAM

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By

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A THESIS

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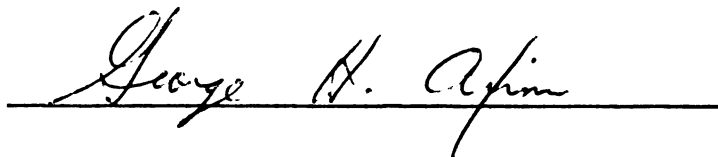
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Considerable material is available in the literature on the methods and the value of doing long range program planning, commonly called program projection, as a precursor to county Extension program determination. That this approach to the involvement of lay people in an educational process is being accepted by state and county Extension staffs is evident by the fact that the Federal Extension Service reports "between 1500 and 2000 counties have done special work in this field" by the start of 1960.

Literature provides little information about factors of program projection related to the effectiveness of total county Extension programs. On the assumption that program projection can contribute to increased effectiveness of Extension programs on a county level, this study attempts to disclose some of the relevant factors by comparing the program projection reports of counties with more effective and less effective total Extension programs.

Extension Service directors of thirteen states, ranging from Pennsylvania to Oregon, were asked to provide program projection reports of six counties, three with more effective total Extension programs and three with less effective programs. To test a hypothesis stating that program projection reports of counties with more effective programs would have greater focus than those of counties with less

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effective programs, the two categories of reports were analyzed and compared for four points of foci, including: (1) priority given to one recommendation over another; (2) the levels of hierarchy of recommendations; (3) the inclusion of situation and background information about a county; and (4) the average number of recommendations per agent.

Although only eighteen of the fifty-four county reports gave any indication of one recommendation having priority over another, the number of counties with more effective programs gave significantly more priority to recommendations, statistically, than counties with less effective programs.

Upon considering levels of recommendations, it was found that reports of counties having more effective programs included a significantly greater number of recommendations tending to be highly specific in nature, while those of the less effective counties tended to be more general in nature.

The amount of situation and background information included in the county reports was very significantly different with the more effective counties including far more material when compared against a standard guide. Without exception, the three more effective counties of each state had higher combined scores than the three less effective counties.

Comparison of the average number of recommendations per agent for the two categories of counties revealed that there was no difference,

statistically. However, counties with less effective programs did have fewer recommendations in total and also as an average, possibly due to the fact that their recommendations were more general in nature.

Assuming that foci found to be significant in the study do contribute to the effectiveness of Extension programs, conclusions drawn suggest: (1) inclusion of greater amounts of situation and background information in program projection reports (and thereby assuring availability for the use of committees); (2) development of priority of recommendations in program projection reports; (3) and the direction of recommendations into highly specific channels. From a personal standpoint, the author indicates belief in a need for the creation of genuine awareness of the value of program projection among Extension staff. Additional research is suggested, comparing foci of annual programs of work with program projection, and the comparison of relationship of size and composition of county staffs as related to effectiveness.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The work of the Cooperative Extension Service is primarily an educational program supported financially by federal, state, and county or local governments. Although cooperative between the three levels of government, the program is a basic part of the Land Grant college of each state and generally is administered by a division of the school or college of agriculture of that institution.

Although the exact manner in which the Extension Service operates in each state varies somewhat, and changes in procedures have occurred to keep pace with the times, the primary purpose of the Cooperative Extension Service, as stated in the Smith-Lever Act is:

To aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same.¹

However, Sower et al. note that, "the Smith-Lever Act was never intended as an act to establish services for rural areas alone, but since the legislation was enacted through pressure and the desire of many farmers for advanced information concerning agriculture, the historical development has largely been that of rural orientation."²

¹Amended Smith-Lever Act, Public Law 85, 83rd Congress, Chapter 157, 1st Session, S1675.

²Christopher Sower, et al., Community Involvement (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), p. 40.

Today, as never before, Extension workers are facing a challenge to keep pace with rapidly changing conditions in our nation involving, among other things, a declining farm population, a growing rural non-farm group, and an increasing suburbia. Increased and often unfamiliar demands upon the Extension staff result. Although not traditionally oriented to serve urban people, Extension workers in some areas are attempting to provide for certain educational needs of some urban dwellers.³ As a means of coping with these problems, Extension workers in many states have sometimes attempted to follow procedures frequently used under other conditions wherein clientele, or potential clientele, are involved in planning processes as a means of developing educational programs that would be effective in meeting the needs and desires of the majority of the people in their counties.

The manner in which program planning activities have been carried on and the degree of public involvement has varied greatly. A few counties have done relatively little outside of the local staff, while others have developed the planning process to a high degree, involving a considerable representation of the population concerned. In recent years, the term "program projection" has come into being as the terminology applied to long-range planning

³Two widely separated examples are the consumer marketing activities of Michigan State University's Extension Service in Detroit and Oregon State College's Extension program in 4-H club work in the city of Portland.

activities conducted by representative groups and individuals within counties with the cooperation of Extension workers and other resource persons.

Because of rather general acceptance of program projection as a precursor to county program determination and development, and because "between 1500 and 2000 counties have done special work in this field,"⁴ it is the purpose of this thesis to give attention to the foci of program projection activities and recommendations, in an attempt to determine what relationship exists between these and the effectiveness of the total Extension program in the counties.

Considerable material has been written about the value and process of doing program projection work, but a cursory examination of program projection reports, even within the same state, will show a high degree of variance in the manner of conducting the process, the preparation of the reports, and the content of the reports. However, almost no information is available on the relationship of the program projection materials to the effectiveness of the total Extension program within respective counties.

The writer hypothesises that the more focused the program projection reports and the recommendations of a county, the more effective will be the total over-all Extension program in that county,

⁴Letter from Gerald H. Huffman, Assistant Administrator--Programs, Federal Extension Service, U. S. D. A., Washington 25, D. C., February 15, 1960.

In referring to "focus" the writer has in mind factors working toward the creation of a degree of primary attention or activity within the program projection reports. Although there may be others, for the purpose of this thesis, focus will be considered as embodying the four factors: (1) priority given to recommendations; (2) levels of recommendations in a hierarchy; (3) inclusion of situation and background information in the program projection reports; and (4) the average number of recommendations per Extension agent. These factors are discussed in detail in Chapter III.

The following chapters are devoted to a report of background information on the program planning process and program projection, the collection of data, testing and analyzing data, and conclusions and recommendations resulting therefrom.

CHAPTER II

THE EXTENSION PROGRAM

PLANNING PROCESS

Adult educational programs are highly varied as a result of the differing perceptions of the imposing number of agencies and organizations participating in this movement. "There is even more variation in the procedures for deciding on the program to be offered," indicate Brunner and associates¹ who also point out that even the use of the word "program" is significant in that in conventional educational parlance, a program, technically, is a curriculum. Ordinarily the word curriculum is used by public schools, colleges, and universities to describe their course offerings, but this is not always so. Usually it designates courses offered for credit whereas the word program is more flexible and less restrictive.

In looking at the educational objectives of these numerous educational agencies, one would assume them to be considerably different, and in many ways they are. However, in a larger sense this is not the case, for "education is a process of changing the behavior patterns of people. This is using behavior in the broad sense to include thinking and feeling as well as overt action. When education is viewed in this way, it is clear that educational objectives, then, represent

¹Edmund deS. Brunner et al., An Overview of Adult Education Research (Chicago: Adult Education Association, 1959), p. 133.

the kinds of changes in behavior that an educational institution seeks to bring about in its students."²

Most members of educational organizations sincerely feel that they have an obligation to be good teachers, but one individual's concept of what constitutes good teaching may not be the same as his contemporaries. Although many factors may go to make up a good teacher, "good teaching requires that the teacher and the institution have a philosophy of education. By this is meant a clear idea of what is ultimately valuable, as distinguished from the immediate objectives of individual courses. Without a philosophy of education, how can we determine what are "desirable" changes in human behavior? How can we be sure that our immediate objectives are consistent one with another and are pointed in the same direction?

"One basic philosophy of education is derived from the concept of education as an instrument of social development. The ultimate objective of education, it states, is to produce individuals who are effective members of the societies to which they belong. Values are stated in terms of the cultural patterns of the society within which education functions. The ultimate objectives of education, therefore, are constantly changing as society changes.

"A second philosophy has as its true end the education of the individual man. The ultimate objective of education, it maintains,

²Ralph W. Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 4.

is the development of the intellect, character, appreciation, and physical well-being of each individual to the highest degree possible. The values flowing from this philosophy are derived deductively in the terms of the good, the true, and the beautiful for all men in all places at all times. The immediate situation, therefore has no effect upon the ultimate objectives of education."³

Following somewhat along the line of this latter philosophy, but embodying some of the thoughts of the first, Dr. C. B. Smith states that "Extension work in its deeper significance is designed to develop the man--to draw him out through his taking part in worthwhile enterprises, through explaining his work to his neighbors; through making reports of accomplishment through counseling with others on matters of common interest; through study with the Extension agent of his own farm and home problems and those of the county, state, and nation, to perfect his technique, to enlarge his vision--to see that the man grows."⁴ However, our formal educational system has not done this, and, "as a consequence we have unwittingly committed a twin error--first of trying to cram everything needed for a long life into the short period of formal schooling; second of neglecting the

³Malcolm S. Knowles, Informal Adult Education (New York: Association Press, 1950), p. 30.

⁴C. B. Smith, The Agricultural Extension Systems of the United States (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1930), p. 5.

continual education of ourselves as adults."⁵ Assuming this to be true, the Cooperative Extension Service, "the largest adult educational system . . . in the world,"⁶ is not only obligated to provide continuing education for our adult population, but also given the challenge of seeing that the individuals of the nation have this opportunity to grow.

"Because contemporary life is so complex and because life is continually changing, it is very necessary to focus educational efforts upon the critical aspects of this complex life and upon those aspects that are of importance today so that we do not waste the time of students [regardless of their age] in learning things that were important fifty years ago but no longer have significance at the same time that we are neglecting areas of life that are now important and for which the schools provide no preparation."⁷

Interest in educational program development on the part of the many educational agencies has resulted in "studies . . . [having] been made of the factors conditioning life in particular communities or areas such as the natural resources in the community, population changes, migration, direction of social change. These have been made on the assumption that education should help a community

⁵ J. R. Kidd (ed.), Adult Education in a Free Society--Speeches by Robert J. Blakely (Toronto: Guardian Bird Publications, 1958), p. 13.

⁶ The United States Cooperative Extension Service, Comparative Extension Publication Number 7 (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1958), p. 23.

⁷ Tyler, op. cit., p. 12.

utilize most effectively its resources, to provide adequate preparation for persons who are migrating as well as those who are remaining within the community, to meet imminent social changes and the like. In all of these cases the studies of contemporary life only give information about the present status of the individual, the group, or the conditions of life within the community or region. They do not directly give educational objectives. In order to suggest objectives, the data from these studies must be interpreted, that is inferences have to be made from present status regarding gaps, emphases, and needs."⁸

As one of the many educational agencies, the Cooperative Extension Service has used such studies to form the basis or starting point for the development of program plans. However, the use of such studies and the development of program plans varies greatly, for "the actual extension picture in the United States is not that of one extension service, but of forty-nine [now fifty-one] extension services. Perhaps it can be said that every county in the United States has its own extension organizations and its own program."⁹

As could be expected under such diversity, "extension program planning has been defined in several ways. Briefly, it is the process of determining, developing and executing programs. It is a continuous process whereby farm people, professional agricultural workers, and scientists pool their knowledge and judgments in achieving

⁸Tyler, op. cit., p. 14.

⁹U. S. Cooperative Extension Service, Comparative Extension Pub. Number 7, op. cit., p. 15.

permanent rural improvements. In it there are three considerations: namely, what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how can it be done."¹⁰ Such a definition should be broadened, either by deleting the reference to rural or indicating both urban and rural, along with some additional notation as to whom is to carry out the program and where.

Although some states develop state program plans, generally there is a very direct tie and working relationship to the county programs which are often developed more or less separately, although coordinated with the state program. For the purpose of this thesis, county programs and their development are to be given primary attention. It is important to note here that a good county program "attracts the attention of those of all educational and age levels and is truly educational in character. It should help people to change interests, attitudes, and judgment as well as to give information. It should teach people to help themselves, otherwise, its value would be only temporary. Extension should help provide the tools and assist in their effective use, but only as a means for teaching, never as an end in itself."¹¹

Program determination within counties has been carried on in many ways, and Matthews indicates that there are at least six principal methods of program determination currently being used including:

1. the county program determined by a representative county committee after consideration of problems and needs at a community level.

¹⁰The Iowa Extension Program Planning Guide (Ames: Iowa State College, 1948), p. 1.

¹¹ibid.

2. consideration of problems, followed by drafting of the program on a county level by a county program building committee consisting of representatives from townships or communities as well as organizations and agencies.
3. consideration of problems, followed by drafting the program by a county committee which has neither geographical nor major interest representation.
4. a program planned largely by agents through personal consultation with leaders and well-informed people of the county but not organized into a program planning group.
5. a program planned by agents on the basis of their own knowledge following a mail survey, or by selection from lists of projects prepared at the college.
6. program determination by commodity or special interest groups, or committees not organized as a county planning group.¹²

There are probably many variations and combinations of these methods used throughout the more than 3200 counties of the United States. However, the trend is more and more toward the development of some sort of advisory group in each county as Extension staffs have recognized that "community development, as a sustained form of social action existing indefinitely, is only possible through the existence of permanent social structures which have been organized for the purpose of planning and achieving selected goals. The history of such social organizations (health departments, planning commissions, etc.) has been one of continued struggle to gain the support of citizens within the framework of a given community. In an effort to gain support permanent

¹² J. L. Matthews, National Inventory of Extension Methods of Program Determination (Washington: USDA, Federal Extension Service, Extension Circular 477, 1952).

agencies within the community usually seek the participation of citizens in various stages of their programming."¹³

Advisory groups to the Extension Service on a county level are by no means new, for records show at least one having been in existence before the turn of the century. Some early reported instances occurred in New Jersey (1887), Maine (1919), South Dakota (1935), and Indiana (1937).¹⁴ Oregon counties were starting active planning as early as 1924,¹⁵ and some agricultural councils were functioning in Michigan in the 1930's.¹⁶

Most county Extension advisory groups of the United States are voluntary organizations, but in some instances, such as New York, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and some others, they have legal status as a result of enactment under public law. Advisory groups to the county staff go by a number of different names in the various states and even within the same state. A survey of some of the literature concerning planning indicates that these groups are referred to by such names as county agricultural planning council, county agricultural advisory

¹³Christopher Sower and Walter Freeman, "Community Involvement in Community Development Programs," Rural Sociology (March, 1958), p. 27.

¹⁴Edward O. Moe, "Use of Advisory Groups in the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service," (Lansing: Michigan State University, mimeograph, 1957), p. 10.

¹⁵"Constitution and By-laws" (Albany: Linn County Agricultural Planning Council, Extension Service, Linn County, Oregon).

¹⁶Edward O. Moe et al., "A Study of the Michigan State Extension Advisory Structure" (Lansing: Michigan State University, 1957) p. 4.

council, Extension advisory council, and other variations, often using the word "committee" instead of council. Even though most of these groups do not have legal status, the majority tend to operate in a formal manner under a constitution and by-laws. These constitutions, using Oregon as an example, usually state something to the effect that "It shall be the purpose of this council and sub-committees to assist the Extension Service of Oregon State College in determining and carrying out a coordinated county program," or a similar statement. For Oregon, the constitutions further state that the council will conduct the outlook conferences (long-range planning or program projection activities) which have been going on in the state since 1924-1925 at about ten-year intervals. Of course, the constitutions also specify the officers, executive committee, terms of office, time and frequency of meetings, and similar items usually found in constitutions, including the make-up of the membership.

As in many other states, Oregon's councils or advisory groups are made up of the chairman or delegates of a number of planning committees such as dairy, family living, farm crops, forestry, horticulture, land use, livestock, and poultry. There may be still other committees, or not all of these may be represented, depending upon the agricultural and social pattern of the county. In addition to these committee delegates, the president or appointed representative of the county 4-H leaders association and the county home economics council are always included. Many councils make provision for

representatives of the county livestock association, the fair board, the immediate past president of the council, and the county court (county governing body). Some constitutions also make provision for the council to extend membership to key individuals within the county when qualified in some particular manner to make contributions to the planning and programming effort.

For comparison of organization, a study made by Moe¹⁷ in 1957 showed that almost all Michigan counties had agricultural, 4-H and home economics councils, while 40 percent of the counties reported having advisory boards made up of representatives of the three councils, and fifty-five counties did not have functioning advisory boards. Curry, in his study of Michigan, found that "it was typical of all planning groups in the counties visited to include in their membership existing agencies on a more or less state-wide basis that fit in with the formal structure of the organization of the extension service for whom they were working. Other agents went beyond this and in making a systematic study of the needs of their area included in their planning committees other agencies that filled a specified need for the rural people of the counties in which they served. Such organizations as the Maple Syrup Marketing Association, the Forest Products Association, the Beef Feeders Association . . . are all examples of existing

¹⁷ Ibid.

associations and organizations in Michigan counties"¹⁸

The functions of Extension advisory groups can be and no doubt have been many in numerous years of their existence. Without question, the part that any such advisory or planning group takes depends to a great deal upon the attitudes of the Extension agents concerned: their willingness to involve local people in a planning process, and to at least follow to some degree, the indications of change desired; and the abilities of the Extension staff members, not only to involve people in an effective manner, but the administrative ability to delegate a degree of authority along with the necessary freedom to carry out the program initiated while still giving support and encouragement. All too frequently advisory groups have acted only as a rubber stamp to approve program suggestions made earlier by Extension staff members.

In many cases a better concept of the purpose of program planning would go far in aiding the staff to bring about more productive relationships with the advisory council. "In Extension, we think of program as referring to special emphasis directed toward the solution of certain problems. This results from a study of the entire situation, the determination and analysis of the important problems, and the setting of goals and objectives. It also relates to the question of priority when

¹⁸Donald Glenn Curry, "A Comparative Study of the Way in Which Selected County Agricultural Agents Perform Their Role" (unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State College, 1951), p. 81.

resources are not adequate to deal with all of the problems presented."¹⁹

Jans suggests that we " . . . define a county extension program as an understanding arrived at cooperatively by local people and the county extension staff of--

The situation in which the people are located.

The real problems that are part of the local situation.

The objectives of the local people in relation to these problems.

The recommendations for reaching the objectives.

"The cooperative Extension service, under such a definition, brings no pre-determined program to the people. The extension staff contributes as much factual background as it can and helps the people to analyze this information in the light of their situation and problems."²⁰ He further notes that program planning is: based on the needs of the people; comprehensive in scope; flexible; an educational process. It starts where people are; requires capable local leadership; makes use of technical and research information; and seeks maximum local participation in the effort to help people to help themselves.

A somewhat different approach is taken by Maunder who indicates that "an extension program has been defined as a statement

¹⁹Bohn E. Musgrave et al. , "Guide for Program Development" (Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, unnumbered mimeograph, 1956), p. 2.

²⁰Fred C. Jans, "Extension Looks at Program Planning" (Washington: USDA, Extension Service Circular 478, March, 1952), p. 2.

of situations, objectives, problems and solutions as distinguished from a plan of work which is an outline of activities so arranged as to enable efficient execution of the program as a whole or in part. A program should answer the questions what shall be done and why. A plan of work tells how, when, where, and by whom the program shall be carried out. The program and plan of work supplement each other and neither can stand alone. The whole process by which programs and plans of work are developed may be considered program planning."²¹

Maunder then lists thirteen basic principles of Extension program planning as established in workshops on the subject. These principles are as follows:

1. Program planning should be based upon careful analysis of factual situations.
2. Programs should be orientated to the existing technical, economic, and social level of the rural people of the area.
3. The program should be comprehensive; including activities of interest to all socio-economic groups.
4. It should be educational and directed toward bringing about improvement in the ability of people to solve their own problems, individually and collectively.
5. The Extension program should be arrived at democratically through the participation of lay people, of the entire Extension staff and of others who can contribute.
6. Organizations should be used as a tool to accomplish objectives.

²¹A. H. Maunder, "Program Planning," Methods and Program Planning in Rural Extension, ed. J. M. A. Penders (Wageningen, The Netherlands: H. Veenman & Zonen, 1956), p. 112.

7. Maximum use of voluntary leadership should be made in the planning as well as in the execution of Extension programs.
8. The program should be flexible to meet long-time situations, short-time changes and special emergencies.
9. Select problems for action which will meet recognized needs.
10. Objectives should be clearly defined at all levels in terms that people will understand.
11. Good program building provides for evaluation of results.
12. Extension programs should be carried on by well trained personnel, effectively supervised.
13. The program should be achievable considering such factors as personnel, finances, time and facilities.

The mere fact that a county has an advisory or planning group is not in itself going to assure the development of an effective program. "The reactivation or establishment of an agricultural council is not an end in itself. Organization is justified only if it helps develop and carry out a county agricultural program based on the needs and desires of the people and if it contributes to the goals of extension work."²²

Although there are some outstanding instances of successful planning,²³ all too often the story is one of only minimum accomplishment. An analysis of the situation would likely find many varying causes, but

²²Bohn E. Musgrave and Edward O. Moe, "Organizing and Operating Agricultural Advisory Councils" (East Lansing: Michigan State University, Cooperative Extension Service), p. 1.

²³William A. DeHart, "Program Planning--Venture in Human Relations," Extension Service Review (Washington: USDA, Extension Service, April, 1959), p. 83.

one common condition might be one wherein "the role of the extension worker . . . is analogous to that of the executive secretary of a largely paper organization, who often is in such complete control and so indispensable to its functioning that he is the organization."²⁴ An agent who has allowed his planning council to get into this situation will probably find his planning group demoralized and satisfied to live with the status quo. "Groups of this kind represent a real challenge to the agent who tries to overcome their apathy. But every community has individuals who have a real concern about its welfare or wish to support a specific activity."²⁵ These are some of the people who can make a contribution to program planning activities if located and given an opportunity to use this channel.

Extension agents have found that there can be many deterrents to the development of a sound program, although in many cases these factors have gone unrecognized by the agent due to the fact that his experience and training have not equipped him to properly evaluate these circumstances. In a study of Extension program development, Darter found a number of such obstacles interfering with the development of an effective program, including:

1. a need for better understanding of the nature and importance of program development on the part of the Extension staff.

²⁴ Philip Selznick, TVA and Grass Roots (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), p. 231.

²⁵ DeHart, op. cit.

2. insufficient agent's time devoted to the program planning process for a constructive outcome.
3. most new agents are production oriented and are therefore inclined to use a commodity approach which aims at improving agriculture and home economics rather than a problem approach which works toward improving the facilities of people. Thus, there is a need for more training in the social sciences.
4. needs and interests of various groups, particularly lower income groups and disadvantaged areas, are not taken into account by agents in program planning. The changing situation now developing as a result of increasing numbers of rural non-farm families needs to be recognized in planning.
5. no local surveys or attempts to bring together more than superficial data regarding the local situation have been used.
6. relatively little thought by extension agents has been given to establishment of educational objectives which will serve as guide posts in Extension teaching.²⁶

Although the size of the county advisory groups will vary considerably, depending upon the type of agriculture in the county, the total population to be represented and whether or not there is a large rural non-farm element, the manner in which the group is organized as well as its specific purpose, it is important for the Extension worker to recognize that an overly large group is apt to be unwieldy and ineffective. The writer believes, based upon reports in available literature and working experience in two states and three counties, the greatest efficiency will generally be obtained when the advisory group ranges from 10 to 20

²⁶V. W. Darter, "County Extension Program Development-- Case Histories of Twelve Counties" (Harvard University, doctoral thesis, 1955), Extension Service Circular 506, USDA, Review of Extension Research, May, 1959), p. 1.

members. Actually, many times this number may be involved when consideration is given to the numerous subcommittees that may be active and represented by members on an advisory council. During periods of long-range planning activities, such as in the case of the newly named but old process, program projection, it is not uncommon to have as many as two or three hundred people participating, and the activity has been known to involve as many as 500.²⁷

The actual selection of the members of an advisory group is not an easy task nor is there complete agreement among Extension workers and others as to the best means of accomplishing this, either in principle or in fact. In many respects, it is desirable to have members elected to the advisory group since this will generally result in the member feeling a responsibility to the organization he represents. However, a weakness of this method of selection is that it may result in omitting key leaders and others with outstanding qualifications. Also, such elected members, when representing organized groups, may block progress by acting as representatives of the parent groups rather than as representatives of the public at large.²⁸

A method of selection of members successfully used in some states, and recommended in Michigan, involves the selection and

²⁷"Eaton County Challenge--Broader Horizons!" Report of the Eaton County Long-Range Planning Committee (Charlotte, Michigan: County Extension Service, 1959), p. 1.

²⁸From Floyd Reeves and given by lecturer Dr. George H. Axinn, EPD 501, Extension Seminar, Michigan State University, winter term, 1960.

appointment of part of the advisory council by the regular members, preferably with the aid of the Extension staff members concerned.

"There is practically unanimous agreement in all studies that the maximum involvement of potential and actual constituents in program building produces the best results. Richert, however, after a review of a large number of studies in social psychology, group dynamics and extension, cautions that merely securing representation or recognized groups and interests is not in itself a guarantee of successful program planning, if these persons do not possess perspectives beyond the boundaries of their own group. In addition, all program planning groups profit by some orientation in the planning process and the formulation of group structure."²⁹

Richert's research studies indicate there are numerous factors in group interaction that should be considered when making decisions about membership of the county advisory group. Some of the factors that might affect group structure and interaction were found to be: status hierarchy, group cohesiveness, leadership concepts of individuals, reference groups, social status and prestige, and communication channels. Some of the implications of the study are noted below:

1. Mere representation of groups and interests is not enough. Committee members should exhibit leadership traits, have perspectives beyond their own group boundaries and be interested in program planning.

²⁹ Brunner et al., op. cit., p. 133.

2. Individuals of high social status who can make important contributions to the program planning group might best serve as resource persons instead of committee members.
3. It is unwise to include professional persons from the various agencies as program planning committee members. Group interaction tends to center around them.
4. Community leaders selected for program planning committees should be those who will be most aware of community problems and yet whose social and prestige status will not create distinct differentiation within the committee.
5. All committee members should be given orientation to the job starting at the time of appointment.
6. A single meeting of a program planning committee cannot be expected to produce effective results for a program plan. Rather the first meeting should be directed toward orientation and formulation of group structure.
7. The chairman of a program planning committee, whether he is an agent or a committee member, should be one who is skilled in handling procedure and maintaining effective working relationships among the members.
8. Extension workers on the whole need a greater understanding of group dynamics.
9. Considerable time and several meetings are required for effective results to come from a program planning committee made up of a heterogeneous group of people.³⁰

"Planning must be distinguished from designing. A design implies a settled procedure; a plan denotes a proposed procedure subject to modifications to meet contingencies. This recognition of dynamism in the planning process is the theoretical differentiating characteristic

³⁰ Marlys R. Richert, "A Study of Factors for Consideration in Membership Selection of County Extension Program Planning Committees" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1957, Extension Research and Training, Summary Number 38).

between planning and designing. As the planners recognize indications of deviations from their anticipated course of events, they will modify and readjust their programs. In any planning process, there must exist a willingness to change planned programs from time to time to correlate more exactly to the larger processes. Only adaptation and readaptation can finally effectuate the realization of predetermined goals.

"Planning is further established upon the supposition that within limits the trend of events in the future can be controlled. This process is a recognition of man's belief in his ability to control his destiny.

"Planning includes, too, the idea of prevention of problems besides the mere analysis and cure of existing problems. Through careful surveillance of trends, potential pathological situations may be avoided by overt attempts to change the course of future events and a more favorable environment for future action will be sought."³¹

Pennsylvania studies indicate that the more successful counties in program planning selected problem areas broader than traditional subject matter areas.³² An analysis of four Oregon counties

³¹ Neal C. Gross, "A Post Mortem on County Planning," Journal of Farm Economics, August, 1943, p. 645.

³² Bond Bible and E. J. Brown, "Program Projection in Eight Pennsylvania Counties" (College of Agriculture, Pennsylvania State University, Agriculture and Home Economics Extension Service & Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, 1957). Extension Research & Training Summary No. 37, March, 1958.

and two Michigan counties by the writer further indicates that program planning activities have usually extended into fields other than the traditional one of production.³³ Ballard has indicated that by involving people, program planning (program projection) will go beyond the physical and biological sciences normally dealing with economic factors.³⁴ Such activities will heighten interest in social factors involving many phases of adult education, public affairs, health, taxation, safety, schools, and zoning. If Extension accepts this challenge, it will be in a position to render still greater service to the people, not only through its own facilities and the land-grant institutions it represents, but by bringing pressure from all sources to bear upon the problems at hand.

Tyler, however, cautions that "a smaller number of highly important objectives needs to be selected [at any one time]. A small number rather than many should be aimed at since it requires time to attain educational objectives; that is, time is required to change the behavior patterns of human beings.

"To select a group of a few highly important, consistent objectives it is necessary to screen the heterogeneous collection of objectives . . . so as to eliminate the unimportant and the contradictory

³³ Don Coin Walrod, "Organization and Function of County Extension Advisory Groups in Relation to Programs Conducted," a mimeographed paper submitted to Institute of Extension Personnel Development, Michigan State University, fall, 1959, p. 8.

³⁴ F. L. Ballard, "Tramp or Pilgrim," Extension Service Review, September, 1956, p. 155.

ones. The educational and social philosophy to which the school is committed can serve as the first screen."³⁵

It is now important to recognize that "farmers and others [have become] accomplished in applying technology and they will now continue with or without the extension system. The choice is to recognize the varieties and richness of contemporary communications which demand of Extension in turn a pushing upward and outward of its repertoire of educational experience. To choose otherwise is to flirt with obsolescence.

"The troubles of the agricultural community are the troubles of society engaged in synchronizing the cadence of human affairs to the cadence of technology. There exists no greater challenge in education than an institution as Extension work addressing the problem of a people who are learning to live with science. If the institution chooses there may advance the stirring spectacle of education helping people still at home and at work in grappling with their own problems and questions amidst both real and dangerous circumstances. A denial suggests the metaphor of Matthew Arnold: 'Wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born.'"³⁶

³⁵ Tyler, op. cit., p. 22.

³⁶ Paul Miller, unpublished manuscript, "Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work in the Industrializing Society," p. 32.

"Extension's educational opportunity rests in part on acquiring additional flexibility and focus, while arranging for continuous experiences for some people into deeper educational sequences."³⁷

³⁷Ibid., p. 61.

CHAPTER III

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

As a means of gathering material for use in determining the foci of program projection and some of the factors relating thereto, an initial request was sent to the Federal Extension Service, Washington, D. C. for the names of states or counties within states having engaged in this process. At this time it was learned that such lists were no longer being kept due to the fact that between 1500 and 2000 counties had undertaken program projection.

Ten states were arbitrarily selected as a source of program projection reports, using the second tier of states from the Canadian border insofar as it was feasible to do so, starting with Oregon and working eastward. The Extension directors of the states of Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania were sent a telegram as follows:

To use in Extension research project we would appreciate having program projection reports of three counties with most effective total Extension program and three counties with least effective total Extension program. Can guarantee return if nonexpendable or pay to thermofax. _____ (state) _____ selected as part of national survey of ten key states. Can provide summary if desired.

A copy of the telegram was delivered to the Michigan Extension director, explaining the proposed research and requesting the same materials for this state.

Directors of two states, Nebraska and Illinois, indicated that they were unable to supply the information needed due to the fact that an insufficient number of counties had completed program projection to allow selection of counties on the basis requested. Reports from some states were received within two or three days after sending the telegram, and most of the others followed suit over a longer period of three or four weeks.

With the receipt of the first program projection reports it was evident that the words "most effective" and "least effective" in the telegram were unfortunate choices. One director indicated that they did not feel confident of their ability to do this, and two states questioned this to the point that explanations of the proposed research program had to be sent, indicating that more accurate wording of the telegram should have included the terms "more effective" and less effective."

Because two states were unable to supply the needed reports and one state was slow in responding, three additional states, Kansas, Missouri, and Kentucky, were invited to send reports from six of their counties. As a result, material was obtained from eleven states. Unfortunately, material from Wyoming and Kentucky was incomplete due to the fact that insufficient counties had completed program projection, and therefore data from these two states are not included in this study.

States included in this study and the respective counties are
as follows:

Idaho

Bannock
Caribou
Fremont
Idaho
Jefferson
Latah

Michigan

Eaton
Isabella
Livingston
Macomb
Presque Isle
Tuscola

Indiana

Clark
Grant
Knox
Newton
Owen
St. Joseph

Missouri

Carter
Henry
Hickory
Lincoln
New Madrid
Schuyler

Iowa

Crawford
Fayette
Harrison
Lyon
Madison
Mitchell

Ohio

Allen
Defiance
Delaware
Jackson
Pike
Vinton

Kansas

Barton
Clay
Geary
Leavenworth
Morris
Norton

Oregon

Clatsop
Linn
Tillamook
Umatilla
Wallowa
Washington

Pennsylvania

Erie
Forest
Huntingdon
Lancaster
Lebanon
Mercer

As indicated in Chapter II, program projection is the process county Extension advisory groups undertake in developing precursory recommendations for a long-range over-all Extension program for a county, usually working with expanded representative committees, numerous resource persons, and members of the Extension staff. Such activities are normally culminated with a printed, mimeographed, or otherwise prepared report embodying the recommendations of the committees concerned. Copies of such reports are almost always kept on file by Extension supervisory staff of the respective land grant institution in addition to being distributed or used in other ways by county staff members.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term "program projection" will refer to the activity within a county leading to the development of a report embodying the recommendations made by committees and others involved. Recommendations may or may not apply directly to Extension programs or Extension workers.

Letters of enclosure from state Extension directors or associate directors accompanied program projection reports in most cases. Comments contained in some of the letters caused the writer to question whether the program projection reports of counties with more effective and less effective over-all programs were sent as requested or whether such statements merely reflect a manner of reference upon the part of the sender. Excerpts from replies from the five states containing such statements are as follows:

State A

Under separate cover, we are mailing to you three of our most effective program projection reports including _____, _____ and _____ counties. The three reports including _____, _____ and _____ counties represent least effective program projection reports.

State B

Director _____, after receiving your telegram, asked me to get together for you three of our best long range programs and three of our worst long range programs and send them to you.

State C

These are not necessarily the best reports that we have, but they are available to send you. I would list the reports of _____, _____, and _____ Counties as superior to those of _____, _____, or _____ Counties.

State D

We are submitting to you six county Extension programs. We have rated them from 1 through 6--1 being the most comprehensive and most complete from the state administration's viewpoint.

State E

_____, _____ and _____ Counties have done a little more thorough and complete job in determining the program for their county. _____, _____ and _____ Counties are those which can be improved.

Since such statements indicate that the material under consideration in this study may not be the same as was intended, this introduces a variable in that factors supposedly held constant may be other than intended. Under existing circumstances, it was considered inadvisable to make any attempt to further control for this factor, and this must be recognized in considering the data presented.

As indicated in Chapter I, the writer's major hypothesis states that the more focused the program projection reports for a county and the recommendations therein, the more effective will be the total over-all Extension program in that county. This statement immediately raises two questions. One concerns the meaning and determination of effectiveness and the other the meaning of the term focus.

Because effectiveness of an Extension program in a county will depend upon many factors, often highly variable and quite different from another county, the ratings made by supervisory personnel are used as the basis for effectiveness for the purpose of this study. Assuming material was sent as requested, the supervisory personnel of each state rated programs of three of the six respective counties as more effective and three as less effective. No information is available as to the methods or factors used in rating the counties. Cognizance must be given to the fact that factors considered may not have been similar in each state, and it is conceivable that there might not even be agreement among supervisory personnel within a state.

Focus implies the creation of a center of attraction, activity, or attention. Miller observes the term "program" indicates focus through the creation of priority and design and that it assumes ability to distinguish important problems from unimportant.¹ Within the context of this concept, focus for this study will include: (1) priority given to recommendations wherein higher priority given indicates greater focus;

¹Paul Miller, op. cit., p. 68.

(2) the levels of hierarchy of recommendations wherein the greater the specificity of the recommendations the more they will be deemed to be focused, and the higher the level in a hierarchy the less the degree of focus (additional details and a key used in determining the levels and specificity are included with the computation of these factors); (3) the inclusion of background and situation information about the county, which is deemed important to focus in this case, as such material provides a base for advisory members to use in determining recommendations to be made and thereby focus; and (4) the average number of recommendations per agent in which the fewer the number of recommendations the greater the focus is deemed to be.

Upon the receipt of program projection reports from the states, the counties were assigned a code letter for use in tabulating and reporting data since there is no real value in identifying the county material, and the writer had agreed with the directors of certain states that this would be done to prevent any undesirable connotations being attributed to particular counties. A number of the directors indicated, and the writer agrees, that the division of the counties of a state into "more effective" and "less effective" in no way suggests that the Extension program being conducted in the less effective counties is not a good program in all general respects.

Priority Given to Recommendations

By definition, the priority given to recommendations made by advisory groups in program projection (as well as in short term

planning activities) is one of the important factors making up focus.

Although the development of the program projection report itself indicates a degree of priority, the writer refers specifically to the indication in the report of a priority of one recommendation over another whereby the recommendation with first priority would or should receive the primary attention of the Extension staff and others assisting with the program. Consequently, the program projection reports were analyzed for such priority.

In a few counties highly specific priority was given to one or a few recommendations, but because all of the program projection reports were generally lacking in any great amount of priority of recommendations given in this manner, it was feasible only to record for each county whether or not any indication of priority was made in the report. If any priority whatsoever was indicated, the county report was credited with containing priority of recommendations, although it is important to recognize that this priority may have existed in only one or a few of the many segments of concern of the report, i. e. agriculture, home economics, family living, community factors, youth, etc.

The distribution of counties showing priority in their program projection reports is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. --The distribution of counties showing priority of one recommendation over another in program projection reports.
Priority indicated by the asterisk

States	Counties more effective			Counties less effective		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Idaho	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	-	*	*	*	-	-
Iowa	*	*	-	-	-	-
Kansas	*	*	*	*	*	-
Michigan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missouri	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ohio	-	-	*	-	-	-
Oregon	-	-	*	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	-	-	-	-	-	-

By determining the difference in the number of counties showing priority and subjecting these figures to statistical analysis through the application of a standard t-test on an .05 level of significance, it was found to have a value of 2.808 while the cutting point at .05 was 2.31. Thus, support is given to the major hypothesis due to the rejection of a statistical hypothesis stating there would be no difference in the degree of priority given between more effective and less effective counties and a tendency to accept the theoretical hypothesis that there is a difference in favor of the more effective group of counties.

Levels of Specificity of Recommendations

Examination of individual recommendations included in the reports will reveal a considerable variation in the specificity of those

recommendations. Analysis and comparison of recommendations within any particular field covered will show that such recommendations frequently bear a relationship to each other in that one or several of the more specific recommendations are the means of accomplishing the superordinate recommendations or those of a more general and less specific nature.

Based upon a sub-theoretical hypothesis to the effect that recommendations of program projection activities of the more effective counties will be more specific while those in the less effective counties will be more general, a key was developed to use as a guide in ranking the recommendations on the basis of specificity into four levels.

Recommendations placed on the highest level were those that were general in nature and broad in scope. On the other end of the scale were placed those recommendations which were very specific in nature as to the course of action to be followed and quite frequently included references to time to start or complete action.

The key or guide consisted of eight example recommendations selected from some of the 54 county program reports for each of the four levels into which recommendations were to be grouped. The eight statements used in the guide at each of the four different levels are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2. --A guide for use in ranking recommendations of program projection reports into four levels or categories on the basis of specificity

-
1.
 - a. "Develop and carry out a planned system on every farm to return highest possible net income considering resources, wants and desires of each family."
 - b. "Conserve, develop and use all natural resources for benefit of mankind and not for sake of resources themselves."
 - c. "Develop program toward incorporating all phases of good farm management toward better family living."
 - d. "Assist families to examine and evaluate their family goals."
 - e. "Provide diets adequate for all nutrients for all families through better knowledge and use of information on nutrition."
 - f. "Make people safety conscious when carrying on all activities."
 - g. "Disseminate more information about agriculture and its technically related fields."
 - h. "Educate parents and youth to appreciate their heritage and think of farming as a way of life."
 2.
 - a. "Assist farmers in analyzing resources and needs in management decisions."
 - b. "Point out various alternatives in marketing to the farmers so that they will better understand price cycles and the need for a quality product."
 - c. "Direct an over-all program toward increasing the profit from farming."
 - d. "The Extension Service help families gain an understanding of money factors (taxation, currency exchanges, over production) that influence family income."
 - e. "The committee recommends that growers maintain present quality but increase yield by exploring cultural and management practices."

TABLE 2. -- Continued

-
- | | |
|----|--|
| f. | "The dairy committee recommends that attention be given to management factors as a means of providing economy and efficiency of milk production. " |
| g. | "Conduct an educational program on adapting livestock programs to individual farms. " |
| h. | "Provide for more education on decision-making and analysis of farm business. " |
- 3.
- | | |
|----|--|
| a. | "Reduce brucellosis so that _____ County can be declared a certified brucellosis-free area. " |
| b. | "Decrease crop losses due to insects to a minimum. " |
| c. | "Increase the number of qualified 4-H leaders on a local level. " |
| d. | "Provide education on nutrition value versus money on cheaper cuts of meat. " |
| e. | "Increase livestock numbers on farms and the number of feedlots in the county. " |
| f. | "Get all dairymen to use artificial breeding to improve their herds. " |
| g. | "Committee recommends that there be no increase in potato acreage until new markets or an improved marketing program is developed. " |
| h. | "Develop a sound zoning law after careful study, public discussions and research." |
- 4.
- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | "Encourage correct care, preservation and consumption of eggs. " |
| b. | "Teach control of insects on vegetables. " |
| c. | "Campaign for routine check on all water systems. " |
| d. | "100 home gardens in _____ County have soil test each year for next five years. " |

TABLE 2. --Continued

-
- e. "Have ten or more farm women keep accurate home account books each year to give us a basis on which to estimate the expenses to plan for in the average home. "
 - f. "Conduct livestock demonstrations of beef, sheep, or swine in one-half of townships and keep enterprise records on them."
 - g. "Committee recommends that beef feeding trials now being conducted be continued. "
 - h. "The committee recommends that 4 more grass nurseries be established and later grazed after they are well established."
-

Using the guide, all recommendations of each county in the study were considered and ranked in one of the four levels. To put the resulting figures in condition for statistical analysis, the total recommendations on each level for the three more effective and the three less effective counties of each state were multiplied by a factor--in this case the same as for the particular level concerned. For example, the number of more general recommendations (level number one in the key) were multiplied by the factor "one" while the number of more specific recommendations at the other end of the scale were multiplied by the factor "four." The resulting total value figures for the three more effective and three less effective counties of each state, as shown in Table 3, were then in a form to be compared statistically.

TABLE 3. --Sum of values obtained after application of factors to the four levels of county recommendations

States	Counties more effective	Counties less effective
Idaho	554	619
Indiana	167	319
Iowa	406	262
Kansas	623	392
Michigan	1059	344
Missouri	956	378
Ohio	815	687
Oregon	1573	779
Pennsylvania	238	182
Totals	6391	3962

With the values thus obtained, a correlation coefficient test was run to determine if the levels of recommendations between the more effective and less effective counties were independent. The results of this test gave a value of .6690 when a value of .666 was indicated as the critical value at the .05 level of significance. Thus, it is necessary to reject a hypothesis that the scores of the two groups are independent.

Applying a standard t-test, using provision for the inclusion of the correlation coefficient value, it was found that t equaled 2.361 when the critical value was 2.120 at the .05 level of significance. This significant result is cause for rejection of the statistical hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the levels of recommendations

of the counties with more effective programs and those with less effective programs. This, in turn, would tend to support the hypothesis that the recommendations of the more effective counties will tend to be more specific while those of the less effective counties will be more general in nature.

Additional data on computations and a table showing total recommendations at the various levels with the percentage of recommendations falling therein, are included in the appendix.

Consideration of Situation and Background Statements

As the third section of the four-part phase of focus in program projection reports, the writer hypothesizes that more effective counties will tend to have more complete situation and background statements included in their reports than will less effective counties. As used in this thesis the term, "situation and background statements," deals with basic information about a county, usually involving certain pertinent phases of history, current information of the type listed by census, at least major factors having to do with human and natural resources, and possibly other information about matters peculiar to the specific county.

Situation and background information, the writer believes, is vital to the effective functioning of committees of an advisory or program projection group since information of this type forms the basis for the development of sound, realistic recommendations leading to the

solution of problems and the attainment of goals as recognized by the people and resulting in the type of Extension program envisioned by most staff members. Although the inclusion of situation and background information in program projection reports is not particularly essential to the report itself, it is frequently included as a means of gathering this information together in one place for future reference, and because Extension staffs use these reports in numerous ways such as distribution to special committees, fulfilling requests of visitors, mailing in response to certain inquiries, etc., the material is usually included if available. While such information is usually obtainable for any county, it is often widely scattered over a number of sources and seldom brought together except in such joint efforts of state and county Extension staffs, other resource persons and lay people. The fact that it is included in the program projection report is indicative of the fact that the various committees concerned at least had some basic information to use as a starting point in developing their recommendations. When such material is not included in the program projection report there arises the question of whether or not such information was available to the committees or, if available, whether it was pulled together in a reasonably complete and usable form.

In an effort to evaluate the situation and background information contained in the program projection reports of the 54 counties in the study, a key was developed for use in scoring the information contained in each report. This key dealt with four major sections of material:

(1) population, (2) commodity data, (3) resources, (4) family living.

Table 4 provides the sub-phases considered and the values assigned to each.²

TABLE 4. --A guide used in scoring situation and background information contained in program projection reports of counties

Factors considered	Maximum scores	
Population trends		
Numbers	5	
Ages	5	
Occupations	5	
Rural or urban residences	5	
Income levels and sources	5	25
Commodity data		
Income to county or areas	6	
County and state trends	6	
Potentials for area	6	
Markets--costs and facilities	6	24
Resources		
Natural or physical--soil types, terrain, highways, boundaries, water, land, forest, mineral, wild-life, climate, etc.	8	
Economic--sizes and kinds of farms and businesses, financial resources, living standards, taxes, transportation facilities, power, etc.	8	
Social--organizations as churches, schools, civic, cultural, governmental, medical, recreational	8	24
Family living		
Home and family data	5	
Health and nutrition data	5	
Educational levels	5	
Communications habits--TV, radio, phone, papers etc.	5	
Safety	5	25

²The author acknowledges the suggestions of Fred B. Kaehler, H. Joe Myers, and Ray Weick in developing this key or guide.

In scoring the program projection reports for situation and background information, each report was examined for material content as indicated in the key. Considerable variation was found to exist among the counties with three of the fifty-four containing no situation or background information while the high county scored seventy-seven. Some reports had the situation and background information neatly separated from the main text of the report, often in the form of an introduction, while others gave consideration to such material as it was appropriate to particular committees or sections of the report. Regardless of where or how the information was presented, scoring was done solely on the basis of whether or not the information was included somewhere in the report. Without exception, the three counties of each state with more effective programs had a combined score exceeding that of the three less effective counties. Table 5 shows the scores of the individual counties and the relationship of the scores of the more effective and less effective group.

In applying statistical tests to this data, a correlation coefficient test was found to give a value of .8580 which is quite significant in view of the critical value of .666 at the .05 level of significance. On the strength of this, it is necessary to reject a hypothesis that the standard deviation of the scores obtained for the two categories of counties is equal and therefore independent. To further verify this relationship, a t-test was made, using the factor providing for inclusion of the correlation coefficient value. In this test, t was found to equal 5.203

when the critical value was 2.120 at the .05 level of significance. The results of this test are cause for rejection of the statistical hypothesis that the situation and background information provided in the two categories of counties is equal, and causes the writer to tend to accept the theoretical hypothesis indicating that the more effective group of counties does include a significantly greater amount of situation and background information in their program projection reports.

TABLE 5. --Scores of individual counties on content of situation and background information included in program projection reports

States	Counties more effective				Counties less effective			
	A	B	C	Totals	D	E	F	Totals
Idaho	38	14	6	58	6	30	0	36
Indiana	18	38	0	56	17	11	0	28
Iowa	27	57	56	140	53	16	15	84
Kansas	12	41	62	115	36	15	14	65
Michigan	73	60	27	160	23	25	42	90
Missouri	77	55	17	149	25	33	38	96
Ohio	57	46	66	169	47	51	60	158
Oregon	75	54	68	197	43	38	27	108
Pennsylvania	35	54	15	104	40	10	41	91

Recommendations per Agent

Consideration of the average number of recommendations per agent made by an advisory or program projection group forms the fourth portion of the concept of focus within program projection reports.

Because of the manner in which program projection activities are conducted, it is the writer's belief that committees tend to make a great number of recommendations covering a wide range of fields, both within and outside the scope of the Extension program as conceived by most workers, without any realistic consideration of the possibility of staff members accomplishing all or any particular portion of these recommendations. It can be argued that there is considerable merit to such an approach in that it will tend to keep Extension programs abreast of changing times as well as broaden the scope of the program to more nearly meet the needs of present clientele. In any case, the writer intends no criticism of this aspect of program projection, but merely wishes to point up his belief that, as a result of guidance on the part of Extension personnel and judicious appraisal of the situation by program projection committees, the counties rated as having more effective over-all programs will tend to have fewer recommendations per agent than will counties rated less effective.

In collecting the data to test this hypothesis, the total number of recommendations for each county was determined from the program projection report. In most instances, these reports also indicated the number of Extension agents working in the county, frequently listing them by name. In the few instances in which this information was not included in the report or was not clear, the County Agents Directory, 1958³

³ County Agents Directory, 43rd edition (Chicago: C. L. Mast, Jr. and Associates, 1958).

was used as a source of the information. In this way, the average number of recommendations per agent was determined for each county. Table 6 shows the number of recommendations per agent for the counties included in the study by states and the relationship between the counties in the more effective and less effective groups.

TABLE 6. --The average number of recommendations per agent by counties within states

States	Counties more effective				Counties less effective			
	A	B	C	Totals	D	E	F	Totals
Idaho	32.0	22.0	12.6	66.6	23.5	16.0	40.3	79.8
Indiana	6.3	9.5	2.7	18.5	13.3	16.3	12.0	41.6
Iowa	14.6	18.0	17.6	50.2	3.0	19.7	11.7	34.4
Kansas	25.5	14.2	25.3	65.0	19.0	21.6	11.5	52.1
Michigan	33.3	16.0	60.0	109.3	4.2	9.6	20.3	34.1
Missouri	14.2	25.2	8.7	48.1	12.6	20.5	29.0	62.1
Ohio	14.7	30.3	50.3	95.3	33.0	42.6	31.5	107.1
Oregon	34.6	22.0	38.3	94.9	21.0	43.0	49.0	113.0
Pennsylvania	4.0	5.5	10.0	19.5	7.7	6.6	2.2	16.5

Upon submitting the figures on recommendations made per agent to statistical analysis, a coefficient correlation test revealed r to equal .5863. Although this indicates that there is some correlation between the number of recommendations per agent for the two groups of counties, it is not significant in view of the critical level of .666 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that the standard

deviation of the scores of the two groups of counties is equal cannot be rejected. When a t-test is used, the value of t is found to be .3027. Since the critical value at the .05 level of significance is 2.120, the statistical hypothesis stating that the number of recommendations per agent in the two categories of counties is equal cannot be rejected.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One very important resource available, or potentially available, to every county Extension staff is their advisory group, by whatever name it goes. The greater the degree of skill exercised by the county staff in involving members of this council or advisory organization in carrying on some of the educational activities directed toward behavior changes in others, the more effective the staff will be. To a greater degree than at any time in the past, Extension workers seem to recognize that "by and large, rural people [and urban people too], are influenced by Extension education to make changes in behavior in proportion to the extent of contact with Extension teaching activities. In other words, the degree to which rural people are exposed to Extension information, through meetings, demonstrations, bulletins, news stories, radio talks, personal visits, and other teaching methods largely determines their acceptance of recommended practices."¹

The use of advisory groups in Extension program planning has received considerable impetus under the activities entitled program projection as Extension workers have begun to realize "that any extension developed out of line with the basic institutions and attitudes of an area is usually fruitless, as it means imposing ideas or patterns upon people

¹"The Iowa Extension Program Planning Guide," op. cit., p. 15.

unready and unwilling to accept them. There is no extension unless people are changed, and there is little constructive change unless people cooperate. Extension moves forward only as it is charged with the dynamic energy of earnest men and women seeking answers to problems of everyday life."²

Because of rather general recognition of the importance of involvement of the people of any area in Extension program development and the impetus occurring in long range program planning under the new name, program projection, it is only natural that questions should arise concerning the factors of program projection activities that make for more effective Extension programs in one county than another. Believing that certain foci of program projection have considerable influence in this respect, it was the author's purpose to examine some of the foci given by program projection in a sample of counties to determine what relationship they bear to the effectiveness of Extension programs.

In examining the data and the statistical results therefrom, the reader should bear in mind that considerable variation exists in the program projection reports examined. In some cases the counties of one state followed a fairly consistent pattern in the presentation of material. In other cases there was as much variation in the counties within states as existed between any counties of different states. Such widely differing approaches are not particularly conducive to easy and

²Edmund deS. Brunner (ed), Farmers of the World (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), foreword.

consistent tabulation of data. One possible reason for the wide variation, particularly as it occurred between states, is the apparent fact that some states have had a relatively long history of doing a program projection type of activity whereas, in some instances, Extension directors indicated that the reports sent were the first attempt at such an activity.

Upon these many differences hinge some, although not all, of the variables encountered in the analysis of the program projection reports. For example, the recommendations made in the reports constitute an important part of the data, either as primary material for tabulation or for use in determining some other relative factor such as degrees of priority or the levels of recommendations. But what constitutes a recommendation? In many instances, there was no question about what the recommendations were since they were listed numerically and often prefaced by a statement similar to "The committee recommends" In a few reports recommendations were found to be loosely defined and often not separated from a narrative section dealing with discussion of the particular problem. Thus, a matter of judgment fell upon the writer to determine the existence of a recommendation and its content.

Even with the use of a key or guide, an element of calculated judgment on the part of the writer was necessary in arriving at a determination of levels of recommendations and for the determination of priority. In spite of every attempt to be objective, it is unrealistic to believe that the writer's perceptions might not introduce some element of bias.

The possible misunderstanding on the part of some of the states regarding the material requested, as discussed in Chapter 3, may have influenced the results obtained. However, under the conditions and time of this study, there was no realistic way of controlling this variable, if it did exist.

Foci of Program Projection

The major hypothesis of this study states that the more focused the program projection reports and recommendations therein for any county, the more effective will be the over-all Extension program of that county. Focus, as used in this study, includes: (1) priority given to recommendations; (2) the levels of recommendations; (3) the inclusion of situation and background information; and (4) the average number of recommendations per agent. Tests of the data indicate that the foci of priority of recommendations, the levels of recommendations, and the inclusion of situation and background information of the group of counties with a more effective total Extension program are significantly different from that of the group of counties with less effective Extension programs, and in the direction predicted as far as program projection reports are concerned.

The relationship of the number of recommendations per agent between the two groups of counties, while favoring the more effective group as having fewer recommendations, was not significantly different, statistically.

Priority of Recommendations

For the purpose of this study, an indication of priority in the program projection reports was an indication of focus. The writer hypothesized that counties with more effective total Extension programs, as rated by supervisory personnel, would have a greater indication of priority than counties rated as less effective. This hypothesis was supported statistically, with the more effective counties showing significantly greater indications of priority. However, it must be recognized that only eighteen of the fifty-four counties in the study indicated any priority whatsoever in their recommendations.

It must be conceded that priority of recommendations alone may not be a particularly good criteria for measuring focus when only program projection reports are considered. Although not requested, or considered in this study, a few states included annual supplements with their long-range planning reports. A cursory examination of these annual supplements tended to suggest that the priority of one recommendation over another was developed annually as a program plan for the county Extension staff. It has been the writer's experience, too, that the annual functions of the various committees and advisory groups tended to set priority for the annual work program to a greater extent than does program projection which serves as a guide in the development of the annual program work plan.

There is also some question as to whether or not the intervals for doing program projection might not introduce a variable as far as

priority of recommendations is concerned. While there were observable differences between counties in this respect, it was noted in the case of one county that program projection activities were scheduled to be carried out on a four-year interval. Although few other counties made reference to the interval of long-range planning activities, Oregon counties indicated a history of undertaking this procedure at ten-year intervals. Since program projection is relatively new in many counties, there has been little opportunity to establish a precedent as to the interval for conducting such activities. However, a preliminary study done by the writer in one Michigan county, also included in this study, indicated that lay people who had participated in program projection activities preferred first, a five-year interval on program projection, and second, a three-year interval. None indicated a preference for the ten-year interval.³

In Chapter II it was pointed out that priority was one of the primary functions of program projection, particularly when working with resources that are inadequate to deal with all of the problems presented. In the opinion of the writer, the scope of the recommendations of any county in the study, in comparison with the existing staff, tends to indicate that at least some resources are missing. Even so, advisory groups in general seemed to have missed the opportunity to establish a system of priority for the problems outlined and solutions recommended in program projection reports.

³Don Coin Walrod, op. cit., p. 22.

Levels of Specificity

For the second phase of focus, the writer hypothesized that program projection reports of counties with more effective over-all Extension programs will show a greater degree of specificity of recommendations than counties with less effective programs, thus indicating a higher degree of focus.

Categorization of recommendations of all fifty-four counties into four levels, followed by statistical testing, revealed that the number of recommendations that were highly specific in nature, was significantly greater in those counties rated as having more effective over-all Extension programs.

Assuming this matter of specificity of recommendations to be a valid factor, resulting in more effective Extension programs in counties, one might generalize to all counties, and suggest that county Extension agents encourage and assist their advisory committees in arriving at a greater degree of specificity of recommendations, embodying an indication of whom shall take action and when.

Although it might be argued that the matter of specificity of recommendations could become a function of the advisory group when rendering assistance to the county Extension staff in the development of annual program plans, the data developed in the study does not bear this out. Since material on annual program planning was not considered, a question arises as to whether specificity of recommendations was developed at any time for the counties with less effective programs.

Situation and Background Information

Believing that situation and background information about a county establishes a base upon which to form recommendations, the writer hypothesized that counties with more effective Extension programs will tend to include more complete situation and background statements than will counties with less effective Extension programs. Upon converting the situation and background information contained in program projection reports to scores, statistical tests supported the hypothesis, indicating that the more effective counties did include a significantly greater amount of this type of information in their program projection reports.

From this the writer concludes that the more effective group of counties supplied their advisory group with more adequate information about existing and past situations, as well as future trends, enabling them to make more detailed and specific recommendations contributing toward a more effective Extension program. Although the inclusion of situation and background information may not be particularly pertinent to the report itself, it is at least indicative of the fact that the information was collected and made available to the advisory groups (or possibly even collected by the groups or committees themselves). Feeling that the scope of information desired in program projection is greater than will normally be found in any two or three sources, the program projection reports provide an effective means of maintaining this information

in a usable form and at the same time serves as a starting point for noting changes and charting trends.

Recommendations per Agent

For the fourth phase of focus, calculations of the average number of recommendations per agent were made as a means of testing the hypothesis that counties rated as having a more effective over-all Extension program will tend to have fewer recommendations per agent in the program projection reports than the counties with less effective programs.

Upon making comparisons of the average number of recommendations of the two groups of counties, no statistically significant difference was found to exist. This supports the statistical hypothesis that there is no difference but causes the writer to tend to reject his theoretical hypothesis that there will be a difference in the number of recommendations between the two groups of counties.

Although support for the theoretical hypothesis was lacking in the program projection reports examined, analysis of annual supplements or annual program plans might possibly reveal differences at that level. The reader will recall that in consideration of the levels of recommendations, it was found that the group of counties with less effective total Extension programs tended to have more recommendations in the upper levels of the hierarchy of recommendations. Examination of appendix material for this phase will also show that they had fewer

recommendations in total and also as an average. In other words their recommendations were fewer in number but more general in nature. When considered on an annual basis, these general, rather all-encompassing recommendations might be divided into more numerous but more specific recommendations.

In general, recommendations made by program projection groups seemingly were made on the basis of problems or objectives without any particular consideration given to the Extension staff. Thus, the number of recommendations developed apparently depended upon the solution of particular problems or the achievement of objectives as perceived by the members of the advisory group. As far as the writer could discern, relatively few recommendations were made in terms of the resources of the existing Extension staff. In the few instances in which the staff was considered, it was almost invariably tied with recommendations expressing the need for additional agents.

Finally, it is the writer's hypothesis that a greater effort needs to be made on the part of supervisory staff, or some other approach made, to encourage recognition of the value of program projection among county Extension staffs, and to develop a genuine interest in doing program projection. For, as indicated in Chapter III, "the term 'program' indicates focus, priority, and design. It assumes ability to distinguish important problems from the unimportant. Tomorrow's county agent, amidst the agricultural-business-industry complex, will need this ability; for not even county agents can do everything with merit. The county

agent will count more on an increasing variety of people, skills, and viewpoints to help him discover and identify the essential problems. With increasing frequency, the county agent can expect to find laymen who will be more expert about some subjects or areas of interest than he. This expertness can shape his job toward essential and high priority goals."⁴

Recommendations

Based upon information developed as a result of and in conjunction with this study, the writer recommends:

1. County Extension staffs be encouraged to give consideration to the need for priority within the recommendations made by advisory groups and that they guide and assist such advisory groups in giving more priority to their recommendations.
2. Extension staffs aid in giving direction and assistance to advisory groups in developing a more complete hierarchy of recommendations, ranging from those most general down to those highly specific.
3. Additional research comparing foci of program projection with the foci found in annual program plans or programs of work, which may prove fruitful in revealing existing relationships and possible means of improvement.

⁴Paul Miller, op. cit., p. 68.

4. Additional research, considering the relationship of the size and composition of county Extension staffs to the effectiveness of the over-all Extension program, might develop useful information concerning some factors of efficiency in Extension programs.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX TABLE 1.--Comparison of the levels of the total recommendations of the counties with more effective programs and counties with less effective programs

States	Levels in counties more effective					Levels in counties less effective				
	1	2	3	4	Total	1	2	3	4	Total
Idaho	3	35	79	61	178	4	51	91	60	216
Indiana	8	25	31	4	68	4	27	83	3	117
Iowa	7	25	55	46	133	11	34	49	9	103
Kansas	8	27	91	72	198	10	39	84	13	146
Michigan	6	50	203	86	345	9	24	85	8	126
Missouri	1	47	159	96	303	3	37	87	10	137
Ohio	16	51	179	40	286	20	49	183	5	257
Oregon	7	161	280	101	549	9	103	152	27	291
Pennsylvania	2	15	50	14	81	3	17	43	4	67
Totals	58	416	1127	520	2121	73	381	857	139	1450
Percentages	.027	.196	.531	.245	.593	.050	.263	.591	.096	.406

APPENDIX TABLE 2. --Comparison of the number of agents in counties with more effective programs and counties with less effective programs

States	Agents in counties more effective				Agents in counties less effective			
	A	B	C	Total	D	E	F	Total
Idaho	3	2	3	8	2	3	3	8
Indiana	3	4	4	11	3	4	1	8
Iowa	3	2	3	8	3	3	3	9
Kansas	2	5	3	10	3	3	2	8
Michigan	3	4	3	10	4	5	3	12
Missouri	4	5	4	13	3	2	2	7
Ohio	3	3	3	9	2	3	2	7
Oregon	7	7	4	18	3	3	2	8
Pennsylvania	5	2	5	12	3	5	5	13
Totals				99				80

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM PROJECTION REPORTS USED AS SOURCE OF DATA

Idaho

Bannock County	Summary of Program Projection Work, Bannock County, May, 1956 to April 15, 1957
Caribou County	County Program of Work, 1958
Fremont County	Report of Fremont County Extension Program Planning and Development, 1958
Idaho County	Idaho County Program Projection Report, March 30, 1956
Jefferson County	Jefferson County Program Projection Report, 1958
Latah County	Latah County Community Planning, Report of the Latah County Advisory Committee, 1958

Indiana

Clark County	The Long Range Extension Program in Agriculture and Home Economics for Clark County
Grant County	1957 Progress Report, Grant County Program Planning Committee
Knox County	Planning for Better Agriculture in Knox County, 1948
Newton County	Planning for Better Rural Living in Newton County, 1952
Owen County	Program Objectives for Owen County, 1960
St. Joseph County	Preliminary Report on Extension Long-Time Program Committee, 1957

Iowa

Crawford County	Crawford County Projected Cooperative Extension Program, July 6, 1959
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Fayette County	Fayette County Facts, March, 1959
Harrison County	Harrison County Extension Program Projected to 1965, May 26, 1958
Lyon County	Lyon County Three Year Projected Extension Program, 1958
Madison County	A New Look for Madison County, The 1958-63 Projected Program of Work
Mitchell County	Cooperative Extension Program in Mitchell County, 1958

Kansas

Barton County	Barton County Extension Program, October, 1959
Clay County	Clay County Agricultural Extension Council Program Projection Report, June 1, 1959
Geary County	Unified Farm and Home Program, Geary County Agricultural Extension Council, 1956
Leavenworth County	Leavenworth County's Long Time Plan, January, 1960
Morris County	1960-1964 Morris County Extension Program Plans
Norton County	The Extension Program for Norton County, 1959

Michigan

Eaton County	Eaton County Challenge--Broader Horizons! Report of Eaton County Long Range Planning Committee, August 1, 1958
Isabella County	Program Projection or Isabella County's "Blueprint of Progress" for the Cooperative Extension Service, 1958
Livingston County	Livingston County Cooperative Extension Service Takes a Look Ahead, 1958
Macomb County	Macomb County Program Projection, 1958-1968

Presque Isle County	Program for Progress in Presque Isle County
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Tuscola County	Program Projection in Tuscola County
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Missouri

Carter County	Carter County Rural Program, 1958
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Henry County	A Long Time Plan for Henry County, October, 1958
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Hickory County	Hickory County Rural Program, 1954
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Lincoln County	Lincoln County Rural Program, 1958-1963
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New Madrid County	New Madrid County Rural Program, 1956
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Schuyler County	Rural Program for Schuyler County, June, 1951
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Ohio

Allen County	Allen County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Defiance County	Defiance County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Delaware County	Delaware County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Jackson County	Jackson County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Pike County	Pike County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Vinton County	Vinton County Long-Time Extension Program, December 31, 1958
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Oregon

Clatsop County	Report of the Clatsop County Agricultural Planning Conference, April, 1956
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Linn County	1956 Report of the Linn County, Oregon, Farm and Home Outlook Conference, March, 1956
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Tillamook County	1956 Report of Tillamook County's Agricultural Planning Conference
Umatilla County	Recommendations for Agriculture and Rural Living in Umatilla County, Committee Reports of the County Rural Affairs Planning Conference, 1958
Wallowa County	Wallowa County Planning Conference Committee Reports, March 15, 1958
Washington County	Washington County Looks Ahead, 1957 Washington County Agricultural Planning Conference

Pennsylvania

Erie County	Preliminary Report, Extension Program Projection, Erie County, November 23, 1955
Forest County	Self-Survey of Families in Forest County, 1957
Huntingdon County	Program Projection Report for Huntingdon County, 1958
Lancaster County	Report of Program Projection Study, Lancaster County Extension Association, July, 1958
Lebanon County	Agricultural and Home Economics Program Projection Planning, Lebanon County, 1955
Mercer County	Mercer County Rural Survey, 1957

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