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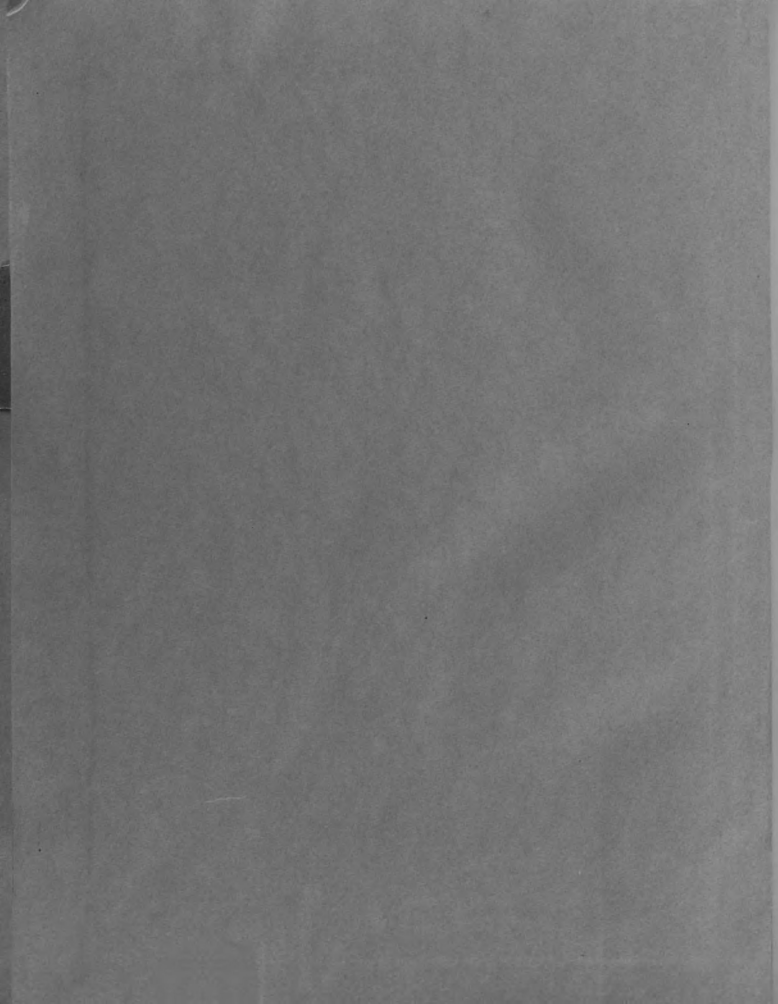
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THE FUNCTIONS OF RELEVANT POWER AND AUTHORITY GROUPS  
IN THE EVALUATION OF COUNTY AGENT PERFORMANCE:  
FOUR SELECTED AGENT SITUATIONS

By <sup>Jose</sup>  
Jack J. Preiss

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
of Michigan State College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Year

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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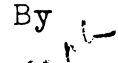
My wife and son deserve a special kind of praise for putting up with the kaleidoscopic moods and frequent

behavioral oddities which descend upon dissertation writers. There was a trial I don't think I could have borne myself.

Above all, I want to acknowledge the indispensable cooperation and help given me by the county agents, the state Extension administrators, and the county leaders and farmers with whom I came in contact. They supplied the bulk of the information which comprises this study. Their honesty of response and their warm acceptance of my presence on their home grounds were deeply appreciated. If anything of functional benefit accrues from this monograph, they, not the author, deserve the credit.

Conversely, the author accepts full responsibility for the manner in which the data have been handled, and for all of the evaluations and opinions expressed by him.

THE FUNCTIONS OF RELEVANT POWER AND AUTHORITY  
GROUPS IN THE EVALUATION OF COUNTY AGENT  
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AN ABSTRACT

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## ABSTRACT

[ The initial premise of this monograph is that it is desirable and practical to explain human action in terms of its manifestations in group life. Groups and individuals are, in an action sense, parts of definable situational wholes. These wholes cannot be reduced into their components (structure, individuals, value orientation) without losing some of their gestalt quality and thereby sacrificing much of their motivational significance. The task here is to find ways of analyzing the components of observed behavior by means of a set of categorical abstractions, while retaining the historical unity manifested by that behavior. ]

Part One deals with the construction of a typology for analyzing social behavior within a multi-level theoretical framework. [ The bed-rock of human motivation is assumed to be the effort to control tangible and intangible resources for the realization of defined ends or goals. ] On the conceptual level, power and authority are defined in terms of elemental characteristics which can be determined for every social group. The combined elements of power and authority which a group possesses determine its behavior patterns in social relations. Consequently, the position of any social group on a continuum having power and authority as its



polar "ideal types" will indicate the type of behavior which characterizes the group in action situations.) American culture, the systems of organized agriculture in the United States, and the role of the county agricultural agent are discussed as illustrations of the multi-level approach to behavior theory. This approach is contrasted with other broad behavioral theories, particularly Freudian psychology and scientific rationalism.

In Part Two, using the power-authority typology as a classificatory device, four Michigan county agricultural agent situations are analyzed with respect to (a) the structure of formal and informal groups which participate in agriculture, (b) the interaction of the agents with these groups, and (c) the images which agents and group leaders have of one another. Of the four agents studied, two were rated "successful" and two "unsuccessful" by the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. The agents and counties examined were reasonably matched on significant comparable factors, such as size, location, type of farming of the counties, length of service of the agent, etc., leaving the rated performance as the major variable. Observed behavior, interviews with agents and county leaders, and historical data supplied material for describing each agent situation.

In Part Three, as a result of comparing the four agent situations, and by applying historical and psychological criteria of performance, it is suggested that: (a) rated success is not primarily the result of measured accomplishment on specific agricultural programs. Neither is it consistent with personality configurations, as measured by a standard psychological test, (b) the authority orientation of the Extension service renders it subject to domination by power-oriented agricultural organizations, and (c) possession of control by power groups permits them to determine the success rating of agents by influencing the evaluative standards of the state Extension administration. The implications of this research in terms of altering or continuing the present manner of rating agent performance are then examined. The summary findings of the agent rating process are related back to the multi-level theory of control, and the results of and weaknesses in the procedure are discussed.



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PART ONE

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AS A THEORY OF CONTROL

## CHAPTER I

### A RATIONALE FOR THE THEORETICAL APPROACH

One of the distinguishing features of contemporary social science has been its increasing preoccupation with empirical materials, or "data." This empiricism seems to have brought with it a narrower conception of fruitful social theory than existed in the "system-building" period of earlier times. This is not to imply that a quantitative research emphasis, per se, necessarily circumscribes or limits the range of theory. Yet it has frequently done so because of the great functional detail involved in the mechanics of research, the heavy cost of collecting and processing desired information, and the development of new criteria<sup>1</sup> for evaluating results.

The prevalence of the quantitative approach has resulted chiefly from the wide adoption of science as the current method of ordering the universe.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, science is considered a "way of proceeding" rather than a

---

<sup>1</sup>Principally in the form of statistical tests, mathematical models, scales, and similar devices.

<sup>2</sup>This statement applies primarily to the phenomenal universe, and not to religious or valuational theories of order. Of course, one can either accept the existence of several kinds of order, or adhere to one and reject the others.

body of substantive facts, although the procedure eventually yields groupings of such facts, as by-products. These facts can be gathered in orderly fashion, through varied and repeated research operations, until communicable abstractions about them can be induced. The latter, in turn, suggest further empirical activity, leading to further conceptual refinement. This interplay has been the accepted pattern for scientific advancement.

Although the physical sciences have thrived under this arrangement, the complex nature of the human being, as the unit of social investigation, plus the frequent involvement of the observer with his material<sup>3</sup> present problems for social research which have transcended those encountered in most physical sciences. Perhaps, as Lundberg and others contend, this difference is transitory, and can be overcome through improved social research techniques and by training a more disciplined corps of professional workers.

On the other hand, some believe there is an inherent qualitative difference<sup>4</sup> between the social and the other

---

<sup>3</sup>Other limitations, of course, are the difficulty of maintaining experimental controls in social situations, and the resistance of the value structure of the group being studied.

<sup>4</sup>As propounded by Max Weber, Methodology of the Social Sciences, (translated and edited by E. A. Shils and F. Finch, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1949). See Section II, esp. p. 74 ff.

sciences which needs to be recognized as fixed, at least in the application of scientific procedures to social situations.

The gap between these two basic positions does not alter the fact that one result of an expanded scientific approach has been to restrict the range of social theory to a greater extent than heretofore. The majority of current social research projects are usually characterized by self-imposed boundaries of elaborate conditional limitations, and a rigid tentativeness in results. Furthermore, the interest in method, per se, often outweighs both the content of a study and the conceptual framework in which it is being examined. In other words, the sheer manipulation of facts has tended to eclipse both their substance and the conclusions derivable from them. Although it is recognized that the overstatement of findings, or an unwarranted claim of achievement, are dangers in any quest for knowledge, it is also likely that excessive cautionary tactics can stifle legitimate generalizing activities growing out of data. At present, there is not a great deal of effort being expended upon "high-range" integration of the massive body<sup>5</sup> of empirical research findings available

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<sup>5</sup>And this fund of information is apparently increasing at an accelerating rate. A perusal of current articles in professional journals, as well as the high degree of specialization in book-length (continued next page)



in the social sciences. Of course, the trends and directions which the social scientists follow are not selected independently by the scientists themselves. The competition in the culture for funds, position, and recognition has influenced the behavior of the very people who investigate these phenomena in scientific contexts. These pressures, some internal and some external, have made the practice of "pure" science impossible to achieve.<sup>6</sup> The "facts," far from speaking for themselves, always have to be "spoken for" in some generalizing frame of reference; and this means utilizing constructs of a theoretical character. A primary need, then, for any practicing scientist is to select the dimension of such constructs. The problem of developing some kind of modus operandi involving theory and quantitative data has become crucial in the operations of the social sciences. One major answer

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(continued) publications is evidence of the circumscribed notions of theory. Those works which attempt to achieve larger scope have usually been collections, or "readers" in an area, with minor connections being made through topical headings and other purely taxonomic devices. This sort of integration would seem to be rather superficial, considered as "high range" theory.

<sup>6</sup>Thus the range of his theory may be said to roughly vary inversely with an investigator's preoccupation in accumulating facts.



has been the idea of the "middle range."<sup>7</sup> Although not clearly spelled out by its proponents, this idea conceives of theory as being somewhere between minor hypotheses evolved in daily research and those master conceptual schemes which earlier dominated the field.<sup>8</sup> Presumably there are inadequacies in both these extremes which can be avoided, and their virtues retained, by establishing a medium ground on which to function. While Merton seeks to interpret data by establishing their consequences for larger structures in which they are implicated, his way of moving from a lower level of abstraction to a higher is by empirical cumulation, or force of evidence, on the lower level. Although he seems to feel that indiscriminate handling and collecting of facts is largely unproductive in theoretical terms, he is equally convinced that "good" theory cannot come from the top down.<sup>9</sup> This accounts for his reliance on the "middle range," as a kind of compromise

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<sup>7</sup>See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, (Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1949), Chapter I.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 5. He conceives the "middle range" of data to group under such headings as "class dynamics, flow-of-power, conflicting group pressure," etc.

<sup>9</sup>Which leads to the "self-fulfilling prophecy" and to the substitution of "plausibility" for cause and effect relationships.

approach.

By recognizing the semantic and physical limitations of scientists as human beings, the "middle range" is a pragmatic answer to the taxing operational strains of scientific labor. It offers the worker a feeling of command over his material while at the same time giving assurance that he is not dealing with trivia. These characteristics of (a) manageability, (b) significance, and (c) progress through accumulations, make the "middle range" idea attractive to the practicing scientist. They give an emotional as well as a practical rationale to his endeavors, and are accepted as premises of much contemporary social research.

However, there may be some uncertainty that this emphasis on the "middle range" has resulted in a universal improvement in the handling of facts in terms of theory. There is, for example, more sheer diversity in research than ever before, with seldom more than a vague hope that order and unity will somehow arise from the unconnected variety of projects underway.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, it is

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<sup>10</sup>Again, an examination of most issues of professional journals in the social sciences reveals a wide disparity of effort, and makes any wide theoretical relationships appear unattainable on the strength of the material given.

possible that some of the "master systems" of theory, for all of their factual discrepancies and observational inadequacy, provided a more consistent orientation for the scientist than the extant brand of empiricism. Furthermore, one of the neglected virtues of the old systemic theories, such as Spencer's sociology, is that the over-all continuity and coherence of their structure enabled critics to attack them with a clarity which aided alternative formulations. Today, however, the average critic of a "middle range" theory or a "minor hypothesis" is compelled to perform on the low conceptual levels of his material, with the result that his contribution is likely to be as feeble and unnoticed as the original proposition. There is also scant evidence that the cumulation process among "middle range" theories has produced higher or more general theories about social behavior.

The position to which much of the above discussion has been leading is that perhaps fuller rein should be given to broader theoretical formulations than have recently been deemed allowable in social research. The time may have arrived when rather bold notions of theory about human organization and behavior are necessary to deal with the data so profusely at hand. Understandably, the advocacy of a particular "high range" theory at this time might be

criticized as a regression to arm chair speculation, as a substitution of insight for information, or as an attempt to read much significance into minor occurrences.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, at the risk of inviting criticisms of the foregoing types, and as something of a reaction against too-patent acceptance of the "middle range" idea, this monograph will assay a rather large (in scope) theory about human social behavior. It is openly acknowledged that empirical evidence for this theory will be scanty or totally lacking at many points. There may also be questioning of the validity or pertinence of even such facts as are employed. But at least the range of the concepts used may offer an opportunity for some social scientists to work on a "high range" level of theory largely neglected at the moment. The first part of the monograph will be a presentation of an over-all theory of behavior, which the remaining parts will try to clarify and illustrate. Understandably, the amount of detail used in any one aspect of the work will seem sparse by some standards; but there seems no way of treating everything thoroughly in this initial effort. The main task is to establish the general

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<sup>11</sup>Also, the "vested interests" of highly specialized disciplines in their own autonomy often produces an ethnocentric reaction whenever unifying or interdisciplinary proposals are suggested.

framework of the theoretical position, and to demonstrate how it can be carried through various ranges of research and still maintain linkage throughout the theoretical and empirical structure.

While such "high range" theory, as a whole, is perhaps of first importance for the long-run development of social science, it is not of exclusive importance. There is much to be gained of a utilitarian value from consideration of limited hypotheses, and also from just describing the actual phenomena observed, in an ethnographic sense. Therefore, some attention will be given to the rather immediate implications of the field work as they relate to the persons and groups involved. In addition, the attempt will be made to connect the research findings to the "high range" theory presented, even though the end-product of the attempt may indeed seem tenuous.

With respect to the preceding theoretical rationale, two further clarifications are in order. In the first place, the point of view of this monograph is that quantitative research methods do not constitute the sole legitimizing criteria for social research. This is not to say that such techniques are themselves invalid, but rather to question the notion that any research which doesn't make them the keynote of its procedure is inherently deficient.

They have their place, but it is not necessarily central in every phase of the process. In fact, it is held here that it may be more fruitful to hold off the application of many powerful statistical tools until after the generalized conceptual positions can be worked out, and until the researcher can readily ascertain what it is he wishes to test quantitatively. Too often, the mere employment of quantitative techniques has been used to camouflage amorphous theory. Thus, the relatively non-quantitative treatment of the data in this monograph is not due to intrinsic rejection of statistical procedures, but because the current stage of the propounded theory is not ready for them.

Secondly, the position that the Mertonian type of "middle range" theory is inadequate on some levels does not mean that it is fruitless at all levels of research. It has been suggested that the wide use of the "middle range" idea may be more a concession to functional expediency than a resolution of scientific difficulties. Although the kinds of propositions and hypotheses with which the "middle range" idea deals have usually been adequate for research use on certain levels of theory, one attempt of this monograph will be to refocus them back into a "high range" frame of reference, or at least to indicate how this may be done.

Despite the foregoing differences with current practices in theory and research, the basic orientation of the work undertaken here remains that of science--a science which can encompass purely physical verification criteria at one level of endeavor while dealing with abstract philosophical evaluations at another. To find ways of linking these and intervening levels together in meaningful, consistent fashion is the basic theoretical and methodological problem to be tackled if science is ever to unravel, even in its own terms, the massive complexity of human behavior.

Therefore, our first task will be to examine some examples of control theories which attempt to classify behavior in terms of a particular orientation. These theories will be of the "high range" type in that their propositions are intended to apply universally to mankind, and not merely to limited behavioral situations. Thus they seem to go well beyond the so-called "middle range" level just described.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONCEPTUAL LEVEL--A POWER AND AUTHORITY TYPOLOGY

#### A. Definition of Control

[ The initial premise of any analytical theory of human behavior is that basically it involves a concept of control. This is true whether one considers the actions of groups, of individuals, or combinations thereof. By control is meant the mastery of material and non-material resources to realize goals. Such a definition can encompass practically any human activity, from a sales clerk deciding where to eat lunch to an engineer designing a bridge. The behavior patterns of man, as a cultural and biological animal, are integral with his ability to control both his environment and himself. Any purposive focus of human enterprise, whether it be science, theology, business, or love, aims at mastery over persons and things, real or imagined. Since we cannot construct a scientific behavior concept for man except in a social setting,<sup>1</sup> we may accept the further premise that all people function within

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<sup>1</sup>Unlike Hobbes' atomistic and undemonstrable "state of nature," see the Leviathan, Chapters XIII-XV.



societies. Such acknowledgment of the presence of the group as an elemental social fact does not eliminate man as the individual unit in that group. His simultaneous existence as both part and whole, depending upon which aspect of him is examined, makes the dissection of his over-all behavior difficult. However, this duality also supplies flexibility, in that participation in social groups does not prevent at least partial detachment at various times for analytical ends.) As Davis has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> a major attribute which differentiates man from other animals is his ability to objectify his own behavior, this being the very quality which makes science itself possible.

#### B. Two Major Theories of Control<sup>3</sup>

Among the social sciences, the effect of society upon man as a biological unit has found its most penetrating

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<sup>3</sup>In selecting two major theories of control for brief discussion, it is duly recognized that history contains other orientations, such as various theological syntheses and several standard philosophies, such as idealism, eudaemonism, hedonism, and others. Most of these were already well-developed before the advent of modern science and were modified by, rather than evolved from, the growing use of scientific method. Although any set of doctrines can always be traced to certain antecedents, it is still possible to speak meaningfully of certain "schools" of thought which are mutually distinguishable. In this respect, rationalism and biological determinism appear to have been the chief control theories produced by the scientific frame of mind.

expression in the Freudian psychology. Here the basic orientation is the struggle of the individual to satisfy inherent physical needs and desires which are circumscribed by artificial social barriers. "Conscience," or super-ego, is the control by which a particular morality and behavioral code are imposed upon a person as he matures within his society. To the orthodox Freudian, every man is in a perpetual state of conflict<sup>4</sup> with both his natural and social environment, and his adaptation thereto consists largely in adjusting himself to demands and conditions of life which are essentially beyond his personal control. Absolute Freudian "freedom" could thus be identified as social anarchy. Its alternatives are drive repression or transference, either of which may result in individual neurosis or psychosis. Social control is conceived as external and negative, forcing each man to struggle against it continually as a penalty necessary for his own survival. These Freudian concepts have much in common with the social Darwinism which greatly influenced the sociologists<sup>5</sup> of Freud's time. It is mechanistic and deterministic--an inexorable process without end.

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<sup>4</sup>This is akin to Hobbes' "state of nature."

<sup>5</sup>e.g., Sumner, Spencer, Ward.

By way of contrast, empirical rationalism inverts the Freudian explanation by postulating effective control by intellectual processes as superior to the demands of the body. In the social sciences, this idea has achieved fullest acceptance as the bedrock of "laissez-faire" economic theory. The rationalists do not deny the influence of bodily responses upon social behavior, but feel they can and should<sup>6</sup> be beneficent rather than hostile. This is epitomized by Bentham's "felicific calculus," in which the common-sense logic of the individual psyche, if left to function unrestrained, automatically results in the common good. Control, therefore, is actually in the hands of every man, to use if he so desires. Any behavior becomes socially legitimate when dictated by rational self-interest. This view of human conduct, which substitutes a world of self-regulating interaction for Freudian anarchy, ranks as one of the major conceptualizations of observed behavior. The fact that it historically preceded the Freudian view, while still accounting for individual motivation via such biological notions as the pleasure-pain principle,<sup>7</sup> makes its

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<sup>6</sup>The "should" made morality an integral part of the rationalist position.

<sup>7</sup>Which postulated that the major motivation for human action was the seeking of pleasure and a concomitant avoidance of pain.

ingenuity even more remarkable, and led to Parson's trenchant observation that Locke's position was empirically sound, but "for the wrong reasons."<sup>8</sup>

### C. Social Scientific Reaction to the Theories

It is difficult to imagine two concepts of control more divergent than classical rationalism and Freudian psychology, and yet they have both been nurtured in the culture of Western society, and have greatly influenced it. The inability of either of these concepts, by themselves, to account for the entire range of human behavior has been pointed out in many contexts. Durkheim,<sup>9</sup> for example, vehemently denies that social phenomena can be adequately explained by behavioristic psychology. He rejects the hedonism of the biological school and substitutes his own conception of "social facts." For Durkheim, the whole (a social group) is not a simple numerical equivalent to the sum of its parts (individual members). A purely psycho-

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<sup>8</sup>T. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, (Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1949), pp. 362 -63. Locke was one of the key formulators of this position. See John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, esp. Chapters I-VII.

<sup>9</sup>Emil Durkheim, Division of Labor in Society (translated by George Simpson; New York, MacMillan Co., 1933); and Rules of Sociological Method (translated by S. Solovay and J. Mueller; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1938).



logical yardstick cannot, therefore, be applied to sociological phenomena. There are also many psychologists who themselves question the supremacy of biological sex libido in human motivation. Adler<sup>10</sup> and Jung<sup>11</sup> were among the first to criticize Freud's negative handling of "community" or social factors, and to insist that morality was essential to development of personality. G. H. Mead<sup>12</sup> argued convincingly that the socialization of the self is as crucial in human maturation as any biological function, and that this socialization is an interactive process which can only occur in a social environment. The most recent cultural-psychoanalytic group, especially Fromm,<sup>13</sup> Horney,<sup>14</sup> and Kardiner,<sup>15</sup> seek the basis of neurotic behavior within the

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<sup>10</sup>Alfred Adler, Understanding Human Nature (translated by W. B. Wolfe; New York, Greenburg, 1927).

<sup>11</sup>Carl Gustav Jung, The Psychology of the Unconscious (translated by B. M. Hinkle; New York, Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1937).

<sup>12</sup>G. H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934), esp. pp. 164-209.

<sup>13</sup>Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (New York, Farrar and Rinehard, 1941).

<sup>14</sup>Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (New York, W. W. Norton, 1937).

<sup>15</sup>Abram Kardiner, The Psychological Frontiers of Society (New York, Columbia University Press, 1945), esp. Chapter I.



culture as a "gestalt," rather than in the genes and physical characteristics of particular individuals. Here the modal, or "basic" personality structure becomes the center of the analysis, and the actual individual is measured against this "typical" cultural formulation. Although these and other critics have found weaknesses in an exclusively psychological analysis of behavior, particularly the Freudian, they have not reformulated their position in a scope comparable to Freud's. Several, including Kardiner, have intimated that a comparably universal kind of behavioral theory may not even be possible.

In like fashion, the tenets of empirical rationalism, with its hedonistic bent, have stimulated fundamental opposition within the field of economics, where rationalism's greatest theoretical success in social science has been achieved. Writers such as Veblen,<sup>16</sup> about whom much will be said later on, Mitchell,<sup>17</sup> Commons,<sup>18</sup> and J. M. Clark<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>The core of Veblen's position, as expressed in most of his books was his refutation of classical rationalism as the basis of human behavior.

<sup>17</sup>Wesley Mitchell, The Backward Art of Spending Money and Other Essays (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1937), Chapters 1 and 10.

<sup>18</sup>John R. Commons, The Economics of Collective Action (New York, The MacMillan Co., 1950), pp. 15 ff., 209-238.

<sup>19</sup>John Maurice Clark, The Social Control of Business, Second Edition (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1939), Chapters II, XVIII, XXVI.





were able to perceive the powerful influence of social customs and institutions upon human behavior. Likewise, in philosophy, James,<sup>20</sup> Peirce,<sup>21</sup> and Dewey<sup>22</sup> rejected the absolute world of pure reason and substituted the idea that truth is tested by the practical consequences of belief. Here again, morality is conceived as a social phenomenon, not a supernatural one.

It is apparent from the foregoing brief resume that the two theories of control chosen for discussion have been indicted on rather similar grounds, although in different contexts. This does not mean that all of the social uses and effects of the theories have been invalidated, but it does point up their failure to achieve a "high range" integration of human behavior, at least in terms of scientific tenability.<sup>23</sup> While the criticisms of both

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<sup>20</sup>William James, Pragmatism (New York, Longmans, Green, 1908).

<sup>21</sup>Charles S. Peirce, Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce, Editors C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1931-35).

<sup>22</sup>John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York, Henry Holt, 1922).

<sup>23</sup>As will be evident in the next chapter, this failure does not destroy the effectiveness or popular acceptance of Freudian psychotherapy and "laissez-faire" economics as mechanisms of social adaptation and as guides to ethical conduct within a given culture.

systems have been incisive, the modern preference for "middle range" theories in social science generally has, at least momentarily, precluded any reintegration of theory on a universal scale. However, if any strain toward theoretical coalescence has been at all discernible among the behavioral disciplines it probably lies in the concept of "normative" behavior. This concept would appear, essentially, to be that of accounting for human response patterns in terms of assorted ranges of culturally accepted conduct which are themselves undergoing varying rates of mutation.<sup>24</sup>

The major institutional patterns of any society are cohesive as well as constraining.<sup>25</sup> They are not evils endured for the sake of personal survival, nor are they entirely subject to the whim or the calculus of the individual. They do permit some behavioral variability within

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<sup>24</sup>e.g., Margaret Mead, "The Study of National Character" in D. Lerner and H. D. Lasswell, Editors, The Policy Sciences (Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 1951); Geoffrey Gorer, The American People (New York, W. W. Norton, 1948); David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950). These and others hinge their analysis around a normative concept of culture. The concept also holds a conspicuous place in many of the newer textbooks, particularly in sociology, e.g., Davis, op. cit., Chapter 3; Freedman, Hawley, Landecker, and Miner, Principles of Sociology (New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1952), Chapter 5.

<sup>25</sup>Louis Schneider, The Freudian Psychology and Veblen's Social Theory (New York, King's Crown Press, 1948), p. 85.

the institutional framework, but there are penalties, both social and physical, for overstepping the normative boundaries. The conformity prescribed by custom is generally a painless and efficient way of keeping personal self-interest in line with existing conduct patterns, while still allowing a measure of psychological freedom.

Any new theory of control, then, would have to consider this concept of normative in social behavior, as well as taking account of the earlier empirical rationalist and Freudian views. The aforementioned critiques demonstrating the fallibility of the two positions in terms of closure have been quite trenchant.<sup>26</sup> Revised, or entirely different, basic concepts of behavior are consequently in order. The normative concept has already been mentioned as a kind of revision, although still somewhat amorphous in its organization and exposition. But it has also been noted, especially in Chapter I, that the climate of opinion in current social theory and research has not encouraged "high range" formulations, but rather "middle range" concepts, presumably dictated by methodological refinements and the

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<sup>26</sup>While the preceding treatment has, in a sense, been telescoped and oversimplified, this has been done purposely. The critical references cited are well-known and need not be repeated, since they are not of paramount interest in this particular text.

hugh agglomeration of data available to the scientist. The "middle range" theory, seen as a concession to the presumed operational requirements within social science, thus militates against "high range" theory.



#### D. Problems of Formulating an Alternative Control Theory

In spite of the pitfalls which will be faced by any "high range" theory, an attempt will now be made to suggest a further alternative theory of control on the level of the two already considered. It is felt that the well-recorded history of what we loosely know as Western society provides two symbolic concepts needed for such an alternative theory. The concepts are those of power and of authority.

It is acknowledged at once that neither of these terms can be considered as free of previous bias and interpretation. Indeed, a large literature, albeit a confusing one, has already flourished around both of them. This is because the terms, despite differences in their definition and use, apparently represent something endemic in human behavior as social scientists analyze it. The recurrent employment of these terms, along with their diversity of meaning, is testimony of their persistence in social theory, and is some evidence of their repeated observation

in varied situations.

Power and authority, handled in the "middle range" manner, have been used chiefly as rubrics for explaining behavior in specified empirical instances, but seldom as components of any larger theory of control. The attempt here will be to take the latter transitional step. In the generic sense, power and authority will be used as universals to the extent that the power element in "power politics" will be no different analytically from the power element in any other context. Of course power, and authority as well, will have to be defined in a manner consonant with this universality. The following pages of the chapter are an attempt to achieve this definition.

One drawback of broad definitions in social science is that they are seldom precise enough to illuminate all conceivable applications and situations. Only as they are narrowed and qualified do they seem to gain refinement, until eventually they become particularistic definitions. Perhaps, then, one characteristic of a "large" idea is that it creates a measure of uncertainty about its own meaning. Perhaps, also, it must at some point resist complete dissection into the lower levels of formulation lest it lose its identity altogether. It is still important to relate both the general and the specific on all theoretical

levels. Therefore, in the present state of social science, it is not imperative to condemn a theory because it appears imprecise, or because it "covers too much ground." Of course, there are always disciplinary dangers involved in pure speculation, or in using one's "intuition," but these risks should be recognized and met, rather than completely avoided. If there is honesty and competence in the scientific method, it will eventually separate sense from nonsense, regardless of the scope of the material.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, we need not be overly timid in raising our sights for fruitful social theory.

Nevertheless, the matter of coverage in broad, or "high range," theory does raise procedural problems with respect to research. There is considerable strain and difficulty involved in maintaining the connections between such theory and the experiential level where it is being tested. With this in mind [it is proposed to treat "power" and "authority" as equi-level concepts which may be looked upon as the opposite ends of a continuum. Both are subsumed under the universal idea of control, as previously defined. It is realized that this arrangement is somewhat

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<sup>27</sup>Indeed, the breadth of modern theoretical physics makes theory in social science seem minuscule. Clearly, "size" alone is no criterion for evaluating concepts.

arbitrary, but an elementary arbitrariness is required for any systematization of observably recurrent behavior. In one way, power and authority will be considered as ideal types, in the Weberian sense that "ideal" is an analytical term signifying purity of type rather than something which ethically "ought" to be. Furthermore, the two types are dichotomous to the extent that their comparable analytic characteristics are mutually exclusive. This does not mean that the actual characteristics of a particular empirical group will fall wholly in one category of type or the other. There will almost certainly be elements of both power and authority in any observed social interaction, but it should be possible to make some judgments about groups, vis-a-vis one another, on the basis of definable power and authority elements. Two major problems, obviously, will be to satisfactorily delineate the elements of the types for empirical use, and then to place the groups on the continuum once the elements have been determined.] It would be unproductive at this stage of development to set up any conclusive quantitative measurements of power and authority via some prefabricated scale. Placement will have to remain in the realm of "relatively more or less," as conceived by the investigator. In this regard, vehement critical objections can be raised, since these loose forms



can lead to muddled and confused thinking. But it has previously been pointed out that "large" ideas may always involve considerable imprecision, and that it is perfectly legitimate to handle theory from the top down as well as from the bottom up as long as the connections among the various levels of abstraction can be discerned.

From what has been said so far, the use of power and authority concepts as main ingredients of control can be made from the standpoint of the individual and/or the group. Both the rationalist and Freudian approaches have tended to view the individual as central, and the group aspects of behavior as somewhat derivative and subsidiary. Although not denying the importance and desirability of this focus, it remains as a part rather than all of the control picture. The group aspects can be accorded an equal analytical position. Therefore, the major emphasis of this study will be that of group interaction. This is not intended to rule out psychological, physiological and rationalistic orientations, but rather to add social, or group factors to them in accordance with the critiques of the two control theories already mentioned.

#### E. The Place of the Group in Control Theory

We may begin this consideration of the group by stating

that a group is any control-oriented association of persons. This rules out mere aggregates or congeries of individuals based solely upon spatial proximity and other physical similarities. The control group is purposive, and it requires common consciousness in a goal sense. It is found in all social interaction except that of a reflex character. It may be properly contended that this goal consciousness, and consequent striving thereto, is always an individual phenomenon under any conceivable circumstances. Groups, per se, do not act, but their members do. This is admitted, but the differentiation insisted upon here is that the influence of an individual's membership in a group, as group is defined above, will, under some conditions, have a greater influence upon his actions in a given situation than his physiological drives or his calculated self-interest. As previously pointed out, this group influence is not invariably a restriction or a negation of other motivations, but is often a positive force in its own right. It has been stated above that the normative concept of control has resulted from the scientific recognition of group influences upon behavior, and that this has been used as a bridge to a like consideration of personality.<sup>28</sup> Yet,

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<sup>28</sup>As Spiro points out, "the development of personality and the acquisition of culture are one and the same process." Melford E. Spiro, "Culture and Personality," in Psychiatry, Vol. 13, 1950.



it may be granted that while the overall process of human development may be a single occurrence in its ultimate sense, it can be, perhaps indeed must be, observed from different vantage points. Here, again, is a problem of the range of theory, for where the number of vantage points becomes too numerous, and the area observed too small, the scope of applicability of the observations becomes less and less. Minuteness and detail of the data may then become dysfunctional for its meaningfulness (or communicability); and meaningfulness is an essential property of theory. It is believed here that the category of group control, while not the apex of behavioral theory, is still in the "high range" classification. It is one of a fairly limited number of comparable vantage points, such as personality theory, bio-genetic theory, and ethico-rationalistic theory. A group theory of control has the normative base which social theorists have long been aware of, but which they have not often spelled out in a structural sense. The most ambitious attempt so far has been Parsons' treatment of the social system in which he attempts closure for his analysis within a set of five dichotomous pattern variables. It must be realized that it is difficult to translate such a level of theory into significant research designs and projects. These latter do not suggest themselves auto-

matically. But the fact that they do not is scant justification for discarding the theory.<sup>29</sup> Perfection of research mechanics and tools is not a substitute for the relevance<sup>30</sup> of the design to what is being tested. In some cases, relevance may even have to be preferred over the best available methodology in order to preserve its primacy over sheer technique. Sometimes, a kind of subjectively derived relevance will characterize certain parts of the research in this monograph, but this selection has been made through an awareness of possible procedural alternatives, rather than an ignorance of them.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>By way of reinforcing this point, Einstein, in discussing his latest formulation of universal field theory, contends that his most difficult and taxing problem is not constructing the theory but to devise means for adequately testing it. The sharp professional reaction to T. Parsons and E. Shils, Eds., Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1951), and T. Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1951), illustrates the effect of "middle range" thinking when an attempt is made to develop "high range" theory. While there is considerable interest in Parsons' work, it appears to be mostly negative.

<sup>30</sup>Relevance may range from a thorough knowledge of specific past research in an area to a "hunch" based upon personal observation. While the former is generally preferred in scientific circles, the latter can still yield fruitful relationships worth investigating.

<sup>31</sup>While the concentration of attention will be upon group control, the psychological aspects will not be neglected altogether, and one psychological criterion of judgment, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, will be used in considering the empirical situations being examined.

## F. Elements of a Group Theory of Control

Returning to the problem of analyzing group behavior, using power and authority as pivotal concepts, the attempt will now be made to set these up as ideal types. Actual groups will be identified in accordance with their similarity to these types. For application to concrete situations, however, the relative proximity of groups to each other, may often be more significant than their position along the continuum as a whole. It is proposed to define power and authority by describing their crucial functional and formative factors, rather than by giving a synthetic summary in one or two sentences. This method of exposition is operational, in that it involves action as well as structure. The characteristics enumerated are perhaps not all of the essential ones, but the size of the typology may vary with future use of it.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF IDEAL CONTROL GROUP TYPES

#### Power Group

1. Roles and interrelationships of members amorphous and often sporadic.

#### Authority Group

1. Roles and interrelationships of members specifically defined in a continuous, on-going pattern.
-

Power Group

2. Internal structural arrangement of members variable and fluid.
  - a. Frequent mutual coercion of members via:
    - (1) Influence
    - (2) Subterfuge
    - (3) Physical suppression

Authority Group

2. Internal structural arrangement of members hierarchical and rigid.
  - a. No mutual coercion
    - (1) Voluntary acceptance by each member of positions of all members

- 
3. Area and scope of group activity fluctuates according to external conditions and to desires of current membership.

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3. Area and scope of group activity fixed and continuous regardless of external conditions and desires of current membership.

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4. Behavioral processes idiosyncratic or charismatic.

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4. Behavioral processes stable and channelized by formal mechanisms.

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5. Behavioral change articulated by sudden shifts of structural alignment or direction of effort via:
    - a. Revolution
    - b. Ideological reversal

- 
5. Change articulated in consistent and predictive manner via:
    - a. Law
    - b. Custom

- 
6. Wide range and choice of action alternatives.
    - a. Situational variations handled via criteria of:
      - (1) Expediency
      - (2) Particularistic assessment of consequences

- 
6. Narrow range and choice of action alternatives.
    - a. Situational variations provided for via:
      - (1) Body of rules
      - (2) Dictates of precedent
-

<u>Power Group</u>	<u>Authority Group</u>
7. Behavioral codes flexible and adaptive.	7. Behavioral codes strictly prescribed and followed.
8. Behavioral innovations and extraordinary modes of action may be invoked.	8. Behavioral innovations and aberrant or unprecedented modes of action not countenanced.
9. Rewards and punishments distributed in accordance with competitive performance among group members.	9. Rewards and punishments distributed in accordance with impersonal pre-arranged standards of office.
10. Group behavior and structure self-legitimizing.	10. Group behavior and structure legitimized by the larger society or ethical code in which group exists.
11. Group orientation to conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Stress and tension in intra-group relations</li> <li>b. Competition and dominance in inter-group relations</li> <li>c. Desire to promote conflict with other groups in areas of self-interest</li> </ul>	11. Group orientation to conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Harmony in intra-group relations</li> <li>b. Cooperative and division of labor in inter-group relations</li> <li>c. Conscious avoidance of conflict situations</li> </ul>

In terms of the above characteristics, it can be surmised that the internal and external orientations of groups may vary in terms of power and authority. This means that intra-group and inter-group behavior will have to be



evaluated separately in given situations. The following are examples of possible group formations:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Internal Orientation</u>	<u>External Orientation</u>	<u>Example</u>
Type I	Authority	Authority	U. S. Post Office Department
Type II	Authority	Power	Nazi Party
Type III	Power	Authority	New York Stock Exchange
Type IV	Power	Power	American Farm Bureau Federation

The Post Office Department, both internally and externally, is representative of what is commonly described as a bureaucratic organization. Its rules and regulations cover almost every imaginable functional contingency it may face, its duties are rigidly prescribed, and it is rarely involved in inter-group conflict. The Nazi party, as representative of Type II may seem somewhat surprising. Yet the internal structure of the party (barring limited periods of stress and upheaval) was remarkably free of internal conflict. The discipline, obedience, impersonality, and carefully defined hierarchy of intra-party relations was pronounced. This is why the party held together so well and for so long. The internal authoritarianism of the membership resulted in structural tenacity,

even in the face of the tremendous conflicts generated by the external orientation. This is why, to the puzzlement of many observers, the Nazi party's internal structure did not collapse when the external power position became unfavorable. The external power characteristics of the party (even among the mass of Germans who were not members) are already well-known and do not require further elucidation. As an example of Type III, the Stock Exchange affords an interesting illustration. In theory, at least, the members are highly secretive, competitive, and cultivate shrewdness in operation. The whole market situation is one of particularism and gambling in a fluid, unprescribed situation. Although there has recently been more emphasis upon the stock market as a "security" device, it is still the main chance which governs its internal structure. However, the external relations of the Exchange with the public has become relatively circumspect, mainly through the regulations imposed by government commissions (indeed, the Exchange, prior to 1933, might well have been classified as a Type IV group). All statements, advertisements, issues, hours of operation, etc., are prescribed and the Exchange, as such, has practically no power manifestations in its external activities. The fourth type, as exemplified by the American Farm Bureau Federation, will be discussed in considerable

detail throughout this monograph. The Federation is made up of many semi-autonomous units, and there is a great deal of differential behavior among them. There is confusion as to purposes, responsibilities, and methods as far as internal unification is concerned. Membership is highly permissive, sporadic, with charismatic leadership quite possible on all levels of activity. Externally, the Federation exhibits the same characteristics, particularly in terms of self-legitimation within the cultural values of the society. It is highly competitive and conflict-oriented with whatever outside groups it deems threatening.

The preceding brief resume is not intended to be definitive but is merely to sketch the main outlines of how the control group typology may be concretely used. Actual case analyses, including the examples just given, must be worked out in much greater detail. At present, most such analyses will necessarily be post hoc; but after enough observations have been recorded, it would seem that some prediction of behavior could be made on the basis of a typological classification of the groups involved. Furthermore, in situations where three or more groups are interactive, indices (perhaps along the lines of partial correlation if the data can be quantified) will have to be devised to measure differential effects within a total

result. It is in this realm of the classification of actual behavior that the greatest amount of empirical and statistical work needs to be done.

The foregoing manner of utilizing power and authority concepts may seem laborious to some and nebulous to others. Yet it is believed that a considered evaluation of the characteristics listed will suggest at least their surface applicability to many groups within one's own experience. However, some further points should be stressed. The dichotomous nature of the characteristics is obvious, as is the fact that each is mutually exclusive of its polar corresponding number, though not of the remaining numbers of the opposite group. Combinations of power and authority elements will be the rule in practically all groups analyzed under these rubrics, although the groups' general leanings will be a matter of interpretive skill, at present, instead of a quantitative measurement. Something further should be said about the orientation of these groups to conflict. The term "conflict" may best be described as an opposing action involving incompatibles, or divergent interests, in which the combatants vie for control. It will be recalled that a like notion of struggle underlies the Darwinian theory of evolution, and with it the Spencerian sociology and Freudian psychology. It also

parallels rationalistic empiricist economics insofar as the latter has sanctioned competitive striving for advantage. Although the power ideal type would add up to much the same result as Freudian anarchy or Hobbes' "state of nature," its inclusion in a group theory indicates that this extreme is not concretely attainable. The "anarchic group" is a logical as well as an empirical impossibility. The use of the term "conflict" as descriptive of human society presumes that there are alternate periods of time when conflict is mitigated. It is now suggested that if any single characteristic of groups observed in an interactive process can give clues as to the general polarity of each group it will be that of orientation to conflict. Situations in which power elements are dominant will result in action patterns which will differ from situations where authority elements are primary. Therefore, from the point of view of both observer and actor, analysis of group relations along the power-authority control continuum does have pragmatic and predictive functions. Every individual performs these functions to a certain extent whenever he "sizes up" a problem, or tries to choose one action alternative from a number at hand; but they are seldom recognized by the actors themselves as processes of any theoretical significance. Yet the whole panorama of historical occurrence,

in very broad as well as very limited examples, may be treated in the power-authority context. Therein, one can classify eras and cultures, as well as particular relations between two known individuals, depending upon the research focus desired.

The claim of rather enormous applicability for this control theory is, to repeat, presumptuous; and it is not anticipated that this monograph will progress very far in establishing its empirical validity. But it is felt that the empirical data, handled in the power-authority matrix as outlined, may be illustrative of how the theory would be utilized under given circumstances, and to what purpose.

The question may be raised as to whether the power and authority classifications are meant to refer only to groups within larger groups, and eventually to whole societies, and whether they apply as well to situational contexts in which the relevant groups may be participants. As has already been intimated, both are permissible. Not only are the structural aspects of a society amenable to this treatment, but its cultural and valuational qualities may be similarly analyzed. The "climate of opinion," or the ethos, in which various groups operate is just as important in determining their behavior as the manner in which they are put together. Therefore, to encompass the major impli-

cations of any action pattern, both structural and cultural factors need to be considered. It is here that the vitally important normative elements in an interactive situation can be discovered and incorporated in the analysis of control. The social atmosphere in which a group acts<sup>32</sup> is largely responsible for that group's notion of its "generalized other." Such a group has social identity insofar as it interacts with other groups and individuals. The self-conception of a particular group in a society will depend both upon the cultural ethos in which the group functions as well as its own structure. One would expect, for example, that a culture emphasizing control characteristics of power would morally approve and encourage power groups within its social structure, and that such groups would be more prevalent than in an authority type culture. It is suggested that such is the case, and also that the process of social change is fundamentally an interaction of power and authority elements within and among societies. It might be pertinent to inquire whether the change process, so considered, is or could be made teleological. In other words, can "control be controlled"? In

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<sup>32</sup>By this is meant individual members who are functioning primarily as members of a group being scrutinized.

the sense of complete mastery, there is really no scientific way of answering this question. It involves, within the bounds of the human mind, an acceptance of certain "beginnings" or postulates of an arbitrary character to which the general procedural canons of a scientific discipline do not apply. No matter how much these may be clarified or modified they do not appear to be removable. Intriguing as these and other philosophical questions of the nature of knowledge may be, it is not intended to discuss them further, although their importance is acknowledged.

However, within specific delimited areas, it would appear feasible that control over social change is achievable. Societal analysis may, of course, be performed for purely taxonomic reasons, but it can also be applied to some other end or goal. Indeed, this is explicit in the previous definition of control itself. Purposes may be complex and confused at times, but they are attainable and manipulable in the suggested theory.

In order to make the illustration of the theory more meaningful, it is proposed to switch from the level of a unified idea of human existence, without a time sense, to a more circumscribed area. The area chosen, both culturally and in terms of specific groups, will be that of the United



States, roughly to the extent that today it represents the product of about two hundred and fifty years of national history. Obviously, not all of the ramifications of American society can ever be touched upon, but at least the general bases for its present cultural characteristics can be outlined to set the stage for examining the particular groups which are the main subjects of this monograph.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE CULTURAL LEVEL--THE VALUE-ORIENTATION OF AMERICA

The effort to suggest a theory of control based upon the concepts of power and authority, as already defined, requires some empirical selectivity in order to get down to cases. The next step, then, will be to <sup>focus</sup> upon what is generally thought of as American<sup>1</sup> society, realizing that America is but one of a group of social structures and cultures known collectively as "Western society." Allowing for many identifiable differences among these structures and cultures, there appear to be certain threads of similarity<sup>2</sup> in the analysis of them which account for their being thought of together. Without entering into a documentation of the historical development of the modern Western world, some salient aspects of the American case will be considered as representative of the larger tradition, though perhaps only in rough fashion. } This choice

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<sup>1</sup>For expository convenience, the terms "American" and "United States" will be considered synonymous.

<sup>2</sup>These commonalities revolve around such manifestations as a scientific concept of knowledge, a Christian theology, political equality of the citizenry, advanced material technology, and a growing urbanization, taken in their broadest conception.

is made because of a relatively wider knowledge of American society on the part of the writer as compared with other Western groups, and because the subsequently reported field work was done in a section of this country.

A. The Power Orientation of the American Ethic

To most observers, including its own inhabitants, life in America is a dynamic process which can be either brashly simple or subtly complicated with equal ease. While almost every cherished belief and value seems, somewhere in the society, to have a comparably exalted paradox, there is one precept that Americans hold with few exceptions. [This is the conviction that the individual human being can never be completely understood or mastered by finite methods or agencies. The faith in the free and independent spirit is a kind of fundamental postulate which permeates the entire society, and which is consciously eulogized and fostered as desirable for its own sake. In the light of the typology of control, the idiosyncratic and non-formal nature of this quality would seem to classify it more as a power characteristic than an authority one. Since its concept of freedom implies some exercise of the unique and the unexpected in behavior, it follows that the possibilities of action, in a given situation, can never be completely pre-

dictable, except that they may be considered as "free" according to preconceived standards.] Of course, the question of "how free" a society, or group within it, really is, becomes a comparative matter. Furthermore, any behavioral situation may be poorly perceived or consciously misrepresented by those who invoke "freedom" as a motivator and rationale of action. Yet the popular notion of freedom, defined principally as an absence of restraint,<sup>3</sup> is fundamental to an understanding of the values of American culture. The locus of freedom in the individual, qua individual, means that the key judgments about the ethics of behavior are not transferrable to the social structure. Also, a convenient avenue for resolving the frustrations of personal failure has been present in the "frontier"<sup>4</sup> idea,

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<sup>3</sup>It is freedom "from," rather than freedom "for." It is important to distinguish between these two kinds of freedom in cultural analysis. The "from" refers to a negative reaction against restraint, whether legal or otherwise. "Freedom," as a cultural symbol, is usually invoked in America as a defense against encroachment. It is something which must be preserved from infringement in a continuous struggle with hostile forces. The freedom "for" is a more positive concept, involving notions of productivity and progress. As such it is more affirmative psychologically than freedom "from." It is contended here that freedom "from" has become the more prevalent of the two as the term freedom is employed in the American ethic.

<sup>4</sup>When geographical frontiers were exhausted, others, such as science, production efficiency, consumer goals, were substituted.

which has resulted in American culture being charged with a constant aura of both physical and emotional mobility, working as a safety valve for the stresses of material failure and mental frustration.

If the self-image of American culture may be termed "free," in the foregoing popular sense, such freedom has become traditionalized, and to a great extent, morally inviolate and sacrosanct. Such an idealization of values will exist, and often become strengthened, within a culture regardless of any changes in the structure of the society itself. American history is saturated with the behavioral permissiveness and fluidity which mark a power orientation. The individual, considering himself central and dominant in his environment, has had little reason to feel circumscribed by natural forces beyond his control. His only qualm has been that he might not fulfill his success potential, and that by such failure he would reveal himself as having been designated morally culpable. This is the kernel of Protestant ethic,<sup>5</sup> so thoroughly outlined by Weber, and it

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<sup>5</sup>In which the motivation of action is to "prove" that one has been saved. Weber's comparative study of major religions led him to the conclusion that capitalist economics could thrive only in the kind of cultural and moral atmosphere provided by Protestant, particularly Calvinist, doctrines. The emphasis of these doctrines upon individual responsibility for behavior supplied the ethical rationale for "laissez-faire" individualism in the world of commerce. Weber did not claim that either (continued next page)

is directly related to both the rationalist and Freudian theories of control alluded to in a preceding chapter.

The cornerstone of the American ethic<sup>6</sup> is social Darwinism, given an optimistic twist by the proposition that even in the competitive struggle for survival no individual need really be a "loser." This is accomplished by asserting that the unfettered rationalistic calculus of the individual, in trying to "best" his fellows, inevitably results in the greatest advance of well-being in the general society. This fortuitous combination of principles, at once

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(continued) Protestantism or capitalism "caused" the other, but pointed out neither is present historically without the other. It is a matter of concomitant variation, rather than a cause-effect sequence. See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (translated by Talcott Parsons; London, G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1930); The Religion of China, (translated and edited by H. Gerth; Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1951); Ancient Judaism, (translated by H. Gerth and D. Martindale; Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1952). Tawney's work also supports Weber's thesis, with minor differences. See R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co.), 1926.

<sup>6</sup>As the American ethic has developed from its early foundations in the Protestant ethic, the stringency of the early Puritan notions of sin and damnation have been softened, even though the basic belief in individual responsibility for behavior has remained. Economic and social sanctions have replaced theological ones, and the material "means" of demonstrating salvation have become "ends" in their own right (i.e., wealth, position, etc.). One of the effects of this substitution has apparently been to make the present American ethic more amenable to social change than its earlier theocratic version.

both mechanistic (in the form of inexorable "natural laws") and idealistic (there is no practical limit to man's intellectual power over his environment), have enabled the American ethic to retain its potency in an era of accelerated scientific development. As long as it was conceived mainly as a system of personal values, doing duty in a time and place largely free of social and physical limitations, no severe shocks upon the actual structure of the society were likely to result through adherence to the ethic. If occasional stress did occur, it could be handled by some relieving device, such as the aforementioned frontier. However, as soon as the pressures of geographical boundaries, a fast-growing population, and the complex organizational problems of a thriving technology grew more insistent, the functional discrepancies between the "power morality" of the American ethic and the behavioral patterns being thrust upon the individual by a rigidifying social structure grew more noticeable and frequent.<sup>7</sup> Soon even the "average

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<sup>7</sup>The mechanics of this process have been both complex and gradual in their operation, and it would require considerable space to spell out this mutation from confidence to disillusion. Yet it does seem that popular faith in the American ethic has absorbed some heavy blows in the past fifty years, especially in the crises of war and economic depression. In general, the goals of achievement have remained quite stable, while the possibility of actually attaining them in the given social structure has declined for large segments of the population. It is the gap between ends and means which has widened.

person" could see that his private dreams of worldly success might well be far removed from what he was likely to achieve. One's own future could no longer be realistically planned as a personal matter, to be gained by private enterprise alone.

#### B. The American Ethic and the Freudian Psychology

Within this atmosphere of increasing personal doubt and misgiving, Freudian psychology also flourished. As an answer to frustration and despair, it provided a technique for individual adjustment to the "facts of life," which were frequently unpalatable. It stripped a man naked of his culturally imposed morality, his false hopes, his shibboleths. Only, claimed the Freudians, by removing the camouflage imposed by society could the individual get to know himself and gain a measure of stability. Admittedly, Freud's "stripping" process was emotionally merciless and traumatic, and his therapy sometimes produced a kind of resignation, and even cynicism, when contrasted with the uplift of the American ethic. But in many instances it proved, with increasing modification, to be clinically usable. As an analytical technique, it attempted to reinforce the position of the individual against the society at large, and it gave him an internal weapon to fight back



against that society's encroachments. It was, then, an attempt to achieve freedom "from" for those unable to gain it without guidance. Freud was not particularly interested in groups or in cultures, except as they hampered the individual. At best, they were necessary impediments whose influence had to be minimized to gain psychological equilibrium.

Conceptually, the Freudian psychology is quite compatible with the American ethic in its concept of control. It is similarly power-oriented. In one instance, the individual must accomplish his own deliverance as a patient in the medical world, just as in the other he must accomplish his own success as an entrepreneur in the business world.<sup>8</sup> The only important quality found in the American ethic and not in Freudian theory is rationalism, which has no place in a biological determinism. As long as psychoanalysis is used in the milieu of Western culture, it can produce successful results in many clinical applications. But this applicability is bound up with the value orientation of that culture. It is mainly as a remedial technique, when personality equilibrium has broken down in a particular society, that Freudian psychology has been useful. It is

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<sup>8</sup>One must accept the tenets of the faith and rules of the game in either case.

a product of the culture rather than an explanation of it, and, like other "drive" psychologies it lacks adequate terms and concepts to make the transition from individual to social behavior.<sup>9</sup>

For instance, there is widespread agreement that one of the paradoxical results of the American ethic has been a wide increase in behavioral conformity in spite of a moral allegiance to behavioral individualism.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, there are wide gaps between value systems and actual behavior, and the heavier the pressure for conformity, the more the cultural values are arrayed against it.

### C. The American Ethic and Rationalistic Science

In contrast to the Freudian position, many social scientists are not willing, or ready, to consign American society to biological determinism. Some of them, such as Lundberg,<sup>11</sup> Bain, Dodd, embrace the position of positiv-

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<sup>9</sup>Louis Schneider, The Freudian Psychology and Veblen's Social Theory (New York, King's Crown Press, 1948), p. 94. This transitional inability also lay at the root of Durkheim's rejection of Spencer's attempt to structure society in psychological fashion.

<sup>10</sup>See David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950), Chapter IV, and generally, Ortega y Gasset, Revolt of the Masses (London, G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1932).

<sup>11</sup>See particularly George Lundberg, Can Science Save Us? (New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1947).

istic rationality, minus hedonism,<sup>12</sup> in which the role of man's psychology is largely subordinate. Chief reliance is placed upon an instrumental scientism, which can solve the problems of life by impersonal calculation of observable causes and effects, rather than by admitting the relevance of such things as unanalyzable values and vagrant impulses. Of course, this faith in rationality, per se, creates dilemmas of its own. In the first place, it can deal with cultural values in only one of two ways, either to eliminate them as necessary influences upon behavior, or else to compartmentalize them in a separate frame of reference. The latter alternative has seemed most attractive to the

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<sup>12</sup>It must be noted that the current type of rationalistic science does not have precisely the same orientation as the empirical rationalism referred to in Chapter II. The modern version of science, better known as positivism, is minus the theological and moralistic ingredients which flavored the empiricism of the earlier Western thinkers. Therefore, while the early version of rational science is imbedded in the fabric of the American ethic itself, modern scientism is a further development, which has had to be reconciled to the ethic rather than being endemic to it. As is pointed out in the text, the main differences between these two positions are the elimination of hedonism in positivistic science, and the extirpation of culture and teleology from its own logical processes. Parsons has carefully traced this separation of science from the body of non-logical ends and values in the work of several outstanding economists and sociologists. The seeming incompatibility of these categories become primary positional dilemmas for these theorists. See Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1937), esp. Chapters II and III.

rationalists, since they can then lay any perceived inconsistencies of behavior (as judged in terms of rational methodology) at the door of this "non-scientific" category. In practice, rational science can dispassionately point out the consequences of behavior alternatives in cause-effect language, but man still has the option, in the final reckoning, of behaving in an impulsive or non-scientific manner if he so chooses.

The high status of positivistic science in the social structure indicates the congeniality of the modern rationalist position with the American ethic. [This science remains a tool which needs to be manipulated to be effective, since it is basically instrumental and non-purposive in itself. Essentially, its findings are common heritage insofar as they are incorporated into the culture. Certain characteristics, such as technical "know how," become ingrained in the society's self-image and even become commodities in cultural interaction.<sup>13</sup> Like Freudian psychology, however, scientific rationalism is a creed of freedom "from" in many respects.) In its early stages, it was a liberation from theological dogmatism, which had

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<sup>13</sup>Such as the export of techniques and information in international mutual assistance programs. (UNESCO, Point Four, Marshall Plan, etc.)

emphasized natural phenomena.<sup>14</sup> It, too, has enabled one to see a "real world," albeit a taxonomic world different from the emotional symbolism of the Freudians. [The social group is important to the rational scientist chiefly as an object of investigation which can be dissected into its elemental components and arranged in some logical fashion. This would even apply to the scientist's own work as part of the division of labor on a "research team." The ends and purposes to which these groups are put, or for which they are formed, are not the province of the scientist qua scientist. As with the Freudians, these "ends" are cultural additives which usually only obscure and hinder scientific analysis by their intrusion as value judgments. It must be pointed out, however, that although science has acquired a high status in the eyes of the society at large, it has done so largely because of its pragmatic qualities. This is especially evident in the biological and physical sciences, which have already demonstrated their ability to produce desired results in such work areas as industry and medicine. While science is authority-oriented within its own sphere, its social legitimacy can only be gained in

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<sup>14</sup>This does not mean that the scholastics and theologians of the early scientific era were uninterested in nature. It does mean that the core explanation which they gave for their observations were supernatural rather than sensory.

terms of its applicability to stated problems of an empirical character. Therefore, the scientists are seldom at the top occupational level in any American group structure, whether it be a manufacturing plant, a hospital, or even a university. The internal discipline of a science is binding only upon its professional members, and is not applicable to its relations with non-scientific groups. The result is that while science provides many tools for social control it is infrequently the agent of that control, leaving such matters in other hands. The fruits of science thus become part of the power orientation of the American ethic, and brains can be "bought and put to work" like any other raw material. Science, as an "end in itself" stirs very little enthusiasm within the culture, and is indeed often suspect as a waste unless tied to some non-scientific goal.

From the foregoing it seems clear that current positivistic science has also been made compatible with freedom "from," and that it has handled the matter of values either by negation, or by relegating them to non-scientific categories. The scientist assumes a rather passive attitude toward non-scientific goals, since he is authority-oriented within his own occupational frame of reference. Outside this frame of reference, he is manipulable by power-oriented, non-scientific groups. One would expect that in power situ-

ations, where pressure tactics and behavioral adaptability are considered desirable, that scientists generally would exhibit ineffective behavior, judged by power standards. Only by acting less as scientists can they perform in accordance with the American ethic.<sup>15</sup> The positivistic scientist is compelled to lead a kind of double life in order to gain acceptance into the American cultural structure. In the actual functioning of society, he often subordinates himself to the power elements.

#### D. Veblenian Analysis of the American Ethic

Perhaps no commentator upon American culture has perceived its inner workings more clearly than Veblen, for whom the entire course of history could be viewed as a cyclical movement<sup>16</sup> between power and authority groups. Since he had addressed himself primarily to economic habits, he used as polar terms "business" and "industry," which,

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<sup>15</sup>One example of this is the behavior of the American Medical Association. The individual who built its strength as a power group was a non-practicing physician. Even though he has been replaced, the behavior of the organization falls increasingly in the power category as a pressure group, than as a body devoted to science per se.

<sup>16</sup>Which also reflected a "stage theory" of cultural evolution based upon his familiarity with physical anthropology. See T. Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class, New Edition (New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1918).

while rather restricted as referents, convey sharply the division between power and authority, as they have been outlined in Chapter II. His critiques of the background and content of Western institutions and modes of thought were incisive, although his notions of psychology were more of a common-sense variety than the symbolic characterizations of Freud, and his concept of "human nature" appears rather confused and superficial. But he understood the importance of power-determined values in American society, and called attention to the present secondary (in the social structure) ranking of science,<sup>17</sup> in the adherence to these values. To Veblen, the elements of power were raw, unscrupulous, and in general restrictive of the general welfare of the "underlying population." On the other hand, the results of science were bountiful, and if the leadership of science could be established in society on the basis of its own internal authority, then the external dominance of power values could be broken. To achieve this was, apparently, Veblen's dream,<sup>18</sup> though he was apparently unaware of the reluctance of most scientists and technicians to assume such an active leadership role.

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<sup>17</sup>As represented, in his terms, by technicians and engineers in the industrial economy.

<sup>18</sup>Via the "soviet of engineers." See The Engineers and the Price System (New York, B. W. Buebsch, 1921).



Despite the inadequacy of Veblen's solutions<sup>19</sup> for what he interpreted to be the ills of society, his analysis of those ills remains <sup>relative</sup> cogent. But there is little evidence to support his belief that if cultural impediments could somehow be removed that "instincts" of a desirable character would remain.<sup>20</sup> - <sup>we can't stop</sup>

In terms of our typology of control, it is necessary to remove Veblen's connotation of "good" and "bad" from the rubrics of power and authority. As techniques of control, either one can be evaluated positively or negatively depending upon the goals invoked. [In fact, the American ethic conceives of power and authority in a way exactly the reverse of Veblen's. The power orientation is morally acceptable, while that of authority is not. Veblen's effort to reverse these normative values was hardly realistic,<sup>21</sup> and he could not demonstrate its desirability except by substituting a different cultural standard of judgment. He attempted to rule out the necessity of con-

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<sup>19</sup>As epitomized by his support of "technocracy."

<sup>20</sup>There is considerable similarity between this idea and that of Freudian psychology, except that Veblen's judgment of basic human character is moral whereas Freud's is largely biological.

<sup>21</sup>As Schneider points out, op. cit., p. 120, Veblen did not see the necessity of norms to hold society together.

flict by establishing a kind of structural rationality, similar to Mannheim's,<sup>22</sup> in place of the existing power ethos. Yet Veblen himself could not fully accept the authority of science as the ultimate answer to power supremacy. He realized that mankind would be as restive "under" science as it had been under any other discipline, and at times he seemed to be pushing himself, via his own relentless analysis, into sheer relativism in his ethics. His ultimate theory of power is a psychological theory involving the recurrent readiness of the victim for the slaughter,<sup>23</sup> because his examination of history seemed to offer no alternative position.

Thus Veblen oscillated between a faith in ethical progress based upon science, and a foreboding that man is doomed to a restless, unending struggle with his own emotional weaknesses. He, himself, is a vivid example of the paradox of a keen observer attempting to be impersonal about contemporary life, whose biases he himself could not completely renounce. He devastated his society with his

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<sup>22</sup>See Karl Mannheim, Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction (New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940), especially his discussion of structural and functional rationality.

<sup>23</sup>As echoed in Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy"--the inherent corruptibility of leadership. See his Political Parties (translated by E. and C. Paul; Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1949), Part 6, Chapter 2.

dissection and irony, yet he secretly hungered for its approval and recognition.<sup>24</sup> Lonely and isolated, particularly in an intellectual sense, he still could not wholly separate himself from his times or his material. He tried to envision a society based upon the authoritarianism of science, but somehow he could never bring himself to accept this as a creed. His respect for matters of fact was too strong to even permit him to worship "matter of fact"-ness as an autonomous value.<sup>25</sup>

The central point is that the clarity of Veblen's perception of Western society failed to provide him with ready solutions for the questions he raised. Condemning the status quo, he found little in the way of tangible substitutes, except a rather vague economic utopianism similar to that of Marx. He comprehended the universality of social processes so well that he realized his own work itself was a product of such processes. As Max Lerner indicated,<sup>26</sup> Veblen's sense of reality was so shattering that

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<sup>24</sup>His difficulties in securing teaching positions, and the agonizing battle to elect him president of the American Economics Association were hurts which greatly affected his personality.

<sup>25</sup>See his essay, The Place of Science in Modern Civilization and Other Essays (New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1919).

<sup>26</sup>Max Lerner, The Portable Veblen (New York, Viking Press, 1948), p. XXII. Veblen's literary style and the eccentricity of his personal habits fall in the category of such shields.

he felt compelled to create shields against his own conclusions, in order to retain even a modicum of connection with his society.

#### E. The Dilemma of the American Ethic

As American society has developed to its present condition, the problems Veblen faced are, in some measure, the same problems confronting all of its members today. Most people do not feel the dilemmas of choice as deeply as Veblen did, nor are they consciously forced to build their lives around them. It does seem clear that Freudian psychology and positivistic science are two possible alternatives for resolving cultural conflicts in Western society. Yet, as Veblen's work demonstrates, neither approach can escape its own cultural limitations. And, in terms of its application to the present culture, each has shown marked compatibility with the value status quo, as represented by *behavioral values of our society* the American ethic.

The issue now is whether the consideration of the structure of action in American society under the typology of power and authority can be seen in any dimension which adds anything helpful to previous analyses.

The most serious behavioral problem in the society centers around the increasing difficulty in the social

structure of achieving the goals paramount in the cultural values. As has been indicated, both Freudian psychology and positivistic science have reinforced the power values--the former as a rationale and the latter as an instrumental device. Yet the authoritarian qualities of the structure remain, as an obstinate by-product of the power-oriented ethic itself. The rigidity of this structure is epitomized by the term "bureaucracy," which connotes all of the complex organizational intricacy which marks Western society. In light of the ethic, bureaucracy is generally a negative phenomenon to be circumvented or eliminated, and at most to be tolerated in restricted areas. This negative valuation of bureaucracy has made it the ideological target of groups in the society which are power-oriented and which regard bureaucracy as a threat to their freedom "from."<sup>27</sup> The fact that there is always some "bureaucracy" in any social structure does not prevent its being non grata as a guide to behavior. It is obvious that many of the dilemmas of modern American life, particularly in its political and economic phases, revolve around the conflicts between power and authority as represented by the American ethic on the

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<sup>27</sup>Particularly since bureaucracy has been identified as a peculiarity of government as a usurpation of its contractual functions, and therefore fair game for attack.

one hand and the structure of American society on the other.<sup>28</sup> Neither Freudian psychology nor rational science have addressed themselves to this conflict except to provide means of individual adjustment to it via clinical therapy, or to reject it as a matter amenable to scientific solution. However, as long as the ethic remains power-oriented, the problems of defining normative behavior in an increasingly authoritarian social structure will become magnified. The sheer technical difficulties of gaining

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<sup>28</sup>An interesting example of this dilemma is found in Time magazine, issue of July 20, 1953, p. 14, editorializing on the topic, "Bureaucracy: Servant or Master."

"The significant struggle is the quiet war of the President and his appointees to get control of the vast governmental machine, manned by civil servants who operate under protective rules designed to keep them partially independent of their nominal bosses. . . . the question [is] whether the men who bear the constitutional and legal responsibility [non-bureaucrats] for running the executive branch will, in fact, be able to get into their hands the power to run it. . . . Nobody wants to end or impair the merit system . . . but the merit system was never advocated or defended as an influence [mostly negative] on policy-making, or a brake upon change. . . . All reforms have their price, and the price now exacted by the merit system is too high. The price can be reduced without damage to the essentials of the career service."

The ambivalence of this editorial is striking in that it suggests the Jekyll and Hyde nature of the Civil Service structure. In terms of a power orientation, the structure is paralyzing; in terms of an authority orientation it is the best protection against naked force. It is hard to decide what percentage of power and authority ingredients make the best mixture in any empirical situation.

specified social objectives will place heavy strain upon the mores of control, until the "line" separating acceptable from unacceptable practice disappears.<sup>29</sup> The immediate question for American society is what sort of re-defined ethic and what sort of modified structure will emerge from the battle for control now going on. It is not yet the function of this control typology to answer that question. Its purpose is rather to provide the setting and frame of reference to analyze the components of the control problem. This will be done concretely in the following chapters by examining a group of organizations and individuals which is grappling with the problem in one segment of American society. The next chapter will take the discussion "down" one further level--from American society as a whole to one structure within it.

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<sup>29</sup>When this happens, of course, the result is anomie, which might be said to have been Veblen's chief affliction.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL--THE SYSTEMS OF ORGANIZED AGRICULTURE

#### A. The Farmer and the American Ethic

The groups which constitute organized agriculture represent one area of American society in which the problem of control may be examined in terms of the concepts of power and authority. Over the years, the American farmer has symbolized those attributes of physical hardihood, independence of thought and action, abhorrence of formal restriction, shrewdness in bargaining, and adaptability to changing conditions (climate, technology, etc.),<sup>1</sup> which are part of the fiber of the American ethic. In spite of the increasing urbanization of even the dwindling part of the population still census-classified as agricultural, farmers and their organizations have remained strong advocates of the postulates of the ethic, as personified by the independent husbandman.

Although current expressions of faith in the "old virtues" of cherished economic and political principles are as prolific as ever, the declining strength of agriculture's

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<sup>1</sup>The farmer is in the "front line" of the battle for human survival against "nature."



social influence within the larger society has imparted a kind of defensiveness<sup>2</sup> to such utterances. The marked expansion in the bureaucratic structures dealing with agriculture during the past twenty-five years partially accounts for this defensive attitude. For this agricultural bureaucracy, particularly the federal variety, illustrates the kind of authoritarian threat to freedom "from" which many farm groups feel is incompatible with the American ethic.

The reasons why this bureaucracy has grown stronger, in spite of strenuous opposition, are complex. They certainly seem to reflect the increased division of labor which occurs in a highly technologized society during periods of rapid population growth within fixed geographical boundaries. All aspects of life thus become somewhat industrialized and bureaucratized in the instrumental sense of those terms. In human relations, even on the face-to-face level, independence of thought and action gives way to interdependence, so that "independence," as a value, becomes more a sentiment of the culture than a means of achieving concrete goals. Veblen saw this transformation

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<sup>2</sup>As illustrated by the oft-expressed belief on the part of many spokesmen of agriculture that the fundamental values of the society are being attacked and weakened by other groups and individuals, and that the primary task of the moment is to defend these values.

taking place in American agriculture, although not as a deterministic corollary of industrial advancement. To him it was not an evolutionary occurrence, but rather a conscious "capture" of the farmer by other power elements in the society. This added an important new factor to the process.<sup>3</sup> Veblen contended that the farmer has become a manipulated element in the overall market economy, and that his basic economic decisions are being made for him by the business (power) interests which maneuver "in the background," controlling prices and consumption for their own maximum profit. Under this arrangement, continued Veblen, the only independence now really left to the farmer is the "illusion of independence" itself.<sup>4</sup> However, as Veblen may not have fully realized, the farmer's retention of this "illusion" has remained extremely important in determining his behavior. Even a cursory examination of American agricultural history in the past half century will reveal the tenacity of the idea of independence, even though its basis in fact may have steadily declined. Yet, despite periods of apparent material well-being, the so-called "farm problem" has gradually become a chronic

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<sup>3</sup>T. Veblen, Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times (New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1923).

<sup>4</sup>Which took it out of the realm of pure social Darwinism.

dilemma throughout the range of government, and a thorn to every political administration.

During the depression following World War I, the farmers had begun to seek large-scale economic relief from the government for the first time. But their efforts, including such legislative proposals as the McNary-Haugen bill in the Congress, were defeated chiefly by urban business interests, whose financial and political strength was steadily increasing. The farmer soon became a secondary figure in the national power picture, although his numerical Congressional position was still formidable on many issues.<sup>5</sup> Yet the policy initiative had been relinquished by the farmer and had passed to other power groups in the society which might contest his point of view. This being the case, it was possible that the farmer might be tempted to modify his adherence to the freedom "from" principles of the American ethic, and seek assistance in a more structured atmosphere of collective action, such as government aid programs. To a certain extent this shift did occur, although never completely.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Farm Congressmen could still bargain for concessions if they could deliver their own votes as a "bloc" on crucial occasions.

<sup>6</sup>Of course, the growing economic dependence of the farmer on government created ideological conflicts and contradictions which had to be rationalized in terms acceptable to the American ethic. For (continued next page)

B. Connections between the Farm Bureau  
and the Extension Service

One key to an understanding of the present operational tactics of organized American agriculture lies in the phenomenon of the relationship between the Farm Bureau movement and the development of the Agricultural Extension Service. The linkages between these social systems form a pattern for examining the contest for control in the agricultural life of the nation.

To many of those engaged in dealing with agriculture's problems, the connections between these systems have had a "natural" evolutionary quality which is more or less axiomatic. As L. R. Simons, Director of the New York State Extension Service, expressed it, "After twenty-five years of active service with both the Extension Service and the Farm Bureau, it is difficult for me to think of one apart

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(continued) example, the use of such artificial financial devices as subsidies needed to be legitimized as a "guarantee" that farmers receive a "just" or "fair" share of the national income. The payments could not be thought of as a "dole" or a "tribute" levied by one segment of the economy upon all the rest, for this would destroy the self-respect of farmers who accepted such payments. Nevertheless, many individuals have experienced a strong sense of guilt in taking government money, and some have actually refused this assistance on ethical grounds. The majority, however, have swallowed their misgivings and have indulged their economic appetites at some expense to their moral persuasions.

from the other."<sup>7</sup> While partially a matter of unplanned circumstance, this unity has been purposefully fostered over the years in diverse ways. For the sake of the present analysis, it would be worthwhile to briefly review the main factors which led up to existing conditions.

### C. The Authority Orientation of the Extension Service

From its inception, the Agricultural Extension Service has been a quasi-governmental organization, whose place within the structure of the Department of Agriculture has given it many bureaucratic characteristics. The early Department was chiefly a fact-finding body interested mainly in the application of physical science to problems of crop production.<sup>8</sup> The Extension Service grew up within this atmosphere and absorbed its internal authoritative bent. Life in rural United States was conceived almost solely in terms of individual farmers owning and operating their farms as independent units. Every advance in farm

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<sup>7</sup>Quoted in The Spirit and Philosophy of Extension Work, Graduate School, United States Department of Agriculture and Epsilon Sigma Phi, Washington, 1952, p. 265.

<sup>8</sup>The emphasis being on increased production based upon mechanical and economic efficiency.

technology was hailed as a boon to agriculture, and hence to the country at large. The task of county agents and other Extension field personnel, as local dispensers of this national fund of knowledge, was to disseminate as widely as possible within their jurisdictions the most applicable kinds of production information. In this role, the agent was supposed to have as his work goal "the best possible status of the farming class."<sup>9</sup>

As long as the nation was in an era of low population pressure and self-expanding markets, this program performed satisfactorily. The internal bureaucratic structure of the Extension Service was kept small and simple by delegating most of the concrete functions to the several states via a series of legislative acts and formal cooperative agreements.<sup>10</sup> This limited bureaucracy has been a distinguishing feature of the centralized portions of the Extension Service from the beginning, and it has been responsible for an attitude of conflict-avoidance and of passivity in group interaction which definitely marks the Service as an authority-type group. Yet the high autonomy of its local county

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<sup>9</sup>Kenyon L. Butterfield, 1904, quoted in The Spirit and Philosophy of Extension Work, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>10</sup>Culminating in the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, and later expanded legislation.

units has rendered it vulnerable to external power group influence. Such vulnerability has enabled organizations like the Farm Bureau to exert pressure and control at the basic point in the bureaucratic structure, namely at the so-called "grass roots" level.

#### D. The Power Orientation of the Farm Bureau

The economic crises in agriculture from the turn of the century onward made it apparent to farmers who were profit-minded that they were peculiarly helpless to cope with their problems as individuals. This realization ran somewhat counter to the American ethic of independence of thought and action, but in terms of financial reality it was a fact which had to be faced. The major question was not whether farmers should or should not organize, but rather how to clothe a new organization with the individualistic values of the ethic. Mercantile business had already accomplished this feat by creating the corporation as a kind of "legal individual," with more immunities and fewer frailties than human beings themselves possessed. Yet for all their loyalty to common values of the ethic, the leading agriculturists<sup>11</sup> of the early twentieth century

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<sup>11</sup>Dillon, Davenport, Bailey, Knapp.

retained the traditional "granger"<sup>12</sup> distrust of corporations and industry. Therefore, the corporate model of industrial organizations would not do for agriculture. Paradoxically, an alternative method of establishing a fairly stable power group of farmers was supplied by the authority-type structure of the Extension Service. As early as 1911, county agent work had been financed by non-farming groups such as merchant associations and railroads, and a start had been made by some business interests to convince agricultural groups that their objectives were mutual. These non-farming groups soon attracted many bona-fide farmers to their ranks, and led to the formation of numerous so-called county Farm Bureaus, which often provided funds for much of an agent's income. In return for this assistance, the agents promoted and participated in Farm Bureau activities. This reciprocity was legally recognized by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which legitimized both partial support of agricultural agents through the contributions of private sources, and forecast the modus operandi for giving

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<sup>12</sup>This antipathy stemmed from many political battles between the large political parties, which were more and more controlled by urban interests, and the sporadic, splinter movements of the Populists, Greenbackers, Non-Partisan League, and others which had heavy agricultural support. This deep-seated rural-urban antagonism continued in spite of the similar value orientation of both corporate and farming interests, taken separately.



Farm Bureaus major access to county agents. In the long run, the access factor has proved to be of key significance in determining the structure of organized agriculture.

#### E. Functional Linkage Among the Relevant Groups

The agents, although nominally governmental employees, were initially encouraged to seek money and support from their constituents. At first this was probably a matter of financial expediency, since it was difficult to raise public money in Congress for new Federal enterprises such as Extension work. Later, when the Extension network became a fixture in the governmental structure with considerable funds of its own, the Farm Bureaus sought to maintain their close liaison with the agents long after the monetary dependence of the latter on the Bureaus had been minimized. The important point to remember is that while the circumstances and substance of agricultural programs were changed frequently, the "interactive set" between the "grass roots" groups and the Extension Service field staff remained essentially unchanged.<sup>13</sup> The only real transformation was

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<sup>13</sup>This and succeeding references in this chapter to farm organizations will place chief emphasis upon the activities of the Farm Bureau, although this is not meant to imply that other organizations, especially the Grange and the Farmers' Union, are unimportant in determining legislation, policies, and public sentiment at various times and places. The Farm Bureau movement was singled out in the present context because it (continued next page)



that the bond came to be based more upon cultural values than upon technological and monetary assistance.<sup>14</sup> Gradually, the initial misgivings which farmers had about tying their programs in with those of the urban business community were dissipated. Although some frictions always remained, as vestiges of the fast-disappearing rural-urban dichotomy, one of the accomplishments of the Farm Bureau movement was that it was able to mitigate the historical conflict between business and agriculture. A major consequence of this reconciliation was that the bulk of organized agriculture in the United States became socially, politically, and economically attached to the business community. As Veblen had surmised, the farmer was becoming convinced that his destiny was concomitant with that of the commercial and corporate interests. His yardsticks of efficiency became less those of sheer output and technical skill, and more those of marketing and the intricacies of the price

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(continued) is by far the largest and most influential private farm organization in American society. Some of its local relationships with the other organizations will be treated empirically in later chapters.

<sup>14</sup>In part, of course, the interlocking development of the Extension Service and the Farm Bureau was something of an historical "accident," but when the mutual advantages of the relationship became operationally valuable, strong efforts were made to preserve it, particularly by the Farm Bureau.

structure.<sup>15</sup> These similarities were buttressed by the unified value orientation among the two groups as represented by the American ethic. The Farm Bureau, for example, felt no antagonism toward business as long as the latter neither dictated or interfered directly in agricultural matters, nor jeopardized the Bureau's unilateral access to the farming population.

In at least one state, this gravitation of agriculture and business toward a common ground has been examined in detail. A study by McKee<sup>16</sup> found that the Michigan Farm Bureau became a vital element in what was termed the power structure of the State. Through a series of interlocking directorates, several of the top Farm Bureau leaders were active in marketing cooperatives, in the State Board of Agriculture (which oversees the land-grant college and the Extension Service), and in various commodity and special-interest groups. As an example of the agriculture-business convergence, McKee mentioned the Michigan Highway Users

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<sup>15</sup>Indeed, technical production problems became almost rudimentary compared to the mysteries of fiscal policies, marketing quotas, commodity loans, and the like. In Veblen's terminology, the farmer had become less a man of "industry" and more a man of "business."

<sup>16</sup>James B. McKee, An Analysis of the Power Structure of Organized Agriculture in Michigan, unpublished M. A. thesis, Wayne University, 1948.

Association, which was headed by the chief state lobbyist of the Farm Bureau. Although business interests appeared to have financial and policy control of this Association, agricultural members were given important administrative positions and often acted as official spokesmen for the organization. In the legislature, McKee also found that business men were preponderant as members, even though a majority of the state counties were rural. The farmers, being dispersed and numerically inferior, could not elect their own candidates independently, but they could often swing a contest by delivering blocs of votes, and by so doing win concessions from non-agricultural political partners. McKee further claimed that the more affluent farmers increasingly identified themselves with businessmen in terms of ideology, values, and programs. Organized agriculture thus supported the stands on issues, such as labor legislation and public spending, which represented the interests of its business allies. The only times agriculture showed opposition to these allies was when the latter tried to forestall and restrict farm cooperatives through the medium of taxes. No breach occurred after the agricultural groups made it plain they meant to fight for the status quo on cooperatives regardless of the consequences. This study of Michigan generally substantiates

the trend noted on the national level, and reinforces the contention that particular organizations, such as the Farm Bureaus, seek to fashion agriculture after their own image,<sup>17</sup> which is itself a reflection of the thinking of the business and industrial community.

The conclusions of this section hinge around the fact that organized agriculture is a power group, with respect to the typology given in Chapter II. By and large, the history<sup>18</sup> of Farm Bureau activities in inter-group and

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<sup>17</sup>On the county level, Alexander and Nelson also found the Farm Bureau occupying a key role in agricultural matters through a high interaction between its leaders and the Extension staff, plus a tendency for these leaders to remain in office for long periods of time. Some sample Farm Bureau resolutions quoted in the study were concerned with curbing present activities of labor unions and giving "freedom of speech" on union activities to employers. See Rural Social Organization in Goodhue County, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, 1949. Such relationships and resolutions are indicative of the general sympathies and opinions of Farm Bureau leaders on non-agricultural matters, and reflect a "business orientation" quite in contrast to early "granger" days. Whereas it now appears legitimate for farm organizations to take a stand on labor controversies, a similar stand by labor organizations on farm issues is likely to be regarded, at least by farmers, as unwarranted interference by outsiders in the internal affairs of agriculture. Much testimony in Congressional hearings on agricultural policy bears out this "dual standard" of judgment by farm groups.

<sup>18</sup>See the following references for documentation of this history: Orville M. Kile, The Farm Bureau Through Three Decades (The Waverly Press, 1948); Charles M. Hardin, The Politics of Agriculture (Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1952), pp. 37-53, 131-142, 194-197; Jack J. Preiss, A Functional Analysis of the Relationship Between the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Soil Conservation Service, unpublished Master's thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1951, pp. 20-41.

intra-group relations will document this contention. It will also forecast the kinds of influence which these farm organizations will exert upon county agents at the present time, and the means by which these influences are likely to be expressed.

The thread of the discussion to this juncture has been to demonstrate:

1. that organized agriculture, chiefly in the form of the Farm Bureau, grew up in parallel fashion with the Extension system.
2. that the two groups became operationally dependent upon one another in both a material and an ideological sense.
3. that the current alliance between organized agriculture and the urban business interests is essentially a power-oriented phenomenon, in which agriculture has a subsidiary position.

#### F. The Importance of Legitimacy

Throughout their development, farm organizations have sought to identify themselves as the legitimate spokesmen of the rural areas. This has been crucial in order to use the organizations as a means to influence the course of political and economic action within the society. In other

words, the "organizational weapon" must gain an accepted place in the overall structure before it can function effectively.<sup>19</sup> As long as the farm organizations can maintain their "right" to represent the majority of farmers, whether by positive assignment or by default, their vulnerability to attack on the "grass roots" level is minimized. As far as the Farm Bureau is concerned, this is achieved by farmer access, and constant vigilance is maintained to eliminate access competition, whether it comes from public or private sources. The foregoing discussion of farm organizations and their place in the agricultural picture has not meant to imply that other specialized groups and individuals have been insignificant in expressing the "grass roots" point of view. There are many local variations with respect to the arrangement dealt with in this chapter, but these substantive differences do not alter the overall power-type orientation which such groups exhibit, even though the empirical forms may be quite diversified.

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<sup>19</sup>As Selznick defines the term, an "organizational weapon" is not restrained by the constitutional order of the arena in which a contest for control occurs. Yet it is generally true that at least the outward form of the organization must not violate the moral code applying to such organizations. Here is where an orientation, such as the American ethic, can serve as a "front" for more covert objectives. See Philip Selznick, The Organizational Weapon (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co.), 1952.



Having thus considered the power aspects of the current picture, a brief analysis of the authority aspects is in order. It has already been stated that the original purpose of Department of Agriculture was to provide means for improving production efficiency through applied science. This conception of function has been especially prevalent within Extension, with its emphasis upon education as the vehicle for such improvement. However, as far as the public is concerned, this education is purely voluntary in character, and cannot be arbitrarily imposed upon the potential beneficiaries. Very often, it has even been difficult to get rural constituencies to countenance Extension methods and personnel as authoritative in a technological sense.<sup>20</sup> This means that an official like the county agent has to "prove" himself both as an expert on agriculture, and as a "right kind" of person with whom to work. In gaining these objectives, the agent has been placed more or less on his own responsibility, in the belief that local solutions of such problems are more satisfactory and desirable than any centralized approach

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<sup>20</sup>At the present time, there are whole areas of the country (and at least a few people in every county) which regard Extension work either as charlatanism or as an unrealistic approach to practical problems. There remains a heavy residue of suspicion against "book" farmers.

would be. These assumptions have molded the thinking of the administrative hierarchy in Extension from the start. They have permitted an enormous amount of influence by private groups in determining the behavior of the Extension Service from the county to the national level.

Besides its legitimation of the union between the Extension Service and private groups, the Smith-Lever Act also wove the various state agricultural college and experiment stations into the educational program. Extension soon became the recognized distributive organ for the productive results of these research institutions. The Federal Department of Agriculture exercises a loose jurisdiction over plans and policies, but its vague legal controls have been rarely invoked. And as the years have passed, the actively nurtured collaboration between the county agents and other field echelons of the Extension Service on the one hand, and the energetic "grass roots" organizations on the other, made any kind of central bureaucratic control more and more remote. Therefore, although still tenuously linked to a national agency, the largest effective governmental units of Extension are acknowledged to be at the state level. In one sense, the State Extension organizations assume the role of being the farmer's bulwark against highly centralized bureaucratic

control. Paradoxically, the complete Extension hierarchy can be viewed as a house partically divided against itself, with many of the state and county bureaucrats opposing bureaucratic organization at any level above their own. The result of this opposition has been virtually to eliminate the Federal branch of the Extension Service as a determinant of local agricultural policy.<sup>21</sup>

Until quite recently, there was little inclination on the part of either observers or participants to question the efficacy of the "grass roots orientation" of Extension programs and personnel. Feeling dependent upon the local power groups for finances and social acceptance, the liaison has been regarded as necessary and mutually beneficial. However, one would expect that the Extension Service, due to its moderate bureaucratization, the instrumental character of its work, and its legalistic origins, would operate in authority-type fashion in its interaction with outside groups. Furthermore, the behavior of members of this authority group should exhibit conflict-avoidance patterns in situations where conflicts seem likely to arise. The tendency for Extension workers, then, if they follow the authority syndrome, will be to model their own

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<sup>21</sup>This being the case, little attention will be paid to the Extension organization above the state level.

performance in accordance with the wishes and goals of the power groups with which they have operational connections. However, some studies in this and contiguous areas of power-authority relationships in agriculture seem to indicate that this kind of adaptation by authority groups has consequences, frequently anticipated, which cast doubt upon its positive contribution to the Service as a whole.

Selznick,<sup>22</sup> in studying the development of the TVA program found that the close alignment of TVA and Extension officials with "grass roots" power groups resulted in the cooptation of these officials. The power groups, invoking their "right" to determine local policy and action decisions in terms of the American ethic, were able to bring in local authority officials as collaborators.<sup>23</sup> This was made easy by the general desire of Extension personnel to work with

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<sup>22</sup>Philip Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950). Here he defines cooptation as the "realistic core of avowedly democratic procedures." This refers to "absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence."

<sup>23</sup>This reinforces McKee's observations on the manner in which agricultural leaders in Michigan were put "on the team" as directors of several special-purpose organizations only indirectly concerned with farming. It reflects, somewhat, the old political maxim, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." Agriculture's actual subordinate role could be covered by a good "front."

local groups as part of their behavioral code. While this procedure cemented "grass roots"-Extension relations, it created strain within the larger authority structure. Field-Washington relations were divergent, since centralized authority programs were opposed by the power groups to whom the decentralized authority groups were attached. As soon as federal-level bureaus attempted, via land-use programs and Soil Conservation Service activities, to gain direct access to the farming population, these moves were vigorously opposed by the "grass roots" organizations, supported by the Extension Services of the states involved. The only alternatives for the Federal authority group remained to acquiesce to the wishes of the local power structure, or to force its way into the TVA area by whatever means were available. Any attempt to do the latter, of course, was met by "grass roots" ideological and political counter measures which relied mainly on the argument that this intervention constituted a violation of freedom "from," and thus constituted a vital threat to the American ethic. Here the willingness of part of the authority organization to compromise its goals for the sake of harmonious relations with outside power groups resulted in a weakening of the authority group itself, both structurally and operationally.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Actually, this process can (continued next page)

Banfield's<sup>25</sup> case history of an agricultural resettlement project in Arizona indicates the possibility that a power struggle, once it gets under way, can result in complete deterioration of the situation over which issues are being fought. In this instance, the factional antagonisms among the settlers precipitated a local battle for control of the settlement which was eventually directed against the government administrators at the regional and federal levels. No efforts at compromise were fruitful, and eventually the entire project was liquidated, with considerable financial and social losses for all concerned. Therefore, it cannot be said that all contests for control among groups will inevitably end in a compromise, although one might hypothesize that compromise would be the predom-

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(continued) work both ways. Lipset found that when a power group achieves control of a unit of government, as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation did in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, it tends to modify its ideals and behavior to harmonize with the pre-existent authority structure, as represented by the continuous bureaucracy. See S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (University of California Press, 1940), Chapters VI, XII. This would lend credence to Selznick's contention that while commitments of one kind or another are indispensable in action, the very process of commitment results in conflicts and tensions frequently unanticipated. These can result either in overt power struggles or in some type of compromise, informally or formally made.

<sup>25</sup>Edward Banfield, Government Project (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1952).

inant way of treating differences in a complex society.

The most frequent pattern of Extension behavior, then, is one which involves considerable dependence upon "grass roots" groups, such as the Farm Bureau. At the same time, the internal structure of Extension agencies, stemming from a traditionalized scientific frame of mind of its personnel, is bureaucratic in its functional outlook. These two facts suggest that those Extension employees, particularly county agents, who are obligated constantly to both kinds of groups<sup>26</sup> in carrying out their tasks, will often encounter problems of choice when these obligations are incompatible. Therefore, stressful dilemmas can be expected to arise often in the behavior of county agents, who occupy an exposed position in the power-authority context of agriculture.

It is significant that neither Freudian psychology nor classical rationalism appears applicable to the level of

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<sup>26</sup>Again, there is a parallel here to Veblen's dichotomy of "business" and industry." The "grass roots" power groups exhibit the same behavior which he characterized as "business," while the Extension Service has much the same esprit and social outlook he attributed to the technologists of "industry." The examples cited suggest that, as Veblen observed, the "business" (or power) elements in American agriculture are in ascendancy over the "industrial" (or authority) elements, although the domination may not be as pronounced as he assumed.

group analysis discussed in this chapter. While the farmer may be able to "adjust" himself to new social and economic conditions by "rationalizing" his changing status position in the overall society, the discrepancy between his adherence to the American ethic and his structural position in the society has not been resolved. These social phenomena appear to have limited connection with any theory of libidinous motivation. Likewise, it seems obvious that neither the conditions of freedom "from" nor the performance of the "felicific calculus" on the part of the individual can consistently explain the relations among agricultural organizations.

The Veblenian analysis seems realistic as a conceptual device, when adapted to the power and authority frame of reference. But the persistence of normative cultural values throughout the interactive process adds an analytical dimension which Veblen did not fully perceive. It is at this point that the action choices of groups become most difficult. Here the problematic nature of behavior becomes crucial, exhibiting as it does the concrete aspects of the cultural-structural dilemma posed in the preceding chapter.

As a final step in the theoretical development of this monograph, the level of analysis will be again changed, this time to that on which the individual is considered as



the unit in group interaction through the performance of a specialized role.

## CHAPTER V

### THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL--THE ROLE OF COUNTY AGENT

As previously stated, the dual nature of the county agent's allegiance and structural position is an indication that his job may well be a focal point for studying the interaction of power and authority groups. Consequently, it would be useful to know what sort of research has already been done, in order to clarify the relationships of the various organizations involved, and to spell out the procedures and channels of action which the members of these organizations utilize. In terms of published material, little seems to have been done to accomplish this.<sup>1</sup> Several works have already been referred to which deal at least partially with analyses of the farm organizations and the Extension Service as collective bodies, both singly and in interaction with other groups. But there is not much available using the county agent as a special ingredient in the process.

#### A. The Situational Approach

Baker's study<sup>2</sup> was perhaps the earliest research treat-

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<sup>1</sup>Which is one reason why the field research of this monograph was undertaken.

<sup>2</sup>Gladys Baker, The County Agent (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939).

ment of the agent in the broad social setting in which he functions. While this work was mainly historical and descriptive, it did note several trends in terms of agent relations with several of the groups we have mentioned. Baker pointed out that state Extension offices appeared to be gaining more direct jurisdiction over agents, mainly through control of financial and status rewards, even though the work activities remain closely tied to county and local levels of influence. Also, at the time of the study, many states still maintained formal connections between Farm Bureaus and the Extension Service. Baker recognized that "the position of the county agent is being compromised by the continuation of this relationship," and she also believed that such objections "would not arise in the case of unofficial cooperation with this organization (Farm Bureau) and other farmers' organizations if no partiality were evident."<sup>3</sup> She apparently felt that a mere negation of the formal link would necessarily bring about a revised interactive pattern.<sup>4</sup> Finally, she believed that the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>4</sup>This is a more superficial conception than has previously been noted in Selznick's TVA study, which demonstrated that informal (power) ties, achieved via the co-optative process, are more important than formal (authority) ones, in governing Extension behavior, and that there is no fixed mode of variation between the two types for all situations.

pressure of a changing economy will require the agent to shift his job emphasis from production processes to "larger economic and social objectives" without destroying his flexibility and local responsibility. The main criticisms of Baker's work are that it underestimated the ability of the "grass roots" power groups to influence agent behavior, and that it assumed that legal changes in current laws would alone be sufficient to bring about basic changes in inter-group behavior.

Williams, in examining the reactions of farmers to Agricultural Adjustment Act programs, threw more penetrating light upon the agent's behavior, even though this was not the focus of his inquiry.<sup>5</sup> He found that the county agent was the effective head of the local committees administering national conservation programs. Those individuals and "grass roots" groups which supported AAA in its initial years were the larger, more prosperous farmers, who are most likely to be those who serve on these committees, and hence they supported the agent in his guidance of the programs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Robin Williams, Sociological Aspects of Farmers' Responses to AAA Programs: Selected Kentucky Areas, 1938-1940, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard, 1943.

<sup>6</sup>It should be stated that many agents have been reluctant to assume responsibility for these conservation programs, and many have done so more because of prodding from their constituents than orders from administrative superiors.

Conversely, farmers who were critical of AAA are likely to be the smaller, less active farmers, who also criticize the county agent in other ways.<sup>7</sup> Thus the agent sought, and found, his major backing among the more receptive farmers, who turned out to be the ones he collaborated with on most things anyway.<sup>8</sup> The shift in the role of the agent from advisor to administrator was resented in some rural quarters, and, in many instances, this very shift in role was upsetting to the agent psychologically. Being sensitive to criticism, and anxious to prevent opposition and dissension, agents tried hard to avoid duties which might precipitate such conflicts. But their attachment to certain pressure groups in the counties made complete neutrality impossible, and most agents felt compelled to do things which satisfied their major local allies, even though such actions meant antagonizing other, and perhaps lesser, elements in the constituency. In terms of the American ethic, this embracing of federal programs has meant that many

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<sup>7</sup>Williams, op. cit., p. 251.

<sup>8</sup>Since the American Farm Bureau Federation was solidly behind the AAA in its first years, chances are that farmer committeemen during this period were also members of, or at least were sympathetic with, that organization. Data in the present research will show the changes which have occurred in "grass roots" and agent attitudes toward the AAA and its successors.

farmers "willingly exchanged part of the older 'freedoms' for the newer watchword of 'security'."<sup>9</sup> Yet it was also true that this exchange had to be rationalized as an ethical practice which did not violate freedom "from." Essentially, this was accomplished by channeling the AAA program through the Extension Service, which had already been "coopted" by the power groups, and by conceiving of the program as being locally controlled and "free" of centralized bureaucratic encroachments. By this type of administration, and by preserving their monopoly on access to the agricultural population, local power groups could fit the AAA program into the "grass roots" ideology without much difficulty. Williams' work generally bore out the contention already made, namely that the agent identifies himself with, and is responsive to, the power groups in his county and state, and that he will sometimes perform services for them which are at variance with his own authority orientation.

#### B. The Psychological Approach<sup>10</sup>

Several rather detailed attempts to describe and clas-

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<sup>9</sup>Williams, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>10</sup>Since the agent is by definition an individual, the appeal of psychological analytical devices is understandable.

sify the county agent from an occupational standpoint have been made in the past five years. Three of these studies will be briefly discussed below.

In Missouri, Nye constructed an inventory of vocational interest,<sup>11</sup> individual characteristics, attitudes,<sup>12</sup> and background and training. The purpose of the inventory, as stated in the instructions for its use, was "to assist Agricultural Extension administrators to choose men for county agent positions who will become successful county agents."<sup>13</sup>

In reporting the results of using the inventory, Nye assumed initially that the major variables for county agent success, as stated above, are personality characteristics, and that these are formed at a time prior to employment as an agent. It was hypothesized that a knowledge of an individual, obtained through the inventory, can predict success in county Extension work.<sup>14</sup> In order to find out who the

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<sup>11</sup>Based upon the Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men.

<sup>12</sup>Based upon the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory.

<sup>13</sup>Ivan Nye, The Missouri County Agent Inventory, University of Missouri, 1952.

<sup>14</sup>Ivan Nye, The Relationship of Certain Factors to County Agent Success, Research Bulletin 498, University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, June, 1952, p. 4.

most effective agents were, for purposes of comparison with less effective ones, it was decided that the "ratings of qualified persons appear to be the most valid . . . "15 Ten raters were selected for each agent--three administrative, two colleagues, and five local (farm and business leaders). Nye believed that using such leaders did not invalidate the ratings because any favorable bias would be a constant factor in comparisons among all agents. In commenting upon an agent's work, farmers who were judges mentioned "hard worker" as the most frequent complimentary comment, followed by "a good cooperator" in working with other organizations.<sup>16</sup> After sample ratings were pooled and ranked, the inventory was administered to all assistant, associate, and full county agents in the state, plus a random sample of agriculture seniors at the University. The multiple correlation of the rated effectiveness with the inventory scores was .80. The use of the inventory was able to explain about 63 per cent of the total variation in agent effectiveness as measured by the rating procedure, although the precise contribution of each variable was not

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 43. Significantly enough, this cooperation meant that "open conflict with other organizations was frowned upon in most cases."



determined. It was suggested that part of the unexplained variation might be attributed to such factors as "values" or "imperfect matching of agents to counties."<sup>17</sup>

In Michigan, Curry<sup>18</sup> has compared agent work situations in the counties, using objective factors such as number of farms, rural and urban population, farm income, and county area. The factors were weighted numerically by judges, who were college and Extension personnel, and a weighted total was computed for each county. These were then expressed as a percentage of the state average of the factors, which yielded a rank ordering of the counties. The agents were also rated by selected individuals (specialists, administrators, etc.) on the basis of activity and performance, and were given a rank in the state as a whole. The comparative task was to discover whether the rank order of the counties corresponded with the rank order of the agents to any appreciable extent. In addition to this statistical data, Curry spent some field time in the counties of both low-rated and high-rated agents to observe their role performance. He found the high-rated agents generally showed

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>18</sup>Donald G. Curry, A Comparative Study of the Way in Which Selected County Agricultural Agents Perform Their Role, unpublished M.S. thesis, Michigan State College, 1951.

more resistance to state office-sponsored programs, and that most program planning was done informally within each county. The agents, in varying degrees, cultivated "social capital"<sup>19</sup> with individuals and groups, with the high-rated agents having more outside contacts and making quicker job decisions. There was widespread caution about starting new agricultural organizations, since this might weaken existing ones.<sup>20</sup> Some agents (chiefly low-rated ones) were reluctant to give definite public opinions on technical as well as social issues and were inclined to refer clients to bulletins, specialists, and other external sources.

An effort was made in the research to divide the agents into two groups, and to discover whether any key differences existed between high ranked agents (Group I) and low-ranked ones (Group II). The observed Group I agents seemed to

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<sup>19</sup>Social capital may be thought of as an informal "fund of obligation" which is especially built up by doing extra services for chosen persons or groups. By performing such services, the performer gains a tacit "right" to call upon the recipient for return services at some future date. Over a period of time, a feeling of mutual interest is established which becomes habitual for those involved. The selected interaction pattern is thus solidly entrenched and is an important channel of action for all concerned.

<sup>20</sup>A similar attitude on the part of the "grass roots" organizations was noted by Selznick in the TVA area.

work with organized groups more than Group II agents (a ratio of five to three), and to make a larger number of farm visits (although number of farms visited was about equal). Group I individuals often went beyond the normal routine<sup>21</sup> to meet requests of constituents, and frequently expressed their local identification by using such terms as "my county" with reference to their job locus. Group I men also were more likely to oppose the wishes and suggestions of their administrative superiors and to adhere to local tradition and custom than those in Group II. And finally, Group I agents used a wider circle of leaders and developed their accumulation of "social capital" to a greater extent than Group II.

Stone, also taking Michigan as the major research area, used the same set of ranking criteria for counties and for agents as did Curry, but included in his analysis a detailed breakdown of agents' monthly statistical reports to see whether the various ranked groups exhibit differences among

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<sup>21</sup>Which may indicate a conscious desire to build "social capital." It is suggested here that the amount of "social capital" which an agent possesses is a fairly reliable indicator of the extent "to which he is power oriented" (i.e., toward the "grass roots"). An agent who is predominantly authority oriented would have less "social capital" and would presumably see less need for it.

one another.<sup>22</sup> He found that top-rated agents made more personal field and office contacts than low-rated agents, although self-estimates of time use do not vary much between the groups. Examining the development patterns of several specific projects, Stone corroborated Curry's finding that agents worked closely with a few farmers in order to get a program under way. However, there was great sensitivity to local desires, and projects which met "grass roots" resistance were seldom pushed. But if a program was locally acceptable, "the conventional pattern of doing things was not saved . . . [and] agents did not hesitate to go outside normal agency channels."<sup>23</sup> Successful farmers worked with successful agents, and were often close personal friends. This small coterie of intimates was the core of any county-wide agricultural enterprise. Acknowledging that the forces governing the interaction of agents and constituents were "complex," Stone concluded that "the intimate friends developed in the counties by the agents are, in the opinion of the writer, one of the major strengths of the Extension Service, and one of the reasons for its success

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<sup>22</sup>John T. Stone, An Analysis of the County Agent's Job, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State College, 1951.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

as an educational force."<sup>24</sup>

### C. Analysis of Previous Research

Taken collectively, the research examples of the preceding sections illustrate several important points. First of all, there is a marked increase in emphasis upon quantitative methods for gathering data and upon the use of statistics in analyzing it. Concomitantly, there is a narrowing of theoretical focus, particularly in the comparison of Baker's rather general observations with Nye's precise, limited hypotheses. Both of these facts seem to corroborate the research trends noted in Chapter I. Secondly, there seems to be general agreement that the role of county agent is highly complex in structure, and that there are conflicting pressures at work which influence his behavior at various times. This is particularly noticeable in the Williams study, and to a lesser extent in that of Stone. However, except for Williams, all of the other researchers either play down or assume constancy for situational factors. This means that heavy reliance is placed upon psychological or personality factors, which presumably have little dependence upon the job itself. Agent success

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

is thought of chiefly as a matter of fitting the proper pegs (agents) into the proper holes (counties),<sup>25</sup> even though both the pegs and the holes often develop entirely independently of one another before they come together. This acceptance of the county situation as a "given" places the major burden of adaptation upon the agent as an individual, since he is compelled to live up to the image which the county has of the agent role. Furthermore, the acceptance of "rated success" as the ultimate success criterion is an assumption which is not questioned by any of the researchers. Yet this is precisely the point which requires analysis in terms of the power and authority typology. Although Nye, for example, could perform detailed statistical operations with the ratings, once he got them, there is very little consistency or objectivity in how the ratings are determined by the individual judges. Here is where one would need to examine (a) the cultural orientation of the judges in terms of the American ethic, (b) the kinds of organizational attitudes they reflected as determined by the agricultural organizations they belonged to and supported, and (c) the interactive sets between the agents and themselves with respect to power and authority behavior

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<sup>25</sup>First assuming such matching was eminently possible.

patterns. Thus the researcher might first spend a good deal of time investigating and evaluating the criteria of success themselves, rather than accepting them at face-value as conditional factors. Of all the studies mentioned, that of Williams seems to direct the most attention to this sort of analysis, even though he is concerned the least with the agent, per se. His mention of the agent's sensitivity to criticism and the latter's reluctant assumption of AAA duties under pressure from grass roots organizations is an indication of the stresses set up by power and authority orientations pulling in opposite directions. However, none of the studies attempt to analyze the "rated success" process in any systematic fashion. This is one of the problems which will be given attention in the next section of the monograph. Some further comment is also in order concerning the pronounced psychological flavor of the studies, particularly the last three. The dependence upon formal psychological instruments is marked,<sup>26</sup> but what may

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<sup>26</sup>The use of standardized psychological tests has given researchers a kind of anchor to use in a very fluid situation, but there is always the danger that the technique of the test and the easily manipulable data it supplies will become a substitute for the important social problems which also affect job performance. In other words, personality factors are of depleted value when isolated from the social context in which the test subjects perform. Yet it is easy to see why psychological instruments tend to encourage this isolation, emphasizing as they do, individual differences of an emotional and biological (continued next page)

not be obvious is that the rating process itself constitutes an informal psychological procedure, in that it is based upon cultural stereotypes and ideological preconceptions rather than a scientifically objective inventory. A consequence of this approach is that the effect of social or situational factors is at best limited, or may be ignored altogether as a significant variable. Therefore, treatment of the value orientation of the American ethic as a behavioral constant means that the actors in an Extension situation must conform to those values or suffer the penalty of a low rating. The agent, therefore, is expected to accept the dominance of the "grass roots" control groups, as they apply to himself, in return for favorable judgments of his own work by those groups. This being true, a conflict seems possible involving the extent of the agent's autonomy of, and/or loyalty to, his administrative superiors. However,

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(continued) character rather than any "gestalt" of personality and culture together. Certainly the reliance upon individual differences among agents as the key success variable is compatible with the American ethic, which recognizes such differences as the only legitimate criteria of distinction among men. Furthermore, these differences can be reduced to hereditary or biological causes if pushed back far enough (intelligence, strength, appearance, etc.). In a sense, then, there is a chance that the procedural advantages of psychological testing have encouraged its users to interpret their results at the expense of relevant social factors, which may prove more difficult to get at empirically.



in view of the authority orientation of the Extension Service structure, plus its decentralized operation and its close historical linkage with some of the very power groups it now serves, such a conflict is usually avoided. For the state and federal Extension authorities have themselves acknowledged the primacy of "grass roots" sentiment in rating agent success. Indeed, the main component of administrative ratings is the consensus of judgment which the administrators have with private groups and individuals in each county. Such consensus is likely to be achieved in a highly informal manner, and the resultant ratings tend to be self-perpetuating, since they are based on the judgment of practically the same informants from year to year. Thus it would appear that an examination of various county Extension programs and structures from the standpoint of the multi-level power and authority typology might contribute substantially to an understanding of agent behavior, particularly with respect to the power and authority groups with which he works.

As a final word on the nature of the cited research, it might be pointed out that, with the exception of Williams' thesis, all of the researches accept the "ideals" of Extension, and most of its practices, as culturally desirable in an ethical sense. Hence, its inclusion in the

structure of organized agriculture is never seriously questioned. The county agent, as the functional counterpart of Extension values, represents them in the behavioral process, thereby attaining legitimacy and self-esteem within the society. To protect his status, in accordance with the authority orientation of the Service, it can be expected that a status quo in intergroup relations will become the agent's goal. This conservatism will be crucial in determining what an agent does and how he does it. Previous research has not adequately explored the implications of these situational and ethical factors as they impinge on observed behavior. The concern with fitting the man to the image of the job, as held by his local clients and his administrative superiors, tends to neglect a critical analysis of the image itself. Thus an opportunity to provide workable means for increasing social control over behavior is overlooked by concentrating too much on one aspect of the behavior--in this case the psychological. In the second part of this monograph it is proposed to rectify this imbalance by investigating the overall work situation of selected agents, without trying to select out specific variables for intensive or exclusive treatment. This "gestalt" objective also has its limitations, chiefly in the form of imprecise research procedures and a kind of

randomness in initial results. Although this may be a defect caused by a lack of readily quantifiable data, it has the countering advantages of giving the researcher (a) an initial "feel" for his material, (b) a chance to select variables for future precise study based upon empirical observation rather than preconceived notions of what is significant, and (c) time to work out some large theoretical possibilities for his efforts. It was with these latter considerations in mind that the basic research program of this monograph was carried out.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY

Before launching into a discussion of the major research done for this monograph, it might be helpful to summarize the theoretical position set forth in the preceding chapters. The various facets of the discussion have proceeded from the higher level of abstraction and generality to the lower, with a conscious effort to maintain conceptual and empirical connections among all of the levels. While acknowledging the limitations of trying to telescope the history of events and of ideas into a small package, it is felt that any theoretical formulation, whether it be a low-range hypothesis, a middle-range concept, or a high-range theory, should be capable of extension into ranges other than its own. This cannot be achieved simply by cumulation on lower levels to reach higher ones, or by disregarding certain levels and confining investigation to a particular one. The current tendency in social science to be overly restrictive in both theory and research to a so-called "middle range" is held to be questionable practice as a scientific procedure. As an alternative it is suggested that linkage be demonstrated and maintained through as many ranges as possible, from the

most concrete to the most abstract.

[ In essence, the contention is that all human social behavior involved an attempt to gain control over resources, both tangible and intangible. Every human group has this motivation, which is expressed in terms of some definable goal or set of goals. Thus, for present purposes, the universal characteristic of human social behavior is declared to be goal-oriented action within and among identifiable group structures. It is recognized that there are other kinds of human behavior, stemming chiefly from biological needs and functions and from certain muscular reactions, which are not primarily social. However, the focus of inquiry here will not be upon any individual or any group of them seen as independent units. People will be viewed as integral with various groups in society, under whose aegis, formal or informal, they behave. ]

After presenting the idea of control as a "first principle" in social behavior, two major control theories of fairly recent origin, Freudian psychology and rationalistic science, were examined briefly. [ In the critique, it was found that neither of these theories is equipped to analyze human conduct from the normative point of view. One theory, the Freudian, viewing the group as a source of conflict rather than equilibrium, preferred to concentrate

upon biological differences as a basis for individual therapy and adjustment. For rationalism, the group was simply an instrumentality for expressing laws which were beyond the scope of human alteration. Basically, both theories were non-social and deterministic, although for different reasons. ]

After discussion of the two major control theories chosen as examples, an analytical model for another high range control theory was set up, using the rubrics of power and authority as a pair of dichotomous ideal types. These rubrics were considered to be polar concepts between which all concrete organizations can eventually be placed according to the type of control elements they exhibit. It was further stated that all human groups will have some characteristics of both polarities to varying degrees, but that each group will probably tend toward one or the other ideal type. At the moment, it was not possible to quantify the relative positions of groups on a continuum between the ideal types, but it was felt that measuring instruments can be devised to accomplish this.

Next, an effort was made to translate the concepts of power and authority into a particular cultural framework--namely, the American ethic, which was chosen as being

representative of Western society generally. Here it was discovered that the American ethic, as a configuration of behavioral values, was primarily a power-type orientation. But these values were under stress because of material changes in the social structure brought about by such forces as technological advancement, urbanization, population pressure, and the like. It was pointed out that the American ethic could be culturally reconciled with both of the major control theories previously discussed, and that those theories were actually products of the same historical development which produced the ethic itself. Thus they were not in a particularly advantageous position to analyze it. Furthermore, the more advanced scientific, or positivistic position, as an outgrowth of classical rationalism, removed itself quite determinedly from professional concern with cultural values, or "ends," for fear of contaminating its own methodology. Yet it did not challenge the ethic, and, in fact, the scientists have proved to be quite passive and manipulable in their non-scientific interaction with outside groups.

By way of setting the stage for applying the power and authority typology to American culture, the work of Veblen was utilized as a forerunner of that typology. Veblen's dichotomy of "business" and "industry" was deemed analogous

to the concepts of power and authority, as operationally defined. Although clouded by his utopianism, Veblen's analysis of the ascendancy of the power orientation in the American ethic is penetrating, and the depth of his analysis was such that he ultimately doubted even his own ideal of the supremacy of the engineering mind as a "good" thing for society.

[ The problem, then, as posed by the critique of the American ethic, was how to resolve the behavioral dilemmas created by discrepancies between social structure and social values. ] Control in a society could be achieved in either a predominantly power or authority fashion, and any social situation favored either one mode or the other. In many respects, there was still a choice of orientations available, provided the groups concerned can adequately assess the factors which govern a concrete situation. ]

To exemplify the problem of control, the treatment was shifted to a narrower focus, that of the systems of organized agriculture, in which particular power and authority systems could be contrasted and their interactive history traced. The power orientation of the Farm Bureau movement was contrasted with the authority orientation of the Extension Service. The position of these groups was also discussed in terms of the larger society, where the changes



in social structure have created stresses and dilemmas in terms of the farmer's allegiance to the American ethic. These stresses were seen to be difficult to cope with on the individual level, particularly where the images of "correct" behavior were incompatible with one another. A situation of this kind seemed to have developed in the role of the county agent, whose ties and obligations to both power and authority groups often forced him to make action choices between the two. It was suggested that the dominance of power-oriented "grass roots" groups over authority-oriented Extension administrations made it feasible for an agent to ally himself with the power groups at the expense of his adherence to his bureaucratic superiors. The development of this power-authority problem with respect to the agent's position in the social structure was then examined in light of previous research upon the role of the agent. The main criticism of such research was that it conceived of agent performance as a psychological matter rather than in terms of the structure and culture of the society as a whole. By so doing, the research placed full emphasis upon the pragmatic adaptation of the individual agent to the job, as conceived by the power groups with whom he worked.

The purpose of the present research was to try to add social and cultural depth to an analysis of the county

agent's job by describing the group structure in which the agent works and by analyzing these groups in terms of the power-authority typology developed in the preceding sections.

PART TWO

A DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY AGENT INTERACTION  
WITH POWER AND AUTHORITY GROUPS: FOUR  
SELECTED AGENT SITUATIONS

## CHAPTER VII

### METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURES

#### A. The Nature of the Research Problem

In order to translate into empirical terms a theory of control utilizing the concepts of power and authority, it was decided to select several counties in the State of Michigan as research areas. Since the theory had already been outlined on various levels of specificity,<sup>1</sup> it appeared logical to conduct the empirical investigation in congruence with the context already employed--namely, the behavior of the county agent as a part of the structure of organized agriculture within the cultural ethos of American society. The broad research topic, therefore, was to examine the ways in which representative county agents behaved in relationships with their administrative and client groups as they tried to achieve goals determined by the success images of agents held by these groups.

In accordance with the preceding chapters on theory, a concrete expression of the proposed power-authority concepts would be the proposition that:

"County agents who are rated 'successful' by the

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<sup>1</sup>See Part One of this monograph.

relevant power and authority groups in agriculture have a definite power orientation in their behavior which affects their overall integration with the major authority group to which they belong."

This is a rather specific example of the more general hypothesis that whenever behavior patterns of a particular role create dilemmas of action with respect to power and authority groups, the allegiance of the actor will be determined largely by the control orientation of the cultural ethos in which the action takes place. It was assumed, then, that county agents, because of their dual identification with power and authority groups in the structure of organized agriculture, would be in an ambivalent situation with respect to the foregoing proposition. One of the themes of the research was to see if these role conflicts materialized, as well as to indicate those groups and values which influenced their resolution.

#### B. Research Methods Selected

In order to gain sufficient perspective and understanding of the situational and cultural factors which help mold county agent behavior, it was felt that the following methods should be employed in the initial research effort:

General observation. By carefully watching and noting the day-by-day agricultural activities in particular counties for a period of weeks, a relatively unbiased sample of such activities could be obtained. This practice would have the additional advantage of keeping the activities comparatively free from the "research effect" of impersonal and formalized field techniques, which might artificialize the behavior of the groups and individuals being examined. In short, the observer had to be "accepted" in the county as a legitimate and essentially sympathetic individual. However, the amount of empathic response could not become too great, since the observer himself might be identified with certain groups to the detriment of his relations with others. This might especially be true in situations where group conflicts were in progress. Among the activities to be observed were (a) office work and office relations of the agent with his staff and with clients; (b) formally planned county Extension activities, such as field demonstrations, "grass days," information meetings; (c) meetings of local organizations, such as Farm Bureaus, breeders and commodity associations, soil conservation districts, etc.; and (d) meetings on county or district levels involving predominantly Extension personnel.

It was believed that these observations would provide considerable information about the structure of agriculture in the county, and some clues as to the kinds of communication channels and behavior patterns used by the agents and by those persons and groups with whom they interacted.

Informal depth interviewing. As an added dimension to the observational approach, it seemed desirable to interview key leaders in the counties to ascertain both their images of and opinions on Extension work. In order to get frank and concrete data in this area, which often involved "naming names" and making critical personal remarks, it was essential to establish easy and rapid rapport with respondents. As in the observational situation, the interviewer's aim was to create an atmosphere of confidence in the interview situation without exhibiting any partisanship. By combining this technique with the preceding one, it was believed that the factual records of behavior in given situations could be compared with the respondent's self-images and verbalizations of that behavior. Furthermore, in a relatively private interview, it might be possible to gain information which would not be divulged in the atmosphere of a public meeting.

The above procedures were deemed justified for a num-

ber of reasons. First, it was felt that an overview of county situations in terms of structural elements and behavior patterns was a prior step to more detailed analyses. Thus, the research cited in Chapter V seemed to place the "cart before the horse" in either assuming constancy for social factors in or dismissing them as unimportant. Second, the rather delicate nature of some of the relationships involved indicated that a purely objective and frontal approach by an investigator might arouse hostility in one or more groups and block off potential sources of "inside" information. The interviewer and observer had to guard against being thought of as a "spy" or "government snooper." Third, it was believed that as few preconceptions as possible should be made about the ultimate findings of the research. This meant that, except for certain broad foci of interest, the investigator would follow wherever his data took him. While this procedure had the danger of making comparisons among counties less uniform, if carried out in completely random fashion, it had the advantage of capturing the distinctive factors of each situation, as well as uncovering leads which would develop unanticipated information.

Thus, at this formulative stage of research, using the power and authority concepts as outlined, the attempt



to achieve a series of "gestalt" pictures via the case study method was deemed desirable, as against a more statistically-oriented research based upon limited specific hypotheses and readily codified data.

### C. Selection of Agent Situations

Given the complexity of social and physical factors which differentiate counties from one another, as well as the psychological and experiential differences among the agents, it was difficult to construct a legitimate test situation which would concentrate on desired problems.

Since a crucial aspect of the study hinged upon the phenomenon of "rated success," the first step was to rate the Michigan agents in the regular administrative manner.<sup>2</sup> The agents were then divided into four groups ranging from

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<sup>2</sup>The rating process is an accepted practice in the functioning of the Extension system. In this case, use was made of Stone's rank ordering of Michigan agents, also used by Donald G. Curry in A Comparative Study of the Way in Which Selected County Agricultural Agents Perform Their Role, unpublished M.S. thesis, Michigan State College, 1951. The agent ranking was obtained by a joint opinion of seven Extension and outside influential judges, plus a composite subject-matter specialists' rating. Scores were weighted and combined into a numerical index. See John T. Stone, An Analysis of the County Agent's Job, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State College, 1951, for discussion of procedures.

high to low ratings. The two extreme quartiles were then selected, and the agents in these groups were compared on the basis of longevity of service in a particular county (it was desired to study agents with relatively long service in one county so that behavior patterns would be well defined), chronological age, educational background, and the geographical location of the county. The ultimate objective was to select four agents, two high-rated and two low-rated, who were similar in all significant job factors except rated success. The intention, of course, was to eliminate to a considerable degree the extraneous effect of variables other than that of rating, when comparing high and low agent situations.

As a second step, the characteristics of the counties in the two groups had to be checked for similarity, in order to get as close a correspondence as possible on situational factors which, if disparate,<sup>3</sup> might easily affect the ratings. To accomplish this, information in certain categories was secured from the 1950 Census of Agriculture report on Michigan counties. These categories included such items as number of farms, average size of

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<sup>3</sup>This check would mean that differences in rating would not then be attributed to the fact that a high-rated agent was in a rich agricultural county, while a low-rated agent was in a poor one.

farms, average value of farms, farms with tractors, number of farms with electricity, percentage of tenant farmers, percentage of farmers working more than one hundred days off the farm, total value of farm products, and value of the chief farm product.<sup>4</sup>

After the data was compiled on the two groups of agents and their counties, cross comparisons were made to match all of the external factors while preserving the dichotomy of rated success. When this was done, it was found that four counties were fairly well-matched according to the overall selection criteria. With respect to the agents, each had been in the same location for more than ten years and all had been agents for more than twenty years.<sup>5</sup> All except one were graduates of the same state college of agriculture, and all were over fifty years of age. With respect to the counties, all but one were in the so-called northern district of the state. The exception was in the western district, but located on the border of the northern district. In all the counties,

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<sup>4</sup>Counties which contained cities of more than 10,000 population were automatically eliminated because the presence of such a city would add special variables to the analysis, as well as presenting interviewing problems. It was thus decided to center attention on basically "rural" counties, with respect to concentration of population.

<sup>5</sup>Three of the agents had actually been in the same counties for practically their entire Extension careers.

dairying was the chief source of farm income, with a scattering of other crops, such as fruit, beans, eggs, poultry, and sugar beets.

Table I shows the comparative data on significant county factors. There are several obvious discrepancies among the counties. However, the "Third Quartile" pair shows consistent numerical homogeneity on all factors except perhaps "Average value of land and buildings" and "Number of dairy farms," but even here the reversal of direction is not great. The "Fourth Quartile" pair is much less homogeneous numerically. However, given the initial disparity in "Number of farms," the succeeding factors exhibit a fairly consistent ratio in terms of this first factor. The major reversals here are in terms of "Average value of land and buildings," "Number of tenant farmers,"<sup>6</sup> and "Number of dairy farms." Thus, while the second pair of agents is farther apart than the first on significant county factors, it does have some unity on a proportionate basis. In view of the enormous discrepancies which would

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<sup>6</sup>In keeping with national trends, this more prosperous county shows a relatively higher rate of tenancy than the other three. This trend is noticeable throughout the rich and expensive farm lands in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys. See C. P. Loomis and J. A. Beegle, Rural Social Systems (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1950), Chapter IX.

TABLE I

COMPARATIVE COUNTY FACTORS IN SELECTED  
AGENT SITUATIONS<sup>7</sup>

Factor (Commercial Farms)	Third Quartile <sup>8</sup>		Fourth Quartile <sup>8</sup>	
	High-rated <sup>9</sup> agent	Low-rated agent	High-rated agent	Low-rated <sup>9</sup> agent
Number of farms	715	645	1,792	1,260
Average farm size, acres	190	192	144	162
Average value land and buildings, dollars	9,100	10,900	12,000	8,100
Operators residing on farms	687	627	1,720	1,200
Operators working off farm 100+ days	63	41	172	118
Farms with tractors	614	494	1,587	1,020
Farms with elec- tricity	633	598	1,586	1,070
Number of tenant farmers	44	33	295	80
Number of dairy farms	394	450	758	750
Value of dairy products sold, dollars	725,000	709,000	2,300,000	1,450,000
Value of all farm products sold, dollars	1,821,000	1,778,000	7,200,000	4,200,000

<sup>7</sup>As taken from United States Census of Agriculture: 1950, Volume 1, Part 6, United States Government Printing Office, 1952.

<sup>8</sup>According to Stone's rankings, op. cit., p. 95 ff.

<sup>9</sup>These agents were ones who had a two-county jurisdiction. Figures given in both columns are combined for the two counties.

have been possible in a purely random selection of both counties and agents, it was felt that the procedures described in this section yielded a group of counties<sup>10</sup> reasonably matched on external factors, both environmental and personal, while preserving the dichotomy of rated success.

In the selected agent situations, an attempt was made to classify various groups related to agriculture in each county in terms of the power and authority typology. Lacking precise instruments for making such a classification, it was decided to add certain items to the broad conceptual typology to make it usable on the level of the specific organizations encountered in the field. The "grass roots" groups were to be sub-divided into power and authority rubrics, depending upon their identification with one or the other set of criteria.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the generalized paradigm outlined in Chapter II, Section F, was

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<sup>10</sup>It should also be mentioned that, since only one observer was available to do field work, it was necessary to restrict the number of counties, so that the necessary travel could be completed before the onset of bad weather. Furthermore, budget limitations were such that additional field help could not be hired, even if it were physically possible to do so.

<sup>11</sup>As before, it is necessary to point out that any given organization may have elements of both types, but that it is the overall orientation which determines its classification.

clarified by more circumscribed characteristics applicable to specific groups in agriculture. Since agricultural organizations often have structural and value differences based upon their origin, purposes, and sources of support, the additional criteria may be listed in the following manner:

Characteristics of Control Group Types

Power Group

1. Non-governmental in origin and jurisdiction.
2. Self-selective in terms of membership and services.
3. No mandatory goals or tasks.
4. Does not handle, raise, or disburse public funds.
5. Salaries of officers paid from non-governmental sources, including those of group itself.

Authority Group

1. Origin and jurisdiction defined by government statute.
2. Access to membership and services based upon fixed impersonal qualifications.
3. Goals and tasks provided for in specific manner (legal, written).
4. Handles, raises, or disburses public funds.
5. Salaries of officers paid from governmental sources, seldom emanating from the group itself.

It can be seen that the above characteristics would apply to limited categories of groups, since they have a narrower focus than the generalized typology. Yet they are useful in delineating the area in which this particular research has been concentrated. At the present time, the

final classification of groups has been dependent upon the judgment of the observer in applying the typology to the relevant groups, with respect to their basic internal and external control orientation. Despite the errors and contradictions which threaten such a methodologically crude technique, it can still make basic group separations which have rough consistency for present purposes.<sup>12</sup>

#### D. Field Application of the Research Methods

Once the agent situations were chosen, the question of how to utilize them for gathering information became paramount. As pointed out in Section B of this chapter, the main techniques employed were observation and depth interviewing. Obviously, the first task was gaining legitimate access to each county and each agent. The chosen method was to contact the high-level administrators of the state Extension Service and to brief them on the intended research in the counties selected. This briefing was done in a general fashion, emphasizing the task of finding out what made some agents successful and others unsuccessful,

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<sup>12</sup>This crudity of classification may indeed be viewed as a challenge for refinement and precision, rather than an inherent procedural defect.



as judged by the administration itself.<sup>13</sup> The project was endorsed by Extension leaders, who made introductory phone calls to the various agents shortly before the investigator was to visit the respective counties.

Prior to entering each county, the annual reports of its agent for the previous decade were carefully studied. These reports yielded many names of persons,<sup>14</sup> projects, and organizations with which the agent had contact over the years. Valuable information on key individuals was obtained, and an outline of the agricultural group structure of the county was constructed. This historical review also gave some direction to the investigator's activities, and provided him with data for discussions and interviews. As previously mentioned, it was first thought that the circum-

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<sup>13</sup>It should be noted here that the major interests of the state Extension administration in this study were not primarily of a theoretical nature. It was more in terms of getting information to improve training and selection techniques, providing better services to agents and farmers, and finding ways of preventing overwork among the agents themselves.

<sup>14</sup>In the actual field work, it was found that this familiarity with the names and actions of specific persons was of tremendous assistance in getting respondents to speak frankly. Often, respondents were somewhat startled to find that the interviewer already knew a good deal about people and events before he (the respondent) had revealed anything. This technique placed the interviewer "in the know" right from the start, and gave the respondent the felt protection that he was not the one who was "spilling the beans" for the first time.

stances and procedures of the research would arouse suspicion, and even hostility, among agents and farmers. This might have occurred if a frontal and impersonal approach had been used. However, the initial job was to gain the confidence and trust of the agents. This was done mainly by showing genuine awareness and concern for their problems and difficulties. By spelling out the very dilemmas which the agents faced (not using the concepts of power and authority, but simply illustrating them by concrete examples derived from the agents' own annual reports), a note of comprehension and reciprocity was struck. All four agents responded positively to a sympathetic analysis of their job situations; and after a few informal private talks, they cooperated fully in giving information, suggesting persons to see and meetings to attend, and providing entree where needed. With the endorsement of agents, plus the aegis of the state college and the Extension Service, it was not difficult to interview most of the selected leaders. In fact, the chain of acquaintance actually eased the interviewing, once the investigator's presence was known in the county, and his motives were generally accepted.

Notes were taken on all observations, wherever feasible, and when these were sketchy or non-existent, resumes were put on sound tape as part of the collected data. Interviews

with farm leaders<sup>15</sup> were done according to a rough guide, with the emphasis upon informality and free association of ideas. Respondents were assured of anonymity, particularly if they seemed reluctant to indulge in personal references which were likely to be important to the research. Before leaving each county, the agent was engaged in a final discussion, reflecting his attitudes toward his job, his clientele, and his administrative superiors.

The last field procedure involved interviews with top Extension personnel at the state level, including the Director, district supervisors, and several specialists. These interviews were designed to get the attitudes of the agents' main authority group, with reference to the local power groups and to the rating procedures which the administrators applied to the agents' performance.

#### E. Other Research Device Used

The final research device used to furnish data for this monograph had been used prior to the present study. It consisted of a series of modified Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventories which were administered to most

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<sup>15</sup>Approximately twenty-five leader interviews were secured in each agent situation. Average length of each interview was about two hours.

county agents and central administrative personnel in connection with another study.<sup>16</sup> Inventories were collected for the relevant four agents and for all but one of the Extension administrators who were interviewed. A discussion of the analysis and pertinence of these inventories will be made in Chapter XIV.

Following this review of the methodology and field practices employed, an analysis of the counties investigated may now be made. The first procedure will be to discuss them under several common headings in order to facilitate comparisons. No attempt will be made to separate information derived from historical sources, from observation, and from interviews, since all contributed jointly to the analysis.

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<sup>16</sup>Stone's research, op. cit., was part of this earlier project, although he did not utilize the Inventory data in his analysis.

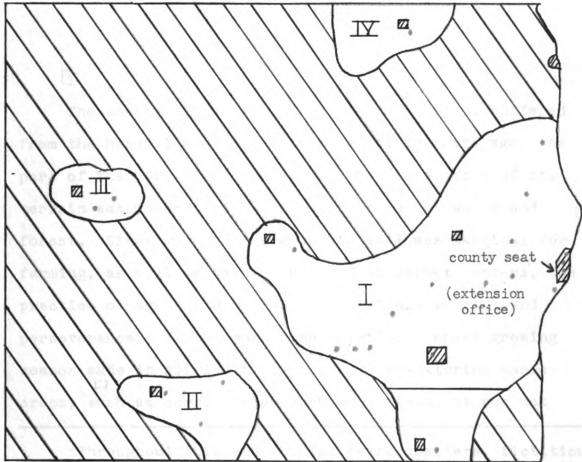


Figure 1. ASPEN COUNTY\*

\*County maps not drawn to same scale in this and subsequent chapters.



#### Legend



City, town, or community centers



Sparsely farmed or non-farming areas



Principal farming areas



Location of major agricultural leaders

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST HIGH-RATED SITUATION--ASPEN AND OAK COUNTIES<sup>1</sup>

#### I. ASPEN COUNTY

The county, like many of those in Michigan, suffered from the heavy lumbering activity of fifty years ago. As part of the "cut-over" section of the state, most of its terrain was covered with second-growth scrub woods and forest. Since much of the county's soil was marginal for farming, as well as being removed from market centers, the practice of agriculture involved considerable risk and perseverance. Furthermore, the relatively short growing season made it difficult to produce long-maturing basic crops, such as corn. Under such conditions, it was not

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this and the following chapters, fictitious names will be given to the counties studied. Likewise, the real names of respondents and agents will not be divulged in order to preserve the anonymity promised to informants during the interviews. For the sake of brevity and convenience, the agents will be designated according to their rating. "FH" will therefore refer to "First High-Rated" agent. Similarly, "FL," "SH," and "SL" will identify the other three agents. References to other persons will usually be made in terms of some office or title which they held. Since the "First High-Rated" situation involved two counties, it was decided to treat them separately, even though FH served both. The main reason for the separation was that it would help pin-point certain aspects of FH's behavior which might be obscured in a combined analysis.

surprising that most of Aspen's population of around five thousand persons was concentrated in the eastern quarter of the county, where the best land was located. Ethnically, the majority of inhabitants were of Anglo-Saxon background, with a sprinkling of Germans, Poles, Norwegians, and Swedes. Only the Poles had a distinctive neighborhood, based chiefly upon their cohesive religious activities, and they were not active leaders in agricultural organizations.

The Aspen Extension headquarters was at the county seat, on the eastern border. The Extension office in Oak County was rarely used, even though the agent was generally supposed to spend specific days in the county each week.

However, since Oak County lay due west of Aspen, the round-trip between offices amounted to around eighty miles. If FH had been faced with similar conditions in both counties, these distances might have been a considerable burden. However, the unusual geographical and social structure of Oak County permitted him to devise a unique solution for his work problems.<sup>2</sup>

#### A. The Structure of Organized Agriculture

An historical review of Extension activities in Aspen

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<sup>2</sup>This, of course, will be covered in the discussion of Oak County.

for the decade 1945-1954 led to the conclusion, later reinforced by the field research, that the relevant agricultural organizations in the county were distinguished not only by control type, but also by geographical location. There were a number of "standard" groups in operation, distributed as shown in Table II.

Town-centered power groups. The town-centered power groups had a smaller percentage of farmer members than those groups concentrated in other locales. Consequently, they seldom took part directly in day-to-day agricultural activities. Yet, since the economic welfare of Aspen County depended primarily upon its income from farming and outdoor vacation facilities, both the Chamber of Commerce and the Lions' Club participated in many county-wide projects, such as curbing juvenile delinquency, building recreation centers, and fostering good business relations between merchants and the rural public.

It may appear strange to have included the Grange in the town-centered category, yet a discussion with the county Master revealed that more than half the members were non-farmers. Meetings were held in the county seat, and one of the most active leaders was an insurance man who resided there. Those farmers who were Grange leaders seemed to be generally of a lower socio-economic status than other



TABLE II

EXTERNAL CONTROL ORIENTATION AND LOCUS OF GROUPS<sup>3</sup>  
RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN ASPEN COUNTY, 1953

Functional Locale	Control Type	
	Power	Authority
Town-centered	Chamber of Commerce*	FHA
	Lions Club*	
	Grange	
	Seed Growers' Assn.	
Country- centered	Dairy Breed Assn.	
	DHIA	
	ABA	
	Beef Calf Assn.	
Mixed**	Farm Bureau	Board of Supervisors
		PMA

<sup>3</sup>For the sake of brevity, the full names of these groups will be shortened, as indicated. They are groups which appear with regularity in most counties, and will therefore need no further definition in subsequent usage. For present identification, the abbreviations stand for the following:

DHIA--Dairy Herd Improvement Association  
ABA --Artificial Breeders Association  
FHA --Federal Housing Administration  
PMA --Production and Marketing Administration  
SCS --Soil Conservation Service  
SCD --Soil Conservation District  
ACP --Agricultural Conservation Program.

\*While these groups were predominantly non-agricultural, they either had relationships with farm groups, or else numbered farmers among their members.

\*\*The "mixed" groups were those which functioned actively in both town and country loci.

power group leaders.

The Seed Growers Association had originally been established to market hay and legume seed as a cash crop. Through FH's efforts, Aspen County had become one of the major alfalfa-producing counties in its section of the state. However, yields and quality of seed had declined in recent years,<sup>4</sup> and the Association branched out into other activities, such as selling feed, fertilizer, and hardware, and marketing berries and eggs. The Association had a full-time manager, who had previously been a farmer, and its Board of Directors included several of the largest farmers in the county.

Country-centered power groups. The Dairy Breed Association was centered around a special type of cattle which FH had sponsored vigorously. This breed had been accepted by many of the largest farmers, and the Association was made up largely of them. Recently, however, several of the leading herds of the Association were decimated by disease, and the breed had received adverse publicity

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<sup>4</sup>The failure of the alfalfa seed to remain on the stem during ripening was a mysterious ailment which cut harvest of seed drastically. Its cause and cure had not yet been found, although FH constantly assisted and pressured Extension specialists at the state college in their research efforts.

thereby. However, FH stocked this breed on his own farm, and continued to espouse it vigorously.

The DHIA had, for a long time, been confined to farmers who raised the special dairy breed, since, under their special breeding programs to establish pure-bred stock, it was mandatory for them to participate in a DHIA unit. However, since 1948, other breeders had been able to join the organization, until they soon outnumbered the special breed members. The total membership dropped from 41 in 1947 to 34 in 1952.

The ABA was a new organization in the county, having been founded in 1949. Since most of the larger farmers, particularly those with pure-bred cattle, kept their own bulls, the majority of ABA users were smaller farmers seeking to build up their herds. However, several of the ABA officers were more prosperous power group leaders who used artificial breeding for supplementary purposes. The current inseminator was a young man, who had a small farm and who was also a leader in the county Farm Bureau. Two of the current Board of Directors were part-time farmers, one of whom worked in Detroit and was home only on week ends.

The Beef Calf Association was part of an inter-county group, which also included members from Orange County,

where the organization originated.<sup>5</sup> Some of the Aspen farmers were shifting from dairy to beef production because of the presumed advantages in marketing and feeding. This group was increasing, even though it was both risky and expensive for smaller farmers to make such a change. In fact, several of them were almost ruined financially when beef prices "broke" in 1952. Yet several of the power group leaders continued to change over in spite of temporary setbacks, and were active in the marketing functions of the Beef Calf Association.

Mixed power groups. The Farm Bureau was the only organization which penetrated every phase of county agricultural life. Although it had several leaders, including the current county chairman, who were older, well-established farmers, many other leaders were smaller farmers, particularly younger ones and their wives, who devoted much of their spare time and energy to Farm Bureau work, (e.g., the ABA inseminator and his wife) and who imparted considerable vitality to the organization. Since the county and community groups had constant communication with state and national levels of the Farm Bureau, there was no lack

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<sup>5</sup>This will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on Orange County.

of discussions, meetings, and policy decisions to keep the membership busy. Local leaders relied heavily upon these high-level sources for subject matter and direction.

Since many organizations contained leaders who were active in other groups, the following chart illustrates interlocking leadership within the power group structure:

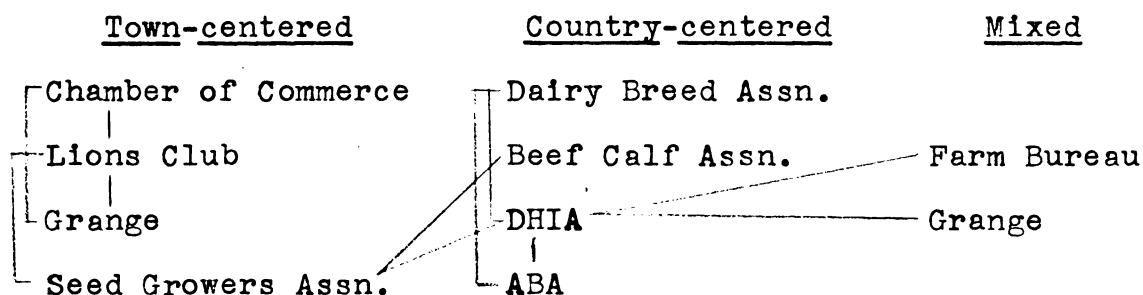


Figure 2. Interlocking leadership of active agricultural power groups in Aspen County, 1953.

From the above chart it can be seen that the interlocking was considerable among all groups. However, except for the Seed Growers Association, the town-centered leaders tended to interact with one another. In the other locales, the DHIA was focal in having leaders who were active in other groups. This was not surprising, in view of the fact that DHIA had always contained a majority of the older, more prosperous farmers.

Authority groups. The FHA staff actually consisted of a single representative who was assigned to the county on a

part-time basis. This person was a farmer himself, even though his FHA duties commanded much of his time. He used the Extension office as a headquarters for his public contact work, and he appeared there on certain days of the month for general consultation.

The Board of Supervisors, being geographically distributed, reflected diverse interests and points of view. Three of the supervisors were non-farmers who lived in town, and three more were part-time farmers whose farm operations were small to medium in size. The Chairman of the Board, however, was a retired power group leader who retained a good working relationship with current power group leaders, and who was accepted by them as an equal. The most recently elected supervisor was a son of one of directors of the Seed Growers Association who was highly respected throughout the county.

The PMA was the only authority group which maintained its office outside the county seat. It was located in the community about five miles to the west, but had no full-time office employees. This spatial separation heightened the general disparity of attitudes and leadership which distinguished PMA from almost all the other county groups. The chairman of the PMA committee at the time of the study had served on that committee for about twelve years.

Although he was a fairly successful farmer, he retained a belief in the necessity and desirability of government aid to agriculture, and was interested in keeping the PMA program active. Another PMA committeeman, recently elected, was active in several of the county power groups, and his presence at first appeared anomalous with respect to his other roles.<sup>6</sup> Although there were few authority groups in existence throughout the county, there was no case of interlocking leadership among them.

"Cross-leadership."<sup>7</sup> It is obvious from the preceding description of Aspen County organizations that some "crossing" of leaders had occurred. This was distributed as shown in Figure 3. From the diagram it is apparent that most of the "cross-leadership" was directed into the Board of Supervisors. The connecting lines represent four indi-

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<sup>6</sup>The circumstances of this man's leadership in an authority group will be discussed in a later section of the chapter.

<sup>7</sup>"Cross-leadership" is a term which will be used to indicate an individual's leadership in both power and authority groups. An anticipated result of such leadership would be a behavioral ambivalence in group interaction, and a tendency to be either indecisive or isolated in conflict situations involving those groups in which leadership positions were held. Such situations would create a condition of stress for those individuals having "cross-leadership" unless they were able to adopt an attitude of neutrality, or at least to avoid a show of group preference. Avoidance or equivocation patterns were usually employed by ambivalent leaders.

Power GroupsAuthority Groups

Chamber of Commerce

Lions Club

Grange

FHA

Seed Growers Assn.

Dairy Breed Assn.

Beef Calf Assn.

DHIA

ABA

Farm Bureau

Board of Supervisors

PMA

Figure 3. "Cross-leadership"<sup>8</sup> among power and authority groups in Aspen County, 1953.

viduals, whose positions were:

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Power Group</u>	<u>Authority Group</u>
"A"	DHIA Director	Township Supervisor
"B"	Farm Bureau County Committeeman	PMA Committeeman
"C"	Seed Growers Assn. Director	Township Supervisor

Figure 4. Delineation of "cross-leadership," Aspen County, 1953.

<sup>8</sup>Only lines of "cross-leadership" are shown.

<sup>9</sup>The dotted line indicates a family rather than an individual "cross-leadership." In this case, the father was the power group leader and the son the authority group leader. Both lived and worked on the same farm, and could thus be considered as part of a single economic and kinship unit.



B. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant  
Power Groups

One characteristic of the power groups was that their leaders were likely to be either the more prosperous farmers and/or the "progressive"<sup>10</sup> ones. This meant that in terms of personal prestige, brought about by success within the basic occupational framework, the power group leaders wielded considerable influence over their respective organizations. This influence was enhanced by the fact that the officers and directors of the power groups represented an interlocking network of control among many of the groups. Thus, the election of new officers often simply meant exchanging titles among the current leaders within one or more groups. This exchange was, however, confined largely within the power group structure, and an individual could not usually enter the leadership stratum simply on his own volition.

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<sup>10</sup>"Progressive" in this case refers to those who seemed most active, alert, and willing to try new ideas. They were not necessarily young men, but they did tend to be younger than those leaders who held their positions by virtue of past accomplishments and visible material prosperity. The "progressive" leaders were quite likely to be in debt if they were under forty-five years of age. Of course, there were leaders who were both well-off financially as well as "progressive" in the above sense of the word.

Town-centered power groups. These groups had a fairly well-defined internal structure, in which functional procedure, division of labor, and hierarchy of membership were clearly arranged.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club were mainly concerned with economic matters, and with developing the county for greater income. They had minor interest in farmers, except as customers and as a labor supply, but were anxious to keep on good terms with them for business reasons. This applied chiefly to the larger farmers who were not close enough to the county seat to interact very much with the town leaders. Therefore, the businessmen sponsored regular farmer-merchant banquets at which farmers were invited guests. Clubs and athletic teams made up of youth from all over the county were also underwritten by the town-centered groups. Although their motivation and interests were not identical with those of the agricultural power groups, the Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club were conscious of the strength of the leaders of such groups and sought good relations with them.

The Grange, by and large, appeared to be a placid organization, whose group attitudes and opinions precluded dealing with partisan matters directly. The Master stated, "We're interested in local civic things like good roads,

safety on the farm and such as that. We don't enter into politics like the Farm Bureau. We have health insurance, just like they do, but I wouldn't say we compete with them. I would say most Grange people agree with what the Farm Bureau stands for, and lots of them belong to both. But we like to keep away from politics." Most of the Grange's activities were of a social nature; and when it took a direct stand on an issue, it usually followed the lead of the Farm Bureau. None of the Grange leaders had much prestige outside of their own organization, and the Master was disliked by several other power leaders, including the chairman of the county Farm Bureau.

The Seed Growers Association was the one town-centered group which was integrated in the main power structure. Its president and two of its directors were among the largest and best-known farmers in the county. They did little of the actual work of the Association, such being the task of the manager and other wage-earning employees; but they kept close watch over policy. It was mainly through the Seed Growers Association that linkage was maintained between the Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club on the one hand, and the country-centered power groups on the other. Most of the farmer leaders experienced no difficulty in their contacts with organized businessmen.

Country-centered power groups. Compared with town-centered groups, these groups had a more confused internal structure, with considerable permissiveness in performance of official duties, inconsistent administrative practices, and irregular communication among members. Most of the agricultural organizations were focused around problems of production; and while marketing problems were the object of increasing concern, they were still approached chiefly on the level of individual rather than group action. This meant that organizational leadership became channelized into regular patterns of behavior. Although the organizations engaged in varied concrete activities, their attitudes on issues and problems tended to coalesce because such attitudes emanated from the same set of leaders (see Figure 2).

The Dairy Breed Association and the DHIA represented the core of the country-centered leaders, and farmers who were members of one were likely to be found in the other. Their leaders had a kind of "ease of leadership" born of experience and self-confidence in personal ability. They took their positions of control as more or less "natural," and as based upon proven accomplishment. When these leaders were asked why officers seemed to persist in their jobs, they had quite similar responses. As one man

expressed it, "Most people don't want to be tied down. When it comes time to elect officers, they look at each other and say, 'Let Joe keep on. He's done a good job and he's got experience.' So, they elect Joe again and he has to take it or else the whole thing is liable to fall apart."

The leaders felt that the mass of the group members were dependent upon them, with the result that the leaders came to have a proprietary interest in their jobs. Another leader stated, "I used to balk when they elected me at first, but now I find I like the work. When they re-elect me, I know I've done pretty well. I wouldn't mind quitting on my own, but I'd feel pretty bad if they voted me out after I've given more time to this work than anybody else." In general, the passive attitude of the membership in practically all the country-centered groups reinforced the control position of the leaders and allowed them a wide latitude in behavior.

Within the past six years, however, the traditional, or "old guard," leaders were sharing more and more control with newer and less well-established men. Since 1947, the DHIA and the Dairy Breed Association showed no steady increase in membership.<sup>11</sup> Yet there was some replacement in

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<sup>11</sup>Since the testing and record-keeping, which were an integral part of DHIA, were (continued next page)

the ranks. One director of DHIA commented that the organization was once a "kind of closed club" for members of the Dairy Breeders Association. "They wouldn't let anybody in DHIA unless he had their breed, but they had to take some of the rest of us when their own fellows dropped out." Although there was no sharp rift between these two types of leaders, the newer ones had less security and breadth of contact.

The "old guard" leaders had an easy tolerance of outside people and events which the others lacked. They also had a familiarity and a "joking relationship" with FH which enabled them to accept or reject his advice without apparent tension or strain. Their views on public affairs generally coincided with those of the newer leaders, but they appeared to be less compulsive and dogmatic in both expression and action.

The ABA, one of the most recently formed organizations in the county, was more representative of the newer leaders, even though its current president was an "old guard" leader. One of the prime difficulties in a sparsely settled county like Aspen was to have enough work for the

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(continued) tedious and demanding processes, they were confined most to established, successful farmers who could afford the time and expense of carrying them on.

inseminator, who usually found it impossible to incorporate another job into his ABA schedules. Many farmers who tried artificial insemination became discouraged and bitter about improving their stock, although some remained with the program in spite of losses and failures. FH was instrumental in encouraging younger men to keep going, and he took an exceptional personal interest in the futures of several whom he regarded as unusually promising.

Those farmers who were active in the regional Beef Calf Association were generally larger farmers, usually of the "old guard" type, who were able to secure sufficient land and capital to make beef profitable. The county-wide increase in size of farms and decrease in number of them over the past two decades had given impetus to the change from dairy to beef, even though the smaller farmers clung to dairy cattle out of sheer necessity.

Mixed power groups. The Farm Bureau epitomized the rise of younger newer leaders in the power structure. While the "old guard" moved slowly with respect to Farm Bureau policies and programs, the young leaders were less cautious. They were vociferous opponents of PMA, and were more critical of authority groups as a whole. They were more positive about what they wanted and how they felt they could achieve it than the older leaders were. This is not

to say that the older leaders were opposed to Farm Bureau ideas and programs. On the contrary, most of them were members, although they frequently had reservations about certain phases of Farm Bureau procedure, such as pre-arranged community programs and pre-digested pamphlets on state and national issues. In spite of the fact that organization membership increased sharply subsequent to the offering of group health insurance, no Farm Bureau leaders acknowledged any causal relationship, preferring to believe that Farm Bureau policies and legislative accomplishments were the main attractions for joining. Whatever the motivation, there was little doubt that the Farm Bureau was the most widespread, as well as the most vocal agricultural organization in Aspen County.

The dairy power groups and the Farm Bureau felt that they represented the majority of farmers in the county, and they behaved on that assumption. Practically all of the power group leaders believed that their existing organizations were adequate to accomplish this representation.<sup>12</sup> As farmers, the power group leaders were likely to be the

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<sup>12</sup>This was often expressed as if it had been true for a long time, yet the Farm Bureau was only organized in the county in 1948. Apparently they felt that the Bureau crystallized opinions and sentiments which had previously been vaguely expressed in less formalized ways.



ones who adopted more of the new practices than did the majority of farmers. Many of the leaders were the first in their areas to build laminated rafter barns, cut grass silage, use trench silos, raise broilers, and adopt a new strain of dairy cattle. The "old guard" power group leaders had a tight in-group feeling and a self-confidence in external affairs resulting from long tenure in policy-controlling positions. It seemed that very often the membership responded to their wishes, rather than the reverse, and that a kind of nepotism<sup>13</sup> prevailed when new individuals were brought into the upper echelons of leadership.

#### C. Behavior Characteristics of Significant Authority Groups

Except for the three cases of "cross-leadership" previously cited, the leadership of the authority groups was separate from that of the power groups. The authority groups were smaller, their size being fixed by statute; and in some respects they were insulated from immediate con-

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<sup>13</sup>Leaders who had sons and sons-in-law, often saw to it that these young men joined key groups and immediately assumed roles of minor responsibility, in order to gain experience and group acceptance. Some leaders, such as the county Farm Bureau chairman, expressed regret that their sons were not interested in, or didn't seem to have the ability to "follow in my footsteps."

stituent control. For instance, the FHA office could be considered as quite independent of local control, since it dealt with clients on a private individual basis. Of course, FHA desired county approval and good will, but to a great extent its actions and policies were determined above the county level.

Board of Supervisors and PMA. The Board of Supervisors and the PMA committee were locally elected, and thereby subject to almost daily public criticism and pressure. In addition, their duties were legally defined, the officials worked for a fixed remuneration, their behavior was channeled by formal mechanisms, and their patterns of action were often bound by custom and precedent.<sup>14</sup> These authority-type characteristics, although not always strictly followed, were contrary to the power group frame of mind. Therefore, the authority group leaders often incurred the hostility of the power group leaders whenever their paths crossed in terms of issues or choices of action.

Of the authority groups, the Board of Supervisors was most likely to be involved in outside conflicts. However,

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<sup>14</sup>For a more detailed description of township supervisors and their behavior, see Charles P. Loomis, et al, Rural Social Systems and Adult Education (East Lansing, Michigan State College Press, 1953), Chapter XII.

these conflicts were usually non-agricultural in origin, and were seldom resistant to compromise by the parties involved.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the presence of two "old guard" power group leaders on the Board gave it an acceptance in the power structure it might not otherwise have enjoyed.

The major portion of such power-authority differences as were found in the county was centered in the PMA-Farm Bureau conflict.<sup>16</sup> The Farm Bureau was unalterably opposed

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<sup>15</sup>A supervisor sometimes relied upon his authority role when controversies became severe. He could use his office as a justification for nonpreferential treatment of his friends and neighbors (i.e., the "requirement" that a public official must play no favorites).

<sup>16</sup>An unusual fact about Aspen County was that it had no Soil Conservation District, and hence no SCS activity. Very few counties in the state were without such Districts, yet many of the Aspen leaders were totally ignorant of SCS work. One supervisor thought that SCS was simply a formal designation for the soil testing laboratory operated by the Extension agent. The president of the Seed Growers Association, which was now chiefly a marketing and merchandising organization, had no conception at all of what a District was, or how SCS operated. Later, the field interviews disclosed that FH was steadfastly opposed to SCS, and had actively campaigned against it, maintaining that Extension could handle conservation more efficiently than another "government bureau." It was significant that FH put Extension into a specifically non-bureaucratic category, in which he himself personified local autonomy, as contrasted with "outside interference." Thus, even those farmers who might have desired, or at least accepted, SCS were convinced, for the time being at least, that it was both functionally superfluous and ethically undesirable. In other counties, the SCS was often involved in power-authority group conflicts, often being the focal point in them.

to the PMA program, since it resulted in PMA's access to the average farmer for purposes of influencing his behavior. The leading PMA committeeman voiced his hostility to the local Farm Bureau which, he felt, took orders from the state and national levels. He said that many farmers were in favor of PMA and other government programs but that they were not vocal, even though a large number of them were Farm Bureau members. He was also convinced that group health insurance was responsible for a large percentage of Farm Bureau membership, and that these members had little knowledge of what the leadership was doing, nor were they interested. Thus, he felt Farm Bureau claims of farmer representation were based on sheer numbers and not upon actual delegation of power. From the discussion, it was also apparent that the PMA leader had himself acquired a "vested interest" in his job in much the same manner that some of the "old guard" power group leaders had done in theirs. Even his stated reasons for longevity in office were similar. As he put it, "I've been at this (PMA) job a long time, and I've gotten so I like it. I suppose others ought to get into it, but it's hard to get them interested. They think you do a good job, so they keep on re-electing you." Thus the same rationalizing principle for continuity in office seemed to serve for both power

and authority group leaders, even though one set of offices was publicly chosen and the other selected from a specialized group.

Another informant,<sup>17</sup> currently a supervisor, was able to visualize conceptually the difference between power and authority constellations. He believed the power groups functioned more on the informal social level than they did on the organizational level. In his analysis, age and experience were important in determining the hierarchy of control, which he spelled out as shown in Table III.<sup>18</sup>

From this table, it can be seen that the leadership of the county corresponded to the power and authority

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<sup>17</sup>This person was a college graduate whose father was a college English professor who was only present in the county during non-school periods. The father was highly respected throughout the area, because of his professional status and speaking ability. The three sons, of whom the respondent was the eldest, lived on a large farm. None had much agricultural experience, and the family had lost heavily on several of FH's projects. However, the respondent was able to grasp the significance of many of the interviewer's questions, and to define the characteristics of many of the groups.

<sup>18</sup>The significant thing about this positional arrangement was that it was given without any kind of coaching or prompting, once the respondent understood what sort of information was desired. His analysis was given using personal names, which were here changed to the major current offices held by the respective individuals. This substitution showed the independent analysis to be consistent with the conclusions reached by the investigator through other county sources.

TABLE III

ONE INFORMANT'S CONFIGURATION OF LEADERSHIP  
IN ASPEN COUNTY

	Major County Leaders	"Outsider" Leaders
Upper echelon (older men)	President, County Farm Bureau	Chairman, PMA
	Manager, Seed Growers Exchange	Committeeman, PMA
	President, ABA	Member, <sup>19</sup> School Board
	President, Seed Growers Exchange	
	Respondent's Father as "elder statesman"	
	Chairman, Board of Supervisors	
Lower echelon (younger men)	Major Farm Implement Dealer	Locality leader, <sup>20</sup> critical of Farm Bureau
	President, Chamber of Commerce	
	Director, ABA	
	Regional organizer, Farm Bureau	
	Respondent himself	

<sup>19</sup>This member and his wife were leaders of the pro-school consolidation forces, while many of the power group leaders were opposed to consolidation entirely.

<sup>20</sup>This leader, a brother of the school board member listed in footnote 19, had a small neighborhood following in the extreme southern end of Area I in Figure 1. This man was a top Extension cooperator and a good farmer, and his wife was very active in Home Economics work. The diagramming respondent classified this person as a "lone wolf" who fitted into no outside category.

organizational dichotomy which had previously been outlined. Although the power elements had preponderance over the authority elements in terms of numbers and position, the latter were not completely overshadowed, particularly in local areas where authority group leaders resided.

As a further illustration of differences between the authority and power groups, another supervisor, located in Area II (see Figure 1), stated that he had "no love" for the Farm Bureau, which he believed was inclined to tell the people what to think instead of allowing them to express their own ideas. This supervisor did not participate much in county-wide affairs, and his marginal farming operations made it necessary for him to do off-farm work consistently. He claimed most farmers in his area were in similar circumstances. All were caught in the 1951-52 drop in beef prices, and there was general pessimism concerning future price trends. This supervisor mentioned several of the power group leaders in critical fashion, and complained that at least two of them had "inherited" their wealth and were not competent farmers themselves. Several of these "inheritors" later turned out to be proteges and key demonstrators of FH.

With respect to Figure 4 on page 143, it was interesting to discover why power group leader "B" was also a

leader of one of the main authority groups. Presumably, this represented some ambivalence on his part. However, the regional Farm Bureau organizer revealed that leader "B's" membership in PMA was to give the Farm Bureau access to the inner circle of PMA ideas and activities. Thus, it was a kind of infiltration maneuver which gave the power group advance notice of the plans of its rivals.<sup>21</sup>

#### D. Interaction of the Agent with Power and Authority Groups

A key feature of FH's organizational activities was that they were almost entirely confined to the power groups. Since he had consciously promoted and helped to organize most of these groups, it was not surprising that he participated in them directly. This was especially true of the DHIA, the ABA, the Farm Bureau, and both cattle breed associations. The agent regularly attended the meetings of all of these groups, and was an active member of the Lions Club as well. On the other hand, FH almost never entered the office of PMA, which was located in the community five

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<sup>21</sup>Other PMA committeemen who were interviewed, including leader "B" himself, made no mention of this process, construed in the above manner. In view of the possible negative reactions to a confrontation on this subject, it was not brought up by the investigator, since subsequent interviews might have been jeopardized.



miles west of his headquarters. The only time he met or consulted with the Board of Supervisors as an official body was during the yearly period of budget hearings, when county appropriations for Extension work were being considered. This lack of contact was illustrated by the fact that one of the supervisors never had any advance meetings with FH on either program planning or budget requirements. Two years prior to the present study, FH had, after considerable discussion at the annual budget hearing, convinced the Board to purchase equipment for a soil testing laboratory. Subsequently, this supervisor had seen the laboratory in the Extension office only once, and during the interview could not give any coherent explanation of its operation or how frequently it was being used.

Another major feature of FH's behavior was the manner in which he influenced the policies and leadership composition of the power groups in which he was active.<sup>22</sup> He was very careful to keep abreast of what these groups were doing and thinking. Since FH had been instrumental in establishing most of these groups, he had taken for himself a proprietary "right" to influence their behavior.

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<sup>22</sup>FH, for example, was little concerned with the work of the Grange, and seldom attended its meetings, except to show an occasional film or give a talk on some topic tangential to agricultural matters in the county.

There were numerous examples of this "right," as practiced by FH. For instance, the ABA had decided to get some younger men in as officers. The leaders took it upon themselves to do this without consulting the membership as a whole. This was possible because of the general permissiveness extended to the leaders of these power group structures, whose rank and file could be counted on to accept "suggestions" from above. In this case, FH not only agreed that "new blood" was needed, but went on to select a specific individual, who happened to be one of his own protégés in farm development. At the next election, this man became secretary-treasurer. On another occasion, a county-wide meeting of the Farm Bureau was addressed by FH, who outlined a list of five ideas on which he thought a particular stand should be taken for the coming year. In the subsequent list of resolutions passed by the county Farm Bureau, all of these ideas were included.

However, FH's attempts to control these organizations was not always successful. The experiment with the special breed of dairy cattle, which the agent had made the backbone of his dairy program, was beginning to show serious deficiencies. After initial enthusiasm had subsided, various problems, such as Bang's disease, poor production records, and artificial breeding failures turned quite a

few experimenters against the new breed, and also partly against FH as well. However, FH's energy and persistence was such that even these failures and deficiencies did not produce the kind of mass rejection and loss of confidence which might have resulted.

There were further evidences of FH's power group identification. During observation in his office on two non-consecutive days, six farmers made personal contact. Of these, three were power group leaders, and none were authority group leaders. Of four farmers contacted by phone, all four were either power group leaders or were active in power organizations. Likewise, in accompanying the agent on a round of farm calls, visits were made to the president of the ABA, the secretary-treasurer of the ABA, a director of the DHIA, the ABA inseminator (who was also very active in the Farm Bureau), and the "locality leader" referred to in Table III on page 157. This contact with the "locality leader" indicated that the agent was able, on occasion, to transcend even the regular power group ties which were his chief source of support. Thus, while certain leaders were opposed to some Farm Bureau ideas and activities which FH himself approved of and helped formulate, they nevertheless were tied to the agent in technical fashion as farming practice cooperators.

Thus FH had enough programs going so that if a leader disagreed with him on one issue, or experienced failure on one practice, there were enough agreements and successes on other counts to preserve a working relationship<sup>23</sup> and thereby build up a sense of mutual obligation. This was entirely lacking in terms of FH's relations with authority groups.

A final citation of FH's organizational behavior is concerned with the handling of a general farmers meeting to promote his newest project, the raising of broiler hatching eggs. This meeting was publicized by posters in various communities, in the weekly county newspaper, and by word of mouth. The investigator attended the meeting, which was held in the largest community in the center of Area I (see Figure 1). In attendance was a poultry specialist from the land-grant college, who had driven up to the meeting with the owner and manager of the commercial hatchery through which the program would operate. Twelve farmers showed up, and one of them, whom the investigator previously interviewed, had then predicted that only FH's

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<sup>23</sup>Thus the "locality leader" mentioned above would never be approached by FH in terms of that farmer's opposition to the Farm Bureau, but rather in terms of his experiences with a new grass seed, or with the progress of pasture rotation. FH never permitted antipathies among various group leaders to jeopardize his access to these leaders as individuals.

closest cooperators would be there. With four exceptions this proved correct. After three hours of explanation and discussion, the meeting adjourned on an inconclusive note. The specialist, hatchery representatives, and FH then went to a motel for further discussion. A friendly, informal relationship prevailed throughout. The gist of FH's position was that if the hatchery would, as he put it, "play ball" with him and funnel all its off-season hatching egg requirements through Aspen County, then FH would see to it that the hatchery always had sufficient sources of supply within the county. Thus both groups would stand to benefit. FH was quite vague as to how some farmers would be able to finance the initial investment for this venture, but was confident he could deliver the product.

From the material presented in this section, the major ways in which the agent worked through and influenced the agricultural groups in Aspen County should now be recognizable. Given this pattern of behavior, how did the leaders evaluate it in terms of their own conception of Extension work in general and of FH in particular?

E. Image of the Agent and of the Extension Service  
by County Leaders

In view of FH's high administrative rating, and his

close affiliation with the power groups in Aspen county, it might be expected that virtually complete approval of the agent would have been expressed by the leaders of such groups. Some dissatisfaction by the lesser authority groups would not have seemed surprising. However, taking the entire leadership group, as interviewed, there was fully as much criticism from power group leaders as from other sources. However, any censure was usually tempered by some praiseworthy comment, and there were no cases of outright rejection.

On the positive side, there was a great respect for the agent's energy and devotion to his job. He was acknowledged to have a large fund of technical information which he dispensed to all who cared to take it. Most of the leaders expressed a rather deep sense of personal obligation to FH. Even those who criticized him usually ended up with something like "but in spite of that I owe him a lot. If he hadn't prodded me into rotating those fields I'd have been a much poorer man today." Other typical comments in this vein were as follows:

"I don't always take his advice, like on trench silos, but he has plenty of good ideas. I put up the first laminated barn in the county on his advice, and I've never regretted it."

"Well, a lot of people criticize him, but he knows what he's doing. They laugh at him sometimes, and at me for all the things I try, but I'll tell you, mister, if it wasn't for FH I wouldn't be on this farm today. The ones who gripe are the ones who just barely keep a-going. The progressive farmers are all behind him."

Thus, while even his backers had some reservations, they stood in slight awe of his ability, and respected his attempts to help those who wanted to be helped.

Negatively, the comments fell into two classes, personal and procedural. There was almost universal complaint that FH talked excessively, both at meetings and in private discussion. Said one farmer, "His main trouble is that he can't answer a question 'yes' or 'no.' He's like a history book. I get so I don't dare ask him anything." Mention of this criticism varied from vehement annoyance and exasperation to a kind of amused tolerance. Some farmers also felt that FH seemed to change his mind frequently and without warning. On one visit he might extol the virtues of poultry, and the next time urge expansion of the dairy herd because the future price of milk looked strong. Consequently, there was some confusion and uncertainty about what to do next.

It was obvious, then, that FH's work was not accepted

without reservations. The feeling about him was mixed, both in terms of personal characteristics and the way he carried out his programs. It was generally acknowledged that he worked over and over again with the same people, many of whom were the respondents themselves, but this was defended on the grounds that (a) you couldn't blame a man for working with people who showed a willingness to work with him, and (b) it was always possible for anyone to work with the agent if the person had enough interest and energy to seek out the information. However, the authority group leaders were more inclined to attribute FH's personal preferences to his own calculated efforts, and to feel that he lavished his time on those whom he thought would support and perpetuate his own influence in the county.

Referring back to Table III on page 157, the informant who constructed the table believed that the "upper echelon" leaders were generally conservative, practical men who regarded many of FH's ideas with some skepticism. However, there was no doubt of FH's loyalty to the county, as represented by the fact that he had "brought more money into it than any other single person." This informant also felt that FH was quite jealous of his pre-eminent position in the county. This, in turn, would account for his conservative position on some issues, such as the opposition to



establishing a Soil Conservation district.

As far as the Extension Service as a whole was concerned, most of the leaders saw it completely in terms of FH himself. When specialists came into Aspen County it was seldom without FH's knowledge, and all of their activities were funneled through him. One respondent regarded this practice as quite undesirable by saying, "Well, we had specialist \_\_\_\_\_ up here to tell us about poultry diseases. FH arranged the meeting and introduced \_\_\_\_\_, but by the time he got finished he'd talked about an hour and a half, and gave \_\_\_\_\_'s speech for him, and one of his own besides. Then \_\_\_\_\_ got up, repeated a little of what FH said and sat down in ten minutes. A lot of folks were kind of sore. We came to hear \_\_\_\_\_. We hear FH every day in the week."

This tendency toward personal monopolization of all agricultural activities in Aspen County was characteristic of FH's behavior; and at times his constituents chafed, at least among themselves, under this domination. Yet there was also a pervasive feeling that things really couldn't get along without his guidance. A few of the top farmers and leaders (the "Upper Echelon") could meet FH as a status "equal," and could feel that he depended upon their support fully as much as they depended on him. But the "Lower

Echelon" supporters, many of whom were FH's technical protégés, felt more of an obligation to him than vice versa. Consequently, FH had an active core of followers who "owed" him social capital, and he apparently drew upon this fund of obligation to achieve his own goals.

F. Image of the County and of the Extension  
Service by the Agent

Numerous discussions with FH left certain definite impressions as to his conception of his own job and of the groups with which he dealt. From the preceding sections of this chapter, it could be seen that within Aspen County itself both authority and power groups were present, and had different characteristics which largely explained their attitudes toward one another. To this we added the dimension of the attitudes of these groups toward the agent personally and to the Extension Service as a whole. Here we found more unanimity than divergence in terms of power and authority opinion, even though authority group opinion was not well articulated and many of its leaders felt personally obligated to FH in his technical capacity. Thus FH used his professional competence to prevent the formation of any organized opposition to his programs. His activities and projects were not always successful, but few would dare to

oppose him publicly, and his "funded reputation" was ample enough to overcome specific instances of failure or conflict.

Viewing these processes from FH's own perspective meant that in the final analysis he placed himself above any group factionalism within the county. In fact, he could use such conflicts as diversionary measures to distract attention from things he wished to do unobtrusively. He was well aware of the major strength of the power group constellation, and made sure that he kept active and informed within it. He was also aware of the weakness of the authority groups, which he largely ignored operationally. Yet he cultivated certain leaders in authority groups by visiting them often, feeding them ideas, and getting them obligated in terms of services rendered. In this way, he neutralized any possible opposition which might have arisen among the authority groups as a consequence of his own preferential identification with the power groups.

FH regarded himself as a considerable politician who knew how to marshal people and groups in his own behalf. He frankly stated that he had "key men" in all the farm organizations in the county, and that he could control membership on most boards of directors. He had several techniques for doing this. If he felt he wanted to remove

a man in a leadership position, he "began asking questions about him" all over the county. He would drop hints that perhaps the marked individual "wasn't carrying out his job as well as he might." Eventually the man would find himself replaced by a new director. Conversely, if FH wanted to get a particular person "elected," he campaigned indirectly by describing the "best man" for the post without actually naming him. Pretty soon people got the idea who was being groomed for a job.

He admitted he worked with key men in order to get them obligated to him. When he felt an individual was resisting him strongly, he never precipitated an open fight, but either won the recalcitrant to his side by patient effort, or indirectly via social pressure. He regarded Aspen County as his own private preserve or, as he called it, his "home grounds." He felt his job to be a challenge, almost a "calling," and in return for his self-dedication he expected loyalty from his constituents. In some ways, he treated the county as his diocese, almost by divine right, and the people as his congregation.

He ruled his office staff with a benevolent but iron hand. Scornful of bureaucratic routine, he ignored most of the paperwork required by the central Extension administration. At the same time, he delegated carefully measured

authority to his 4-H agent and Home Demonstration agent, but kept all major decisions for himself. He related that one of his enjoyments was to give his 4-H agent a "problem" to work on, and when the younger man thought he knew the answer, FH would, as he put it, "take the wind out of his sails." Yet as long as "his" people, whether co-workers or farmers, respected his positional supremacy they could count on his loyalty and protection with respect to "outside" forces.

These "outside" forces were represented chiefly by the Extension administration. FH, on numerous occasions, voiced hostility and criticism of the central Extension office. He felt many specialists were impractical, and that the administration was too rigid in its procedures. As a man with great respect for technical competence, he conceded that the state departments had much to offer, but he wanted their contributions on his own terms--or not at all. He carried on running feuds with some specialists, yet was very close with others. Sometimes, as in the case of poultry, he joined in the research efforts himself, and many specialists regarded him (not always without distaste) as their professional peer in certain fields of work.

As a result of his wide technical knowledge<sup>24</sup> and the

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<sup>24</sup>Which, as we shall see later, has become almost a rarity among modern county agents.

solid backing (in some cases almost blind following) he had built up within the county, FH felt secure and confident in flaunting the Extension administration. He felt himself above reprisal, and was willing to pit his own social resources and political skill against any opposition. His conception of independence was freedom from administrative control, and he communicated this dogmatically to those who worked with him. Paradoxically, this conception was the basis of his own control over the very same people.

Thus it would appear that, while the images of the agent by the leaders were often couched in negative as well as positive terms, no concerted defection in general allegiance was forthcoming. Many people underestimated FH's political acumen, and even those who were restive under his domination felt a kind of emotional attachment and dependence which precluded any overt rebellion.

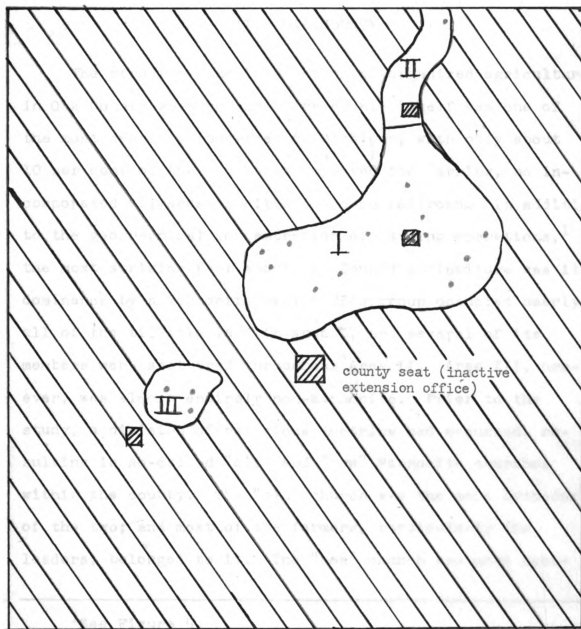
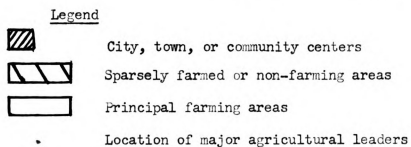


Figure 5. OAK COUNTY



## II. OAK COUNTY

The structure and interaction of organized agriculture in Oak County were unique. The county itself was one of the most sparsely inhabited in Michigan, with only about 10 per cent of the land area improved for farming, no incorporated villages or cities, and no railroad. In addition to the geographical concentration of farming operations,<sup>1</sup> the most striking fact about Oak County agriculture was its dominance by a Mennonite sect. This group occupied nearly all of the tillable land in Area I, and several of its members were scattered throughout Area II. Area III, however, was almost entirely non-Mennonite. Prior to the study, a division of religious doctrine had occurred, resulting in so-called "old" and "new" Mennonite churches within the county. The "old" church was the more orthodox<sup>2</sup> of the two; and most of the farmers, particularly the leaders, belonged to it. The "new" church was more secu-

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<sup>1</sup>See Figure 5.

<sup>2</sup>Yet it was less so than some other Mennonite sects, such as the "older order" Amish, which was sparsely represented in Oak County for a number of years, but had eventually disappeared because of incompatibility with the behavior of the present sects. It is not necessary for the purpose of this study to describe Mennonite principles and theology in detail. Only those beliefs and activities which are applicable to particular problems will be mentioned.



larized, and most of the members were younger people who apparently desired less rigor and formalism in their religion. Although no outward schism occurred between the groups, a distinct coolness existed, especially on the part of the "old" church, which outnumbered the other by about three to one.

The main community in Area I was the center of agricultural activity and most of the Mennonites traded there extensively, several of them owning shops. Both the feed store and the creamery were located in this community. As a consequence of cultural and occupational differences (Mennonite farmers vs. non-Mennonite village dwellers), the county seat and the main community in Area I had built up a rivalry over the years which extended to everything from high school athletics to allocation of tax assessments.

#### A. The Structure of Organized Agriculture

Despite the fact that there were only slightly over two hundred commercial farms in the county, a large percentage of farmers actively participated in organizations. Continuing the kind of analysis attempted in Aspen County, the control classification of Oak County groups is shown in Table IV.

Town-centered power groups. The feed store and the

TABLE IV

EXTERNAL CONTROL ORIENTATION AND LOCUS OF GROUPS  
RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN OAK COUNTY, 1953

Functional Locale	Control Type	
	Power	Authority
Town-centered	Feed store Creamery	Board of Supervisors
Country- centered	DHIA ABA Dairy Breed Association	
Mixed		PMA

creamery were both operated by members of two of the largest "old church" Mennonite families in the county. The feed store not only handled grain and fertilizer, but also helped market eggs and poultry, and often financed farmers who were getting started in such enterprises. The creamery had excellent plant facilities for handling milk and cream, and had its own collection routes and equipment. These two businesses were profitable, and had steadily expanded their operations during the post-war period.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Both the feed store and creamery did a considerable amount of business in neighboring Aspen County.

Country-centered power groups. Leadership in these organizations hinged around the fact that the special dairy breed introduced into the county by FH fostered joint participation by many farmers in the Dairy Breed Association and in DHIA. In addition, such farmers were likely to have adopted several other practices and programs recommended by Extension. Prior to 1951, there had been no ABA in Oak County, but when service became available for the special dairy breed, there were enough interested farmers to form an organization, which soon grew to eighty members. Although most of the larger farmers retained their own bulls, many used ABA to bring in new blood lines.

There was no Farm Bureau,<sup>4</sup> which most Mennonites regarded as a partisan political group.

As might be expected, the power structure reflected its Mennonite composition; and all of the leaders in the power groups listed in Table IV belonged to the old church. In addition to this general religious tie-in, family connections were also present. For example, a relative of the feed store owners was president of the DHIA, and the

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<sup>4</sup>However, the Farm Bureau organizer in Aspen County had confided to the investigator that he was working patiently and slowly in Oak County, with FH's knowledge, and that he felt the county would eventually have a Farm Bureau unit.

manager of the creamery was related to the secretary of the ABA. The "old church" bishop was also president of the Dairy Breed Association.

Authority groups. In contrast to the power structure, the authority groups were led entirely by non-Mennonites, with one exception. This power and authority cleavage was practically assured by the general Mennonite abstinence from holding public office, from engaging in overt political activity, or even voting in civil elections.

The Board of Supervisors had its office in the county seat. Most of its members were men in their sixties who did not live on farms, and were either retired or engaged in a village business. By and large, they had little interaction with the power groups, except on public occasions, such as budget hearings. Within the agricultural areas, the supervisors did not follow the majority pattern. The representative from Area II was a French-Canadian, who was a strong neighborhood leader. Although living on a farm, he had given up agriculture in favor of politics and various seasonal jobs, such as hunting guide work. As chairman of the Board, his hierarchical position was strong. The "exception" referred to above happened to be the minister of the reformed "new" church, who had risked censure by competing for the position.

The PMA office was also in the county seat, and its three committeemen were non-Mennonite farmers, one from Area III and two from Area I. There was one part-time office employee. Due to the nationally revised PMA and ACP programs, numerous PMA functions were being curtailed or eliminated, and there was some prospect that too little would be done to justify keeping the office going. There was no linkage between the authority groups. As in Aspen County, there was no Soil Conservation district.

"Cross-leadership." The only "cross-leadership" which could even resemble power and authority interaction was represented by the "new" church minister, who was also a supervisor. Yet, being a minority power faction leader, he was not represented in the major power group structure. His dual roles actually served to widen the gulf between the religious sect groups, since it violated "old" church principles. The minister had taken this post as a calculated risk, in order to show that all Mennonites need not be as conservative and "custom-bound" as many people imagined. Consequently, he hoped younger people would accept the "new" church as a modern version of a traditional faith.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>This motivation was expressed in an interview, as he explained why he had decided to flout the elders and run for political office.

B. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant  
Power Groups

Although the power groups of Oak County were similar in name and purpose to their counterparts in Aspen, the aura of Mennonite influence led to behavioral differences. The bishop, or chief elder, although initially chosen by the group as a whole, became an entrenched leader of great stature and authority. His leadership was accepted, by virtue of his office, and there was little internal conflict once it was established.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence of this acceptance, the Mennonite-dominated groups tended to act as units in their external relations; and it was frequently a problem of convincing "all of them or none of them" whenever a choice of policy was involved.<sup>7</sup>

The Mennonites were prolific (having one of the highest birth rates in the state), and the extended families were very large. Thus, about fifteen surnames accounted for the bulk of the individuals farming in the major areas. Offices

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<sup>6</sup>This was analagous to the traditional type of authority discussed by Weber and later modified by Riesman in terms of general behavior patterns. See David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950), Chapter I, Part I.

<sup>7</sup>This kind of problem would not be faced, of course, in a more secularized county like Aspen.

in the agricultural power groups were rotated within the family leadership structure, much the same as in Aspen County; and sons of older leaders tended to follow their fathers in active participation in the various groups. As a result of overwhelming Mennonite superiority in numbers, the power organizations were regarded by outsiders as "clannish," a label which the Mennonites chose to ignore rather than repudiate.

The feed store and the creamery acted as focal points for exchanging ideas and information. Since they performed functions which nearly every farmer depended upon, their owners and managers were key channels through which to reach the general public; and their position of influence was enhanced by the fact that they had little economic competition in the surrounding area.<sup>8</sup>

Due to the above circumstances, then, the power groups of the county presented an unusually cohesive "front," which was cemented by (a) close territoriality of a few large kinship groups, (b) a common religious and ethical tradition among the majority of farmers in the county, and (c) joint economic interest in a special breed of dairy

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<sup>8</sup>However, several non-Mennonite farmers in Area III felt that the creamery had things "too easy," and that it not only drove a hard bargain on milk prices, but was reluctant to extend its collection routes outside Area I.

cattle. This situation made it clear that interaction of outside groups with the power structure of Oak County would have to be made with the preceding characteristics in mind.

### C. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Authority Groups

The Board of Supervisors, being centered in the county seat, which was itself outside the chief agricultural area, had little direct interest in agriculture. It is significant to note that the supervisor of Area II, and chairman of the Board, was not particularly concerned about Mennonite influence. Since the Mennonites eschewed politics,<sup>9</sup> although they could easily have had formal control of the county government, their attitude enabled active minorities, such as this leader, to parlay his township strength to county-wide dimensions. His reputation among

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<sup>9</sup>There were some dissenting views to this picture of the Mennonites as being "outside" of politics. One of the leaders in Area III (see Figure 5), which was mostly non-Mennonite, claimed that the "Dutchmen," as he called them, did a lot of undercover wire-pulling. He cited instances of elders getting draft deferments for their sons "no matter what it cost." He also believed the Mennonites controlled the County Road Commission, with his "proof" being that most of the workers were sect members who used these jobs whenever they got into financial difficulties. At the time, there was no way of checking this respondent's information; but the fact that he gave specific instances at least opened up the possibility that the Mennonites, in typical power group fashion, might have used legitimized behavior patterns to camouflage antithetical covert maneuvers.



the Mennonites was quite low, except for the minister-supervisor, who recognized his political astuteness.

The PMA organization, within the past several years, had experienced a sharp decline in activity. Its program had never appealed to the Mennonites because of their reluctance to deal directly with government agencies, and also because their ability as farmers made it less necessary for many of them to receive financial assistance.<sup>10</sup> The chairman of the county PMA committee was rather critical of the clannishness of the Mennonites, and he felt that the county as a whole suffered because they were only interested in themselves. Personally, he was in favor of a Soil Conservation district, but FH was against it, and the Mennonites were not interested enough to investigate the matter.

By and large, then, the two main authority groups were isolated from the power groups, both culturally and geo-

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<sup>10</sup>In fact, they had an informal system of sect-group financing. If one of the members needed money, a "committee" of elders pointedly visited his farm unexpectedly, having been informed of the member's desire for help via an intermediary. They inspected his land, buildings, and stock, particularly noticing the size of his manure pile (if too large for the size of the operation, this indicated either laziness or inefficiency on the part of the operator). After inspection, if a loan were approved, the member was informed where and from whom he could get some money and under what terms.

graphically. They were ignored by the power groups, rather than opposed by them, and were definitely in a secondary position in the structure of the county as a whole.

#### D. Interaction of the Agent with Power Authority Groups

From the information in the preceding sections, the main task faced by FH to gain acceptance and cooperation in the agricultural framework of Oak County was to establish and conserve a positive working relationship with the Mennonite groups. FH understood this necessity, and made it the basis of his entire county program. The crucial project was the introduction of the special dairy breed as the backbone of the program itself. This breed had been adopted by several key leaders in Aspen County prior to FH's designation as agent in Oak.

When they first came to Michigan, the Mennonites had tried to make ends meet primarily by raising wheat and other cash grain crops, as they had done "back home" in Kansas, Indiana, and Ohio. This approach failed because of climate and soil limitations; and at the time of FH's appointment, the people were psychologically and economically ready for new ideas. FH worked strategically through the then "old bishop," who was venerated as a patriarch of the

sect, which at that time was unified. A tour was arranged to Aspen County where the special breed was exhibited and explained. At the end of the tour, the "old bishop" was reported to have made the following comment: "I am now too old to change, but if I were a younger man I would go into something like this."<sup>11</sup> With this authoritative approval, a considerable number of Mennonite farmers adopted the special breed within the next couple of years. The agent quickly used this "opening" to establish a DHIA, and to further such projects as grass silage, poultry raising, trench silos, etc. In time, he selected key persons to act as funnels for his ideas, knowing that the relay system was dependable and productive. He found that he could give these leaders responsibility, and that they would follow through to the people in general.<sup>12</sup> Both the feed store and the creamery owners acted as his "lieutenants"; and once he convinced them of an idea, it was often possible to let them complete the ground work and imple-

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<sup>11</sup>This incident was related by the young minister of the "new church."

<sup>12</sup>What FH was doing was capitalizing on the general sense of obligation which the Mennonites had toward all their undertakings. Their kind of moral compulsion, or "inner-directedness," went far beyond agricultural matters, and was a transcendent ethical principle. FH merely put it to work in his own cause.

mentation. The farmers were inclined to be cautious at first, but could be counted upon to carry out things they had agreed to do. This made close supervision by FH unnecessary once the pattern of action had been set.

As FH built up his hierarchy of contacts, he spent less and less personal time in Oak County. He had early been given a branch office in the county seat courthouse, but had seldom used it. He came to the county at his own discretion; and when he did appear, he visited only those persons he desired to see (primarily the power group leaders). From them, he could get a resume of progress and problems, and decisions could then be made on an informal basis. Two leaders mentioned in interviews that attendance at Extension public meetings was recently declining, but that the agent did not seem to be worried about it, and preferred using his informal system.

Having developed this effective pattern of interaction with the power groups, FH paid very little attention to the authority groups. He met with the Board of Supervisors only once a year, for appropriations hearings; and since most of the supervisors were non-farmers, they had very little occupational contact with him. The chairman of the Board, while very favorable toward the Extension Service and toward FH as a worker, admitted that they seldom met,

and then usually by chance. Likewise, FH had little contact with PMA, as an official agency. The chairman of the PMA committee remarked that he had not seen FH for four months, although he knew he had been in the county oftener. This respondent claimed that many "good farmers" did not use Extension much, but got their ideas from farm magazines<sup>13</sup> and by watching neighbors. This was particularly true in his local neighborhood, located in the western part of Area I. He also made this trenchant comment about FH's system. "FH once told me that he didn't intend to work through a lot of people and organizations. He said he'd work through a few small groups, and I guess that's what he's doing now." Certainly those who were outside the chosen pattern were aware of its existence, and were quite conscious of their exclusion.

#### E. Image of the Agent and of the Extension

##### Service by County Leaders

As in Aspen County, the Oak County leaders identified the Extension Service largely with FH as an individual. Likewise, all governmental agencies and private political

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<sup>13</sup>He himself had put in a trench silo a year before FH had introduced it as part of his own program. He had read about it in a magazine and had gotten plans there.

groups were seen through him as an intermediary.<sup>14</sup> Among most of the Mennonites, FH and Extension were now an accepted part of their way of life. Various ideas and programs had been put to practical test, and many of these had been materially successful. Thus, in terms of results, Extension "made sense" to the thrifty and industrious farmers. Furthermore, they approved of FH's energy and capacity for work, and could conceive of him as one of themselves. They felt that it was not the responsibility of the agent to "sell" his ideas, but rather the responsibility of individual farmers to recognize their value.<sup>15</sup> Thus, to the Mennonites, FH's program was more a matter of good business than of an emotional affinity reflecting local self-determination, "grass roots" democracy, or any other value concept. It reinforced rather than disturbed their traditional moral code.

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<sup>14</sup>FH, while a booster of the Farm Bureau, was conscious of the disfavor with which many Mennonites would view it. Therefore, he was unobtrusive about trying to establish it in Oak County. He had managed to communicate this attitude to the regional Farm Bureau organizer, with whom he had much personal influence.

<sup>15</sup>Here, we might say, was the original conception of the American ethic, expressed in its simplest form. "Salesmanship" has actually been a latter American adjunct to the economics of "laissez-faire," since neither its necessity nor its desirability were ever suggested by the classical economic theorists. In fact, with an automatic system working according to natural laws, much of the whole modern process of high pressure selling and advertising would not be merely logically superfluous, but concretely disruptive.

There were, however, a few negative responses to FH, chiefly among the younger Mennonite farmers. Several of them had been singled out by FH for special attention, and two or three had virtually "grown up" agriculturally under his tutelage. FH, as an authority figure, found easy acquiescence to his leadership role within the social structure, once his acceptance by the elders had been established. In agricultural matters, he thus managed to transfer some of the "father dominance" of the Mennonite kinship group to his own person. This paternalism had begun to make some of these young protégés uneasy. One of them, a member of the "old" church, indicated that the attention he was receiving from FH was making him feel conspicuous in the community. His wife concurred rather vehemently, and said people were beginning to "talk," and to imply that FH was giving their family too much time. People pointedly asked him to "send FH over" when the latter paid his next visit, because they knew that whenever FH came to Oak County he would be sure to visit this farmer. This protégé described FH's approach as one of informally sounding out inner-circle opinion before getting under way with a program, and he believed he knew of FH's ideas long before the public in general.

Some farmers felt that both FH and the Extension

Some farmers felt that both FH and the Extension specialists he brought to the county sometimes appropriated ideas of farmers, and subsequently presented them as their own. Among specific instances were an idea for a poultry house door, and an improved way of keeping breeding records for dairy cattle. Furthermore, the specialists frequently didn't agree<sup>16</sup> among themselves, which was confusing for the farmer. It led him to pick one specialist, whose advice he followed, and to ignore the rest.

As in Aspen County, there was consensus that FH was knowledgeable, energetic, and that he had done a great deal materially for the county. But there was also an undercurrent of at least latent dissatisfaction with his methods. The same personal criticisms, such as verbosity, poor speech delivery, and a tendency to monopolize any social or technical meeting, were common to both counties.

Among the authority group leaders, there was some bitterness at the agent's neglect; but as before, it seemed that intergroup animosity in the county was more pronounced than any direct criticism of the agent. For example, a

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<sup>16</sup>Some evidence of this confusion was found in Aspen County, where some farmers had been faced with Bang's disease in their herds, and received conflicting advice from dairy specialists, college veterinarians, and local veterinarians. The farmers found this extremely frustrating.



leader in Area III was very harsh in his description of Mennonite behavior, but full of praise for FH, even though he knew that FH worked very closely with the group he disliked. Here again, as in Aspen, FH, through strategic use of his services,<sup>17</sup> escaped personal recriminations resulting from inter-group tensions. The PMA chairman put it this way, "I'll say this, FH never refuses me any information or gives me any trouble when I ask for something--but I have to ask. It isn't so with \_\_\_\_\_ (the young Mennonite protege mentioned above) and the rest of that bunch. They get things without asking. That's the big difference right in a nutshell."

The feed store and creamery owners were fulsome in their praise of FH, and regarded themselves as his closest confidants. Though not farmers themselves, their business had prospered mightily since the Extension program had been introduced. Any Extension project which appeared likely to further increase their volume, or add a new commodity to the market<sup>18</sup> was likely to receive their support.

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<sup>17</sup>He assiduously visited this Area III leader, who was himself a retired Forest Service employee, and saw to it that he received all the help he needed.

<sup>18</sup>The feed store owner was the sparkplug behind FH's growing broiler program, and he even arranged private financing for farmers if necessary to get them started.

F. Image of the County by the Agent<sup>19</sup>

FH discussed his activities in Oak County in a manner exuding confidence and self-assurance. He felt that his initial effort in introducing the special dairy breed had provided the key to continued success within the county. In discussion, he referred to several power group leaders as his "lieutenants," and confided that the county really ran itself without much attention on his part. However, he was very careful to keep in touch with events, mainly relying upon the creamery and feed store owners for assessments and evaluations of local happenings.

In practice, his own attitude was inclined to be paternalistic.<sup>20</sup> He tried to plan his Extension projects strategically, or as he put it, "when I feel they are ready for them." This, to him, was principally a matter of timing, which depended upon his private estimate of the

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<sup>19</sup>Since FH's attitude toward the State Extension Office has already been noted in the corresponding section under Aspen County, it will not be repeated here.

<sup>20</sup>For example, at one Extension district meeting attended by the investigator, he brought two Mennonite women along as Oak County representatives. At certain times, he prompted each of them to make remarks on issues being discussed, and if they faltered or seemed to wander in their presentations, he coached them deftly by "putting words in their mouths," or by clarifying some vague point himself.

"right moment." Such an orientation was in line with FH's basic image of the job of county agent. He believed that even his own exceptional technical knowledge would avail him little if he did not have a certain "feel" for his work. "An agent," he said, "should have ninety-five per cent of his training in psychology, and the rest of it in subject matter." It was evident that he regarded his own handling of Oak County as a concrete example of his psychological competence.

If he was aware of the rumblings of discontent among some of his proteges and among certain authority group leaders, he never indicated as much. He felt he understood the Mennonites culturally, and that in terms of control he was pretty generally in the dominant position. This was not to say that he had little respect for the power groups, but rather that he had evaluated their structure and action patterns so well that he could convert their strengths into his own. In return for his "adoption" by the power group community, he made all of their causes his own, and had always been quick to rise to their defense against outside threats.<sup>21</sup> Here were at least the rudiments of a gemeinschaft relationship.

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<sup>21</sup>This is a good example of building "social capital" by constructing a network of mutual obligation.

On the other hand, his image of other county groups was sketchy. In fact, his only direct reference to the Board of Supervisors was that he sometimes had difficulty getting them to contribute "their share" of Extension financial support in comparison with Aspen County.<sup>22</sup> Since most of them were non-farmers, living outside the major agricultural areas, FH had little motivation or opportunity for interaction with them. Furthermore, his general antipathy toward agricultural organizations over which he had neither direct nor indirect control encouraged a lack of cooperation with PMA, which he regarded as a lurking threat to his own position and influence. Since he could not formally dissolve it, he could informally circumscribe it by avoidance, and by substituting his own program wherever possible.

In the final analysis, then, FH chose to work mainly with the power groups in both counties. His modus operandi in Oak was perhaps an intensified version of his approach to Aspen, where he had to deal with more heterogeneous elements. For this reason, he devoted more time to the latter county, even though his basic aims and techniques were the same in both situations.

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<sup>22</sup>By general agreement, Aspen contributed between two-thirds and three-quarters of the total Extension appropriation.

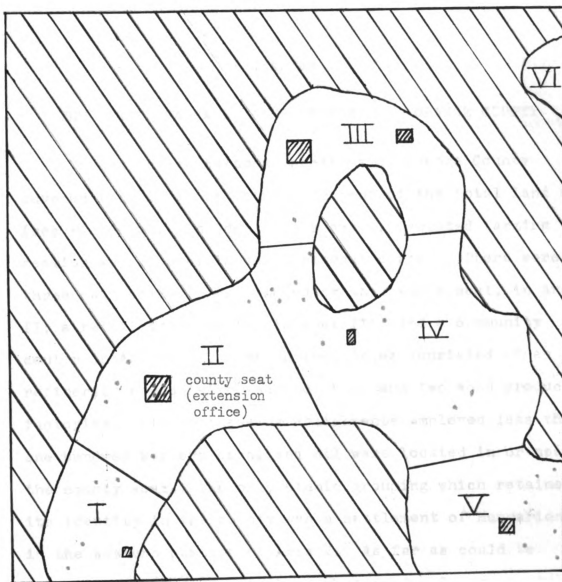
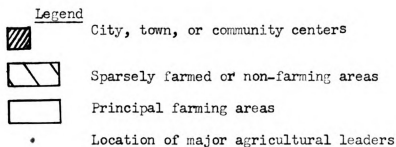


Figure 6. ORANGE COUNTY



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## CHAPTER IX

### THE FIRST LOW-RATED AGENT SITUATION--ORANGE COUNTY

The major agricultural sections of Orange County covered roughly about thirty per cent of the total land area (see Figure 6). In addition, a small, isolated farming section was located in the northeast corner. There were three main communities, including the county seat, in Area II; a retail trade center in Area III; and a community center in Area V. The major industries consisted of an oil refinery,<sup>1</sup> a precision machine shop, and two wood products factories. All of these establishments employed less than one hundred workers each, and all were located in or near the county seat. The only ethnic grouping which retained its identity in the county was a settlement of Hungarians in the western portion of Area V. As far as could be determined, this group took no organized role in county activities, although it sometimes acted as a bloc in township affairs.

While the county seat was the focal point of agricultural activity within the county, the leadership was

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<sup>1</sup>A number of oil wells were in production, concentrated in Area II. Most of these were fairly old wells, with small volume, but at the time of the study, a number of new drillings were under way.

distributed quite evenly in the several areas, with the exception of III and VI. Areas I and V tended to have the kind of locality self-identification which was observed in sections of Aspen and Oak Counties. Area V, especially, had a leader group composed of three households within one family, which was one of the largest beef breeders in the county. This family had considerable influence and power within the area, including fairly good rapport with the Hungarian ethnic settlements. In terms of the control group types, the authority group leaders were found mostly in Areas II and IV, while the power group leaders were about equally distributed in Areas I, II, IV, and V.

#### A. The Structure of Organized Agriculture

As in the agent situation described in the preceding chapter, it was found that the agricultural organizations in Orange County could be aligned into power and authority classifications. These are shown in Table V.

Town-centered power groups. The Farm Bureau Purchasing Cooperative performed marketing and supply services for the entire county. Through it, for example, farmers could sell grain, seed, and eggs for prices prevailing at the nearest market centers, and could purchase a wide variety of feed, fertilizer, construction materials, and machinery. The

TABLE V

CONTROL ORIENTATION AND LOCUS OF ORGANIZED AGRICULTURE  
IN ORANGE COUNTY, 1953

Functional Locale	Control Type	
	Power	Authority
Town-centered	Farm Bureau Purchasing Cooperative	FHA County Committee
	Bank	
	County Newspaper	
	Chamber of Commerce	
	County Fair Board*	
Country- centered	DHIA*	
	ABA #1	
	ABA #2*	
	Dairy Breed Association*	
Mixed	Agricultural Advisory Council*	Agricultural Resources Conser- vation Committee*
	Beef Calf Association	
	Livestock Exchange	PMA
	Dairy Cattle Cooperative	Soil Conservation District
	Farm Bureau	Board of Supervisors

\*These organizations were not actively functioning at the time of this study, September, 1953.



organization had led an independent existence for many years, although it had experienced financial difficulties several times. However, for the past four years it had been affiliated with Farm Bureau Services, which had provided a specially trained manager to institute efficient operational procedures into the organization. Although the Board of Directors seldom participated in daily business affairs, it retained considerable autonomy over local policy matters, and it had administrative control over the manager, including payment of his salary.

The bank, one of two in the county seat,<sup>2</sup> did a large amount of business with farmers. Being centrally located, it served as a kind of "clearing house" for information and opinion, in addition to providing financial resources.<sup>3</sup>

None of the current bank officers were farmers, although the president had operated a beef ranch until 1952. The county weekly newspaper had also been owned by the bank president for many years, but he had recently sold it to the present younger editor, who was paying for it on an

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<sup>2</sup>Just prior to the study, the second bank became insolvent and was forced to cease operations pending legal investigation of its financial activities.

<sup>3</sup>These functions were similar to those rendered in Oak County by the feed store and the creamery.

installment basis. The paper had excellent circulation throughout the county and devoted considerable space to agricultural news, feature columns, and technical information.

The Chamber of Commerce was composed chiefly of merchants and businessmen who were located in the county seat. There were no full-time farmers among its leadership, although there were two men<sup>4</sup> who operated farms in addition to town enterprises. The main purpose of the organization was to discover ways and means of increasing the business volume and income of its members, and to publicize the virtues and advantages of Orange County.

The Fair Board's history was difficult to trace. Although the fair was begun for the benefit of 4-H clubs, town-centered leaders claimed that rural people had failed to contribute time and money, and had depended upon townspeople to do most of the work. Since the fair usually

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<sup>4</sup>One of them revealed that while he now spent most of his time in his town office, he "thought more like a farmer." He sharply criticized many of the businessmen for what he termed "looking down their noses" at farmers. He resented this even though he had more town contacts than rural ones. This man had a good deal of what might be termed "attitude ambivalence." When questioned directly about his views and loyalties he was equivocal in his answers, and attempted to avoid direct commitments. When other informants were asked where this man stood on particular issues, both power and authority leaders were unsure of his position. None were positive he was on "their" side. Thus he tended to be somewhat isolated in group situations involving confidential relations among leaders.

showed a financial loss, these town leaders had come to feel it was not worth perpetuating. The farmer leaders, on the other hand, believed that the townspeople were "not civic-minded" about the fair, and were trying to turn it into a carnival for the sake of profit. The farmers thus refused to support the Fair Board for what they deemed "undesirable" practices. Besides this impasse, the fair grounds itself was in need of repairs, but there was no concerted effort to put up money for the necessary work.

Country-centered power groups. The data in Table V indicates that most of the dairy production organizations were dormant. This was partly due to a shift from dairy to beef cattle on many farms. Therefore, county-wide interest in dairy products was at a relatively low point at the time of the study. Since many leaders were involved in the transition, they devoted less time than formerly to dairy production groups.<sup>5</sup>

The DHIA and the Dairy Breed Association had been closely identified with one another. The dairy breed was the same one which agent FH had introduced into Aspen

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<sup>5</sup>However, due to the decline in beef prices, many farmers who had turned to beef cattle at the price peak were now uncertain about future plans. Some felt they would return to dairy as soon as they could because of milk's greater price stability.

County, but there were fewer breeders of this type in Orange County. As interest in the breed declined over the years, it reflected in the shrinking size of DHIA, to which all Dairy Breed Association members belonged.<sup>6</sup> At the time of the study, regular meetings of both groups had been discontinued, and the panels of officers remained constant almost by default. Both ABA organizations had experienced alternate improvement and decline over the past decade, with the #2 group, which was concentrated in Areas IV and V, having disbanded in 1952. Some farmers in these Areas received service from ABA groups in neighboring counties. The ABA leaders tended to be smaller and less prosperous farmers than those in DHIA and the Dairy Breed Association. Several leaders were active in both organizations, but since most of the larger dairy farmers kept their own bulls, they used artificial insemination less than many who had small herds.

Mixed power groups. The Agricultural Advisory Council, along with its authority group counterpart, the Agricultural Resources Conservation Committee, was composed of representatives of various other organizations in the agricul-

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<sup>6</sup>As previously mentioned, one of the requirements for raising purebreds in the special breed was active participation in a DHIA unit.

tural structure. Its purpose was to get diversified leadership opinion in the planning of county programs. But the difficulty of getting members to meetings, plus their indefinite roles in the group resulted in abandonment of formal meetings after the initial organizational session was held.

The Beef Calf Association and the Livestock Exchange represented much the same individuals. It is significant that both were marketing organizations, as contrasted with the production organizations of the country-centered type.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, both were devoted to beef, whereas the declining production organizations were concentrated in dairy breeds. The yearly auction of the Beef Calf Association, in particular, had become in about five years an event of regional importance. Buyers throughout Michigan attended, along with many from neighboring states. Price trends were directly influenced by those established at the sale. Most of the leaders of the two beef marketing groups were among the largest farmers in the county,<sup>8</sup> and several were members

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<sup>7</sup>This may well illustrate a long-range shift in emphasis within organized agriculture. Marketing-type goals are superseding production-type goals. This trend has been recognized and encouraged by government as well as "grass roots" leaders.

<sup>8</sup>The Beef Calf Association had grown so rapidly that its membership now included several counties. Some directors of the Association thus came from "outside," although the central leadership remained in Orange County.

of other power groups.

The Dairy Cattle Cooperative was only a year old at the time of the study, and was formed as a marketing equivalent of the beef organizations. It was composed mainly of non-power group leaders who were trying to find an outlet for surplus dairy animals and feeder stock. Its operations were still in the formative stage and were on a comparatively small scale.

The Farm Bureau was by far the largest power group in the county. Although some of its directors were among the older, well-established power leaders in the county, there were newer young workers who were even more active. Meetings and neighborhood group discussions were scheduled and held with regularity, and members were rewarded with such benefits as low-rate hospital insurance. These benefits proved to be a powerful attraction for many rural people.

From the preceding description of power groups, it is apparent that there has been some interlocking of leadership among them, as illustrated by Figure 7. It can be seen that the only organizations without formal linkage to others were the Chamber of Commerce and the Dairy Cattle Cooperative. However, prior to 1953, the president of the bank had been an officer in the Chamber of Commerce for

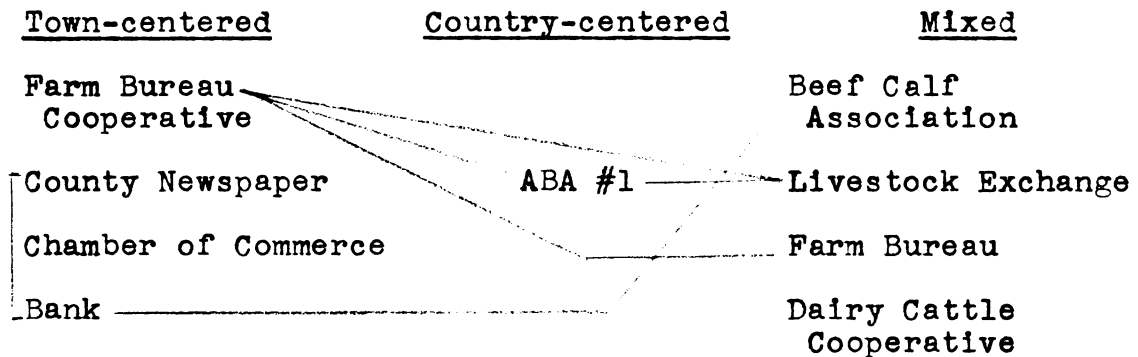


Figure 7. Interlocking leadership of active agricultural power groups in Orange County, 1953.

many years. Of course, formal power linkage would include the Chamber if some of the dormant groups, such as the Advisory Council and the Fair Board were reactivated. The lack of linkage for the Dairy Cooperative, however, was of another order. Its leaders were chiefly those who had positions in the authority group structure, and who had formed the dairy organization in emulation of the power-group leaders in beef who were not greatly concerned about marketing dairy animals. As one dairy group leader put it, "The beef boys have had it all their own way for a long time. They built their calf and steer auctions into a big thing. We figured dairymen better do something like that, too, before we got snowed under." As a result of these commodity differences, no major county power leaders were found among the officers of the dairy cooperative, at least up to the time the study was made.

The authority group structure was less unified than that of the power groups, even though the number of organizations was smaller.<sup>9</sup> This was true in spite of the fact that the FHA, PMA, and SCD headquarters were all located in the same building as the Extension Service, and could thus supply farmers with easy access to available government services. The main function of the FHA County Committee was to advise the local administrator on federal loan policy in the county. This was mainly a task of technical interpretation of regulations, and to make recommendations for changes in such regulations. The FHA administrator, a government employee, had general responsibility for carrying out the actual loan program.

The Agricultural Resources Conservation Committee contained representatives from all of the authority groups, but it had never gotten beyond the formative stage. Although the individual members thought that the committee might eventually serve a vital unifying function, they were too preoccupied with their own activities to devote much time to such an objective.

The PMA committee had no professional employees, but

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<sup>9</sup>Since there were so few authority groups, the locus classification has been ignored in the text.



did support one full-time office clerk. The current chairman had been associated with both PMA and its predecessor, AAA, ever since their inception, and thought of himself as primarily a public official. The other committeemen were fairly small farmers, and two of them had non-farm jobs to supplement their income. Since they had been elected to office by the farmers at large, they considered this a mandate to carry out the regulations as literally as possible. The chairman spent considerably more time on PMA work than the other committee members.

The SCD committee of four members contained two who were active in power groups, and two who were not. All were thoroughly convinced, personally, of the value of conservation work, and used various practices extensively on their farms. One SCS technician was under the jurisdiction of this SCD committee, although he was responsible for the technical aspects of his work to the SCS hierarchy, and he made his work reports to them. The committee held monthly meetings in the technician's office and were paid a nominal fee for their services by the federal government. The technician functioned much like a county agent, in terms of setting up individual farm conservation plans, dispensing bulletins, and arranging demonstrations of practices.

The Board of Supervisors, as in Aspen County, consisted of a considerable number (five out of eleven) of non-farmer members who lived and worked in towns and community centers. As will be shown in a later section of the chapter, some rural-town differences were present on the Board, which led to sharp rifts, extending to numerous issues. Since the Board had many kinds of duties and problems, agriculture was handled by a special committee, which was mainly concerned with the disposition of the budget submitted annually by the Extension Service for local travel and office expense. The Board itself was not directly involved in shaping agricultural policy, except insofar as county funds might be involved.

The interlocking leadership chart was as follows:

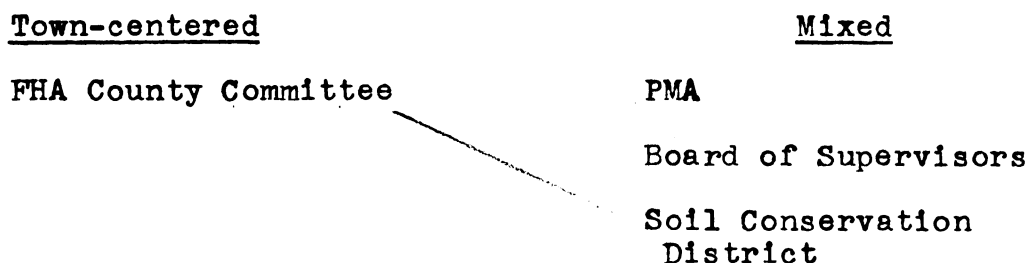


Figure 8. Interlocking leadership of active agricultural authority groups in Orange County, 1953.

Thus, at the time of the study, only two authority groups were formally linked, although several lines of connection

would come into being if the Resources Conservation Committee were to become active.

"Cross-leadership." Although there was a definite division of leadership along power and authority lines in Orange County, there was a striking "cross-membership" in the two types of groups which counteracted this division. Thus the leadership structure was far from symmetrical with the control typology, as shown in the following chart:

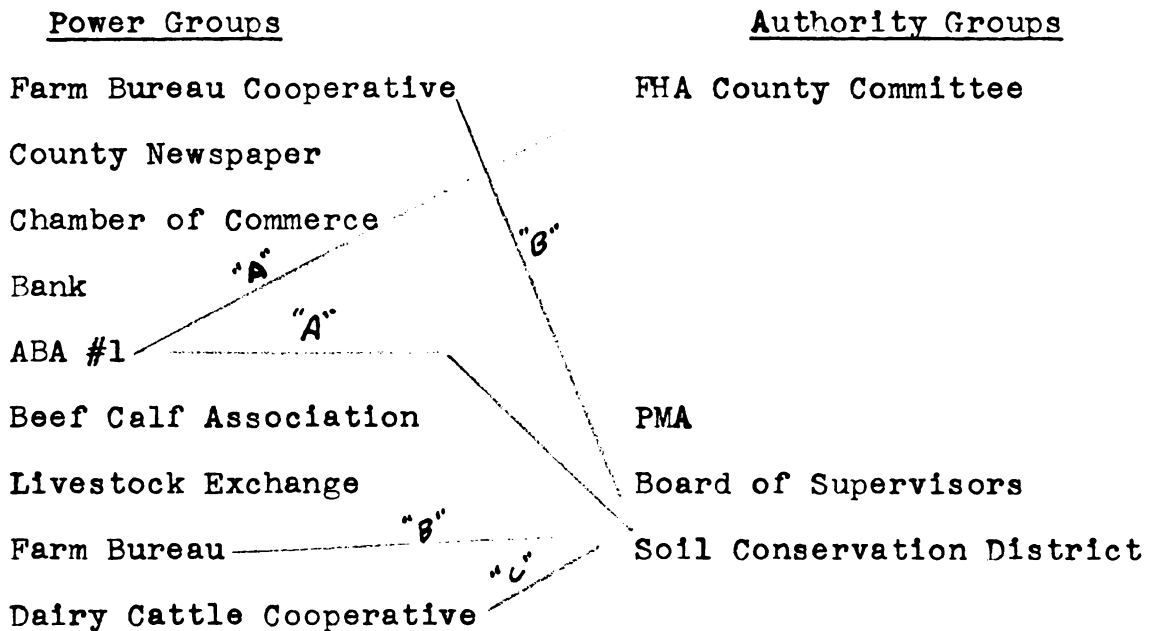


Figure 9. "Cross-leadership" among power and authority group leaders in Orange County, 1953.

The "cross-leadership" lines were actually represented by three individuals, only one of whom felt he was decidedly

in the authority group structure.<sup>10</sup> For two of the leaders involved, their "cross-leadership" resulted in uncertainty as to their control position in the entire organizational structure, and produced some ambivalence in their behavior. The chart below indicates the manner in which the "cross-leadership" occurred:

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Power Group</u>	<u>Authority Group</u>
"A"	ABA Director	SCD Director
"A"	ABA Director	FHA Committeeman
"B"	Farm Bureau County Chairman	SCD Director
"B"	Farm Bureau Cooperative Director	SCD Director
"C"	Dairy Cooperative Director	SCD Director

Figure 10. Delineation of "cross-leadership,"  
Orange County, 1953.

#### B. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Power Groups

The power group leadership was considerably unified at the formal level, and the town-country differences were minimized, except in the one case of the Fair Board. Two

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<sup>10</sup>This was "C," whose power group affiliation was outside the main power structure.

consequences of this unity were that the power groups had geographical and instrumental access to most of the farmers of the county, and that they were not only numerically superior to the authority groups, but had access to more operational resources.

Town-centered power groups. Among the power group leaders, there was very little friction, since all appeared to have a community of interest which was openly expressed. Said the bank president, "This idea of the town fighting the country folks is nonsense. We're for the whole county. Anybody who tells you different is trying to stir up trouble, or just doesn't know the facts." The bank and the newspaper, while not specifically agricultural in themselves, were potent factors in making decisions affecting agriculture, and through various kinds of pressures<sup>11</sup> could influence the outcome of practically any public issue. The president of the bank had long been a key figure in Orange County. He was not, he said, "a friend to all men," but he did have personal contacts with most of the power group leaders, and at least an acquaintance with many of the authority group leaders. Having been a beef farmer for several years, he

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<sup>11</sup>By controlling the granting of loans and credit, editorial writing, publicity coverage, etc.

had been active in starting the Beef Calf Association with a few other large breeders. The newspaper editor mentioned that he "often consulted" with the bank president and other town leaders on issues and policies before taking a stand in print. He had little personal regard for government programs generally,<sup>12</sup> and mentioned several authority group leaders as being "radicals" and troublemakers."

Some members of the Chamber of Commerce, such as farm implement dealers, had direct dealings with farmers occupationally, but most of the merchants made no distinctions among their over-the-counter customers. The only conscious effort at town-country cooperation was an annual Farmer-Merchant Stag Day,<sup>13</sup> which was sponsored annually by the Chamber of Commerce.

The Farm Bureau Purchasing Cooperative's directors were almost entirely power group leaders, who replenished their ranks by nepotism, and by the careful hand-picking of new men. Three of the directors were following their

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<sup>12</sup>He even felt that the Extension Service was spreading itself too thin, and that it should spend its time mostly with "good farmers on good land," and not try to keep marginal farmers on poor land. This latter effort was, he believed, a waste of time and money, and if these poor producers were "smart" they would leave farming on their own volition.

<sup>13</sup>According to many of the participants, this event was largely an opportunity to imbibe liquor freely under a socially acceptable pretext.

fathers in the same jobs, while the latest addition to the board was the fairly young (early forties) chairman of the County Farm Bureau. As the Chairman of the Cooperative board of directors described the latter, "We needed a new man, and the Farm Bureau Chairman seemed to be the best one around. He's young, but he gets in on a lot of things. He's a little unsure of himself, but he won't be quite as nervous later on with us older fellows as he is now." Since the Beef Breeders Association and Farm Bureau were well-represented in the cooperative's leadership, its policies reflect the attitudes of these organizations.

Country-centered power groups. As mentioned previously, the dairy production groups grew weaker as marketing groups became stronger. Since three of the groups had ceased operations, little hope was expressed among leaders for their rejuvenation. As one farmer stated, "I don't think our county is in that kind of agriculture any more. The DHIA went out because we didn't need it." This kind of attitude was coupled with the continual difficulty of getting and keeping herd testers for DHIA and inseminators for ABA. There were many criticisms by farmers of poor performance on the part of these special workers, and there were rumors of misappropriation of funds, discrimination, and herd losses. The testers and inseminators, on the

other hand, claimed they were not paid enough in either salary or expenses, that their working hours were too erratic, and that the attitude of the farmer clients was overbearing and excessively critical.<sup>14</sup> The last active president of the DHIA declared that the "swing to beef" had hurt the organization, and that it would not start up again unless there was more demand for it than presently existed. The Dairy Breed Association could not function effectively without a DHIA, so that its scattered members were forced to carry on as individuals, and to get tests whenever and wherever they could. Some of them had begun a cooperative system of bulk milk shipments in a refrigerated tank truck in order to help solve their problems of dispersion and isolation from central markets.

It was quite evident that, taken as a whole, the dairy production organizations in Orange County were neither vigorous nor influential. Most of their leaders, however, were active in other power groups through which they made their influence felt more effectively.

Mixed power groups. Although there were some signs

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<sup>14</sup>This kind of criticism was found to some extent in Aspen County, but it had not reached the state of mutual recrimination which was present in Orange County.



of a rift between the Chairman<sup>15</sup> of the Beef Calf Association and several other power leaders on county issues such as taxation and school consolidation, this had not become an open break, at least at the time of the study. These men had great pride in the success of their auctions and they were not too disheartened by slumping beef prices. Unlike most of the smaller farmers who had gone into beef during a period of inflated prices and who had lost heavily, the beef leaders were there to stay and had the resources to overcome what they termed a "stabilizing slump."<sup>16</sup> Of all the mixed-locale groups, these beef marketing associations had the closest formal and informal ties with the town-centered power groups.

Many of the leaders of Farm Bureau community groups

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<sup>15</sup>This man was a state legislator who owned the largest beef ranch in the county. He had been a prime mover in starting the Association, and had been elected chairman every year since its inception. Since he was out of the county most of the time, his sons represented him as community leaders. They were not held in high regard throughout the county as farmers, but held the general respect of most leaders because of their father's position. The sons worked up a strong neighborhood leadership, but did not participate much in county-wide organizations. Much of their personal animosity was directed at the president of the bank whom they felt was trying to "run the county," including their own locality.

<sup>16</sup>Some of these leaders actually welcomed the slump as a way to weed out marginal producers. They felt that only the "real" beef men would remain.

were young people, usually married couples, who undertook many clerical and administrative responsibilities seemingly without monetary recompense.<sup>17</sup> The Farm Bureau leaders, via state conferences, regional meetings, mailed literature, and traveling representatives, kept themselves and their members in fairly close touch with organizational activities in the upper echelons. But, as one of the young "dedicated" leaders put it, "You can get people to meetings if you work on them enough, but they usually won't say much even if they do show up. If they don't stand up and holler, you can usually figure they'll go along on a thing."

As a fairly typical instance of how the Farm Bureau functioned on the purely "grass roots" level, the investigator attended a regular meeting of a community group in Area IV. About a dozen people were present (one half of total membership) at the home of an enthusiastic young leader and his wife. A state Farm Bureau publication was used as a text for discussion. Conservation and credit were the pre-determined topics for the meeting. Most of those present had little detailed knowledge of these subjects and their comments were vague and halting. While they spoke against almost every kind of governmental

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<sup>17</sup>The ABA inseminator and his wife in Aspen County were similarly immersed in Farm Bureau work.

agency in principle, especially PMA and FHA, yet later in the meeting several members complained of the difficulty of getting private credit and paying for farm improvements. They did not conceive these two viewpoints as related. They endorsed the officially expressed Farm Bureau position on free enterprise and exclusive reliance on supply and demand to control prices, but their concomitant criticisms of present conditions suggested a lack of faith in these ideas as solutions to their own problems of high costs. They talked of "economy" on the national level, yet felt that farmers, per se, "deserved a good living," and that ways must be found at any cost to insure this. They seemed to have an overall faith that the Farm Bureau on the upper levels could, and would, find answers to their problems even if they themselves were unable to discover any. The meeting covered its topics methodically, according to the printed guide, and the members unanimously endorsed the Farm Bureau resolutions on conservation and credit. Thus the "grass roots," at least in this case, seemed to involve little more than a legitimation of the position already taken at higher levels of the organizations.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>One of the chief criticisms of the Farm Bureau by non-members, especially authority group leaders, was that opinions were "handed down" from the top, and then made to appear as if they had come from the bottom first. Likewise, as in Aspen County, it was claimed that many Farm Bureau members were in the organization only for the health insurance privileges.

If this example was any criterion of such meetings, the power orientation of the Farm Bureau would need little further documentation in terms of the way in which members were influenced. The road was always carefully left open for dissent via discussion and voting, but the average member had few subject matter resources with which to even question the official organizational presentation of facts and issues. Thus the Farm Bureau county leaders were supplied with numerous mass media and prestige tools for preserving the notion of "grass roots" democracy with respect to Farm Bureau activities. Nevertheless, none of the county leaders showed anything but sincerity in carrying out their jobs, and they were thoroughly convinced that their methods were in keeping with the best tradition of majority rule. Yet, as an opinion-minded group, the Farm Bureau singled out several authority groups as specific targets,<sup>19</sup> and so was in the forefront of the conflicts among the two types of groups. Since it took definite stands on such matters, it was in turn the target of attack by these groups and those who sympathized with them.

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<sup>19</sup>Although the Farm Bureau was opposed to FHA in principle, most of the county leaders, whatever their affiliations, had high regard for the work of the county FHA administrator. This was another case of discrepancy between a general idea and the personification of that idea in real people and situations.

The Dairy Cattle Cooperative was something of an anomaly among the power groups. As a unit, it was largely ignored by the rest of the power structure and there was no interlocking leadership in which it was involved. However, repressive actions<sup>20</sup> by the major power structure indicated that it was sensitive to even minor threats from new sources.

As a whole, the behavior of the power group leadership of Orange County represented a well-knit set of interactive patterns. There were some stresses, particularly among individuals on specific matters, but these were not powerful enough to destroy long established affinities. Every one of the power leaders interviewed was a full-time farmer, and practically all of them had substantial incomes and social status by observed county standards. While the shift from dairy to beef had taken a heavy toll of the dairy production groups, it had compensated for this by strengthening beef marketing groups, which served the leadership equally well. Most of the power group leaders were able to identify the authority group leaders as "outsiders" or as "not one of us," and often considered them

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<sup>20</sup>There was a movement within the beef group to deny the rental of its pens to the dairy group for their annual sale, and the latter contemplated moving future sales to the fair grounds.

as inefficient, radical, or just not bona fide farmers. They were secure in their own sense of control, but were alert for competition from either the authority groups or the latter's power offshoots.

### C. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Authority Groups

The chief linkage among the authority groups was through considerable office visiting among the personnel, and all agreed that their sheer proximity to one another, if nothing else, had increased their cooperative interaction. Of all the groups, the PMA was probably the least interactive with the others. Most of its farmer committeemen were in the office rarely, except for periodic meetings.

FHA. The FHA administrator had considerable leeway in interpreting and carrying out FHA statutes and regulations. He numbered several power and authority group leaders among his clients, and he seemed to be personally popular in leadership circles generally. This acceptance might have been deemed unusual for an official whose work was at least partially bureaucratic, and who dealt largely with those farmers unable to get funds from commercial sources. However, investment capital was usually scarce in Orange County, and the private lenders were only too glad

to have a government agency either assume or insure the marginal risks.<sup>21</sup> The FHA was not so much a group activity as it was a relationship between individuals, and each application was decided on its own merits. The administrator, while popular, tried scrupulously to stay out of other county activities which might compromise his position of impartiality. No matter how friendly he might be on off hours, he made a point of being "all business"<sup>22</sup> when on the job.

PMA. Of the authority groups, PMA was the subject of most controversy. To the power group leaders, particularly the Farm Bureau, it epitomized "non-American" ideas of wasteful expenditures, bureaucracy, and coercion of individual freedom. The PMA committeemen felt that the PMA system of elections was fair and democratic, and that they were acting as spokesmen for the so-called "little fellows." They were well aware of Farm Bureau opposition, and the reasoning behind it, but believed they were more realistic

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<sup>21</sup>The bank president, for example, praised the FHA administrator's work highly, and did not feel that it competed at all with his institution.

<sup>22</sup>As he phrased it, "When they walk in that (office) door, I want them to forget I'm \_\_\_\_\_, and to think of me as somebody they never saw before. Some of them may not like it, but I don't mean to have any favorites."

about the facts than their opponents were, and that government participation in agriculture was not only expanding in practice, but that it was desirable in principle in order to eliminate economic cycles. There was a tendency, also noticed in Aspen and Oak Counties, for these authority leaders to cultivate as much of a "vested interest" in their jobs as the power leaders had in theirs. While their substantive and ideological differences might be great, the psychological attitudes of these individuals toward their jobs were quite similar.<sup>23</sup>

PMA also had one of its committeemen<sup>24</sup> in the Farm Bureau who kept the authority group leaders up-to-date on power group thinking. The PMA chairman had little regard for official Farm Bureau opinion, believing it to be parrot-like repetition of directives from state and national leaders. The aims of PMA were to prevent its own absorption by other authority and/or power groups, and to preserve as

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<sup>23</sup>PMA and Farm Bureau committeemen, although poles apart on policy, expressed the same kind of dedication to their work, and both said categorically that they would feel "hurt" and "let down" if their group membership had voted them out of office in favor of a newcomer.

<sup>24</sup>The PMA chairman did not identify this person, but said such action was necessary to preserve his own group from surprise maneuvers by the oppositions. This procedure was remarkably similar to the one which the Farm Bureau used on the PMA in Aspen County. Obviously, such tactics could be used in either direction.



many of the practices and payments which were the cornerstone of its activity. Since these aims were being resisted, the PMA leaders found themselves being drawn toward power-type practices in order to retain their identity.<sup>25</sup> As a group, however, they had little organized effort outside their functions.

SCD. The Soil Conservation District Committee illustrated a degree of ambivalence not encountered in previous power and authority groups. The nature of this ambivalence was well illustrated by the leadership activities of the current chairman (see Figure 9). He had also been previously an officer in the Farm Bureau, of which he was an original county member, and secretary of the inactive DHIA. This extraordinary amount of group activity created divided loyalties which prevented a consistent line of thought and action. Although most of the "grass roots" leaders of all groups knew this man well, many were doubtful about "where he stood" on specific issues.<sup>26</sup> Some disliked his ubiquitous presence at meetings and believed he was in these

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<sup>25</sup>The PMA chairman also confided that several PMA committees in the neighboring counties had created an "informal group" to exchange ideas and information and to discuss possible joint courses of action.

<sup>26</sup>See footnote 4, page 201, for similar example.

groups more for his own enjoyment than for any public objective. As one authority group leader summed it up, "Old \_\_\_\_\_ growls and talks a lot, but when you come right down to it, he doesn't do very much. He gets a lot of these jobs because he's the only feller around here you can be sure will take 'em."

Discussion with this almost "professional leader" revealed that he regarded himself as an "independent." He criticized the bank president and the Farm Bureau, and supported PMA policies in general. He felt that a "committee of three to five farmers" should have overall control of agriculture and be responsible only to the people of the county. He was well off financially, took winter vacations in Florida, and served on many organizations because he "like to keep active and have a hand in what's going on." Thus what his critics termed a confusion of sentiment, he considered to be a breadth of approach far removed from narrow partisanship.

Another ambivalent SCD director was, at the same time, a Farm Bureau director. Even though, on a national level, the SCS and Farm Bureau were at swords points, this individual was as enthusiastic about one program as he was about the other. To him, the control orientation differences simply did not exist, or if they did exist, they were

solved on the level of concrete' participation rather than the level of ideology.

Since both of these men identified themselves more with the dominant power group leaders than with any others, their soil conservation interests had to be justified on the basis of technical desirability rather than in terms of any group organizational principles.

The two remaining committeemen were definitely outside of the power structure as far as interaction was concerned, except for the fact that one of them had been a key figure in organizing the dairy cattle cooperative. The farm planner, who was under the jurisdiction of the SCD committee, was a bureaucratically-oriented person whose main concern was keeping his office files up to date and seeing that farmers accomplished their paper-work properly. He had difficulty in getting people to use their farm plans once they were drawn up, but felt it was not his duty to "push" them. He consciously remained in the background,<sup>27</sup> and preferred to let the "grass roots" leaders take the

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<sup>27</sup>At a Soil Conservation demonstration in laying drainage tile, he took no active part in the proceedings, leaving descriptions and announcements to the tile manufacturer's representative, who handed out souvenir pencils and company literature, and made a short speech describing and praising his own product. Only at the insistence of the county agent did the farm planner say a few words into the microphone.

policy lead. He said that whenever he was confronted with a difficult procedural problem, he consulted with his administrative superiors in SCS for suggestions or solutions. This avoidance of publicity and lack of aggressiveness resulted in much criticism of the planner as "inefficient" or that he was a "book man," and therefore too rigid. Even the SCD committeemen expressed these sentiments. However, it was obvious that the planner, by choice, was quite passive with respect to the power groups, and that the SCD committee had a more pronounced power orientation itself, in terms of leadership, than any other county authority groups.

Board of Supervisors. As a whole, the Board had a reputation for being "stingy," even for what its critics termed "good" causes. There were several young men on it, and also several who were termed "radicals." Five power leaders had a vociferously low opinion of the Board, and one claimed that the representative from his own township was a "communist." However, since the Board had no continuous activity in agriculture, despite its standing agricultural committee, the power leaders were inclined to ignore it. However, two of the authority group leaders, both of whom were actively antagonistic to the power groups, were supervisors and served on the agricultural committee.

The following incident served to accentuate the county cleavage between the power and authority groups. Two men, one a power group leader through the Farm Bureau and informal personal connections in the county seat, and the other an "outsider" who had been living in the neighborhood for only seven years, were contending for township representative on the Board of Supervisors. The major issue was school consolidation of this township with the county seat. The power group man was in favor of the move, while his opponent was against it. Much campaigning and name-calling were engaged in by both factions, and even some fisticuffs. As township opinion coalesced around the candidates, it was found that most of the smaller, part-time farmers, and also the PMA committee chairman who lived in the township, rallied behind the "outsider." While the larger, more prosperous farmers were supporters of the power group candidate. The first group represented more votes, and the "outsider" won by a handy margin. The important fact was that the school issue was not of supreme importance. It merely brought out all the latent hostility which various groups had for one another in the community at large. Both candidates, when interviewed, expressed bitter feelings about the opposition, even though the election had been over for six months. Thus, from several points of view,

the power leaders had few friendly feelings for the Board of Supervisors, and reviled them with great candor.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, the authority groups themselves were almost as different from one another as they were from the dominant power structure. This conclusion was borne out in Figure 8, which showed little interlocking leadership. When the authority group leaders clashed with power group leaders, it was usually with reference to a particular problem or occurrence, rather than a county-wide struggle. Furthermore, the attitudes of the authority group leaders was not so different from those of the power groups with respect to their concepts of control. It was more a case of the "outs" trying to break the power of the "ins." There was a marked difference, for example, in the "purer" authority type represented by the farm planner, as con-

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<sup>28</sup>The defeated candidate said, "Those reactionaries (as he labelled the opposition) are illiterate. They don't read and don't care if their children do or not." He was quite aware of clique divisions, and considered himself a progressive, as contrasted with the other group. The successful candidate, on the other hand, inveighed heavily against the well-to-do farmers who, he claimed, wanted to run the whole show. He felt conscious of being an "outsider," even though he had lived on his present place for fifteen years. He hadn't wanted to run for supervisor at first, but his friends urged him to do so. The school issue made him so angry he decided to go ahead and campaign. Now that it was over he was glad he won. He thought his friends would now stick together for a while to keep the "old clique" from getting back into control.

trusted with the "mixed" orientation of the SCD committee members. However, as demonstrated, there were variations in the social, economic, and value orientations of the two group types, which reflected their typological differences.

#### D. Interaction of the Agent with Power and Authority Groups

The extent to which FL interacted with the agricultural organizations varied considerably. For many years, his office had been separated from those of other government agencies, but even in the short time since the major units were combined under one roof, some changes occurred. All of the government personnel now had increased face-to-face contact, and could unofficially discuss many problems of common concern. Whether this would lead to any kind of a "united front" was problematical, except on an informal level, but the juxtaposition did seem to produce more cohesion than friction.<sup>29</sup> Better liaison also coordinated action with farmers and resulted in fewer contradictory policies. Thus the new office arrangement did lead to some

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<sup>29</sup>Indeed, the friction among the farmer leaders of these authority agencies was greater than among the respective technicians. This supports the observation that the more bureaucratically-oriented an individual is, the less likely he is to be involved in conflict situations.

increased work efficiency among the agencies. FL himself had been the leader in bringing this consolidation about, perhaps because his agency was the oldest and best known in the county. He was quite pleased with this achievement, showing no jealousy at all over the functions and prerogatives of the other agencies.

FL, himself, had little official contact with either the bank president or the newspaper editor (whose office was located in the same building as his own). He had known the bank president for many years, both as an acquaintance and business customer. He visited the editor quite regularly, since he sent a weekly agricultural column to the paper, and frequently supplied news items and state college agricultural releases for publication. The editor and bank president both said that FL consulted with them often about agricultural matters, and that he had "several others" in the county<sup>30</sup> on whose policy judgment he relied. The editor, in particular, said that FL was "not a man to butt his head against a stone wall," and that he never "pushed" a project of which the leaders of the county did not approve.

The one power group in which FL had no determinable

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<sup>30</sup>They named three merchants, an FB director, and an ABA director.



participation at all was the Farmers Purchasing Cooperative. This was run, seemingly, on an autonomous basis, though taking some policy cues from Farm Bureau Services, Inc., and had its own board of directors. The latter, while made up entirely of power group leaders, remained rather distinct from the other activities of these leaders, whose interest in the organization was traditional,<sup>31</sup> as well as commercial. The actual running of the organization was handled by a full-time manager and staff of employees, who did not participate visibly in other power or authority group activities.

FL had sporadic relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, since he lived right in the county seat, and saw many of the members daily on the street. While he did not attend their regular meetings, he did help to start the annual rural-town banquets sponsored jointly by the Farm Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce. This involved contacting leaders, arranging programs and speaker, and a host of other administrative details. As one merchant said, "FL knew everybody on both sides of the fence" and so was designated as the "logical man to put the thing together."

The town-centered activity to which FL had given most

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<sup>31</sup>Via lineal descent, as previously noted; see p. 213.

of his time was the county fair. He had always promoted 4-H club work, and had devoted much effort to it in the absence of a regular 4-H agent. He helped organize the Fair Board, and served as its chairman for a considerable time. This created for him a heavy load of administrative work and considerable physical exertion. Most of the financial matters and the non-agricultural entertainment were left to the merchants who were board members. This division of labor probably accounted for the different foci of interest among farmers and townspeople, and led to their disagreement on the objectives of the fair. FL tended to side with the rural group on this issue, and thought the fair should be held, even if it showed financial loss. Privately, he was somewhat bitter about the merchants' recent decision to discontinue it. This attitude was dissimilar to that of most of the power group leaders, particularly those living in town. However, FL made no attempt to organize farmer opinion to re-establish the fair, even though he probably would have had receptive ears for such a campaign. Despite his own past investment in time and work, he merely said, "Well, if they don't want it, I'm not going to force them into it."

The country-centered dairy production groups were all quite similar in their relationships with FL. He had

attended their organizational meetings in the mid-forties, but had gradually dropped out of participation. There had been, from the beginning, much friction among the members, and many controversies centering around the paid employees. A study of FL's annual narrative reports from 1947 on showed a continuous series of hirings and firings, disbandings, and membership fluctuations. FL expressed disgust at these occurrences, but did not inject himself into any of the squabbles if he could avoid it. The incessant conflicts were the main reason why he ceased to attend the meetings of these groups, even though his own technical specialty was dairy husbandry.<sup>32</sup> He expressed the opinion that the many verbal battles were giving the whole dairy program a "black eye," but as a technical man, he did not believe it was his place to engage in the controversies, and to publicly take sides. Thus the dairy program as a whole languished, partially because FL did not wish to take aggressive steps to prevent it.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>FL was in frequent demand as a judge of dairy cattle at fairs in neighboring counties.

<sup>33</sup>Whether this was mainly due to lack of energy and deficient initiative, or to a conscious policy of non-involvement as part of FL's image of his job, was not tablished. It was assumed, in terms of FL's rating as an agent by his administrative superiors, that the "personal" deficiencies were operative here. However, the investigator's talks with FL indicated that the second reason should not be discounted, at least until more data has been obtained. FL had made some quite (continued next page)

In his relations with the Beef Calf, Livestock and Dairy Cattle marketing groups, FL was more of a collaborator than an instigator. The germinal ideas for all of these organizations had come from groups of farmers,<sup>34</sup> who then enlisted FL's aid in planning the formal structures. This was especially true of the Beef Calf Association, which utilized FL's organizational assistance, but not much else. He felt constrained to even help shovel out the cattle pens after the auction because of the shortage of workers. He gave practically as much time to the Dairy Cattle Cooperative, despite the fact that its members were not of the dominant power group, and had acted as sales manager for all of the three years it had been in operation.

Following the above pattern of collaboration, rather than origination, FL was asked by a set of power group leaders to help set up a county Farm Bureau. Subsequently, he contacted the state and regional Farm Bureau personnel and sat in on the formative meetings. This was one private

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(continued) rational calculations of the consequences of involvement, and was not unaware of the choice he had to make.

<sup>34</sup>FL stated that the enthusiasm of the members of the Beef Calf Association was "really surprising," and he had not imagined that such enterprises could capture the sustained interest of the people.

organization whose meetings he attended regularly.<sup>35</sup> and he and his wife were actively participating members of a community Farm Bureau group, similar to the one described earlier in this chapter. He seldom took part in the county meetings in his capacity as agent, and was not involved in drawing up Farm Bureau resolutions or recommendations. He felt he was a citizen member, rather than a leadership member through his occupational status.

The Agricultural Advisory Council had never really progressed out of the rudimentary stage. FL had unenthusiastically organized it at the behest of the state Extension office, but he felt it was unnecessary in the county. It took months to get organizations to designate representatives, and it was hard to find meeting times when a majority could or would appear. The sessions themselves were strained and awkward, since many council members were cautious about each other, and preferred to operate via old accustomed channels. After a few unproductive meetings, FL decided the group was too unwieldy, and ceased to schedule any more. He knew the state office was disturbed by this outcome, but felt he had made a genuine effort to make the organization work. He believed its failure was not his

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<sup>35</sup>As an "extra" activity he also attended the Midwest Training School of Farm Bureau during part of one summer.

fault, but was simply due to the impracticality of the idea at the county level.

FL's interaction with the authority groups was somewhat less apparent than with the power groups. Since a number of the authority group and several of the "outsider" leaders were inclined to be partisan and outspokenly critical of the dominant control structure, they got little positive response from FL, who almost never verbalized his opposition to people and policies. FL had good relations with the FHA loan administrator, a governmental employee like himself, but had no relationship with the FHA county committee. Likewise, he took little active part in PMA work, and since he had never been called upon to assist in its operation, he was quite willing to have it function independently. By thus divorcing himself from PMA, he was not identified with it in the heavy criticism to which it was subjected.

He also kept contact with the Board of Supervisors at a minimum, and took no part in township politics, such as the school consolidation struggle previously described. He realized that feeling among factions often ran high, and he felt that injecting himself into local controversies would only create resentment and opposition among certain Board members. This latter, of course, might have jeopardized

his ability to get necessary funds for Extension expenses each year. He had already experienced difficulty due to the fact that some Board members continually tried to identify his work as favoring special interest groups they did not like.

It was in soil conservation work that FL seemed to feel more interested than he did in other activities. He himself stated that he "worked more with SCS than with any other group." He had helped get the District organized through calling meetings and leading discussions, and the county had voted overwhelmingly for the proposal. He worked closely with the SCS farm planner and helped to arrange and conduct numerous farm demonstrations on conservation practices. Perhaps the ambivalent nature of the SCD committee took the organization out of the purely "interest" group category, yet there was still some public ridicule and skepticism concerning strip-cropping and other "new-fangled" ideas. However, FL seemed willing to identify himself actively with soil conservation work, unlike his affiliations with other county groups.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>It seemed that the technical validity of conservation had been accepted by FL, and he was willing to make his stand on the authoritative basis of scientific competence. This basis was different than the opinion-centered rationales of most other county groups.

The Agricultural Resources Conservation Committee was quite similar in format to the Advisory Council, and it had experienced a like fate. Its members were mostly authority group and "outsider" leaders, but they seemed to have little in common when it came to sitting around a conference table. Consequently, FL did not pursue the matter once the leaders indicated their disinterest.

E. Image of the Agent and of the Extension  
Service by County Leaders

The major images which the leaders had of FL ranged from mild praise to candid opposition.

The "old guard" power leaders, such as the bank president, the chairman of the Farmers Cooperative, the Chairman of the Beef Calf Association, and several town-oriented directors of these organizations were the most complimentary. There was a general impression that the agent was "over-worked" and that he needed more Extension personnel, particularly a 4-H agent. The praise was not enthusiastic, consisting mostly of statements like, "FL does a good job," "I haven't any fault to find with him," and "I know some folks don't like him but he's always done well by me."

The power group leaders did not seem to think of FL as an "equal," and certainly not as a "superior" (as FH had



sometimes been regarded in Aspen and Oak Counties). They thought of him as a dependable assistant who would "pitch in" when asked, and who could be relied on to get things done organizationally. They did not conceive of him as an inner-circle policy consultant, and were perfectly willing to run their organizations comparatively free of Extension influence. Extension specialists were thought of as independent technicians, and many of them particularly in beef, visited farmers without "going through" FL first.

The dairy production group leaders were disappointed at the failures of their associations, but none of them blamed the agent directly. One farmer did say he wished FL "had taken hold a little more" in setting up the groups, but this was more nostalgia than recrimination. The ambivalent leaders were quite reserved in judgment on FL's performance. The previously mentioned "professional leader" thought him "too quiet," and lacking in "ginger." The Farm Bureau-SCD director, however, thought he was "competent, and a real good fellow when you get to know him." None of these leaders had any criticism of the state Extension Service, but all did feel that no centralized policies should be imposed on agents or county groups. The consensus was to "leave the local people alone and let them decide

what should be done." There was considerable evidence, as the chapter has shown, that the power group leaders of Orange County were doing just that.

It was among the authority group and "outsider" leaders that most of the opposition to FL was voiced. Here again, there was a split. The PMA chairman and more than half the supervisors interviewed had mild praise and felt FL was doing "a pretty good job." They sympathized with his many duties, and hoped he would get more assistance. Other leaders, however, chastized FL for not visiting farmers enough. They complained that he never seemed to have positive answers to technical questions, and that he "was never around where you could get in touch with him." They thought he spent too much time "with those 'big-shots' in (the county seat)." An Extension man was supposed to spend his time with the farmers, "not running errands for bankers." In one sense, of course, these leaders were venting their dislike of the power group leaders by charging that the latter were mis-using and monopolizing the agent. When asked if they thought the agent could, or should, give personal service to every farmer in the county, all but two of the critical leaders admitted it was an impossibility, but they did feel that FL spread himself too thin. Since some of the authority group leaders were part-time farmers,

they had major sources of income other than agriculture. They became more interested in politics for its own sake, and less in the techniques of agricultural production. Therefore, they were more concerned about the power group leaders as antagonists for the control of county organizations than they were in the agent as a purveyor and demonstrator of farming information and practices.

In summary, the agent, while he aroused no fervent backing,<sup>37</sup> had solid acceptance as a collaborator in the dominant control structure. His lack of aggressiveness made him an appendage rather than a central figure in the battles for organizational control within the county, and even his critics regarded him more as a tool of the "real opposition" rather than an active opponent himself. By and large, there was no widespread accusation that FL aligned himself with some groups against others.

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<sup>37</sup>One farmer, a director of the SCD, contrasted FL with FH, whom he also knew. This farmer classed FL and the SCS farm planner as being similar. They lacked a "personalized approach" and had to be "driven" to get things done. He had been in contact with FH on several occasions with reference to grass silage, and had noticed that FH "kind of wanted things done his way or not at all." In comparing the energy and fund of knowledge of the two men, he said, "Well, up in Oak County they have FH, and down here we have FL--if you know what I mean." Yet he did feel that FL had solid if unspectacular qualities, and that in the long run he "might get along better with people. There are plenty of them in his own county who don't like FH."

F. Image of the County and of the Extension  
Service by the Agent

Taken as a whole, FL's attitude toward Orange County was one of resignation, bordering at times on a sense of defeat. He had seen so many organizations rise and fall in local favor and support that he was almost unbelieving when one or two did not follow this pattern.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, he conveyed the impression to others that, in the end, any project was bound to run its course and disappear. He felt that personally he was a poor organizer and a poor speaker, and candidly attributed the small crowds he got at meetings and demonstrations to these personal deficiencies. He felt inadequate when it was necessary to explain to the Advisory Council and the Conservation Committee why they were being formed and what they were supposed to do.

He was very much aware of the frictions and rivalries which existed throughout the county, and implied that these were none of his business as agent. It was difficult enough to keep farmers interested in Extension activities without antagonizing them by throwing his support to a particular side in a dispute. He firmly believed it was

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<sup>38</sup>See his comment on the continued success of the Beef Calf Association, p. 235, footnote 34.

not an agent's job to force people into activities. He was there to be of service, and it was up to the people to tell him what they wanted. Apparently, he thought this approach worked satisfactorily in terms of keeping him busy, since he claimed to be "on the go all day and half the night."<sup>39</sup>

As previously mentioned, this pattern of non-aggression was probably not entirely due to FL's lassitude. He was working with many active and partisan groups, and he believed that discretion was a more desirable quality than crusading. He believed that having many groups was a "good thing for the county" since it kept any one group from getting too strong. He would help anyone, no matter what their alignments or convictions were, but if some sought him out more than others it was not his fault.

His private convictions seemed to approximate those of the power group leaders more than the authority group leaders. But in observed situations with both types his general behavior and demeanor were quite similar.

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<sup>39</sup>The observer's three weeks in the county did not seem to bear out this conception of great activity. The agent made few casual farm visits, but did engage in considerable organizational and planning work for future county events. Much of this was carried out in the office, but he did considerable contacting of key people by phone, letter, and some personal visits.

His attitude toward the Extension administration was almost noncommittal. He felt the "state people" did not get out into the counties enough, and did not have a realistic view of an agent's problems. Yet he added that this would be difficult to remedy. His main lack was "support" from the college personnel. They left him to fend for himself almost entirely, and this fostered a feeling of neglect. He had spent much time and effort in setting up the Advisory Council, and when he finally got it organized, it existed in a kind of vacuum. He was carrying out instructions from the central group, but he was not convinced they knew what they wanted. He had practically no criticisms of specialists, and felt he got along well with all of the Extension personnel with whom he had contact.

His overall conception of his job conveyed the impression of disillusionment. His own concern for agriculture, over the years, had met with many rebuffs; and he had often come to expect resistance and apathy from the very people he was trying to help. This mildly cynical negativism had led him to conclude that the Extension Service, particularly himself, was a kind of "outside activity" which competed with other things for people's time. He said bluntly that "if the Extension program were to cease tomorrow, it wouldn't change things much in Orange

County." He had resigned himself to this peripheral position, and made up his mind to take each day as it came without getting unduly upset or perturbed, regardless of the course of events.

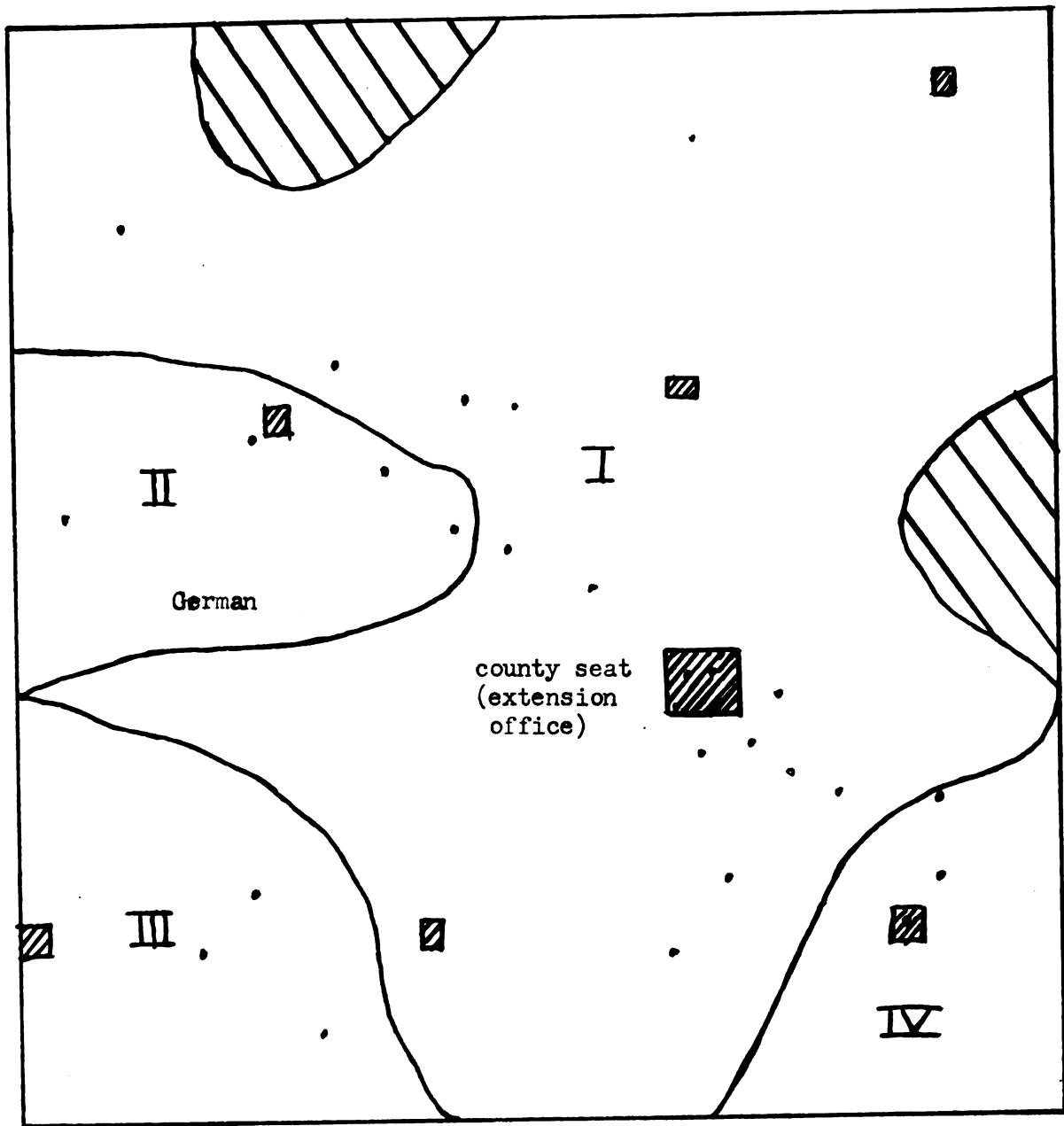

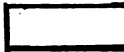




Figure 11. IVY COUNTY

- Legend
-  City, town, or community centers
  -  Sparsely farmed or non-farming areas
  -  Principal farming areas
  -  Location of major agricultural leaders







## CHAPTER X

### THE SECOND HIGH-RATED AGENT SITUATION--IVY COUNTY

Ivy County had the largest proportion of its land area devoted to agriculture of the four counties studied. Likewise, it had the greatest income from farming activities, and the most even distribution of rural population. The county seat was by far the largest community, and contained the headquarters of all of the governmental agencies connected with agriculture. It dominated Area I (see Figure 11), and was a center of light industry, petroleum extraction, and retail trade. Many farmers in the northern part of Area I, however, did considerable business in a community about seven miles directly north of the county seat. Area II was settled heavily by Germans of Catholic faith who had erected a large church and a parochial school in one of their communities. These common ancestral and religious bonds encouraged a feeling of delineation on the part of the inhabitants of Area II with respect to the rest of the population. Likewise, many people in Areas III and IV felt more identified with their locality centers than with the larger section represented by the county seat. Such a feeling was more evident in Area III than in Area IV, but in neither case was it as manifest or intense as in

Area II. The foregoing remarks do not mean that there was any marked spatial isolation of county groups, since good roads and adequate transportation resulted in considerable overall interaction. The ecological separations pointed out here were in the nature of a clustering tendency rather than an actual segregation.

#### A. The Structure of Organized Agriculture

The structural arrangement of agriculture in Ivy County followed a rather familiar pattern, when arranged according to the power-authority typology, as shown in Table VI.

Town-centered power groups. Of the town-centered power groups, the Chamber of Commerce was the oldest and most stable. It was composed mostly of business and industrial leaders clustered around the county seat. Its most unusual feature was that the current Chamber secretary (its only full-time paid official) had preceded SH as agricultural agent in Ivy County, and had resigned to take the Chamber of Commerce position. This ex-agent, therefore, was well aware of rural activities and problems, even though he had become formally identified with a more urbanized group.

The County Fair Board had both businessman and farmer

TABLE VI

EXTERNAL CONTROL ORIENTATION AND LOCUS OF ORGANIZED  
AGRICULTURE IN IVY COUNTY, 1953

Functional Locale	Control Type	
	Power	Authority
Town-centered	Cooperative Elevator	FHA
	Chamber of Commerce	
	County Fair Board	
Country- dentered	Three ABA	
	Two DHIA	
	Milk Producers Assn.	
	Two Dairy Breed Assn.	
	Beet Growers Assn.	
Mixed	Farm Bureau	PMA
	Grange	Board of Supervisors
		Soil Conservation District

members, although over the years the town interests had gained preponderance in numbers. The secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and the manager of the cooperative elevator were nearly always members of the Fair Board. Also, SH gave a large amount of time to fair work, and

served officially as its executive secretary and business manager. Major fair activities were centered around 4-H programs and exhibits, with the chief justification of the whole enterprise being in terms of youth-service and civic betterment. This appeal enabled the Fair Board to get contributions of goods and services from the citizenry, and thereby to remain solvent without the usual income from a "midway" of commercial entertainment. But since fair preparations required considerable time during busy farming seasons, rural people were increasingly disinclined to serve as directors, preferring to give money and labor on an expediency basis. Thus the Fair Board leadership became concentrated in the county seat and surrounding towns, even though the fair itself remained thoroughly rural in content.

The Cooperative Elevator was affiliated with Farm Bureau Services, as in Orange County, but was smaller and more recently established than the latter. It was located on the outskirts of the county seat, and was managed by the family of a local farmer, who was gradually doing less farming as the business grew.

Country-centered power groups. The ABA and DHIA groups were the core of the country-centered power groups. The most successful of the various associations were found

among the ethnic group of Area II, and in the adjacent parts of Area I. In this region were the DHIA which had the highest per cow butterfat record in Michigan in 1945, as well as the most consistently active of all the county ABA groups. These two organizations contained a large number of the power group leaders, most of whom had been charter members of the groups, and who were proud of their continuous affiliation. This was particularly true of the DHIA unit, which had a considerable number of non-German members, some of whom lived near the county seat. The leaders of Area II ABA were more uniformly representative of the Area's ethnic population. The remaining two ABA groups were centered in Areas III and IV. Their leaders were local men, a few of whom were part-time farmers. Both of these groups experienced difficult operating problems, especially the one in Area IV, where the group had already functioned and disbanded twice in the eight years of its existence. At the time of the study, it had just been re-activated for the third time. The Milk Producers Association and the Dairy Breed Associations were closely linked with the DHIA and ABA groups. The Milk Producers Association served mainly as a marketing outlet for whole milk, and was affiliated with the same state milk cooperative which handled non-certified production in Moss-Lilac

County (see Chapter XI). One of the Dairy Breed Associations had shrunk from an original twenty members in 1945 to ten members in 1952, and had thereby become unimportant in the power structure of the county. The other Dairy Breed Association, however, was comparatively strong, and numbered about thirty members at the time of the study. All of its leaders were men who were active in various other dairy organizations described above.

The Beet Growers Association also had once been a thriving group, but had steadily decreased to a handful of members due to the decline of the beet sugar industry in the region. Although several power group leaders still raised sugar beets, and served as nominal officers in the Association, few formal meetings were held, and the organization was not influential as an entity in the power structure.

Mixed power groups. The Grange in Ivy County resembled its counterparts elsewhere among the counties in that its leadership and program were not molders of county agricultural opinion. In fact, the Ivy Grange made strong efforts to stay neutral in all types of controversial issues. The Farm Bureau, on the other hand, was extremely active on the leadership level and was by far the largest of the power groups. There was no organized opposition to its dominance,

although few of its leaders, or supporters, were found in the ethnic group of Area II. As in the other counties studied, the Farm Bureau had difficulty establishing itself in places where religious or racial cohesion was high, and where secular influences of all kinds were regarded with suspicion.<sup>1</sup> Many of the active Farm Bureau leaders were young couples who gave much more than routine attention to their duties. Here a new level of leadership seemed to be rising which was distinguishable from the "old guard" traditional leadership found in most of the other power groups, where long tenure of office and father-to-son transference of control were often found. The Farm Bureau leaders had considerable personal drive, plus a vigorous devotion to their organization not discernible in the other power groups. However, most of the older power group leaders were Farm Bureau members, and supported its activities, even though many of them were not highly placed in

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter VIII for a similar situation among the Mennonites in Oak County. Yet in both instances, the dairy production organizations, such as ABA and DHIA became very strong in such areas once they were accepted locally. The church leadership evidently did not regard the production organizations as threats to their influence over the behavior of their parishioners, whereas the Farm Bureau and similar organizations were suspect on this count.



the county organization.<sup>2</sup>

Power group interaction. Figure 12 illustrates the diversified nature of the Fair Board, with its town-

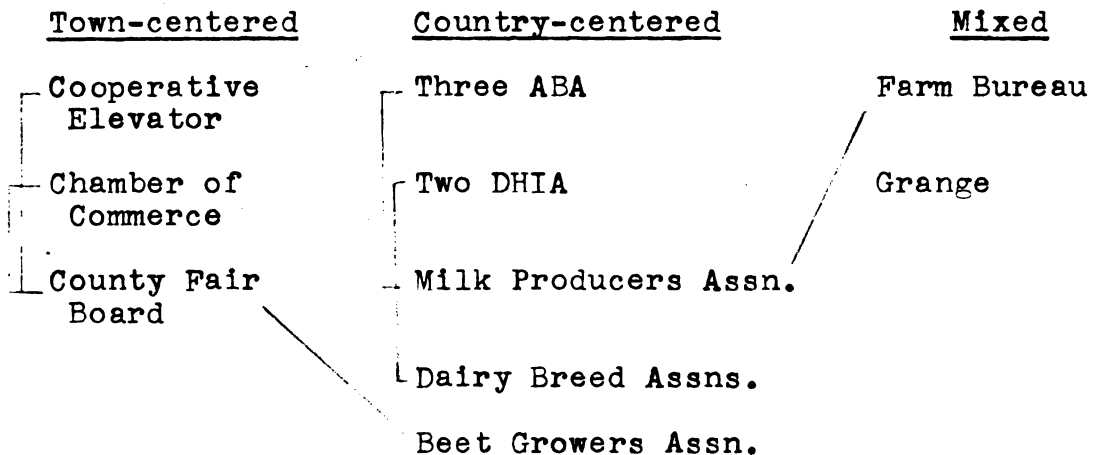


Figure 12. Interlocking leadership of active agricultural power groups in Ivy County, 1953.

centered emphasis, while the country-centered dairy groups have heavy internal leadership interchange. The Farm Bureau, although connected to the dairy groups, has remained largely independent in terms of its own leadership.

Authority groups. Turning now to the authority groups,

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<sup>2</sup>This difference between a kind of "old guard" and "new guard" set of leaders was also noticed in Moss-Lilac and Orange Counties, and to a lesser extent in Aspen. The most active Farm Bureau workers were often young married couples, with the wives often carrying the brunt of the tasks and obligations.

it was found that while few in number, they were well-centralized in location. The FHA, PMA, and SCD had adjacent offices in the same building at the county seat, while the Board of Supervisors met at the county courthouse, about three blocks away. The Extension office, including the 4-H and home demonstration agents, had separate quarters in the United States Post Office. This proximity of offices again reflected the trend toward spatial unification of agencies observed in the other counties. In Ivy County, the FHA functioned somewhat apart from the others, since its work was carried chiefly as a face-to-face confidential relationship between client and administrator. This, too, followed previously observed practice. The PMA, on the contrary, was set up with a fairly large office staff under the direction of an office manager. This manager had been a leader in PMA work since its inception under the old AAA program, and although he spent most of his time in handling office and administrative duties, he maintained general supervision over the entire PMA staff, including the publicly elected committeemen. Practically all of these committeemen were small farmers, none of whom were represented in the power group leadership.

The SCD Board of Directors also contained a number of men who were not participants in other county groups. Three

of them, out of a total of five, came from Areas II and III, although none were members of the ethnic group in Area II. At the time of the study, some internal conflict had arisen within the board, and the above-mentioned three members, two of whom were part-time farmers, were arrayed against the remaining directors. The county agent had served continuously as Board secretary, and attended all of its meetings. A full-time SCS farm planner worked under the direction of the Board, along with two part-time assistants.

The Board of Supervisors exhibited at least latent rural-urban differences. Most of the rural supervisors were in their sixties or more, and were not fully active occupationally. Four of them had served for more than fifteen years. The supervisors from the county seat area were younger businessmen, whose terms of service were shorter, and whose attitudes concerning fiscal appropriations and expenditures were more generous than those of the farmer supervisors. The "old guard" power group leaders frequently expressed misgivings about the "spend-thrift" motives and objectives of these supervisors from the county seat area.

Taken as a whole, there was no apparent interlocking leadership among the authority groups.

"Cross-leadership." The occurrence of "cross-leadership" in power and authority groups was present in several organizations, as shown by the following chart:

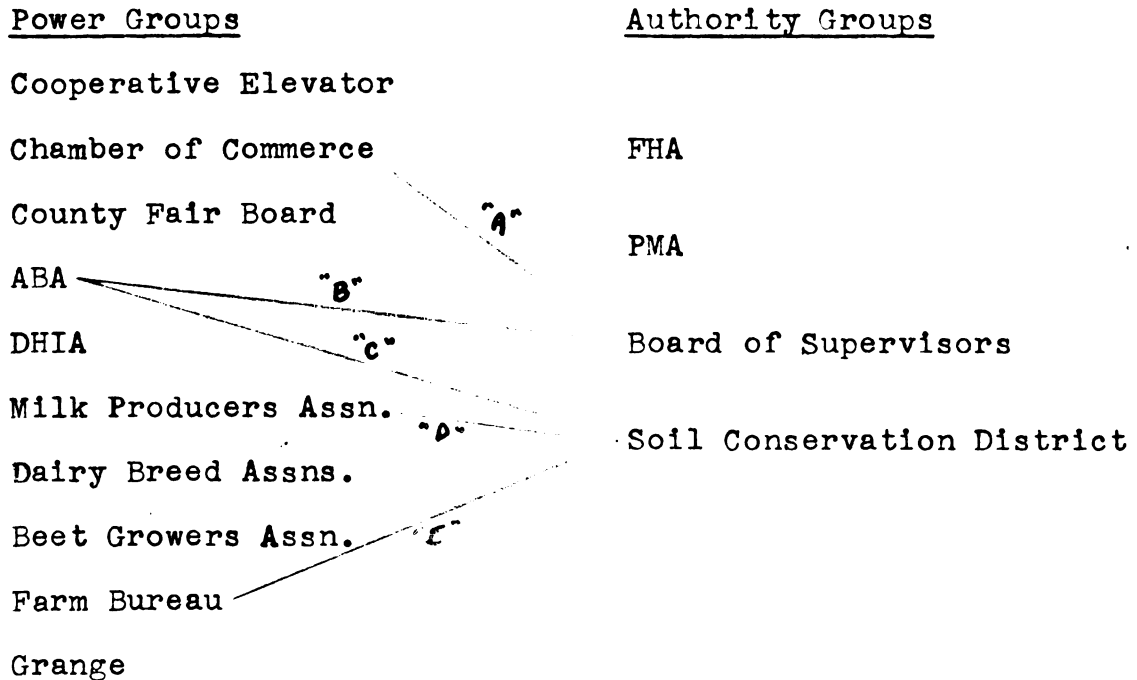


Figure 13. "Cross-leadership" among active power and authority groups in Ivy County, 1953.

Practically all of the "cross-leadership" was concentrated in the SCD, where the power groups had been party to some of the factionalism which existed in that organization. The conflict on the Board of Supervisors was traceable to the rural and urban origins and interests of the opposed leaders. However, there was no overt strife among any of the power groups, despite the presence of

some of their leaders on authority group boards. The internal authority group struggles, in turn, were based more upon the special characteristics of each group than upon any general dichotomy in the county at large.

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Power Group</u>	<u>Authority Group</u>
"A"	Chamber of Commerce Director	Township Supervisor
"B"	ABA Vice-President	Township Supervisor
"C"	ABA Director	SCD Director
"D"	Milk Production Assn. Director	SCD Director
"E"	Farm Bureau County Committeeman	SCD Director

Figure 14. Delineation of "cross-leadership,"  
Ivy County, 1953.

#### B. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Power Groups

Town-centered power groups. The behavior of the town-centered power groups was quite similar to that found in Orange County, and the tie-in between the Chamber of Commerce and the County Fair Board was almost identical in both situations. In Ivy County, this involvement of urban interests in a rural project was intensified by the fact that the former county agent (preceding SH) was serving as

a fair director, in addition to being Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. As county agent, this man had not been popular with the majority of farmers because of his so-called "independent" attitude, and his refusal to take advice and direction from the local farm leadership. He had attained a reputation for spending his time with businessmen in the county seat rather than getting out in the rural areas. Although his technical competence had seldom been questioned by anyone, his apparent preference for urban associates and interests had made him unacceptable to the farm leadership.<sup>3</sup> The present agent, SH, thus came to the county in the wake of a long struggle between the Extension and many of its clients.

When the fair was organized, SH invited the ex-agent to serve on the Board, and soon several businessmen became involved in underwriting and promoting the project. Yet many farmers identified the fair in the image of the

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<sup>3</sup>For his part, the former agent felt that the farmers had treated him unfairly, and he had no regrets in changing jobs. He felt that townspeople were more enlightened, even on farm matters, than the rural people; and he remarked that while he was an agent he got more support and funds from town sources than rural ones. He also pointed out that on the Board of Supervisors, the city members were always willing to boost and finance Extension work, while most of the budget cuts and objections came from the rural supervisors. Thus he felt an agent was justified in spending some effort on urban as well as rural matters.

ex-agent, whom they still disliked, and it was sometimes difficult to get them to give their service to fair work. This was expressed in terms of mutual rural-urban criticism. Yet, many of the larger and more prosperous farmers did have close contacts with city people, and did not harbor much of this antipathy.<sup>4</sup> The ex-agent, as a spokesman for the town-centered power groups, believed that both the PMA and Board of Supervisors were "reactionary and obsolete." He was in agreement with most of the Farm Bureau's policies, especially on price supports and on government agencies generally, and he felt that the Extension Service had no obligation to seek out farmers in order to assist them. The manager of the elevator, who served as Fair Board president for several years, was one of the ex-agent's strongest defenders. He was convinced that the leadership of the better and richer farmers was inevitable, and that Extension should spend most of its effort and resources on those farmers. "They're the ones," he said, "who can benefit from all the teaching and can put ideas into practice. Farming today is a business, and

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<sup>4</sup>However, several of the rural power group leaders claimed that townspeople received preferential treatment on public services, and that their assessments on property were disproportionately lower than that of farmers. Some of this feeling, it may be recalled, was also present in Orange County.

eventually some of these little fellows are going to be squeezed out. But that's the way it is with everything. You can't penalize a man because he does better than the next man. The ones who get ahead will be the leaders."

Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Fair Board looked upon the fair itself as a civic enterprise which they were duty-bound to support, rather than as a money-making venture. Thus the profit orientation was not functional under such circumstances, even though "efficiency of operation" was a legitimate goal.

Country-centered power groups. The country-centered organizations were led primarily by an "old guard" group of leaders. This was the case in Areas I and II, which overlapped in terms of power group membership. The Area II DHIA and ABA groups were inclined to be clannish because of their ethnic and religious unity,<sup>5</sup> and they took little interest in outside groups, whether power or authority oriented. The DHIA membership was almost a kind of élite, in which vacancies were filled only by "invitation" on the

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<sup>5</sup>This was fostered by the area religious leaders, who were vigilant for signs of defection, such as not sending one's children to parochial school, or in selling one's farm to "outsiders" not approved of by the larger community. Competition was common within the Area, but vanished in the face of threats or inroads by outside influences.



part of the incumbents, and total membership remained small. This attitude of selectivity was carried over to some extent into the Milk Producers Association, and into the major Dairy Breed Association. The leaders of all of these dairy organizations were largely the same persons, or their relatives.<sup>6</sup>

The investigator attended the annual meeting of the major Dairy Breed Association, held in the county seat. Eight members were in attendance. After routine reports were read, an election of officers was held, and the son of one "old guard" leader and the younger brother of another were chosen as president and secretary for the coming year. A third leader was re-elected a director in absentia. All of those present were members of the Area I and II DHIA. The meeting was highly informal, with much joking and story-telling, participated in by SH, who also made a short speech congratulating the association on its achievements for the year, principally its butterfat test records. The need for having a larger membership was discussed, but mostly in terms of the financial advantages

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<sup>6</sup>The "old guard" farmers, being quite similar in their attitudes to those in Orange and Aspen Counties (i.e., their broad tolerance of others and their confidence in the security of their own positions) saw to it that their sons and nephews were elected to various boards of directors in which the older leaders were actively interested.

rather than leadership participation. No one appeared dismayed or surprised by the small turnout. When one leader was asked about this after the meeting, he replied, "Oh, this is about a normal turnout. You can pretty well figure who is coming to meetings. It's mostly the same old crowd. I could have told you beforehand who was going to be here."

However, not all of the DHIA and ABA groups had unqualified success. The second DHIA had great difficulty keeping a tester employed during the late 1940's, and its membership dropped during that period. The other two ABA units were neighborhood-centered in Areas III and IV. The one in Area III was held together largely by the efforts of a leader who had a great deal of personal influence in the community. He owned a general store which served as a social gathering-place on off-hours, had a flourishing roofing business, and operated a 440 acre farm with twenty milking cows. Since he served variously on the SCD and PMA boards of directors, as well as on PMA and the Farm Bureau, he had the same kind of tolerance of opposing points of view which were found among the other "old guard" leaders.<sup>7</sup> He described himself as "civic-minded," and accounted for

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<sup>7</sup>In addition, his "cross-leadership" in power and authority groups gave him the same kind of ambivalent loyalties which were previously noted among some Orange County leaders who likewise had "cross-leadership."

his wide range of activity by saying most people were "too bashful to accept public office," so that he got many responsibilities through the default of others. One former inseminator for the Area III ABA was a part-time farmer whose debts had caused him to take a factory job outside the county. Therefore, he had relinquished his ABA duties and was trying to save enough money to get back into full-time farming. He was quite conscious of his position as a part-time farmer and felt a growing social barrier between himself and the current full-time farmers in the neighborhood. He mentioned that he had often engaged in heated discussions about labor unions in his community Farm Bureau meetings, and he felt that the majority of Farm Bureau members misunderstood labor's position. Consequently, he was thinking of dropping his Farm Bureau membership. He stated that the number of farmers he knew who were holding factory jobs was rapidly increasing, and named four of his close neighbors who had taken such employment within the past couple of years. By so doing, they had removed themselves, at least partially, from the agricultural activities and organizations of the Area.

The Area IV ABA had experienced even more difficulty keeping an inseminator (the last one having been accused of willful mismanagement), and was currently in a dormant state.

Many of the "old guard" power group leaders were less interested in ABA than they were in DHIA and the Dairy Breed Association because they had pure-bred bulls of their own and were not dependent upon ABA for improving their stock. In the overall county picture, ABA achievements were not consistent, although the DHIA program made minor but continuous gains. As in the other counties, ABA groups were of chief benefit to small farmers who could not afford to keep pure-bred bulls, or to those who wished to bring new blood lines into their herds. As elsewhere, the low percentage of successful first services,<sup>8</sup> coupled with the required cash outlay for the process, caused much criticism and dissatisfaction among ABA users.

The Beet Growers Association was composed of a few "old guard" leaders who had something of a traditional attachment to their crop, which most of them used as a supplementary rather than a main source of income. Although all of them were part of the power group leadership, they had little success in encouraging beet production, and the acreage for the crop had dropped steadily every year since 1945. Even the president of the Association confided that as soon as the few present growers ceased raising beets,

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<sup>8</sup>Varying from 40 to 60 per cent in most counties.

the crop would probably disappear from the county permanently.

Mixed power groups. With respect to the mixed locale power groups, the Farm Bureau was much the largest and most influential body, having over one thousand member families. Many of its officers, including the chairman and the secretary,<sup>9</sup> were young leaders who were not particularly active in other organizations. These "new guard" people were highly energetic, and were frequently not the most prosperous or well established farmers. The secretary observed that most of the criticism of the Farm Bureau came from what she called "outsiders," who claimed that the state and national Farm Bureau offices controlled county opinion. She denied this was so, and said that diversity of viewpoint was encouraged, even though majority rule prevailed on final policy decisions. The Grange confined itself mostly to social activities, and none of its leaders were important in the power group structure.

Summary. Essentially, there were no deep schisms within the county-wide power structure. While there was

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<sup>9</sup>A woman in her late thirties who held her job for eight years.

some cleavage between town-centered and country-centered groups with respect to the County Fair, and between part-time and full-time farmers based upon occupational differences, no organizational struggles had crystallized within the structure itself. The following figure shows the relationships among the power groups with emphasis upon their attitudes toward each other. In general, the dominance of the major power faction was seldom effectively challenged by the peripheral elements:

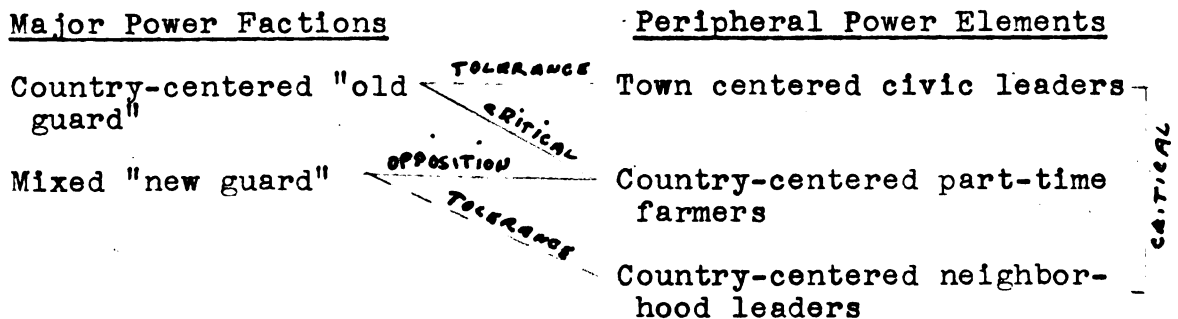


Figure 15. Delineation and focussed attitudes of active power structure, Ivy County, 1953.

### C. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Authority Groups

PMA. The Ivy County PMA was centered around the efforts of one man, its office manager. As previously noted, he had been associated with PMA from its earliest days, and had thereby assumed the sort of proprietary

interest in it which had also been noticed among long-time PMA leaders in other counties studied. The Ivy County PMA was almost entirely dependent upon this one individual for its operation, since over the years he had developed his personal role into a full-time job which he alone felt competent to fill. The manager took a critical view of the new Agricultural Conservation Program, in which PMA relinquished or shared many of its previous duties with SCS. In spite of the fact that the Farm Bureau often criticized PMA, the manager insisted that his relations with other county groups were "100 per cent cooperative." He felt that government support programs were destined to be permanent, "just like a minimum wage," and that the present PMA system would always have a place in the organizational framework of agriculture.<sup>10</sup> Most of the PMA committeemen were small farmers who followed the office manager's lead on most issues and who seldom belonged to any of the power groups, except ABA.

SCD. The Soil Conservation District directors were

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<sup>10</sup>In spite of the manager's professed cooperation with other groups, most of the power group leaders were highly critical of PMA, and thought it should be abolished. Yet was acknowledged by all concerned that many of the critics, including the more prosperous farmers, partook of PMA cash benefits whenever they were available.

not nearly so well-knit a group as PMA. When the District was first organized, in 1947, it had been confined to the western half of the county, and its leaders resided chiefly in Areas II and III. In 1951, the eastern half of the county was annexed to the District, and within a year, several Area I farmers became directors. By 1953, the newer directors had achieved the chairman and treasurer positions on the Board and were in nominal control. Some of the earlier directors regarded this as usurpation, and they even boycotted the regular monthly meetings. The new leadership was outspokenly critical of PMA, and correspondingly friendly toward the Farm Bureau. The SCS farm planner was a vociferous person who did his best to enhance the independent strength of his organization by keeping it free of interaction with other agencies, and publicizing the accomplishments of his own technical services.

At a monthly SCD Board meeting, attended by the investigator, the question of PMA-SCS relationships under the new Conservation Program was discussed. The farm planner pointedly wanted this program curtailed in Ivy County so that his own work-load would not be increased by his having to supervise PMA loans. He urged the SCD Board to attend a PMA policy meeting scheduled for the following day, and to try to eliminate as many PMA conservation practices as



possible. SH, who was Secretary of the SCD Board, then remarked that the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts was making a "power grab" in Washington and that the local District should not go along with this program. The members present agreed, and felt that SCD and PMA national leaders were conspiring to make agriculture subservient to the federal government.

At the PMA meeting the following day, the anticipated conflict of policies did not materialize. The PMA office manager was able to get most of the allowable practices accepted for the county, and the SCS farm planner got little support for his objection.<sup>11</sup> Thus the animosity between the two groups remained covert under an outward show of conciliation.

For its own part, the SCS steadily increased its services and functions in the county. However, the farm planner, having cooperated fully with the new leadership, was criticized by several of the old leaders as being too opinionated, and only interested in the larger farmers.

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<sup>11</sup>This lack of support by the SCD Board members for their farm planner was difficult to explain, except perhaps on the grounds that the Board members decided that their participation and supervisory role in the ACP program would offer a legal means of controlling PMA operations. To them, this was a more important objective than lightening the work-load of the farm planner.

The planner denied any bias, and said he worked on an equal basis with whomever sought his aid. He did acknowledge that these voluntary clients were more likely to be larger farmers, but felt this was not his fault, and that he had no preferences as far as cooperators were concerned.

Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors reflected a rural-urban split similar to that found on the County Fair Board in the power structure. The older rural supervisors, although quite conservative politically, were inclined to be sympathetic to the PMA, while many of the town-centered supervisors and leaders (including the ex-agent) felt that the rural supervisors and the average PMA committeeman were all "the same type of farmers--generally ignorant and uncooperative." Two of the rural supervisors who were interviewed showed a definite lack of information concerning the activities and functions of important county organizations, such as the Farm Bureau and the SCS. In fact, one of these supervisors believed that the Farm Bureau was a federal agency officially linked with Extension. Neither supervisor was very clear about the SCS, except that they knew it was "supposed to help folks save the land," and they were unfamiliar with any of its field practices and procedures. Although both of these

supervisors had large dairy herds<sup>12</sup> (one was milking almost fifty cows), neither participated in DHIA or ABA, and both had recent epidemics of Bang's disease among the cattle. They were aware of some town vs. country friction, but were inclined to minimize it. They felt that one of their primary obligations was to prevent "raiding" of the county treasury by any groups, including Extension, and both vehemently denied favoritism in assessing town property over against rural property--a charge which was made several times by rural power group leaders in criticizing the Board of Supervisors. The rural supervisors were interested in their jobs, per se, even though they felt their efforts were unappreciated by their constituents. One man said, "I like the job although I never put in for it--and I never will. It's kind of interesting work, and a place where I can use my experience and what I know about the town. I must be doing all right. They keep sending me back."

The city supervisors were inclined to be interested in civic improvements and promotional work, and were more willing to spend money on new projects, such as a commercial parking lot and an airport. They voted Extension appropriations usually without comment, and expected rural super-

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<sup>12</sup>In each case, the sons of these men had assumed major roles in operating the farms.

visors to support their municipal programs in return. Yet this reciprocity seldom occurred without some conflict, and often lengthy debate.

FHA. The FHA office, although located in the same building, had little contact with either PMA or SCS, except as a particular loan might involve the services or advice of those agencies.

Summary. In summary, there was little cohesion among the authority groups. The rivalry between PMA and SCS was often evident in the actions of both groups, with SCS verging more toward power group cooperation than unity with PMA. There seemed to be more community of interest between PMA and the Board of Supervisors, particularly in terms of the type of farmer who served on both groups, but their functions were dissimilar, and the PMA was independent of the Board of Supervisors as far as funds were concerned. The SCD Board of Directors and the Board of Supervisors exhibited ambivalence and inner turmoil in group behavior, and they were significantly the two authority groups which contained "cross-leadership" in their membership structure (see Figure 13).

D. Interaction of the Agent with Power  
and Authority Groups

SH was well aware of the fact that his appointment in Ivy County followed the term of an agent who was unpopular with many segments of the farm population. Therefore, he tried to adapt himself to the various groups and interests which had been neglected or opposed by the former incumbent, realizing that such groups would be sensitive to his behavior toward them, through comparison with his predecessor.

Relations with the town-centered groups posed this problem from an opposite point of view because the ex-agent had been extremely friendly with town leaders. This was the very situation which some of the rural groups had resented, and SH did not feel he could follow the same pattern. Neither, however, could he avoid the town leaders entirely just to establish his identification with farmers. Since this problem of town and country relationships was potentially explosive, the agent tried to get both types of leaders to join together through the medium of the county fair. SH put a great deal of organizational effort into this enterprise, and during his ten years in Ivy County it constituted the most time-consuming single project he had undertaken. It was his goal, eventually, to step out of

active participation<sup>13</sup> and allow the Fair Board to take over completely. However, each year he was called upon to do as much work as he had done previously, and found himself so enmeshed in programs and administrative details that he could not escape major responsibilities. Certain frictions remained between town- and country-centered leaders, and SH feared that if he withdrew under leader protest the entire structure would collapse. He felt such a demise might have consequences he could not risk, and he therefore grimly accepted his fair duties as a necessary price to be paid for the working compromise between the town and the rural leaders.<sup>14</sup> At times, it took much conciliatory skill to keep the two sets of leaders from quarreling and breaking off with one another.

While SH was careful to maintain friendly relations with the Chamber of Commerce and other city groups, and even with the ex-agent, with whom he had discussions occasionally, he devoted most of his attention to the country-centered and the mixed organizations. Both of the

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<sup>13</sup>He served variously as manager, secretary, treasurer, and master of ceremonies.

<sup>14</sup>Thus, while the Fair did give SH a vehicle for getting cooperation from varied groups, it had the "unanticipated consequence" of involving SH himself into the enterprise on a seemingly permanent and ever-widening basis. It controlled him even more than he could control it.

DHIA groups were in operation before he entered the county, and these functioned quite autonomously under the control of the "old guard" leaders. Two ABA groups were inaugurated during SH's first year as agent, and although he attended their meetings occasionally, he did not participate directly in their affairs. In fact, even after the Area III ABA ran into financial and inseminator trouble, SH did not try to salvage the group directly. He did attempt to locate another man to begin training as an inseminator, but only at the request of the ABA Board of Directors. He also attended the meetings of the Milk Producers Association and of the major Dairy Breed Association, both of which he had helped to organize. Since many of the leaders of all of these dairy groups were the same men in each case, SH established a working relationship with them based upon "easy access." These leaders, mostly of the "old guard" group, were successful in getting SH's attention whenever they felt they needed it. He, in turn, called upon them for advice and consultation on an informal demand basis. If he was thinking about starting up a new group or implementing an old one, SH telephoned or visited several of these leaders to get their views, upon which he relied heavily. In fact, one of the leaders made the comment, "SH comes over a good deal and asks me about things I don't

even have an interest in. Sometimes they sound awfully foolish, like whether to let a fellow back in DHIA after he had quit on his own. Now what would I care about a thing like that when I'm not even in that group! SH just gets mixed up in too many things, and runs himself ragged trying to make a good showing. The only time he relaxes is when a bunch of us get together to play cards on a Saturday night."

Likewise, when SH helped get an ABA group started in Area III, he worked almost entirely through the neighborhood leader (previously mentioned in this chapter) and two or three other large farmers. He left most of the recruitment and organizational details to them, with the result that difficulties arose in keeping proper records and accounts, and in securing personnel to do the work effectively. Since its inception, this ABA had just about held its own in terms of members, although there had been some increase in the number of cows serviced.

Although the Beet Growers Association was practically defunct, SH had made several attempts to aid in increasing beet acreage through contracts with local sugar processors and through advertising. He did this even though he admitted privately that he felt sugar beets were an uneconomic crop for the county and that it was a waste of



time and money to "sell" the idea to the farmers. Yet two of his closest advisers were beet raisers, and one of them stated that SH often discussed his personal problems with him and asked for his counsel. In such cases, SH apparently felt that sheer economics was secondary to maintaining good personal relationships, even when his own technical judgment was subverted.

SH made a special point of being at all of the social as well as business gatherings of the dairy groups, particularly those in which his inner circle of "old guard" leaders were interested. He made a speech at the Milk Producers Association yearly banquet (which was held during the period this study was being made), and offered the use of facilities of the Extension office to help the major Dairy Breed Association in a membership drive.

Among the mixed power groups, SH was most involved with the Farm Bureau, on whose board of directors he had long been an ex officio member. Each year he was provided with a pre-paid membership card, and he participated in a number of discussion groups with community Farm Bureaus each year. However, he attended no community group of his own, and was an irregular attendant at the monthly county level meetings. Nevertheless, he praised the Farm Bureau highly in his public statements and in his annual Extension

narrative reports. As far as the Grange was concerned, SH had very little to do with it in terms of his own activities, although he did respond affirmatively to requests for speaking engagements, moving pictures, or other special programs.

By and large, in his relations with the power groups, SH relied chiefly upon his interaction with the "old guard" leadership, whose presence upon the eight boards of directors of the active dairy associations constituted the backbone of Ivy County agriculture. Since his contact with this nucleus was relatively intimate, SH felt no compulsion to establish an Extension Advisory Council, or any similar entity for program planning. He felt that present means of leadership communication were adequate, and that new organizations of this type were unnecessary functionally, as well as simply adding to his over-burdened meeting schedule. By such rationales, he accounted for his decision not to organize his agricultural contacts into any formal structure.

SH's relations with the authority groups were generally less frequent and less intimate than those just described. As in most of the other counties studied, the agent had very little to do with FHA operations. His connections with the Board of Supervisors were also fairly well standardized in

that he seldom had dealings with the Board except in terms of his own budget. He was usually supported in his financial requests by the city supervisors and by several rural ones who lived close to the county seat. He was not averse to asking several of the "old guard" power leaders to appear before the Board to support the Extension case,<sup>15</sup> and several of those leaders remarked that they had assisted SH numerous times by making such appearances. Except for this required interaction, SH avoided the Board of Supervisors as much as possible, since his program was primarily geared to power group activities.

Likewise, he tried to minimize his relations with PMA, whose program he personally felt was superfluous and wasteful. Furthermore, he believed that the PMA office manager was attempting to solidify his own position, and thus represented a continuous potential threat to Extension's access to the farmers. However, in the meeting on the new Agricultural Conservation Program, which re-defined PMA-SCS-Extension relationships, he cooperated in helping to choose applicable county practices, and agreed to accompany the PMA manager and the SCS farm planner on a township-by-township series of county meetings to explain

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<sup>15</sup>This technique was also utilized by the agents in Moss-Lilac and Orange Counties.

the arrangements to the farmers.<sup>16</sup>

Although Extension offices were spatially removed from the authority groups, SH did cooperate enthusiastically and voluntarily with the Soil Conservation District. He served as secretary of the board of directors, although he was careful not to expound his own opinions too forcefully during the regular monthly meetings. He rather skillfully used the SCD as a buffer against PMA by suggesting that "perhaps" PMA was trying to "horn in on something we've built up here in the District." He tried to stay neutral in the internal "eastern directors" versus "western directors" struggle for supremacy on the board, but when the "eastern" group seemed to win out, he worked with them just as he had with the "western" group in previous years. SH was not overly fond of the SCS planner personally, and he sided with some of the "old guard" power leaders, who considered the planner too rigid in his thinking and too dogmatic in his discussions. Yet SH realized that the farm planner, who was vociferously antagonistic to the PMA generally and its office manager in particular, was a valuable ally in keeping PMA under control. Yet he also

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<sup>16</sup>In an actual situation, when he felt he could no longer manipulate opposing forces, or avoid taking a stand on an issue, SH tended to make formal compromises rather than risk "showdowns" with any county groups.

wished to keep the SCS technicians from becoming too independent, and was very assiduous about keeping active on the SCD board of directors. In private conversation, SH stated that he felt all government agencies should come under the jurisdiction of Extension in order to "promote efficiency and prevent waste to the taxpayers." He believed the county agent should be a kind of administrative head with wide coordinating responsibility, while the several agencies continued to do their specialized tasks on the functional level.

Thus, it can be seen that the agent worked with authority groups either to gain specific ends, such as monetary support, or to manipulate them for the purpose of restraining their competition for agricultural control in the county. Whereas SH exhibited considerable dependency upon "old guard" power group leaders, he showed slightly more independence and a willingness to take risks in his interaction with authority groups. Yet, as he himself pointed out, his main objective was "not to offend anyone," and he was quite concerned about other people's opinion of his work.<sup>17</sup> Despite his close ties with the dairy groups, he

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<sup>17</sup>For example, in closing his 1951 narrative report, he expressed his gratitude that "no criticism was voiced against Extension programs and policies."

was wary of the consequences of too great intimacy with particular interests. The more controversial a local issue, the more he avoided taking a position on it, and he stated that it was his policy to "go along with whatever group is in the driver's seat." This latter attitude was evidenced by his conduct during the SCD board of directors' struggle mentioned previously. Consequently, when any county situation arose which involved a clarification of relationships between Extension and the power groups, SH believed it to be his duty to adjust himself to the wishes and opinions of the power groups, not the other way around. This type of adaptation was less evident in his relations with authority groups.

E. Image of the Agent and of the Extension  
Service by County Leaders

The large majority of power group leaders were highly satisfied with SH's work and methods of operation. They were the same individuals who were leaders during the tenure of SH's immediate predecessor, yet they made few invidious comparisons between the two men, except to say that SH was "more of a diplomat," and that he "gets out with the farmers instead of being with the city folks so much." These power group leaders, particularly the "old guard," were not

unfavorable in many of their judgments about the ex-agent's technical knowledge and ability. They simply felt that SH's techniques and procedures for getting things done were more successful.

The leaders were impressed with SH's energy and his sponsorship of group activities. Most of them approved of his heavy commitment to the county fair, even though it meant that he had less opportunity to work on other things. All of the power group leaders, especially the old guard, stated that they had easy access to SH, despite his busy schedule. They were confident he would always "make time" for them if they requested it. As one expressed it, "Sure, I go in to see SH any time. If he's around, he's always ready to talk to me. If he isn't, I leave word at his office that I want to see him, and he usually shows up in a day or so. He never forgets you." Thus the power group leaders believed that SH was more or less at their service, and that they could legitimately call upon him for advice or assistance at their own discretion. Although SH worked with many groups, the power leaders still dealt with him on a face-to-face basis. In fact, these leaders were inclined to consider the whole Extension Service principally as a resource for solving individual problems, and they used the agent freely for that purpose.

On the other hand, the part-time farmer leaders, particularly those in Areas III and IV, were less certain about the success of Extension work. None of them criticized SH directly, but they had some doubts that Extension programs were geared to their needs. Since they were away from their farms a good deal of the time, their contacts with neighbors and with SH were scattered and unpredictable.<sup>18</sup> This loss of intimacy and of participation encouraged a cleavage in the communities which was enhanced by the different kinds of perspectives which the part-time farmers had as a result of their outside work. They criticized the anti-union position of the Farm Bureau, and contended unions were necessary, even going so far as to suggest that farmers organize in similar fashion. Numerous spirited arguments occurred in Farm Bureau discussion groups, with the result that several part-time farmer leaders believed they were unwelcome in Farm Bureau circles, and so ceased to attend meetings. One man, who used to be treasurer of the Farmers Union when it was operative in Ivy County said, "Most people around here have the wrong

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<sup>18</sup>As an illustration of this, three part-time farmer leaders were visited four times each before an interview was obtained. They were busy during evenings with such activities as union meetings, lodge meetings, and shopping. Two failed to keep appointments because they "forgot."



idea about unions. They think all unions are black and they themselves are white. Sure, I have plenty of arguments, even in my church group, about it. Farmers and union men just don't talk the same language, and it's time we did something about it. Most little farmers like me have to 'work out' in order to keep going. Anyway, it isn't such a bad idea. I've learned a lot I didn't know when I was sticking to home, and I don't think I'd go back to full-time farming even if I could afford it."

Thus, while there appeared to be identification of SH with the full-time farmers, there was no concerted opposition to him personally. There was more latent than manifest criticism of the whole Extension program, which some felt was not providing for the needs of this growing group in the agriculture of the county.

The "new guard" power group leaders regarded SH as an ally, since they noted that he often went out of his way to publicly commend them on their activities. However, they did not claim, or seek, the kind of personal accessibility to him which the "old guard" leaders possessed. The town-centered leaders, including SH's predecessor, likewise felt that he was doing a good job, and that no one in the county had good reason to be dissatisfied with Extension's performance. The tendency among all of these leaders was to

feel that it was up to the individual farmer to seek the help of the Extension Service, which was equally available to all who had the desire and initiative to utilize it. None of the leaders felt they received any special treatment from SH, or that they had any undue influence upon his behavior by virtue of their close relations with him. Their attitude was, "If you work well with a man, he'll work with you. That's the way it ought to be. Extension is no different from anything else, and you can't shove it down people's throats. If people don't want to better themselves that's their business."

Even the authority group leaders, such as the PMA office manager, and the chairman of the agricultural committee of the Board of Supervisors, expressed approval of SH's work.<sup>19</sup> As the latter put it, "Well, I admire SH for always being on the job. I hardly ever get a chance to see him myself, so I guess that's a pretty good sign he's keeping busy." Undoubtedly, these authority group leaders did not feel they were close enough to SH to command his attention whenever they wished. But although SH did not

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<sup>19</sup>Of course, critics of SH in official positions might well have been wary of expressing candid opinions of him to an outsider, particularly if they regarded the questioner as one of SH's friends. Comments by other informants indicated that the PMA office manager was often less enthusiastic about SH than he admitted to the investigator.

cultivate these men, he tried to avoid any hostility toward himself or his work.

F. Image of the County and of the Extension  
Service by the Agent

When SH first came to Ivy County, he realized that he would have to create a pattern of operation different from that followed by his predecessor. His key behavioral principle, from the beginning, was "Don't offend anyone if you can help it." This applied mostly to the people of the county, and if there were ever a question of whether his first loyalty was to them or to the Extension hierarchy, his choice was the former.

As part of his conscious campaign for personal acceptance by the people, he assiduously attended meetings and built up relationships with the "old guard" leaders. A considerable amount of social capital was established on both sides of this interaction. Programs were often informally initiated, but found their public expression in the activities of various groups, particularly of the dairy organizations. SH explained that he worked with groups now almost exclusively, and that it was becoming impossible for any agent to work individually with most of his clients. Besides, as he said, "Some of these farmers know more about

certain phases of farming than I'll ever know. In fact, I sometimes ask them for advice. Anyway, an agent doesn't need to be a specialist any more. All he needs to know is where to get the information, and he can give this to the farmers to carry on from there themselves."

SH felt that it was an agent's obligation to work with whatever groups had the greatest active strength in the county, and he prided himself on being highly adaptable in this respect. From the standpoint of sheer work load, he was convinced that functioning through proven channels of behavior was the most satisfactory way of accomplishing his job. He believed that the current organizational structure was adequate for this task, and he was not in favor of setting up new groups for special jobs. This attitude accounted for his resistance to the idea of an Advisory Council, which he felt would be burdensome and unnecessary. He was quite aware of the factional pressures and demands upon him, and was wary of any new group which might add to them. Thus, he responded favorably and enthusiastically to the established power groups and their leaders, but was anxious to keep the status quo arrangements if he could. He acknowledged his dependence upon these leaders, but was willing to accept this as the price of harmony and personal acceptance.

His conception of authority group leaders was less definitive, since he was prone to adopt any policy with them which he felt advantageous at a given time. He never criticized authority groups or their leaders openly, but would try to manipulate them as "counter irritants" which could neutralize one another (he used this tactic in his relationships with SCD and PMA). By such neutralization, and by maintaining his own official position in SCD, he was able to keep any single authority agency from becoming too independently strong. In private conversation, he made no secret of his belief that the Extension Service, personified by the agent, should have jurisdictional control over all other government agricultural agencies in the county. He felt this was an objective worth working for. He was aware of the problem of how to reach the part-time farmers, but was so busy with current projects that he was able to bypass it in terms of action, and even to eliminate it from his thinking and planning during his busiest seasons. He was aware that his commitments and connections with the power groups excluded him from working with the less organized segments of the population, but could not see any way out of such a dilemma.

His attitudes toward the Extension administration were more negative than they were toward either the power or

authority leadership within the county. He felt that the administrators did not have close enough touch with county situations to be of any great assistance to the agents. The ideal agent, he felt, was a good public relations man, not a technician. He thought many state-level people did not understand this, and that they were too rigid in their thinking and actions. He said he would have no hesitation in opposing the state administration, if he felt the good of the county demanded it. For, by building up his own acceptance among the power group leaders, he had created a buffer between himself and his administrative superiors on county policy matters. However, he also criticized the procedures employed in the district Extension meetings, for which the agents had to spend a couple of days traveling and listening to what he termed "useless speeches and pep talks." What the agents of an area really needed, he thought, was "a chance to get together informally and talk about their problems without the state people around."

In summary, SH felt he had developed a satisfactory mode of operation within Ivy County through his methods of dealing with both power and authority group leaders. He measured this at least partially by the fact that there was no real opposition among groups in the county (at least compared with his predecessor) and that there was very

little criticism of Extension programs or its personnel. He felt his own cooperative attitude was largely responsible for this acceptance, and he received much personal satisfaction in having achieved this. On the other hand, he seemed not to regard the state Extension administration as a necessary part of his working pattern, and he was willing to risk official censure whenever he felt his county support was sufficiently behind his actions (e.g., his opposition to the formation of an Advisory Council). Apparently his experience had demonstrated that resistance to the state administration need not have undesirable consequences if his local power resources were adequate and demonstrable.

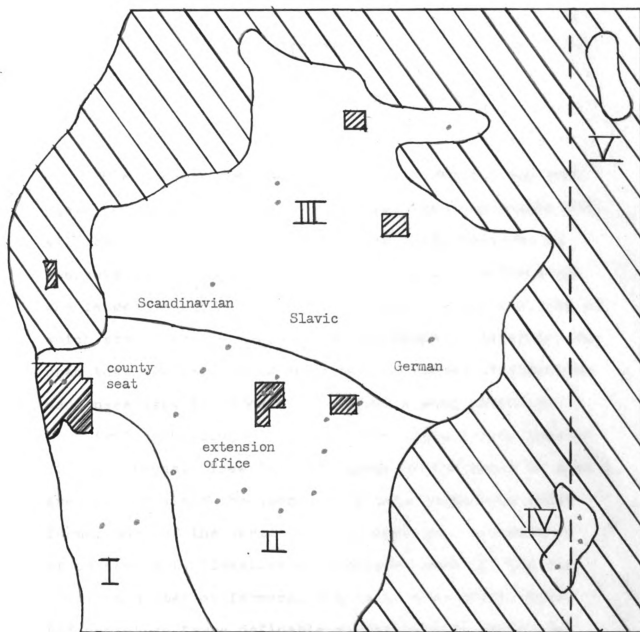


Figure 16. MOSS-LILAC COUNTY

county line

## Legend



City, town, or community centers



Sparsely farmed or non-farming areas



Principal farming areas

Location of major agricultural leaders







## CHAPTER XI

### THE SECOND LOW-RATED AGENT SITUATION--

#### MOSS-LILAC COUNTY

This agent situation, although it involved one complete county and part of an adjoining one (see Figure 16), will be treated here as a unit. The added area was so sparsely populated that its participation in agriculture was largely confined to a pair of small localities, one of which straddled the inter-county boundary. Therefore, for practical and analytical purposes, no county distinctions were necessary in terms of the agent's work situation.

Agriculturally, the county<sup>1</sup> was divided into several distinct areas. Tree-fruit orchards predominated in Area I; Area II contained the largest and most prosperous dairy farms, most of the large poultry producers, and several other specialty livestock enterprises; Area III had the greatest number of farmers, mostly of the general type, and contained three definable ethnic centers among the agricultural population; Area IV was a fairly isolated community with neighborhood characteristics; and Area V was

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<sup>1</sup>To facilitate discussion, this agent situation will be referred to hereafter as the "county," even though two are involved. Thus, "Moss-Lilac" will be considered as a single entity.

almost completely untouched by the county Extension program.

The county seat was a city of about 10,000 population, whose main occupations were retail trade, some medium and light industry, and considerable lake traffic and tourist activity. This city drew its labor force from all over the county, particularly the western half. The second largest community was the site of the Extension office and of all the major agricultural agencies, both public and private.<sup>2</sup> Its location was almost central in the major farming region. The remaining communities were local shopping centers where varied retail and service facilities were maintained.

#### A. The Structure of Organized Agriculture

In accordance with the procedure adopted in previous chapters, an attempt was made to classify the relevant organizations in Moss-Lilac County in the power-authority typology, resulting in the alignment shown in Table VII. From this table, it can be seen that the arrangement of county groups roughly paralleled that found in preceding counties. The only inactive organizations were two whose

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<sup>2</sup>This separation of county seat and agricultural center is reminiscent of Oak County. Certain animosities between the centers existed in both county situations.

TABLE VII

EXTERNAL CONTROL ORIENTATION AND LOCUS OF ORGANIZED  
AGRICULTURE IN MOSS-LILAC COUNTY, 1953

Functional Locale	Control Type	
	Power	Authority
Town-centered	Rotary Club (E)	Rural Electrifi- cation Cooperative
	Grange	
	County newspaper (E)	
Country- centered	Two Dairy Breed Assns.	
	Fruit Growers Assn.	
	ABA	
	Dairy and Farm Services Cooperative	
Mixed	Dairy Assn.	PMA
	Extension Advisory Board*	Board of Supervisors
	Agricultural Extension Council*	Soil Conservation District
	Farmers Union	
	Farm Bureau	

\*These organizations were not actively functioning at the time of this study, October, 1953.

(E) This Rotary Club and county newspaper were located in the same town as the Extension office. The county seat had similar organizations, but they were not active in agriculture.

members were also represented in other specialized groups and whose general purpose was the coalescence of leadership opinion with respect to county agricultural planning. Although a few leaders subscribed to this general purpose, the majority were not motivated by it, and the county agent did not call more than one or two meetings of these groups per year.

Town-centered power groups. These groups were not exclusively oriented toward agriculture. This was readily understandable in both the Rotary Club, which contained only about one-tenth farmer members, and the county newspaper, whose editor had primarily town and city contacts. The Grange, however, was somewhat surprising, even though its substantial non-farm membership had been noted in other counties. Yet in Moss-Lilac, the "urbanization" of the Grange was even more pronounced. Its county master was employed in the tax office in the county seat, and its main meeting hall was situated in that city. Many of its members were drawn from the older, rural non-farm people, and those who engaged in part-time farming, either by necessity or preference. Therefore, the Moss-Lilac Grange was considerably removed from the main stream of occupational agriculture, even though it professed many rural interests, such as roads, schools, and health and marketing problems.

Country-centered power groups. These groups were led by many of the dominant agricultural figures in the county. The Dairy Breed Associations, of which there were two in operation, were numerically small, never numbering more than twenty active members each. There was a rivalry of breed between them, partly based upon the comparative productive and physical qualities of the cattle, and partly upon jealousies attributed to the alleged arbitrary preferences of Extension personnel.<sup>3</sup>

The Fruit Growers Association was confined almost entirely to Area I, and utilized the services of a district horticultural agent for technical assistance. The fruit growers had marketing and seasonal labor problems which were quite foreign to dairy and general-type farmers, so that these specialty differences tended to isolate the fruit farmers to some degree from the other groups. The geographical concentration of these fruit farmers within one area tended to minimize the individual frictions which might have occurred if they had been dispersed among the dairymen throughout the county. It also permitted efficiencies in dealing with the group as a cohesive unit, with respect to the services of the horticultural agent and

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<sup>3</sup>This will be discussed in a later section of the chapter.

to the harvesting and marketing of the crop.

The ABA, while it had its own group of officers, was closely allied with the Dairy and Farm Services Cooperative. In fact, the two inseminators, one full-time and one part-time, were the same individuals who staffed the Cooperative. These groups were basically production organizations, as in the other counties studied. Most of the users of ABA were small farmers, having ten cows or less, who did not have registered herds. The larger farmers, with purebreds, preferred keeping their own bulls and doing their own breeding.<sup>4</sup>

The Dairy and Farm Services Cooperative had been organized to consolidate within a single organization all fee-charging dairy services<sup>5</sup> to farmers. Although the ABA remained administratively separate in this respect, its two inseminators happened to be the manager and the assistant manager of the Cooperative. The functional cooperation of the two groups was therefore strong. The Cooperative had desk and filing space within the main Extension office, and the soil testing laboratory was lo-

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<sup>4</sup>A few of these farmers resented ABA because they claimed it prevented them from selling young bulls locally from their own herds.

<sup>5</sup>Such as milk testing, soil testing, etc.

cated there. From this central location, telephone calls and personal visits were handled promptly, with free assistance from the Extension secretary.

Mixed power groups. The Dairy Association was a recently organized group of smaller farmers, mostly shippers of Grade B and uncertified milk, who had banded together to preserve the market for their product. It was precipitated by the fact that a privately owned local creamery had suddenly gone out of business, thereby creating a serious milk marketing problem. Even the larger certified producers had no outlet for their surplus milk, and a majority of dairy farmers were faced with heavy losses or outright ruin. A mixed group of authority and power leaders, faced with this common economic threat, formed a citizen's committee and negotiated with the largest milk cooperative in the state to take over the defunct creamery. At the time of the study, this transfer had just been completed. As will be noted subsequently, this unification of diverse leadership elements in a time of felt crisis had created the same kind of leadership ambivalence previously noted in Orange County.

The Farm Bureau was much the largest power group in the county. As elsewhere, many of its leaders were fairly young people, who possessed considerable energy and a



strong identification with the principles and programs of the organization. The structure, consisting of numerous community groups plus an overall county committee, was of a standard variety, and differed little from the arrangement in the other counties studied. Various kinds of group and personal insurance were among the major tangible benefits available to members.

The Farmers Union, although far smaller than the Farm Bureau, had a similar county and state structure. There the similarity ended, since the views and programs of the two organizations were frequently antagonistic. In Moss-Lilac, the Farmers Union had been formed by a splintering off of a small group of dissidents in the Farm Bureau in the mid 1940's. This faction then organized as a Farmers Union group, which had its greatest strength and appeal among the smaller and the part-time farmers. The differences between these groups at the county level were consistent with those reflected at the state and national levels.

Power group interaction. Figure 17 illustrates the patterns of interlocking leadership stemming from differences and similarities among the power groups. The chart shows the tendency for town-centered groups to be isolated

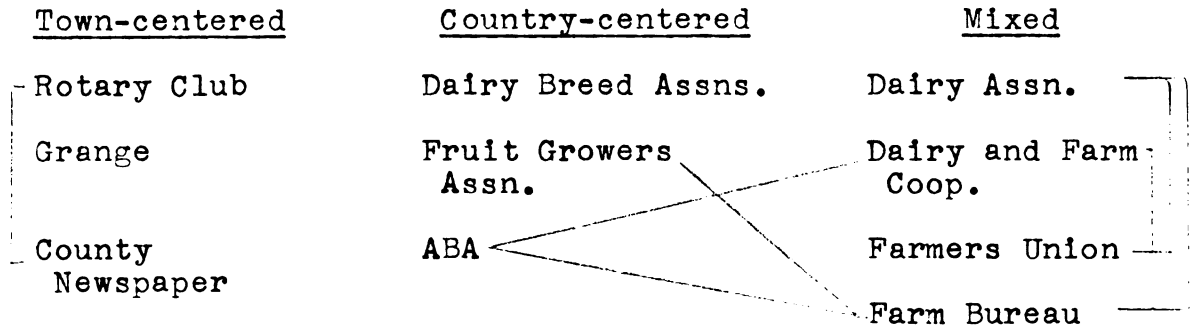


Figure 17. Interlocking leadership of active agricultural power groups in Moss-Lilac County, 1953.

from the other two types.<sup>6</sup> The Grange, the Dairy Breed Associations, and the Fruit Growers Association had little interaction with other groups. Although the ABA and the Dairy and Farm Cooperative were production-minded, two of their leaders were active in Farm Bureau. The Farmers Union was a minority faction in the power structure, and its only interaction was with the Dairy Association, which was likewise connected with the Farm Bureau. The chief cleavage in power group harmony came from rivalry between the Farmers Union on the one hand, and a loose confederation of the remaining groups, spearheaded by the Farm Bureau, on the other. This confederation constituted what might be called

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<sup>6</sup>This is not to say that many of these groups did not have joint members. Quite a few Rotarians, for example, were members of the Farm Bureau. However, their leadership influence tended to be minor, or at least informal.

the major power faction.

Authority groups. The authority groups had less contact with one another than did the power groups. The Rural Electrification Cooperative was primarily a business service organization which was set up according to public statutes and regulations. While its directors were local people, with the chairman being a leader in the Fruit Growers Association of the power structure, the organization took no official part in the regular agricultural activities of the county.

The PMA maintained separate offices in the same town as the Extension Service, and employed two full-time clerical personnel. Its leaders were either Farmers Union men or "outsiders" who had no power group affiliation at all.<sup>7</sup> Practically all of the committeemen were small farmers, several of whom were part-time operators.

The Board of Supervisors had the most diverse representation of any authority group. Since the county seat was, by virtue of its population, entitled to three supervisors, non-agricultural interests were present on the

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<sup>7</sup>Four were active Farmers Union members, three were non-affiliated farmers, and one was a vocational agriculture teacher in the public school system.

Board. Also, one township in which an ethnic group predominated usually chose its supervisor from among that group. While the city supervisors were generally businessmen, the rural supervisors were predominantly small farmers over fifty years of age whose public office provided an important source of personal income. The agricultural committee of the Board was composed chiefly of these rural members, whose recommendations were seldom questioned by the Board as a whole.

The SCD board of directors, as in Orange County, had representatives from both types of control groups, as well as "outsiders." The composition of the board over the years had considerable variation, but the power groups were preponderant in its membership. However, no one set of leaders had continuous control. A chief farm planner, and an assistant planner were full-time employees, along with two part-time assistants, and all were under the local jurisdiction of the SCD board. The offices of the board and of the SCS technicians were located in the same building as the Extension Service.

"Cross-leadership." The phenomenon of "cross-leadership" was present in the county, as illustrated by the following chart:

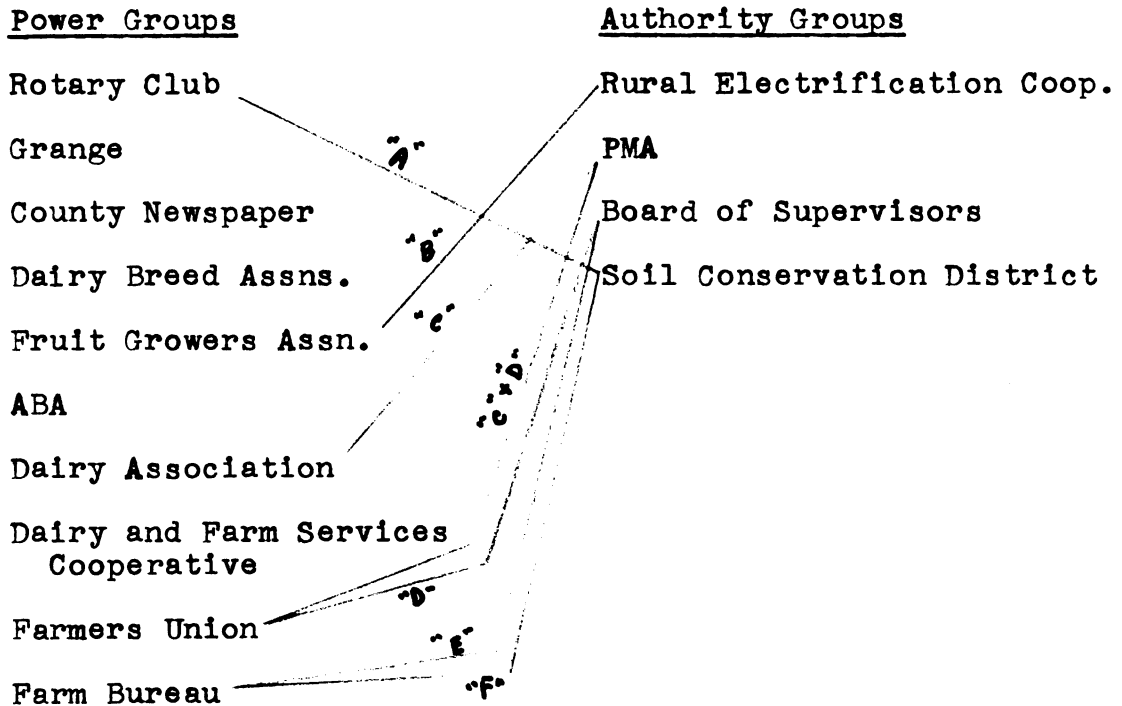


Figure 18. "Cross-leadership" among power and authority groups in Moss-Lilac County, 1953.

The data in the above diagram indicates that the major power faction accounted for most of the "cross-leadership" noted. The SCD committee was heterogeneous, containing authority and power leaders, as well as "outsiders." The minority power faction, with its hub in the Farmers Union, had strong representation on the PMA committee, and on the Dairy Association board of directors. Thus the minority and majority power groups each interacted with certain of the authority groups. The results of such interaction were noticeable in the behavior of those groups having "cross-leadership."

Geographically, county leadership (mostly of the power variety) was concentrated in Area II. Area I was also power-oriented, though weaker in numbers. Area III contained more authority and "outsider" leaders, while Area IV was a stronghold of the minority power faction.

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Power Group</u>	<u>Authority Group</u>
"A"	Rotary Club Program Chairman	SCS Farm Planner
"B"	Fruit Growers Assn. President	Rural Electrification Cooperative President
"C"	Dairy Association President	PMA Chairman
"C"	Farmers Union Director	PMA Chairman
"D"	Farmers Union Director	PMA Committeeman
"D"	Farmers Union Director	SCD Director
"E"	Farm Bureau Community Leader	Township Supervisor
"F"	Farm Bureau County Committeeman	SCD Director

Figure 19. Delineation of "cross-leadership,"  
Moss-Lilac County, 1953.

#### B. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Power Groups

The conflict between the majority and minority factions

permeated power group behavior within the county. In one sense, this conflict was a manifestation of the national antagonisms between the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union. Locally, these were often expressed in purely doctrinaire fashion.<sup>8</sup> However, the power leaders on both sides were able to translate these diffuse abstract differences into specific empirical ones, in which personal animosities and preferences were prominent.

The major power group consisted of leaders from the Dairy Breed Associations,<sup>9</sup> Fruit Growers Association, Dairy and Farm Services Cooperative, and the Farm Bureau. For the most part, the major power group leaders were the larger, prosperous farmers.<sup>10</sup> Many of them regarded the

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<sup>8</sup>This mechanical repetition of arguments over current issues occurred often at the community and county meetings of both of these groups. Material sent from state and national headquarters was dutifully discussed, and usually the local vote confirmed the state or national position on an issue. Actual knowledge of an issue was not essential to "taking a stand" on it. Other criteria of judgment (political, ethical, religious, etc., symbols) were even more influential than the "facts."

<sup>9</sup>One disturbing factor in this structure was the rivalry between the two major dairy breed associations. Whenever the question of breed comparisons arose, there was a considerable amount of acrimony between the groups. But if a different type of problem was at hand (such as the desirability of PMA, or support of the Farmers Union), the attitudes of both organizations were unified.

<sup>10</sup>As noticed in other counties, there was a tendency for the sons of these leaders to follow their fathers as group leaders. At the time of the (continued next page)

"outsiders" and the minority power faction as radicals who were trying to get something for nothing at the expense of those who had been legitimately successful. However, several of these leaders, particularly the older ones, made up a kind of "old guard," who were inclined to be more tolerant of behavioral differences than the younger generation of Farm Bureau partisans. The latter were more vehemently opinionated than the "old guard," and were more inclined to condemn the minority power faction on personal grounds.

This difference of the attitudes within the major power group structure was illustrated by the following comments. Said one "old guard" leader, "I go along with the Farm Bureau most of the time, but the Farmers Union has some good men in it, too. The only reason the Farmers Union got started here in the first place was because certain Farm Bureau people rode them too hard in the meetings. You can't step on everybody who disagrees with you. They got these other people mad, and now maybe they're sorry." Another put it this way. "Well, you hear a lot of talk about what these organizations do (Farm Bureau and

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(continued) study, six sons were taking active roles in power organizations, and were being "pushed" for top leadership jobs.



Farmers Union). Personally, I think they all get some orders from the top and take credit for things they don't do. That's human nature, I guess. I think the Farm Bureau is a good thing for agriculture, and we need a thing like that to speak up for farmers. But they can push that too far sometimes." Conversely, the partisan Farm Bureau leaders were less broad-minded, believing that "the gang over in \_\_\_\_\_ (Area IV) is a bunch of Reds," and "the trouble with them (Farmers Union) is that they're poor (in a technical sense) farmers and think the rest of us should take care of them. If they did more farming and less stirring up trouble we'd all be better off," and, finally, "that outfit (Farmers Union) is run by labor, anyway. They're not farmers, they're just stooges for the C.I.O. A lot of them learned this stuff working in factories. They're not for the farmer, they work against him."

Town-centered power groups. On most agricultural matters, these groups followed the policy lead of the major power faction. Many Rotarians belonged to the Farm Bureau and subscribed to its political and economic positions. There was cordiality between the two organizations, which was expressed in their cooperation on numerous community and civic enterprises.

The master of the Grange not only belonged to the Farm

Bureau, but promoted it vigorously throughout the county. Although his job in the tax office at the county seat was not in itself agricultural, he harbored strong feelings about farm policy matters. His opposition to PMA and the Farmers Union was just as vehement as his support of the Farm Bureau. Undoubtedly this attitude influenced the points of view of rank and file Grange members.

The newspaper editor tried to remain neutral in sentiment, with respect to the power factions because, as he said, "I don't believe a newspaper should take sides among local groups, but should simply present the facts." He was, however, a member and strong booster of the Rotary Club, and several of the major power group leaders were his personal friends.

Country-centered power groups. The Fruit Growers Association was chiefly under the influence of "old guard" leaders who, while generally in favor of Farm Bureau programs, did not participate a great deal in its activities. The fruit growers had their specialized kinds of marketing and labor problems and they seldom worked on outside projects. The president of the Association did serve on the regional fair association and on the dormant Extension Advisory Board, but he was not overly concerned about non-occupational political or policy issues. As he put it,

he was "civic-minded" because he regarded this as a citizen's "duty to serve the community," but he eschewed partisanship.

The general vigor of the dairy groups reflected the coordination of services and operating personnel which had been established in the county. Instead of having several ABA groups, plus autonomous DHIA units, the entire set of functions was performed through a central manager and one assistant. Thus, enough income was available to keep these men at their jobs. They were both energetic, particularly the manager, and kept detailed and accurate records of their work. Although many of their clients were not in the major power faction, particularly in ABA, the cooperative manager and assistant were both oriented toward that faction. The manager felt that the Farmers Union generally attracted "unsuccessful" farmers and that the "good" farmers were the ones who got the most out of Extension. He thought PMA had outlived its usefulness, and that the Extension Service should concentrate on marketing problems, not production. He himself was concerned with quality, not quantity, and he believed the Grade B milk producers would never come out on top. The assistant manager was a director of Farm Bureau and had served as chairman of the annual meeting described below. For economic reasons, then, the dairy production organizations showed no formal preference

toward either of the opposing power groups, although individual leaders definitely classed themselves as partial to the major power faction.

Mixed power groups. To illustrate the attitudes and procedures which characterized the Farm Bureau's organizational behavior, a brief account of its 1953 annual meeting has been included here. There were about eighty persons present, at least three-quarters of whom were over fifty years of age. A major order of business was to consider policy resolutions submitted by the resolution committee. On national issues, such as abolition of PMA payments, flexible price supports, and a return to private credit, there was not a dissenting vote on any resolution. A few requests for clarifying information were made from the floor, but these were seldom answered directly. For instance, someone asked whether the abolition of national trade barriers would depress farm prices by "flooding the country with cheap stuff." There was much confusion among the leaders but no one seemed to know what would happen. In desperation, the chairman called for a vote, and the resolution favoring abolition of trade barriers passed unanimously. Following the voting, the chief speaker, an assistant state lobbyist for the Farm Bureau, was introduced. He told the assembly that their organization was

"a multi-purpose tool, which is flexible and can change its objectives at any time." He said the Democrats had been "taken over" by labor, and that the Farm Bureau opposed this. He stated that certain Republican members of agricultural committees in Congress, "who certainly don't act like Republicans," were listening to the Farmers Union and the C.I.O. instead of the Farm Bureau. He urged those in his audience who might disagree with the Farm Bureau on one or two items to still support it as a whole. "Remember," he concluded, "there are only two teams in this country--the one of government centralization and the one of individual freedom. Don't be misled by the demagogues who want to destroy your local government." From the tone and content of this meeting, there remained little doubt that the Farm Bureau had every intention of mobilizing county opinion along partisan lines. This included the naming of its opponents and presenting strategy for their defeat.

The minor power faction was epitomized by the Farmers Union,<sup>11</sup> which was concentrated in Areas III and IV (see Figure 16), contained many part-time farmers. It proved impossible to secure any membership figures, either for the

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<sup>11</sup>There were several "outsiders" who, by either initial choice or by disillusionment, were independent of both factions.

county or the state, from the local officers. Although highly critical of Farm Bureau methods and policies, these minority leaders used similar practices themselves. For example, while attending a monthly community meeting of the Farmers Union in Area IV, the investigator was subjected to close questioning as to his motives and his group affiliations. There was a definite defensive and suspicious attitude on the part of the twelve persons attending which was never entirely dispelled. At the start of the meeting, reports and an information sheet from the Union's national office were read, punctuated by a continuous berating of local major power faction groups in terms of the points being discussed. In a later discussion, after the formal meeting, the members were asked by the investigator to define such terms as "family farm" (which they used frequently as a value symbol), and "parity or better." There was some annoyance at this request, and no satisfactory or coherent explanations were forthcoming. The PMA was highly praised, as was the Dairy Association, but almost all other groups in the county were condemned as "reactionary" and against "the little guys" (which most of the Farmers Union believed themselves to be). All but three of those present at the meeting were part-time farmers.

While this Farmers Union group was vocal and well-knit,

it was numerically small, and its material resources were meager. Yet it used them effectively in influencing the behavior of one or two other county organizations which had control of concrete community services, such as PMA.

The Dairy Association, embracing as it did both major and minor power group factions, was something of an anomaly in the power structure of the county. Its president was a top Farmers Union man and its secretary-treasurer was a Farm Bureau director. The president, who was generally given credit on all sides as the originator of the group, explained the ambivalence of the group as follows, "It was when the creamery folded that I knew we had to do something all together. We had to get a milk market. I asked \_\_\_\_\_ (the Farm Bureau director) if he would give me a hand. We needed everybody to write, talk, and sign petitions. I said this was bigger than any group, and it didn't matter what a man belonged to. A Farm Bureau man could starve just like anybody else. I didn't want people to think the Farmers Union was in charge of this. I really acted as a citizen, not as a member of any group, but people wouldn't have believed it. It would have been a failure if the Farm Bureau hadn't been in on it."

Thus it was clear that an economic crisis had persuaded some leaders to bury their usual differences, at least for

the time being. Since many rank and file members were small farmers shipping Grade B milk, there seemed a good chance that the minority power faction might gain more control as time went on. However, since the organization was less than one year old at the time of the study, there was little indication of how long the truce would last. At the Association meeting which the investigator attended, no signs of power conflict were openly in evidence. The only vestige of disharmony came when the president claimed that he and the other three directors (two of whom were "outsiders") were willing to serve another year without pay. At this point, the Farm Bureau county chairman, who was a rank-and-file Association member, proposed that the directors be paid five dollars per monthly meeting plus mileage. This was more to obligate the directors to do a good job, he said, than to reward them for past efforts. The directors were not anxious to take this recompense, and made objections on grounds of extravagance, but the motion was finally carried. There were about two hundred fifty members in the Association, of which more than one hundred turned up for the meeting. As one farmer commented, "There's plenty of 'em here now, but I wonder how many will show up next year."

In order to summarize graphically the varied attitudes



of the power groups toward one another, the chart below indicates the significant relationships:

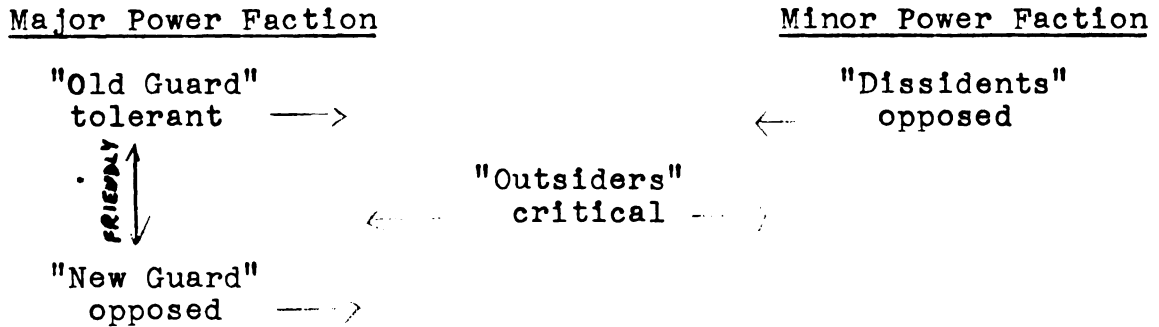


Figure 20. Focused attitudes of power structure leaders, Moss-Lilac County, 1953.

### C. Behavior Characteristics of the Significant Authority Groups

PMA. The PMA was the authority group counterpart of the minority power faction. Since its chairman was a Farmers Union leader, there was acute awareness of the anti-PMA feeling found in the Farm Bureau and in other major power groups. While practically all county leaders, whatever their affiliation, admitted past values in the PMA program, most believed it was no longer needed. Only the minority power faction and several of the "outsider" leaders were staunch supporters of PMA as it now stood.

By legislative fiat, the Agricultural Conservation Program of 1953 had made PMA and SCS joint partners in

carrying out conservation practices, but each looked upon the other as a potential rival.<sup>12</sup> At the PMA-sponsored meeting in Moss-Lilac to discuss the new arrangement, the role of SCS vis-à-vis PMA was discussed warily. The PMA chairman regarded SCS as definitely under the wing of the major power groups, and saw this new "cooperation" as a possible entering wedge to undermine his own leadership in PMA. The investigator attended this meeting, at which two SCS personnel and SL were also in attendance. The latter three said very little, while various committeemen were vocal in their criticism of the proposed list of permissible ACP practices. A noticeable coolness existed between SCS and PMA representatives, and it was apparent that future relations in carrying out these joint functions would be somewhat strained.

Board of Supervisors. As was evident in counties already described, the Moss-Lilac Board of Supervisors was seldom preoccupied with agricultural matters, except during the period when appropriations for the Extension services were being considered. At such times, it was up to Extension officials and their supporters, whether on the Board or not, to justify the requests made. The tendency

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<sup>12</sup>A situation similar to that noted in Ivy County.

among the rural supervisors was to conceive of themselves primarily as guardians of the county treasury, and to assume that a request for funds was excessive unless proven otherwise. Their county-wide prestige was not high, particularly among the power group leaders. In two Moss-Lilac townships, the major ethnic groups had each managed to keep one of their number in the supervisor position for many years.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, one of the Area II supervisors was a young Farm Bureau and ABA leader who first had run for office "reluctantly," but found he liked the job after a year or so. He soon became the chief sponsor of Extension measures and requests in Board meetings, and admitted he did quite a bit of "arguing and persuading the rest of them" to get an increased Extension budget. This younger member also observed that the non-farm supervisors from the county seat rarely opposed Extension appropriations, and he labeled them as "more enlightened" than many of the rural members. The latter regarded themselves as "independents," and seemed to strike back at the major power groups and urban leaders by opposing them on specific issues, of which

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<sup>13</sup>The feeling of the older seasoned supervisors was that new men, particularly young ones, were easily hoodwinked by the experienced members, and that it took a good many years to achieve the guile and shrewdness to cope with one's fellow board members who were wise in the ways of politics.

Extension appropriations was one.<sup>14</sup> As one of these rural supervisors put it, "Extension has a lot of ideas but they don't get to the people. SL doesn't get out on the farms enough, and when he does it's to the big ones. People don't like it, and if the real farmers had the whole vote they probably wouldn't have an agent at all." The Board of Supervisors, as a whole, was a stronghold of the "outsider" type of leader, who was critical of almost every other faction and organization. There were, however, a few supervisors who belonged to, or at least followed, the major power group leadership and who "carried the ball" for Extension<sup>15</sup> in securing appropriations. The main body of supervisors, by identifying Extension work as a major power group project, attacked the Extension budget as a means of combatting power group dominance in general affairs. This kind of attitude transference was also observed in Orange

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<sup>14</sup>Here again was the paradox of rural opposition to agricultural agencies, which derived solid support from city and non-farm sources.

<sup>15</sup>This support was not wholly confined to Board members. The president of the Fruit Growers Association stated that "many times" he had been asked by SL and others to appear before the Board and "plead for the money" which Extension had requested. He realized SL was "not too popular" with the Board, but felt it was his duty to see that Extension work in the county was not penalized because of that antagonism. He added that he himself had no great regard for many of the supervisors, but felt they would "listen to me."

and Ivy Counties, where country-city conflicts often occurred.

SCD. For its own part, the Moss-Lilac SCD had some of the leadership ambivalence which was characteristic of it in other counties studied. In terms of conservation accomplishment, the District had one of the outstanding records in the state. It was among the first to have been organized (1942), and showed a history of steady progress over the years. In 1950, the District won recognition as having the best annual record of achievement in the state.

Although one major power group leader had been an SCD director since its inception, much of the current leadership came from "outsiders." One of these, a poultry farmer who had been in and out of both the Farmers Union and the Farm Bureau, was quite aware of the power structure of the county, and tried to influence the selection of SCD directors who were, as he put it, "non-partisan like myself." With such diverse leadership representation, District meetings were often lively, and in the words of one other director, "kept everybody on their toes. You came to the meetings because you knew if you didn't, somebody might try to slip something through on you."

The technical SCS personnel demonstrated that they were aware of the power cleavages in the county, particularly

as they were reflected on the Board. Consequently, they had a flexible work schedule, and responded to pressures exerted by cooperating farmers for services. The more vocal and insistent a farmer was, the more likely he was to get attention. Very often these were the larger, more prosperous farmers who could afford to carry out their farm plans. The farm planner was trying to develop a "neighborhood group" system of organization to broaden the base of conservation practices. Frequently, the leaders of such groups were the same ones employed by Extension on its projects.<sup>16</sup> The SCS work in the county received high praise from all of the major power group leaders and most of the "outsiders." The minority power faction was more critical, principally making the argument that the big farmers got a disproportionate share of the technicians' time. More than 70 per cent of the active SCS cooperators resided in Areas I and II. It seemed clear that SCS personnel was working mostly within the major power groups, simply as a line of least resistance, and because these power groups were productive enough to give them a good record of accomplishment.

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<sup>16</sup>One indication that the SCS technical personnel might not have been thoroughly neutral was the membership of the farm planner in the Rotary Club, in which he took an active role. During a Rotary Club meeting, he discussed farm policies with the investigator, and voiced heavy criticism of PMA.

The farm planner, especially, looked with distaste upon his enforced role as collaborator with PMA on the Agricultural Conservation Program. His relations with the SCD directors were kept smooth and friendly by meticulous effort on his part to carry out their instructions.

The authority groups, then, showed little cohesion with one another. All had been infiltrated to a varying extent by power group leaders, and thereby reflected certain biases which these leaders had. Thus the clashes which authority groups had with one another were traceable to power group cleavages which had been carried over into the authority group structure. These differences, primarily in the case of the SCD, seemed to invigorate the organizations and to have resulted in a large amount of productive work. The SCS personnel, cognizant of the power struggle within the county, chose to work with whatever groups demonstrated control strength, and in most instances these were the major power groups.

Overall, the behavior of the authority groups also reflected, to a considerable extent, the main conflict between the two power structure factions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>This was not the case with the Rural Electrification Cooperative, which had few relationships with other groups, due to the narrow range of its activities. It was run solely as a business enterprise even though its genesis had been a source of community conflict about ten years ago. By the time this study was made, the conflict had largely been dissipated.

D. Interaction of the Agent with Power  
and Authority Groups

SL was a person who found individual face-to-face relationships difficult to engage in. He preferred working with groups, and was quite aware of the fact that he was not an outgoing personality, saying, "It just isn't natural for me to go up and slap a fellow on the back."

By and large, he had very little contact with the town-centered power groups, and had practically nothing to do with any power groups in the county seat. He did not belong either to the Rotary Club or the Grange, although he occasionally came to their meetings as a guest, or as part of a program.

His activities in the Dairy Breed Associations were more pronounced, and did engender some opposition among the farmers. The #1 Association claimed that he showed partiality to the newer #2 Association in the county. A #1 Association leader was particularly bitter about this, although he had remained one of SL's main cooperators on most other Extension programs. Likewise, most of these #1 Association leaders were "old guard" power group individuals who still got along with SL generally, even though they thought he had "gone over to the other side," as far as the dairy breeds were concerned. Yet they felt strong enough



to carry on their own group without his support. SL admitted his professional preference for the #2 breed, but denied he showed favoritism in his organizational work. He was merely helping the new association to get established because he was technically convinced the #2 breed was the best one for local conditions, and because it was his obligation to aid any organization which requested his help.

He had helped to start the ABA, principally with a number of major power group leaders, and had been instrumental in organizing the Dairy and Farm Services Cooperative, which included DHIA, owner-sampler testing, and soil testing. He was very proud of this program and the good record it was making, while at the same time giving full credit to the energy and enterprise of the Cooperative's manager. SL believed that organizations should "stand on their own feet" once they were organized, and he purposely avoided influencing Cooperative or ABA activities, although they often invited him to their meetings. His relationships with the Cooperative's manager and the latter 's assistant were friendly, as evidenced by the fact that they used part of the Extension office as a work center.

SL's contacts with the Fruit Association were sporadic, although he did help to secure seasonal labor for the growers during harvest time. However, the fruit men seemed

desirous of doing their own recruiting and did not rely on SL for assistance. Both growers and agent commented on the lack of contact between them. SL felt that, since he was not a fruit specialist, he had better leave the main technical work to the district horticultural agent. Yet many fruit farmers had some dairy cattle or poultry as a side enterprise, and claimed they would have welcomed more attention from the agent. Actually, SL depended a great deal upon the support he received from two major Fruit Association leaders. This, however, was more of a personal kind of dependence<sup>18</sup> than a case of group interaction.

As might be expected, the Farm Bureau-Farmers Union dichotomy had basic consequences for SL's behavior. Though seldom publicly vocal or expressive as to his opinions, he had strong affinity for the Farm Bureau orientation. It was significant that this preference stemmed from personal convictions about economic and political principles, and not from an assessment of the relative power positions of the groups concerned. Indeed, SL had been a charter member of the Farm Bureau in the county, and had even served as secretary during its early years. He attended county-wide

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<sup>18</sup>As noted previously, SL had several times requested the president of the Fruit Association to intercede for him in getting appropriations from the Board of Supervisors.

meetings regularly, and participated in a local community discussion group. Yet from observation, it was apparent that he exercised no influence on Farm Bureau policies. He frankly admitted that the county leaders "don't always follow my suggestions." He also felt that the "new guard" president of the Farm Bureau was "not too strong" as a leader, and that he (SL) felt him "too boisterous." In spite of SL's Farm Bureau preferences, he felt that his job required him to work with other groups, including the Farmers Union. He said that some of the latter were very "radical" (and mentioned a film shown which featured a lot of material about Russia and Stalin) and that they were used as "tools by outside interests." Yet he praised some of the leaders as "good men" personally. He was aware of the criticism which his efforts for either group engendered in the other, but felt it his duty to be as impartial as he could while on the job. Although not a politician in this very political situation, he made an elaborate attempt to see the pros and cons of every move he contemplated. This rigorous process mollified his participation generally, since for every line of action he could discern negative consequences or possible alternatives. Therefore, while his manner of participation appeared tentative and cautious, it was not from ignorance, but the reverse.

The crisis of the defunct creamery, which gave rise to the bi-partisan Dairy Association was a case in point. SL was slow in taking initiative because he did not believe it was his job to decide what should be done. He did not feel he had the right or authority to obligate the Extension Service in any financial transaction. Therefore, except for acting as a consultant to the leaders, he left the entire matter to the people themselves. While some persons condemned him for incompetence and lack of interest, others praised him for allowing people to decide for themselves what to do. Whether or not the early success of the Dairy Association was due to SL's position is difficult to answer. Yet it could not be denied that the course of events was eminently satisfactory from the farmers' financial standpoint, and that at least a temporary liaison was created between the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union.

SL's experience with the Extension Council and the Advisory Board paralleled that of agents in the other counties studied. He had organized these groups, but had called few meetings because he was unsure of how to utilize them. He also believed that existing groups were sufficiently effective avenues by which to gain leadership opinion. These opinions were not shared by all of the Board and Council members (mostly the same people in both organiza-

tions) who felt that valuable ideas and needed coordination might result from the meetings. However, SL preferred to work closely with the "old guard" major power group leaders who had been his bedrock supporters ever since he had come to the county.

Interaction with the Board of Supervisors was meager; and since SL was not overly popular with "outsider" leaders, he needed power group support. Except when necessary, he avoided contact with the supervisors, whom he regarded as opinionated and often vituperative individuals, who were usually hot-tempered and biased against Extension.

With PMA, he exercised great restraint, but was prepared to discharge his duties under the new ACP program as well as he could. Since PMA was dominated by Farmers Union leaders, SL did not feel welcome or comfortable at the policy meetings. His recommendations were received coolly, and were often pointedly rejected by the minority faction leaders. Thus SL entered the PMA office only in line of formal duty, but he made a strict point of responding to every invitation extended to him in order to demonstrate his willingness to help any group.

His relationship to the SCD, and particularly the SCS personnel, was considerably strained. Although he had helped organize the District as one of the early ones in

the state, it had quickly shown signs of independence. Specifically, the farm planner and his assistants had exhibited much energy in their work and had approached the farmers directly without going through, or even consulting, the Extension office. SL viewed this as an affront, and a deliberate attempt by one government agency to circumvent another. He tried unsuccessfully to bring the SCD under his own jurisdiction. "Outsiders" soon replaced many "old guard" leaders on the board of directors, and these newcomers did not feel obliged to submit to SL's control. Besides, SCS work soon became so popular throughout the county, even with many major power group leaders, that SL did not try to attack it openly. It was ironical that he had concentrated his own brand of opposition upon an authority group like his own, and that his only allies in criticizing SCS were the minority power group leaders, who were outspokenly critical of him in other contexts. The SCS personnel were alert to SL's antagonism, but they carefully avoided any open conflict, preferring to rely on their board of directors as a buffer whenever relations became tense.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that SL's degree of participation in various groups was highly variable, and that most of his interaction was with the major power

groups. He played key roles in the formation of some of the important agricultural organizations, and absolutely none in the origin of others. The success or failure of any group did not seem to depend upon SL's connection with it, and the organizations themselves gave the impression of self-generated vigor rather than dependence upon Extension leadership.

One of SL's extra projects was his promotion of a series of economic policy forums. He utilized speakers from the agricultural economics department of the state college and invited as many farm and business leaders as he could to attend the discussions. Taken as a whole, he felt that these meetings were highly beneficial and that they aired the pros and cons of problems which were everyone's concern. Despite his vigor and persistence, however, attendance at the forums was unpredictable and showed a slight decline from year to year.

#### E. Image of the Agent and of the Extension

##### Service by County Leaders

The "old guard" power leaders had the most favorable group image of SL. Through long personal association, they had come to regard him with the same self-assured tolerance which they felt for the rest of the county. They freely

admitted his faults, such as indecision, lack of energy, and restricted technical knowledge, but were inclined to believe that "in the long run, SL is about as good a man as we could expect to get anyway." In their opinion, the Extension Service was there to be used, but it was not the agent's job to force people to use it. Therefore, they felt that people had no right to complain about SL when the real fault lay with themselves. These "old guard" leaders did feel that more emphasis should be placed upon marketing problems and less upon production. They were aware of the trend to larger farms and fewer full-time farmers on the one hand, and more small, part-time farmers on the other. The gap between these two groups was growing wider, and the major power group leaders were convinced that the full-time farmers should get the major share of the agent's time. This, of course, was the category which they themselves were in.

The "new guard" leaders were more critical of SL, principally because he seemed to spend some time with the minority power faction. This they regarded as a defection from their own ranks, since they were not able to conceive of SL's job in an objective fashion. This bias was not true of all the partisan power leaders, but it made many of them impatient with SL's rather cautious approach to



issues, even though he was personally on their side most of the time.

Most of the "outsider" and minority power group leaders were openly critical of SL and the entire Extension hierarchy. They regarded both as "committed to the Farm Bureau, lock, stock, and barrel," and pointed out SL's personal preference for the major power group point of view. They charged that SL worked only with the bigger farmers, and that he didn't get out to visit other farmers the way he should. While some of these leaders said that they had "nothing against SL personally" and that "I wouldn't take on his job for a million dollars," they regarded him as a symbol of the major power groups whom they disliked, and used him as a focus of their attacks. SL was not adroit enough politically to avoid his aim identification with one faction as against another.

This antagonism carried over into the authority group structure, where both the PMA and Board of Supervisors were inclined to take issue with the entire Extension program. The PMA saw SL as being in the camp of the Farm Bureau, and many supervisors looked upon Extension as little more than a fund-seeking body which had to be kept in check, and which produced meager returns for the money it received. The Soil Conservation District directors and the SCS technical

personnel often felt the agent to be an opponent. Their reaction was not to fight SL openly, but rather to circumvent his obstructions. As the chief planner said, "We know SL doesn't care for us, but it's really not our fault. We have our job to do and the people want us to do it. Sure, we'd like to be more friendly, but that isn't going to stop our program. We're not going to fight with SL, but if he doesn't want to play ball with us, we'll just have to play along without him." Without doubt, the SCD was well-enough established in the county to survive without the agent's assistance.

The image of SL, then, was highly variable, but except for the "tolerant approval" of the "old guard," it was inclined to be negative. SL was pictured as vacillating, unimaginative, and lazy by leaders from all groups. Paradoxically, others claimed he was one-sided and stubbornly opinionated. The more partisan leaders were likely to have this latter point of view. The presence of these rather inconsistent criticisms of SL may well be an indication of inter-group conflicts within the county, rather than a sober evaluation of SL as a professional worker.

F. Image of the County and of the Extension  
Service by the Agent

SL made few attempts to create a generally favorable

impression of himself, either among the people in the county or in the state Extension administration. He was quite frank in his own self-appraisal and was well-informed as to the criticisms which were levelled at him by various groups.

He made a great effort to somehow reconcile his personal preferences with his concept of the county agent role. In so doing, he tried to weigh carefully the pros and cons of almost everything he did. Most of the time this involved a comparison of his social and political convictions, which he believed fundamental to his own integrity, with his equally strong desire to treat all individuals and groups with impartiality. This inner struggle was manifest in the Farm Bureau-Farmers Union conflict. SL's convictions and background were all on the side of the Farm Bureau, yet he forced himself to participate with the Farmers Union because of his sense of obligation to treat all groups with equal consideration. Thus, SL's dilemma was one of adherence to an internal moral principle in a political situation which did not recognize any such principle. So, by trying to allocate himself professionally, to both power factions, he ended up working closely with neither. He recognized that one solution was to reject the minority faction completely, and in an individual sense this could easily have been done. Yet as a county agent he could not

bring himself to do it.

From long experience, he regarded the "old guard" power group leaders as his confidants and supporters, and he often discussed programs with them informally and asked their help in situations where his own efforts were not sufficient to gain desired results (i.e., getting appropriations from the Board of Supervisors, laying out the program for Grass Day, etc.). He was rather proud of his dairy program, and the growth of production services via the Dairy Cooperative. He also pointed out that the SCD, while it had done "as good a job probably as any other in the state," had accepted much assistance from Extension but had rarely given his program a boost in return. This lack of cooperation, as he saw it, was disturbing, and he believed that the Extension office could have handled soil conservation just as well as a new agency.

To a considerable degree, SL was troubled by the fear that he was not doing a good job generally. He worried about the rising number of part-time farmers, about where he should put his efforts to best advantage, and about whether his "group approach" through key leaders should be modified to an individual approach stressing more face-to-face contact. Basically, he wished to avoid conflicts among groups, since taking sides distressed him, yet at times he

felt impelled to stand by his principles publicly. He felt that he was wrestling with these problems pretty much on his own, and he had difficulty communicating them to his Extension superiors at the state office. He believed the central administration was too permissive in its approach to agent behavior, and that he needed more concrete help and support on policy questions than he was receiving. His economic forums were an attempt to involve higher-level Extension specialists and supervisors in some of the perplexing issues of the day, but he suspected that this process was still superficial.

He believed the agent's main function was to help initiate projects, but not to be active in them once they were underway. Every organization eventually should stand on its own feet, even at the cost of some of its operating efficiency. SL avoided becoming emotionally partisan in a cause or a program, since this would have resulted in a kind of commitment to one course of action which his self-skepticism would not permit. He was a man whose external behavior exhibited a relativism which was the direct antithesis of his internal ethical compulsions.

PART THREE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM OF RATING  
AGENT PERFORMANCE

## CHAPTER XII

### COMPARISON OF COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION AND INTERACTION

In the preceding chapters of Part II, a considerable amount of material has been presented which might be used in comparing the performances of the agents involved. Although there are many ways in which such comparisons could have been handled, it was necessary to select certain aspects of the data for particular relevance to the control theory developed in Part I, and to the agent rating procedures followed in the Michigan Extension Service.

Most of the content of these descriptive chapters has dealt with power and authority groups within the counties. Consequently, agent relations within the larger framework of Extension have been treated only from the county point of view.<sup>1</sup> The following are the comparative structural and behavioral foci which will be discussed for the four<sup>2</sup> agent

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<sup>1</sup>Agent-state administrator interaction is a dimension of the research which will be treated as part of the next chapter, dealing largely with images and judgments.

<sup>2</sup>Except where the discussion requires actual differentiation, Aspen and Oak Counties will be treated as a single unit, even though they have been described separately in the text.

situations:

- (a) Patterns of county organizational structure.
- (b) Agent relations with county power groups.
- (c) Agent relations with county authority groups.

A. Patterns of County Organizational Structure

The representation of groups related to agriculture is quite consistent within the four counties (see Tables VIII and IX). A composite picture of this organizational structure is shown in Table VIII. From this table, it is clear that the widest range of incidence occurred among the power-oriented groups. Dairy production associations were not only the most heavily represented as a whole, but also showed the widest internal variation, as between Ivy and Orange Counties. There were also a sizeable number of marketing associations, most of which were concerned with dairy and beef products. In most categories, however, there were no marked patterns or differences between high-rated and low-rated counties, except for the above-mentioned contrast between Ivy and Orange. However, even part of this can be explained by the fact that Ivy contained more farms than any of the other counties, and could therefore support more ABA and DHIA groups. However, the weakness of Orange County in dairy production associations was not explained



TABLE VIII

INCIDENCE OF ACTIVE COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS  
RELATED TO AGRICULTURE, 1953

Control orientation	Number of organizations					Total
	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties		
	Aspen	Oak	Ivy	Orange	Moss-Lilac	
<u>Power</u>						
Service club	1	1	1	1	1	5
Fair board	0	0	1	0	0	1
Dairy production association	3	3	7	1	4	18
Dairy marketing association	0	0	1	1	1	3
Other marketing association	1	0	2	2	1	6
Purchasing cooperative	1	0	1	1	0	3
Advisory and planning board	0	0	0	0	1	1
Farmers organization	2	0	2	1	3	8
Other	0	2	0	2	1	5
Sub-total	8	6	15	9	12	50
<u>Authority</u>						
Board of Supervisors	1	1	1	1	1	5
Soil Conservation District Board	0	0	1	1	1	3
PMA committee	1	1	1	1	1	5
FHA	1	0	1	1	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sub-total	3	2	4	4	4	17
TOTAL	11	8	19	13	16	67

by this factor of numerical difference in farm units. A general shift from dairy to beef production had occurred to some extent in all four counties, but had been most pronounced in Orange. The shift had brought with it a strong interest in marketing problems, and Orange County beef farmers had taken the lead in establishing marketing associations, several of which had become regional in scope. In this process, three of the four dairy production organizations had become inactive, although their formal structure had remained intact. Aside from these particular variations, the control groups in the counties appeared quite uniform, particularly with respect to authority-type groups. Therefore, if real differences existed in agent performance, these could not be ascertained from the data in Table VIII, since the structure of agriculturally-related organizations was similar in both the high-rated and low-rated counties.

The interlocking leadership of the power groups in the four counties showed the distribution indicated in Table IX. This table illustrates no marked pattern based upon high and low ratings, except that cohesion within locales seemed more prevalent in the high-rated counties. Also, Aspen-Oak power groups showed a generally higher occurrence of interlocking than the other counties. This

TABLE IX

INCIDENCE OF INTERLOCKING LEADERSHIP AMONG  
COUNTY POWER GROUPS, 1953

Group locale	Number of organizations					Total
	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties		
	Aspen	Oak <sup>3</sup>	Ivy	Orange	Moss-Lilac	
Town-centered	4	-	2	1	1	8
Country-centered	3	-	3	0	0	6
Mixed	0	-	0	0	3	6
*Cross-locale" <sup>4</sup>	4	-	2	5	3	14
TOTAL	11	-	7	6	7	

may have been due to agent FH's direct participation in the selection of county leaders, and his conscious effort to get those with whom he could work. However, the fact that the other three counties showed little difference in totals suggests that the Aspen-Oak level of interaction may have

<sup>3</sup>Although none of the power group leaders in Oak County were officers in more than one group at the time of the study, Mennonite preponderance in the power leadership resulted in a high degree of cohesion among the power organizations, see Chapter VII, Section II. Thus the Oak County power structure could be considered unified in a functional, if not a formal sense.

<sup>4</sup>This refers to interlocking between a group in one locale and a group in another.

been idiosyncratic.

The data in Table IX can be misleading in that it does not indicate the factional strife between two major power groups in Moss-Lilac County. While the larger faction was unified in much the same manner as the power structure in other counties, it did have to deal with an organized minority group which vigorously challenged its supremacy. This factionalism was, of course, disjunctive to the overall power group unity in the county.

In contrast with the power groups, none of the authority groups in any county, except Orange,<sup>5</sup> had interlocking leadership. This meant that the authority groups were considerably less unified on the county level than the power groups were, and that their measure of control over agriculture in the county was limited mainly to their specific legal duties. This situation provides some clue as to the direction an agent's behavior might take if he were desirous of working with the prevailing control groups in the counties.

In addition to the two previous types of interlocking leadership, the incidence of so-called "cross-leadership" was examined. The distribution of such leadership was as follows:

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<sup>5</sup>Even here, there was just one individual who was serving on two authority group directorates.

TABLE X

INCIDENCE OF "CROSS-LEADERSHIP" AMONG COUNTY  
CONTROL GROUPS, 1953

Groups involved	Number of organizations					Total
	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties		
	Aspen	Oak	Ivy	Orange	Moss-Lilac	
Power	3	0	4	4	5	16
Authority	2	0	2	2	4	10
TOTAL	5	0	6	6	9	26

The tabulation of "cross-leadership" shows no outstanding county differences, except perhaps in the case of Moss-Lilac, where the split within the power structure seemed to have encouraged both power factions to try to gain control of certain authority groups in order to outmaneuver one another.

More significant than the number of groups involved was the fact that the farmers organizations, particularly the Farm Bureau, were the power groups most likely to show "cross-leadership." Furthermore, the Soil Conservation District was the authority group with the heaviest "cross-leadership," and, in the three counties which had Districts, most of the "cross-leadership" in those counties was concentrated in the SCD board of directors. This meant that

each board was at least vulnerable to internal strife among various types of leaders, including those "outsiders" who were not identified with major power or authority constellations within a county. Due to this situation, it might be expected that agents would have a rather difficult time dealing with a group as heterogeneous and ambivalent as an SCD board of directors frequently was.

Two other structural characteristics of county agricultural structure deserve mention for their possible effect upon agent performance. The first was the "town versus country" rivalry which, though often overplayed in both fiction and research, was found to exist, at least in latent form, in each county. However, the empirical circumstances varied in each. It was strongest in Ivy County, where the agent preceding SH had supposedly so allied himself with "urban" interests that his resignation was brought about by rural leaders. The dichotomy was least noticeable in Aspen County, although no overt clash had occurred in FH's entire career as agent. In Orange County, the Fair Board was the focus of some merchant-farmer animosity, and in Moss-Lilac, the Board of Supervisors showed division between supervisors representing the county seat and those from the more rural townships on many issues. Being a legal representative body in each county, the Board

quite naturally would be likely to bring out whatever rural-urban differences might exist. There was no evidence that the presence or absence of such differences was a corollary of rated agent performance.

The second characteristic was a noticeable separation of leadership in the power group structure between what have been called "old guard" and "new guard" leaders. In all of the counties, the older leaders were concentrated in the country-centered dairy production and marketing organizations, and were likely to be the larger and more prosperous farmers in the county. The newer leaders were found in the mixed-locale farmers organizations (except in Oak, which had no such organizations) and in marketing organizations other than those containing older leaders. They were likely to be either non-farmers, part-time farmers, or farmers who were in an early stage of economic development. The chronological age of the "old guard" group was generally higher than that of the "new guard" group, although in many cases "old guard" leaders had channeled young sons or relatives into official leadership positions as their own successors. As in the case of rural-urban differences, this "old guard-new guard" separation was apparently not correlated with county agent ratings, since it was most noticeable in high-rated Ivy and

low-rated Orange Counties, and to a lesser extent in Aspen and Moss-Lilac Counties. Furthermore, in none of the counties did this separation of leadership result in a schism within the major power structure. There was, on the contrary, more agreement than antagonism, even though the two sets of leaders were dissimilar in many ways.

#### B. Agent Relations with County Power Groups

As pointed out in the preceding section, the behavior of the power groups had no obvious relationship to agent ratings. All of the counties, except Oak, had a measure of conflict between the Farm Bureau and the PMA. The stand taken by all of the county Farm Bureaus was nearly identical in terms of PMA. This suggested that neither the stated position nor the reasons for it were arrived at independently by each county Farm Bureau unit.

Consistent operational difficulty also occurred in all the county versions of ABA and DHIA programs. Problems of hiring and training testers and inseminators, poor success in artificial breeding, and high expense and inconvenience of testing procedures were present in all of the counties. Although Orange was the overall lowest performing county in its dairy production program, and had the fewest active groups, Ivy County also had one totally disbanded ABA group,



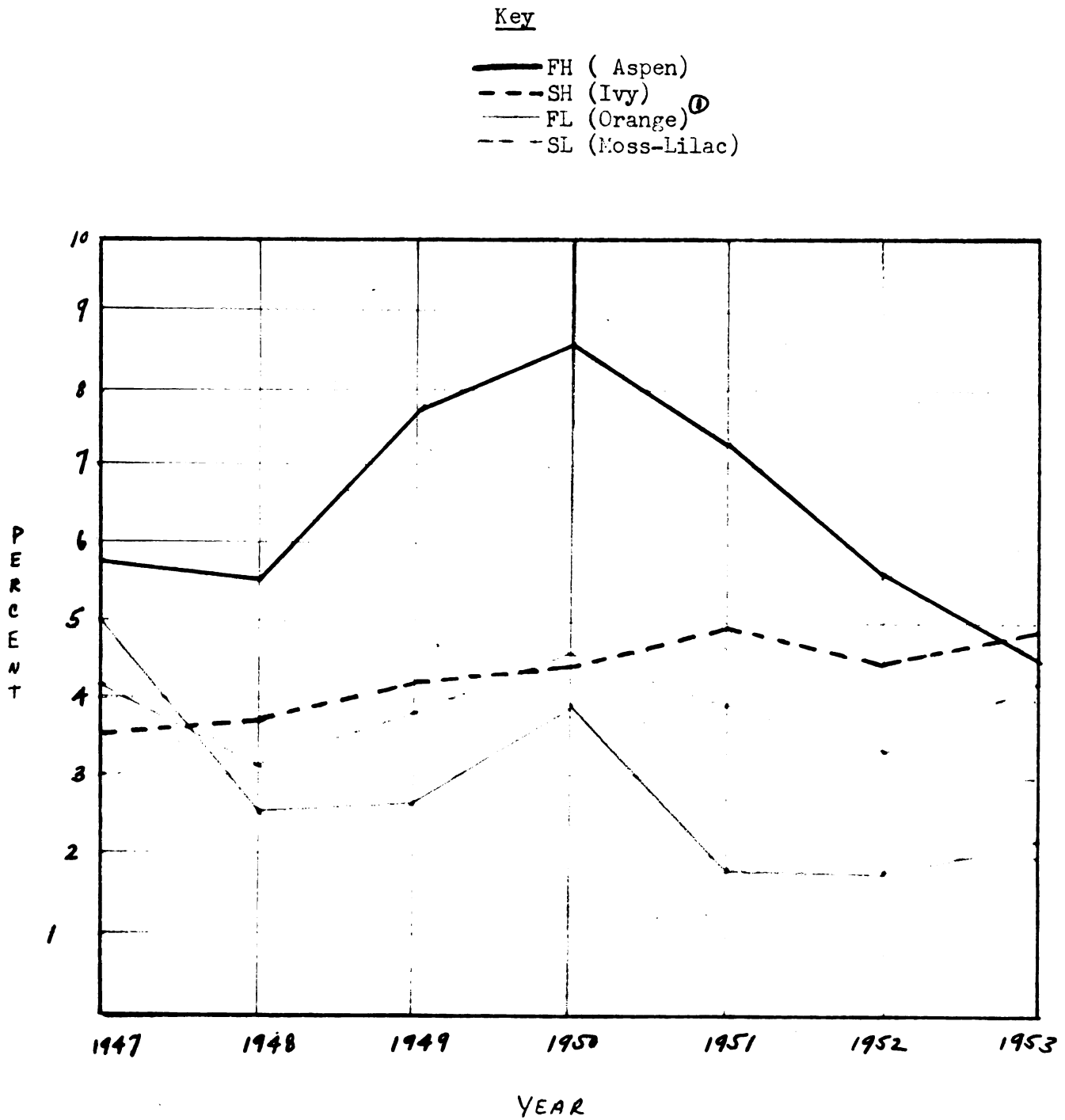
and Aspen had experienced highly erratic interest in both its ABA and DHIA organizations. Only in Moss-Lilac, one of the low-rated counties, did the dairy production groups seem well-organized and confident. Here the unification of services had been accomplished in a special organization formed for that purpose, and the hired personnel were not only capable, but were satisfied with their prospects of making a good living at their jobs.

Since the dairy production organizations were of great importance in most of the power structures examined, some data were investigated with reference to the activities of these organizations in the four agent situations. The county indices chosen were percentage of cows on butterfat test, and percentage of cows artificially bred. These data covered the period from 1947 to 1953,<sup>6</sup> although some gaps were caused by the fact that not all counties had DHIA or ABA units during the entire period.

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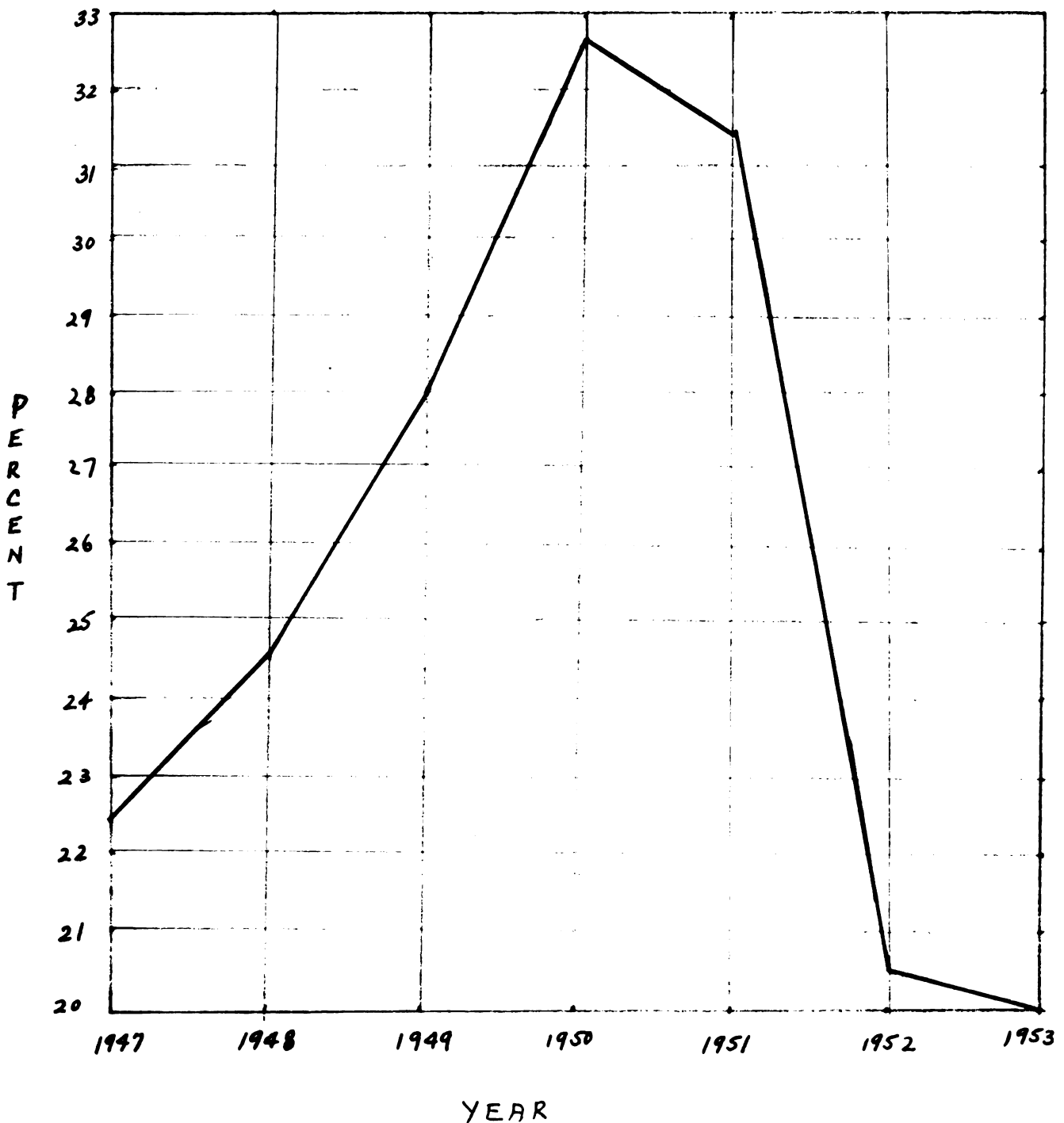
<sup>6</sup>Most of the base figures of cow population ( which consisted of milk cows and heifers two years old and over) were furnished by the office of the State Statistician, Lansing, Michigan. The estimates were derived from a questionnaire mailed to a sample of farmers selected by population on existing mail routes. Yearly replies have averaged 50 per cent of total sample. Results are tabulated annually, using the previous year and the last five-year agricultural census as checks. Spot enumerations throughout the state indicate that estimates have been accurate within 5 per cent of actual cow population.

Figure 21: Percentage of Cows on Regular Butterfat Test (through DHIA or equivalent procedure), 1947-53



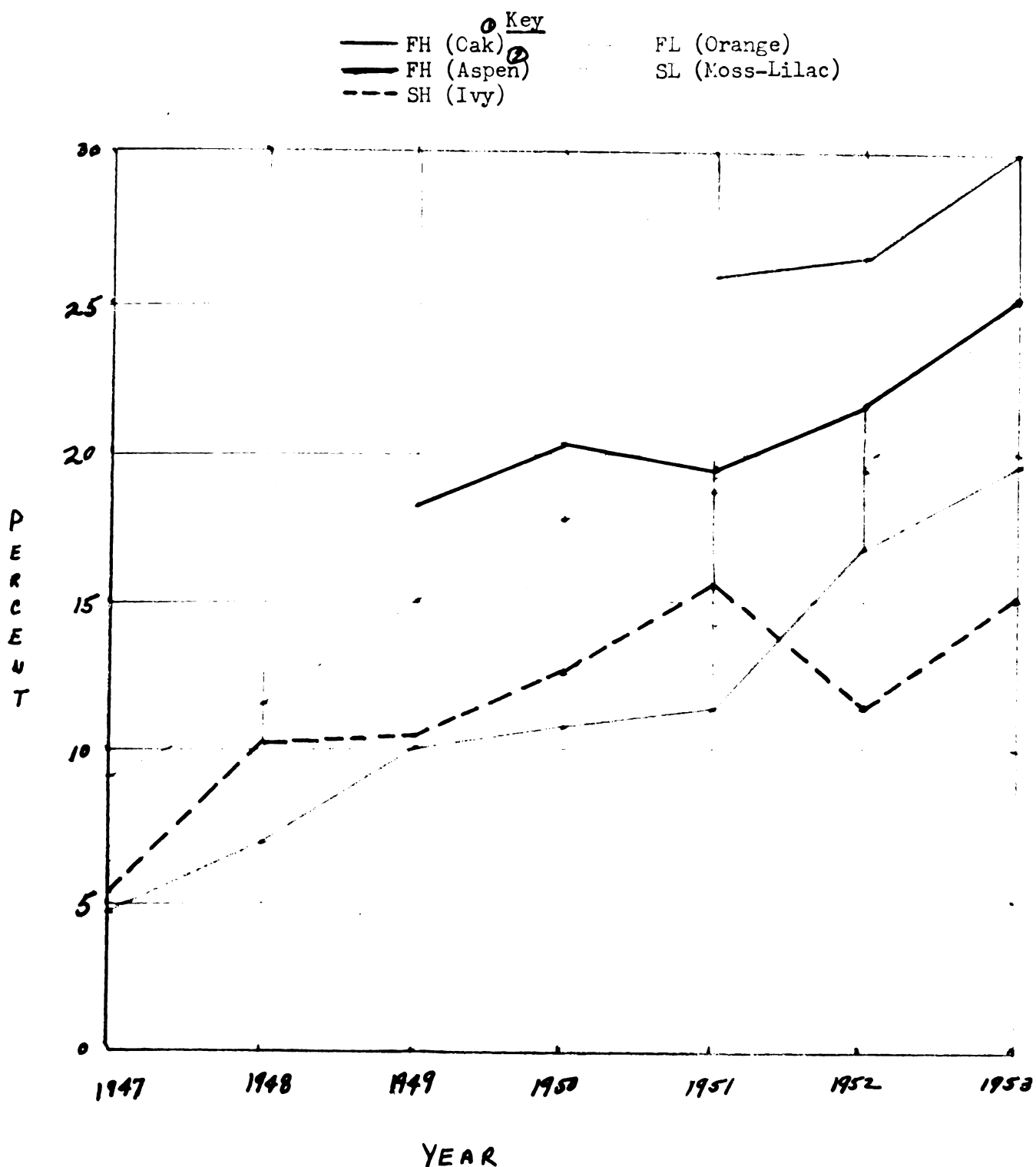
<sup>①</sup> The Orange county DHIA disbanded in 1953.

Figure 21a: Percentage of Cows on Regular Butterfat Test, Oak County<sup>①</sup>  
1947-53



<sup>①</sup> Oak county is diagrammed separately because the numerical percentages involved differed widely from those of the other four counties, and it was not feasible to include them in the first diagram.

Figure 22: Percentage of Cows Bred Artificially (through ABA or equivalent organization), 1947-53



① Did not begin operations until 1951

② Did not begin operations until 1949

The percentage of cows on butterfat test showed little regularity, according to Figure 21. Ivy County had a slow but steady increase, while Moss-Lilac exhibited a cyclical tendency. Orange County had by far the poorest percentage record, while both Aspen and Oak Counties experienced precipitous declines during the past three years which more than offset the gains of the three previous ones. Oak had much the highest numerical percentage on test, although the pattern of behavior was similar to that of Aspen.

In Figure 22, the level of performance was quite consistent for all the counties, with only Ivy falling off slightly during the last two years. In terms of position from year to year, the low-rated counties did not fare much below the top at times. For example, Moss-Lilac was equal to Aspen in 1953, while Ivy was in last position.

Thus, while DHIA percentages have demonstrated erratic county differences, but generally showing better accomplishment for the high-rated ones, the ABA percentages showed more consistent profiles which did not follow rating differences. Therefore, by use of the foregoing figures alone, it would be difficult, especially in the case of ABA performance, to ascertain which counties were high-rated and which were low-rated.

Turning now to the relationships between agents and

various specific organizations, it was feasible to compare the four agents in regard to the kind of interaction they experienced, as shown in Table XI. Unlike the structural and performance comparisons of agricultural and related organizations in the counties, the table indicates marked disparities between high- and low-rated agents. FH and SH had a higher positive orientation toward the power groups than did FL and SL. Neutrality and non-participation were more prevalent in Orange and Moss-Lilac, and the latter accounted for the only two cases of real negative feeling on the part of power group leaders.

Yet, although both the high-rated agents had positive power orientations, they were often dissimilar in their specific behavior patterns. The high "N.A." for Aspen and Oak was evidence of FH's reluctance to establish formal organizations which might eventually upset the status quo structure in which he had so great a personal stake. FH's organizational involvement was purposive and direct, and his personal sense of leadership was strong. He made conscious efforts to keep control of agriculture in his own hands, although he was far from being an obvious or crude politician.

SH, on the contrary, did not seek control for himself. He knew where the strength of the power groups lay; and he

TABLE XI

COMPARATIVE INTERACTION<sup>1</sup> OF AGENTS WITH POWER  
GROUP LEADERS, 1953

Category	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties	
	Aspen (FH)	Oak (FH)	Ivy (SH)	Orange (FL)	Moss-Lilac (SL)
Service Clubs	+	N.A.	+	0	0
Fair Board	N.A.	N.A.	+	+	N.A.
Dairy Producers' Assns.					
DHIA	+	+	+	0	+
Breed Assn.	+	+	+	0	-
ABA	+	+	+	+	0(+)
Dairy Marketing Assn.	N.A.	N.A.	+	+	0
Other Marketing Assn.	0	+	+	+	0
Purchasing Cooperative	+	N.A.	0	0	N.A.
Advisory & Planning Board	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0	+
Farmers' Organizations					
Farm Bureau	+	N.A.	+	0(+)	+
Grange	0	N.A.	0	N.A.	0
Farmers Union	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	-
Other	+	+	+	+	0
<hr/>					
Total	+	7	5	9	5
	0	2	0	2	6
	-	0	0	0	2
	N.A.	4	8	2	2

## Key to Symbols

+ = positive cooperation or acceptance

0 = neutrality or non-participation

- = negative or antagonistic relations

N.A. = not applicable (no such org. in county, etc.)

<sup>1</sup>Symbol appearing first represents predominant type of interaction. Symbol in parentheses represents variation most likely to occur.

cultivated, rather than dominated, the important leaders. He showed some deference in his dealings with the power group leaders, and if they wanted him to perform a function which he, as an individual, was unenthusiastic about (such as managing the county fair), he was inclined to conform with their wishes rather than risk disapproval. Criticism and disfavor were the things which SH wished most to avoid.<sup>7</sup>

FL lacked a sense of identification with the power groups, and was not conscious of any necessity to make himself liked. He had considerable technical ability in dairy work, but did not take the lead in the dairy production organizations. Like SH, he wanted to avoid conflict, especially in situations involving potentially strong opposing forces, such as beef and dairy groups, town and country leaders, etc.

SL also tended to stay out of leadership positions. Yet he had personal convictions which he maintained regardless of the consequences. This had cost him the friendship

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<sup>7</sup>Using Riesman's classification, the behavior patterns of the two high-rated agents could be contrasted by saying that FH was "inner directed" while SH was "other directed." FH was a superior technical expert, who depended upon knowledge and material results for his success. SH was a better "mixer," who relied upon wide contacts and much organizational activity to keep Extension in a favorable light among "grass roots" leaders.



of one group of dairy breeders because he had seen fit to sponsor a different breed, due to its adaptability to local environmental conditions. SL believed the disgruntled group was wrongly accusing him of unwarranted favoritism, but he did not change his course of action when criticized. Likewise, his adherence to Farm Bureau principles aroused the ire of the Farmers Union, even though he made a pointed effort to treat impartially all requests for his assistance as an agent. In both instances, however, his attempts to divorce his private preferences from his public office were not construed favorably by various factions in the county, and were viewed as mere vacillation by the more partisan leaders.

There is a possibility, then, from the material in Table XI, that the type of agent involvement with significant power groups was a major factor in rating agent job performance. This point will be discussed further in the next chapter.

#### C. Agent Relations with County Authority Groups

The interaction of the agents with the most prevalent authority groups was as follows:

TABLE XII

COMPARATIVE INTERACTION<sup>1</sup> OF AGENT WITH AUTHORITY  
GROUP LEADERS, 1953

Category	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties	
	Aspen (FH)	Oak (FH)	Ivy (SH)	Orange (FL)	Moss-Lilac (SL)
PMA	0	0	0(-)	0(+)	0(-)
SCD	N.A.	N.A.	+	+	0(-)
Board of Supervisors	0(+)	0	0(+)	0	0(-)
FHA	0(+)	N.A.	0	0(+)	0
Other	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
<hr/>					
Total	+	0	0	1	0
	0	3	2	3	5
	-	0	0	0	0
	N.A.	2	3	1	0

## Key to Symbols

+ = positive cooperation or acceptance

0 = neutrality or non-participation

- = negative or antagonistic relations

N.A. = not applicable (no such org. in county, etc.)

<sup>1</sup>Symbol appearing first represents predominant type of interaction. Symbol in parentheses represents variation most likely to occur.

Unlike the agent power group interaction, the dichotomy between high- and low-rated counties was not clear-cut with respect to authority group leaders. By far the most prevalent type of interaction was that of neutrality or non-participation. However, in many instances there were responses other than those listed which would come to the fore for limited periods of time (i.e., during budget hearings before the Board of Supervisors, PMA policy meetings, etc.). FL and SH appeared most positively involved with the authority leaders. FH and SL were almost completely neutral or non-participant, although their sporadic involvements had opposite signs. The greatest disparity between agents actually was found in the two low-rated counties.

As before, the behavior patterns of the individual agents were dissimilar. FH again had the fewest number of groups in his counties, especially since he had opposed establishment of soil conservation districts. He followed a consistent policy of ignoring authority groups entirely, although he very often had technical relationships with their leaders on a personal "agent-farmer" basis. Since there were two key power group leaders on the Board of Supervisors, FH showed no concern about his relations with the Board as a whole.

SH, consciously pursuing his aim of harmony with all groups, was himself a member of the SCD board of directors. Since the Board of Supervisors was a focal area for the "town vs. country" dilemma of his predecessor agent, SH avoided relations with it as much as possible, although he was careful to keep in personal contact with individual members who would support him in budget appropriations and other matters. Almost in spite of himself, SH had negative relations upon occasion with the PMA, particularly in the person of the office manager, whom he regarded as a distinct threat to Extension's control position in the county. His opposition mainly took the form of trying to get SCD to take over the functions of, or at least to supervise, PVA's activities.

FL's relatively close cooperation with the authority groups was at least partially explained by the location of all the group offices (except the Board of Supervisors) within the same building. Although FL was not officially an SCD director, he worked closely with the SCS farm planner and assisted with many conservation demonstrations. He was also on congenial terms with the FHA loan administrator and with the chairman of the PMA committee. FL exhibited no conflicts of allegiance with respect to power and authority group allegiance, since he did not regard

power group support as crucial to his status either in the county or in the state Extension hierarchy.

SL did not follow FL's pattern. Although SL was lowest in positive power group interaction, he did not compensate for this by interaction with authority groups. In fact, the reverse seemed to be true, suggesting that there is not necessarily an inverse relationship between power group and authority group interaction with an agent (i.e., an agent who is positively oriented toward county power groups is not automatically hostile toward authority groups, and vice versa). SL's almost latent hostility to PMA was another facet of his unpopularity with the Farmers Union, which dominated PMA membership. This was also his tendency with SCD, although he had a definite fear of the SCS planner as a competitor in his own area of work.

From the foregoing data, there is scant indication that the type of agent involvement with the major authority groups had any appreciable influence on rated agent performance, except that a generally neutral-negative pattern, such as SL's, may have contributed further to his low rating.

#### D. Summary

In light of the preceding comparisons of the four

agent situations investigated, the following tendencies may be noted:

1. The structure of organized agriculture and related groups was not correlated with rated success of the agents involved. All of the structures showed more similarities than differences in most categories.

2. The success of two key dairy production programs, DHIA and ABA, was not markedly correlated with rated agent success, and had negative indications in the case of ABA.

3. The positive orientation to county power group leadership varied directly with rated agent success, suggesting that such orientation was at least one factor in determining ratings.

4. The positive orientation to county authority group leadership was not correlated with rated success, nor was it the converse of proposition 3 above. Greatest dissimilarity in authority group orientation existed between the two low-rated agents.

5. There were considerable differences in the behavior patterns of all four agents as they went about their jobs. These differences did not seem to be related to rated success, at least in the four cases studied. The differences between the two high-

rated agents were often just as marked as those between either high-rated and either low-rated agent. The same was true between the two low-rated agents. This individual behavioral variation casts some doubt about the psychological homogeneity of high- and low-rated agents as group types.

The foregoing statements, even though based upon so few cases, nevertheless suggest that rated success, at least to this point in the analysis, has focused less upon such criteria as comparable social structure and demonstrable performance on specific projects, and more upon some aspect of agent integration with the "grass roots" power structure. Further aspects of the connection between the power groups and the administrative ratings will be attempted in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII

### COMPARISON OF IMAGES HELD BY AGENTS AND BY COUNTY LEADERS

The preceding chapters have made it clear that it was not possible to classify all of the agricultural organizations in a county in a single category, using the control typology. Each agent studied was faced with a variable amount of factionalism and conflict among groups at the county level. The process of contending with these local problems was not often transferred into the orbit of agent relations with the state Extension administration. The important exception to such a compartmentalization of behavior was that the "grass roots" leadership could reach the Extension administrators without having to "go through" the agent. Thus their judgment of the agent's adaptation to county problems was directly transmissible to the agent's administrative superiors. Diagrammatically, this interaction pattern would appear as shown in Figure 23.

So far, in this monograph, the emphasis has been upon interaction at the county level of the diagram in Figure 23, with little attention paid to the "feed back" of county rating influence to the state level. Now, however, it is necessary to transfer the discussion to a dual level of



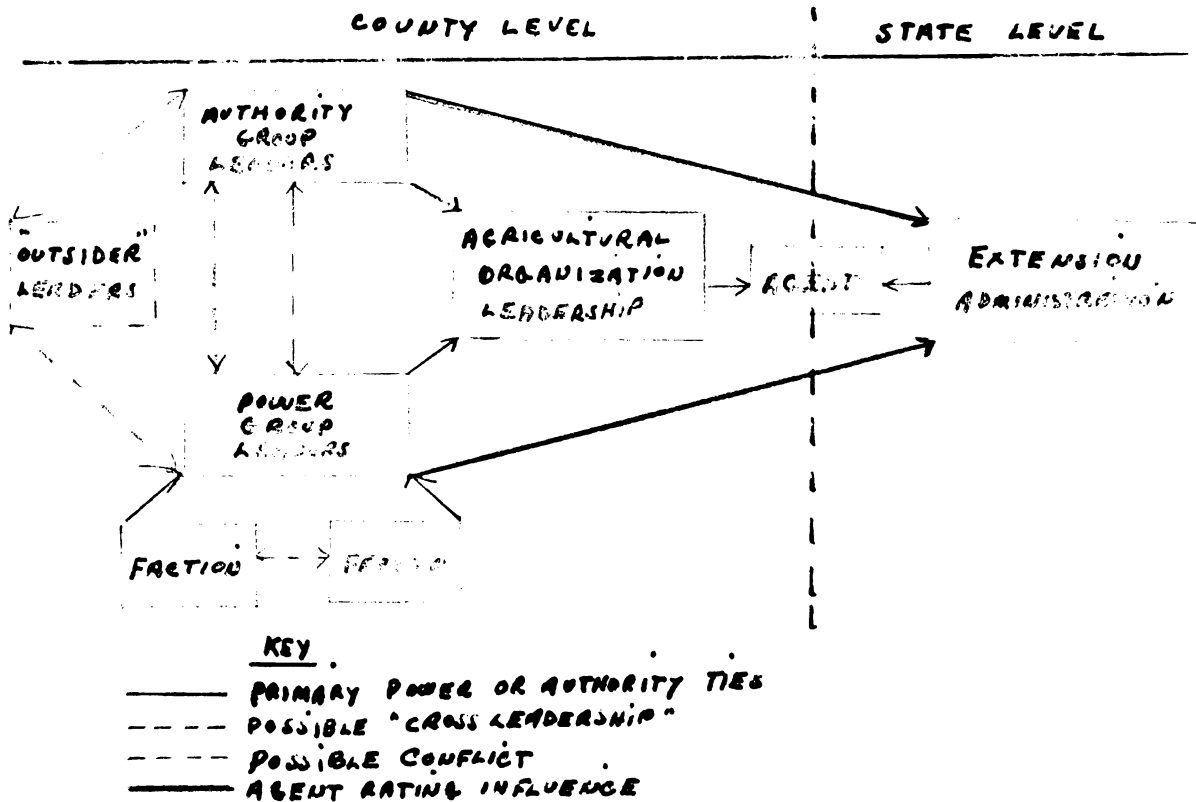


Figure 23. The apparent leadership interaction pattern of agent-centered behavior.

analysis which will bring the state Extension administration into the picture. In keeping with the procedure already begun in the last chapter, comparative data for the four counties will be examined under several headings:

- A. Image of the Agent and of the Extension Service by County Leaders.
- B. Image of the County by the Agent.
- C. Image of the Extension Service by the Agent.

A. Image of the Agent and of the Extension  
Service by County Leaders

Table XIII furnishes a general image of each agent, as conceived by major constellations of leaders in the counties. It is apparent from this table that the "old guard" and the town-centered leader types were most favorably disposed toward county agents generally. However, there was a distinct difference in degree of approval, corresponding to the division between high-rated and low-rated counties. Even though many of the town-centered groups were essentially non-agricultural, and often contained few farmer members, they consistently supported agent programs,<sup>2</sup> and were important factors in maintaining county financial aid to Extension at a high level. The "new guard" leaders, who were inclined to be younger than the other types, and who were most active in the farmers organizations, were less likely to have a strong positive orientation toward the agents. They were quick to spot evidences of "defection" of an agent to groups or to ideas of which they disapproved. The "outsider" and authority

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<sup>2</sup>As has already been pointed out in the county chapters, the urban and village supervisors on the county Boards offered less opposition and more active assistance to Extension requests than did the rural farmer supervisors.

TABLE XIII

COMPARATIVE ATTITUDES OF COUNTY LEADERS TOWARD THEIR  
RESPECTIVE AGENTS, 1953

Leader Types	High-rated counties			Low-rated counties	
	Aspen (FH)	Oak (FH)	Ivy (SH)	Orange (FL)	Moss-Lilac (SL)
Power					
"Old guard" (country-centered)	MF	HF	HF	MF	V
"New guard" (mixed)	V	MF	HF	MF	V
Minority faction	NA	NA	NA	NA	O
Town-centered	HF	HF	HF	MF	MF
"Outsider"	NA	NA	NA	C	C
Authority	V	V	MF	V	C

Key:<sup>1</sup>

HF - Highly Favorable  
 MF - Mildly Favorable  
 V - Variable (favorable and critical)  
 C - Critical  
 O - Active Opposition  
 NA - Type not Applicable

<sup>1</sup>These attitudes were not based upon any fixed scale, but were the result of impressions and statements stemming from observation and interviews. Although the categories were not clearly delineated in practice, it was possible to get the quality of a leader's attitude toward an agent without asking him for it directly. The symbols used in the table are a consensus of the opinions and actions derived in the above fashion. Presumably, in future research, these attitudes may be elicited in more objective and precise fashion.

leaders were, where applicable, almost uniformly variable or critical of the agents. This applied to high- and low-rated agents without exception, and probably reflected an image of the agent as either a leader in, or a victim of, the power structure. Thus the agent was judged less as an individual working independently, and more as an element in the larger social context of the county.

In the overall judgment, it would seem that the majority faction power leaders, particularly the "old guard" and "town-centered" leaders had opinions which corresponded most closely to the ratings. There was no evidence that agents who were rated low or mildly favorable by the power structure were rated higher by the authority structure.

Among the counties, there was considerable variation which did not follow differences in rated success. For example, FH was criticized frequently because of personal characteristics, such as his manner of handling meetings, but the extensive faith which many people had in his technical knowledge and judgment more than balanced the social and psychological deficiencies attributed to him. Thus FH was endowed with a charismatic quality which enabled him to carry people along on his own terms, and to influence a wide range of their behavior on non-agricultural matters.

Many of his so-called protégés (including the new 4-H agent whom FH was "grooming" as an agricultural agent) had both faith in and respect for FH's program, and FH was regarded as a paternal figure by several of the younger men to whom he was giving assistance. However, there were signs, in both Oak and Aspen Counties, that some recipients of FH's special attention were beginning to rebel against this paternalism, since it led to envy and criticism by neighbors. Some thought this notoriety was too high a price to pay for the benefits of Extension aid. To nearly all of the leaders, FH and Extension were practically synonymous, since almost no Extension activities were possible in his counties except under FH's auspices.

SH had high approval of almost all relevant groups, although none of the seeming devotion which FH sometimes called forth. SH had a reputation for willingness to serve those who worked with him. The "old guard" leaders felt they had easy access to him, and that he was, in a sense, "their man." They contrasted him, in this respect, with the preceding agent, who had been accused of neglecting farmers. Although the authority leaders were less satisfied with SH and with Extension, none transferred this to the level of personal criticism. The Extension program was often said to be "out of gear" with the people's needs,

but SH was not held responsible for this. He was characterized as "doing the best he can" under harrying conditions. None of the power leaders thought they ever demanded, or received special favors from SH, and they believed that it was not his duty to force his programs upon the farmer. He was a resource to be used at the client's initiative. Yet the fact that these leaders established informal patterns of personal interaction with SH (such as social visiting, card-playing, etc.) did not seem to them to result in preferential treatment, and they denied any imputation that the Extension system was over-balanced in their behalf.

FL inspired few extremes of judgment among the power group leaders. He was not thought of as a leader, or policy-maker, but more as an "assistant." In this sense, he was something of a minor version of SH, although less positive in his identification with the leaders. The power leaders believed FL would do little without consulting them first, and yet they felt able to call on him for technical and administrative assistance at their own discretion. FL had, indeed, been a chief organizer and worker in the potent beef marketing organizations whose influence had spread beyond Orange County. The power leaders thoroughly approved of the Extension policy of "letting county people

decide their own program." This attitude was quite understandable in view of their domination in the county, and consequently the "people" they had in mind were themselves. The authority leaders were more critical of FL, and felt he spent too much time with power group leaders. Their criticism extended to the Extension Service itself which, they felt, was geared to the larger farmers. Since there was considerable strife and conflict of leaders within the county, FL thus shared in both praise and condemnation "by association." Thus he was not criticized as much on personal or technical grounds as on who his friends were. SH, who had these same problems to a lesser extent, was apparently better able to create the impression that he was impartial.

SL had the greatest amount of criticism from all quarters of any of the agents. The "old guard" and town-centered leaders were relatively favorable, although even they gave the impression of "tolerating" SL rather than supporting him. These leaders believed it was the responsibility of the farmers individually to make use of Extension, and they did not condemn SL for not being a "salesman." SL's position, however, was complicated by the presence of an organized and vocal minority power faction, which identified him with the majority faction. In fact,

the entire Extension Service was included in this negative appraisal. Thus SL was judged, to a great extent, as was FL, by his supposed group affiliations and preferences. This judgment was intensified by the fact that SL's personal ideologies were fairly close to those of the major power faction, even though SL himself denied that this influenced his behavior as an agent. The leadership did not countenance such a distinction of role. The authority leaders were critical because many of them were the same persons who led the minority power faction. Also, SL's disputes with SCS personnel tended to make the SCD leaders feel suspicious of his motives with respect to their organization. In this agent situation, then, there was a curious, almost paradoxical quality to the criticisms expressed. On the one hand, the major power leaders felt SL was vacillating and indecisive, whereas the authority and minority power leaders believed he was narrow and opinionated in his behavior. Clearly, the judgment of the agent was at least partially determined by the orientation of the judge. Although two conflicting leadership types may have been critical, they had conflicting rationales for that criticism. In such a situation, widespread criticism of an agent might be more a by-product of conflict among groups than a direct evaluation of the agent's work performance.



Nevertheless, despite a good deal of uniqueness in each agent situation, the range of attitudes in Table XIII offers some evidence that rated success is directly associated with power group opinion. However, it does not vary according to authority group opinion to a comparable extent.

One supplementary point worthy of mention with respect to all of the counties was the expansion during the past decade of part-time farming.<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon has had, and will continue to have, tremendous effect upon the social and economic life of rural areas.<sup>4</sup> Without entering into a discussion of this complex and important problem, several observations concerning it are in order which are pertinent

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<sup>3</sup>It was often surprising, but not unusual to find farmers driving as much as two hundred miles a day to an urban job. While a few were discouraged by their lot, most were satisfied, and felt that the added money income more than compensated for the inconvenience and the social problems they were experiencing. Many times they were referred to by neighbors as "week-end" farmers, and some did actually stay in their places of work throughout the work week, returning home on Friday nights.

<sup>4</sup>In fact, there are indications that many characteristics of so-called "fringe" areas around large and medium sized cities extend far beyond their ecological boundaries, and have penetrated seemingly remote rural communities (e.g., changes in shopping, recreational, and visiting patterns resulting from occupational shifts). Thus the rural hinterland may be well on the way to becoming a part of a constellation of giant "fringes" covering most of the settled land area of the nation.



to this research:

a. An observable dichotomy has been established between full-time and part-time farmers based upon differences in:

1. Size of farm (the full-time farms have become larger, while part-time farms have remained stationary or become smaller).
2. Opinions concerning labor unions (which many part-time farmers have joined).
3. Opinions on government activities and their expansion (which part-time farmers tend to condone).

b. Part-time farmers were inclined to be active in community and county affairs, did not mingle as much socially with their rural neighbors, and went outside community not only for work, but pleasure.

c. Part-time farmers were likely to be found, if at all, in authority-type groups, and were frequently opposed to power group leaders, particularly the "new guard."

d. Part-time farmers were critical of Extension activities and of agents, and some felt neglected or "left out" of the program, since they did not feel any aspects of it were geared to their needs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>This trend toward multiple employment and even

If the number and strength of part-time farmers continue to increase, the image, and through it the functions, of the county agent and of the Extension Service may eventually be cast in a mold quite different from the present one.

B. Image of the County by the Agent

Aspen and Oak Counties (FH). FH attempted to place himself outside any intra-county strife, not by vacillation or by retreat in conflict situations, but through by-passing those groups or factions he did not deem essential for his operational plans. However, he was aware of the existence of the power leadership as such, and tried to manipulate it when necessary for his own ends. The county served as a large proving ground for demonstrating the technical soundness and local applicability of his projects. He made a strong effort to control, or at least to influence, the selection of county leaders, primarily for what he termed "the good of the county." Although not a dynamic personality, he had a persistent drive to keep ultimate control

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multiple residence, based upon high mobility and economic pressure, would seem to be one of the fundamental changes now taking place in what is left of the rural United States. It bids fair to make the concept of rural-urban differences less meaningful than ever before.

of agricultural activities, and was wary of delegating responsibilities unless he was sure of the loyalty and reliability of the persons involved. He was conscious of his unusual practical accomplishments as an agent, and rather enjoyed opportunities for demonstrating his technical superiority over those who in the past might have scoffed at or questioned his actions. Above all, the county was his "home grounds." He considered himself the occupational and political equal of county leaders and officials, and confidently participated in all major policy and planning decisions. He thus personalized his relationship to the agricultural groups, and showed no hesitancy in spending large amounts of time with those whom he felt were receptive and willing to follow his directions. He was proud of the fact that several of his "proteges" were showing great material progress as a result of his detailed guidance, but was oblivious of the consequences of a policy which his critics labeled "favoritism." The authority groups were a minor factor in his activities, except that he considered the Soil Conservation District as a potential threat to his leadership, chiefly because of its autonomous character, as demonstrated by its performance in neighboring counties. Therefore, he prevented its establishment on the grounds that it was "unnecessary," since it would merely duplicate

functions he thought were competently handled by Extension.

FH's conception of Oak County was built around his rapport with the Mennonite leaders. They were a disciplined group which could be reached effectively through contact with the key religious and business leaders. Besides feeling secure among these power group leaders, FH developed a strong paternalism among several of the younger farmer group. He was quite proud of the showing he had made in Oak County, and felt it was largely due to his own astute handling of the situation. As he expressed it, "I know just how to handle these people," and he was wary of new groups or individuals becoming established outside his own orbit of control. He ignored the authority groups, except for the contacts he maintained with a few non-Mennonite farmers who were his technical disciples. It could be said, then, that Oak County was an intensification of FH's attitudes in Aspen.

Ivy County (SH). SH viewed the county leaders as potential sources of trouble, as well as of support. The difficulties experienced by his predecessor made him cautious of making similar mistakes in conduct. His guiding precept, "never offend anyone," was his way of escaping criticism and avoiding enmity from the leadership groups. Being a friend to all those who concerned themselves with county agricul-

tural affairs was an arduous task, and SH found himself participating in a wide variety of organizations. Over the years, he began to chafe under the tremendous burdens these efforts (such as his official positions on the Fair Board and in dairy breeders and SCD organizations) were making upon his time and energy. Yet he could find no way of softening or eliminating these demands, which were the price he paid for county-wide personal acceptance.

By comparison with FH, who was known as a technical expert, but a poor speaker and organizer, SH was not recognized for his technical knowledge, but was considered proficient as a speaker and as a handler of meetings and demonstrations. Also, while FH simply ignored those groups and individuals he regarded as unimportant or hostile, SH felt impelled to win over, pacify, or neutralize every vocal element in the county. As a result, SH was more apprehensive of failure and possible errors of behavior than FH. However, like FH, he was suspicious of new organizations which might upset the equilibrium of the status quo, or jeopardize his relations with the current leadership. SH was aware of the increasing number of part-time farmers, but since his time and program were committed to the needs of power leadership, he simply had to neglect them as far as direct attention was concerned.

SH, then, was highly sensitive to the reactions of Ivy County leaders, and often "spread himself thin" to maintain their approval and regard. He felt they were his friends, but he never felt secure enough in their favor to provide strong leadership on his own, especially if it meant running counter to the wishes of the dominant "grass roots" organizations.

Orange County (FL). FL exhibited little positive orientation to the county leaders as a group. Since most of them were neutral, or at least moderately "pro" or "con" in their attitudes toward him, he responded in kind. He was resigned to the lack of enthusiasm generated by and for Extension programs, and believed that people were basically uninterested in these programs. However, FL's acceptance of this disinterest as more or less a fixed public attitude did not mean that he actively tried to counteract it. On the contrary, he maintained that the initiation of ideas, as well as their implementation, was a function of the people, not the agent. He was always ready to help, or to perform certain requested tasks, but he seldom tried to do the actual leading. As had been indicated in the chapter on Orange County, FL was competent as an organizer, and was also regarded as a good technical man, but he did not seem to use these qualities to further his own aims or objectives.



This meant that he waited for people to come to him, rather than the reverse procedure, and undoubtedly this caused some criticism among those who expected to be sought out.

FL was fully conscious of the group rivalries and tensions within the county. His policy was to keep clear of these as much as possible, and to use discretion and tact in conflict situations. Although his aim of "no criticism" was similar to that of SH, he approached it by the path of reticence and retreat, rather than the almost hyperactivity employed by SH. FL, then, was not on a very high level of intimacy with either the power or authority leaders of the county, and showed no overt preference for either group. He took the criticisms of many of the "outsider" leaders more or less "in stride," and made no attempt to either defend himself or to cultivate the favor of the critics. As far as he was concerned, the county-at-large was not actively opposed to him, even though its approval was often qualified and tentative. Thus, while he had been in the county for a quarter century, FL's sense of identification with the area, and his emotional attachment to it were tempered and even obscured by his own personal reserve and by his efforts to avoid personal commitments and entanglements in the performance of his job. In keeping with this approach, FL did not respond with alacrity to basic

changes occurring in the social and economic structure of the county, even though he was aware of some of them. The increase in part-time farming, for example, caused him no great concern as a crisis, nor did it motivate him to re-examine his own role as a public official. It was simply a phenomenon to be taken as it came, and to which he would adapt himself in due course.

Moss-Lilac County (SL). SL's relations with power and authority leaders were dependent upon the active struggle taking place among groups representing the various factions. This meant virtually that bi-partisan acceptance of SL was impossible. SL realized this, but also felt partially responsible for the conflict situations themselves. They made him feel inadequate, both as a person and as an agent. Although he felt closest to the "old guard" leaders he refused to "take sides" against either the minority power faction or the authority groups they controlled.

In such a precarious position, it would have been understandable to find him vindictive or self-righteous about the county situation, but he rarely complained. In fact, he usually pointed to the accomplishments of county organizations and projects, rather than his own discomforts. He felt that an agent should initiate projects if he could, and that he should then retire from active participation as

soon as possible. In this, SL was almost a direct antithesis of SH, whose involvement with county groups was high and continuous. Yet he had much more organizational initiative than FL, who represented the most extreme withdrawal from contact with county leaders of the four agents studied.

With his sense of responsibility for conditions within the county, it was not surprising that SL was concerned about the increasing number of part-time farmers and their new kinds of problems. His promotion of economic and policy forums, and his idea for setting up a county committee to study part-time farming bespoke his interest and efforts to bring these matters before the county at large. Yet he appeared to be defeated by his own inability to resolve or circumvent the partisan strife among the power factions in the county.

Summary. As far as FH was concerned, the counties and their leaders were a resource, almost a raw material, upon which he could legitimately draw to suit his needs. He had respect for this material, but felt willing and able to mold it largely in the image he selected.

For SH, the county was a diverse and demanding set of interests which had to be constantly served and kept in harmony. Leaders had to be guided and assisted but they

could not be "told." SH, therefore, considered his job as more a matter of diplomacy than one of overt leadership.

FL thought of his county as a stubborn and largely unresponsive network of groups, whose orbits he could not enter for long. These groups, often conflicting with one another, were best left to their own devices since they often "cancelled out" each other's excesses. FL felt himself to be legitimately outside the county structure as it pertained to power and authority groups.

SL considered the county as a focus of moral obligations, as expressed through his own technical talents. He felt it his duty to contribute his ideas and knowledge regardless of the parties and groups involved, including his own personal preferences. Although this attitude was often unpolitic, he stuck to it as the premise underlying his public functions.

FH seemed to have the strongest sense of identification with his counties, based mostly upon his own leadership, and his high interaction with power group leaders. Yet FH did not feel every man was, or should be, his friend, nor did he work to achieve this. Of the four agents, SH achieved probably the greatest popularity because he made nearly every cause of the leaders his own, and because he was highly conscious of his public relations, in the sense that

"the customer is always right." Unlike FH, criticism was anathema to SH. FL, in many respects, resembled SH, in that he assiduously avoided conflict and accepted the aid and ideas of nearly everyone. The major difference between the two was that SH was active in the run of affairs, while FL was passive. SL had many of the qualities of FH, including a high sense of moral obligation to his county. In terms of technical knowledge, and originality of ideas, SL ranked next to FH, even though several of his activities were criticized by one or the other of the county factions. What SL did lack was FH's political acumen, and his ability to over-ride criticism. But it may well have been true that SL's inability to identify with the leaders of his county was more a function of the social and economic structure of the county than of psychological deficiencies on the part of SL himself.

The discussion in this section, then, indicates the following results:

1. That differences among the images of their respective counties by the four agents were not clearly associated with their rated success (i.e., differences between the images of FH and SH were as basic and numerous as those between SH and SL).

2. That conditions within the counties probably

exerted primary influence upon such behavioral factors as an agent's relations with county leaders, and his sense of identification with his constituents.

Thus, if FH were to become agent in Moss-Lilac County, his rating might be altered more in the direction of SL's position rather than toward his own current ranking.

3. However, despite the above points, the hierarchy of integration of agents with power group leaders roughly followed the order of their rated success, with SH and FH showing the most integration and FL and SL the least. However, there was no evidence that the low-rated agent's relative lack of identification and intimacy with power group leaders led to compensatory integration with authority groups. One relationship was not the inverse of the other. The data and conclusions of this section thus bear out and are consistent with those in Chapter XII which dealt with the involvement of the agents with the actual operating groups in each county. Conceivably, the degree of integration among agents and "grass roots" leaders would have a direct effect (see Table XI, p. 356) upon the evaluation of each agent's performance by the Extension administrators, a factor which will be

discussed in the next chapter. Before this is done, however, a brief consideration of the agents' image of the Extension administration will be made.

C. Image of the Extension Service by the Agent

Aspen and Oak Counties (FH). FH viewed the state Extension administration much as he did the counties themselves--as a resource to be used on his own terms and at his own discretion. All extra-county plans and projects had to be funneled through him, and he refused to accept state specialists whom he did not approve. He indulged in much criticism of the state office, and enjoyed "proving them wrong" on technical matters. He had no compunction about ignoring or altering regular administrative procedures to accommodate his own methods of operation, but he was always careful to assemble facts and alternatives to support his independent position. Rather than wait for research and programs to emanate from the state office, he took his own fact-finding trips all over the country,<sup>6</sup> sometimes being out of the county a month at a time. Thus, the extension administration was, like the counties and their leaders, an

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<sup>6</sup>He went to New England with a state poultry specialist to get material on raising hatchery eggs, and he toured the North Central states for information on pastures and grass silage.

appendage to FH's particular program and method of work, and he felt justified in criticizing or rejecting it if such conduct suited his purposes.

Ivy County (SH). SH's desire for harmony in the county and for his own personal acceptance therein carried over somewhat into his relations with the state administration. SH believed Extension, as a whole, should be agriculturally supreme in the county vis-à-vis other government agencies, but this could be achieved only by energy and maneuverability on his part. Like FH, SH often neglected administrative chores, but he did so more from the press of county activities than because of his disagreement with state officials. Because of his own flexibility, he felt the state people were too rigid and not close enough to each county situation. He made it clear that his own position in the county would get priority over any administrative requirements or directives. Although he drew upon state sources for technical assistance, he preferred to work locally on his own, without unsolicited assistance from the central office.

Orange County (FL). FL was inclined to be non-committal about the Extension administration. While he felt it had lost (if, indeed, it ever had it) touch with local conditions





throughout the state, he did not condemn the administrators personally for this deficiency, pointing out that "they have their troubles, too." Yet he did believe that liaison on programs and policies was poor, and he welcomed district and state-wide extension meetings (unlike SH) as an opportunity to receive enlightenment on such matters. He felt he got along well with most specialists, but his general attitude was based upon his feeling that if Extension work "stopped tomorrow" little would be upset in the county. Consequently, he had little motivation to impress his administrative superiors by a show of extra energy or creativity.

Moss-Lilac County (SL). SL had a sense of isolation as far as coping with his local problems was concerned. The "hands off" attitude of the state officials was, in his opinion, a kind of default of their obligation to individual agents. They did not "back up" an agent in a crisis situation, and were too permissive in what they would countenance as acceptable behavior from agents and "grass roots" alike. This was especially true for policy questions, upon which the administrators seemed most anxious to avoid commitment. For this reason, SL had promoted his series of policy forums in an effort to have the higher echelons of Extension participate in and guide county thinking.

For SL, then, his job appeared to be a matter of self-salvation, in which he could expect intervention by the state only upon the request of sources other than himself. For technical agriculture, SL deemed the existing channels quite adequate, but on social and political problems he could not tap Extension resources very readily.

Summary. With respect to the preceding resumes of agent images, there seemed to be more hostility, both latent and expressed, toward the state administration on the part of the successful rather than the unsuccessful agents. FH certainly was the most outspoken, whereas FL was least critical. Another salient fact was that the autonomy prized and guarded by FH and SH was conceived as abandonment by SL, and by FL to a lesser extent. Thus, the lower-rated agents would have welcomed more activity and guidance by state officials, whereas this would have been regarded as interference by the high-rated agents.

As a result of these differences, the state administrators were, intentionally or not, rating those agents who were most prone to resist or reject them higher than those who sought their help. This situation also made it considerably difficult for state-wide programs to find wide acceptance and enthusiasm among the successfully-rated

agents. Just how this anomaly of rating and behavior patterns came about and was perpetuated will be the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XIV

### IMAGE OF THE AGENT BY THE EXTENSION

#### ADMINISTRATION

Now that the exposition and analysis of the basic field data relative to the four agent situations have been completed, it remains to link these results to the actual rating procedure employed by the state Extension administration and to tie them back to the propositions stated in Chapter II. When this has been done, the rationale and the premises underlying such ratings should become more meaningful, if not more logical.

As a check upon the data gathered from interviewing several top Extension administrators, the results and professional interpretations of a modified Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, as given to agents and administrators, will be utilized. An evaluation of the process of rating agent success will conclude the chapter.

#### A. How the Agents were Rated, and Why

Interviews with the Extension administrators<sup>1</sup> had

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<sup>1</sup>It should be recognized that these interviews were made with the full knowledge by the administrators that the rating procedures were under scrutiny. The agents and county leaders did not have this (continued next page)

two main foci. One was the rating and comparison of each of the four agents in the study; the other was a general consideration of rating processes and criteria as these expressed the goals and ideals of the Extension Service as a whole.

With respect to the agents in the study, the four administrators contacted arranged the rank order as follows:

TABLE XIV  
ADMINISTRATOR RANKINGS OF THE FOUR AGENTS STUDIED

Rank Order	Administrator			
	"A"	"B"	"C"	"D"
First	FH	SH	FH	FH
Second	SH	FH	SH	SH
Third	SL	FL	SL	FL
Fourth	FL	SL	FL	SL

As indicated by Table XIV, there was variation in

(continued) knowledge prior to their interviews. Therefore, a degree of reticence, or purposive bias may enter into the administrator interviews to a greater extent than the others, particularly in terms of criticism of particular agents. However, due to the external circumstances surrounding the study, this variability was unavoidable, since the administrators had to be taken into the confidence of the investigator. However, the administrators' answers to general questions about the rating system and about Extension objectives and philosophy were probably as frank as would ever be made, since the notion of invidious comparisons was not injected.

the ranking of the agents, but only within the high and the low categories, never between them. Despite the reluctance of certain of the administrators to make personal criticisms of agents, there was a clear gap between the high and low categories, in terms of reasons given for the rankings.

The consensus for the administrators' ranking of each agent may be summarized as follows:

FH. It was felt that FH had been highly successful in his job, and that he exhibited much initiative and creativity in his programs. FH would not undertake a project unless he was "sold" on it himself, chiefly on the basis of its economic appeal. His method was to work through individuals and small groups and to reach the rest of the farmers through them. FH picked his key people according to their interests, and groups varied considerably from one project to another. The Oak County leaders seemed to cooperate more readily than those in Aspen, but this was a relative difference only. On the debit side, FH was a poor detail man and "hated" to make reports. He was also quite critical of specialists and state officials generally, and the administrators thought this was "not a very good thing." Also, FH was notorious for being a



rambling speaker, and this cut down farmer attendance at his meetings. Despite these drawbacks, the positive accomplishments of FH, such as his poultry, dairy, and barn building programs, were so great as to far outweigh them. As Administrator "A" put it, if FH "folded up tomorrow he would still rate high as an agent in my book," and it was felt that he was "a kind of yardstick to measure what the others do."

In other words, FH's administrative deficiencies were largely discounted by his field record in the counties, and the administrators had admiration for his accomplishments and program. As Administrator "C" summed up his evaluation, "if I had seventy FH's, I'd have the best Extension Service in the country."

SH. SH was considered to be a good organizer and contact man who was able to spur others into action, both by suggestion and by his own example. He was not considered much of a planner, in the long-range sense, but rather a practical leader who could show results on the material level. Because of SH's wide variety of activities, Administrator "C" thought him weak on personal service, but added that an agent could not be expected to perform equally well on both levels. He contrasted FH and SH in this respect, believing that FH was better with individuals than groups.

Major weaknesses of SH were his tendency to rely on expediency rather than foresight in his program, and his inadequate attention to administrative details and procedures. This was especially true of his office techniques. This latter weakness was similar to that exhibited by FH, although it was likewise discounted in view of SH's high level of program achievement.

FL. FL was characterized basically as an easy-going individual who "rode with the tide" and did not engage in very many county activities, agricultural or otherwise. It was assumed that FL was moderately well-liked in the county simply because his lack of aggressiveness could not make any enemies. He was thought to have fewer projects under way than most other agents, principally as a result of his lack of drive and imagination. FL rarely was the center of county conflict and presented no diplomatic or disciplinary problems for the state office. He seldom had complaints, nor did he directly criticize administration policy. He usually tried to carry out suggestions and projects (such as the Agricultural Advisory Councils) recommended by the central administration, even though his overall success was not very high. The major difference between FL and the high-rated agents was that he did not have the spark, or as Administrator "B" called it, the

"X factor" which made one man a success while another who lacked it was a failure.

SL. Of the four agents, SL was most puzzling to the administrators in terms of his performance and the reasons therefor. He was described variously as "lacking initiative," "too equivocal," and "not having enough push." He was definitely not a promoter or organizer, which meant that few groups were active in the county. Yet it was stated by all the administrators that SL was a "good thinker" and had "quite a few ideas" but that his major shortcoming was putting those ideas into practice. This was believed to be a psychological problem, since SL had somehow lost confidence in himself, to the detriment of his whole program. This weakness of accomplishment was the ingredient in SL's record which counted most heavily against him in the ratings. A second negative point was that several times there had been complaints from the county directed at SL. Twice this resulted in visits to the county by one or more state officials to resolve the difficulties. None of the administrators could recall SL as a critic of themselves or their policies, in the manner often utilized by FH. Yet this type of cooperation, or at least lack of opposition, was not deemed a major

attribute for an agent.

Summary. The administrative ratings of agents seemed to hinge upon the following evaluative points:

1. An agent who was a "doer," or who at least showed considerable activity, was thought of more favorably than one who was passive or less energetic.

2. The differences among agents were ascribed largely to what might be called psychological or personality variables which were inherent in the person rather than in the external situation in which he was functioning. None of the administrators, for example, compared the four counties socially and politically in attempting to account for differences in agent performance.

3. Other than general references to "accomplishments" and to such things as "X factors" and "spark," the administrators did not mention any definite or consistent criteria by which agent performance was rated. The annual narrative reports of the agents contained summaries of their yearly work, but these were seldom read by all of the administrators, except that district supervisors usually checked through all agent reports in their respective districts.

B. Comparison of Administrative Ratings with  
Objective Performance Criteria

Since the administrators designated "accomplishment" as one of their main standards of rating, presumably there would be major differences among high- and low-rated agents when their records in comparable activities were compared.

However, referring back to Figures 21 and 22 in Chapter XII, it will be recalled that it was not a simple matter to distinguish between high- and low-rated agents on the basis of their actual performance in DHIA and ABA.<sup>2</sup> For example, percentagewise on DHIA, SH, FH, and SL were very close together in 1953, and FH had shown a precipitous rate of decline in both his counties<sup>3</sup> over a three-year

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<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that while ABA has become an independent cooperative organization in Michigan and is not under the jurisdiction of the Extension Service, it has nevertheless been sponsored and assisted locally by the county agent more than by any other individual or group. The ABA has thus been an important part of the agricultural program in almost every dairy county in the state. As such, it is a legitimate measure of relative agent performance.

<sup>3</sup>Oak and Aspen counties varied similarly in their performance from year to year, although Oak was in a much higher percentage bracket from the start. In comparing the agents, Oak County performance has been largely ignored because of the unusual homogeneity and cohesion of the Mennonite farmers, and their relatively small numbers. Thus the heterogeneous Aspen County was more likely to give data on FH's work which was in a situational category similar to that of the other three agents.

period, as compared with stability for SH and a slight decrease for FL for the same time span. FL performed consistently with his administrative rating, showing decline and failure over the seven year stretch. The ABA comparison was even more at variance with the ratings, since it showed FL virtually even with FH in percentage of cows artificially bred, with SL third, and SH in last position.

Thus, the administrators' conception of "accomplishment" did not appear to correspond very well with at least two factual measures of work done on basic dairy programs. The gap between the measures and the rating was particularly wide in the case of SL, who seemed to be rated considerably lower than his comparative performance warranted. Of course, further comparisons, involving larger numbers of agents and additional measures need to be made before it can be stated categorically that administrative conceptions of "accomplishment" neglect the facts of the matter. However, the investigations of the present study indicate that Extension administrators (1) may be unaware of actual accomplishments of the agents, (2) may be unsure themselves as to what they mean by "accomplishment," or (3) that their notion of "accomplishment" may reflect factors not included in the kinds of graphs and tables cited here. Whichever of the preceding three explanations proves most valid, more

precise and consistent criteria of "accomplishment" would seem to be desirable in order to objectify the rating procedure.

C. Comparison of Administrative Ratings with  
Subjective Psychological Criteria<sup>4</sup>

Since most of the differences among agents were attributed by the administrators to psychological and personality factors, and since so much of the previous analysis of the agent and his job has been keyed to these factors (see Chapter V, Section B), it seemed desirable to examine the ratings of the four agents studied in relation to some standard psychological measure of personality characteristics applied to both administrators and agents. Such measure was found in a modified<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Multiphasic

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<sup>4</sup>The author is indebted to Mr. William Thomas of the Department of Psychology, Michigan State College, for his clinical interpretations of the modified MMPI profiles discussed in this section. At no time did Mr. Thomas have any knowledge of or contact with the persons whose profiles he analyzed, nor did he know prior to his analyses the purpose for which they were required.

<sup>5</sup>The modifications consisted chiefly of a shortening of the standard Inventory so as to eliminate three of the pathology scales (Mf, Pa, and Sc) which were not essential to the study for which the Inventories were originally administered. Thus, while the profiles were incomplete with respect to the omitted scales, they were deemed by the analyst to be adequate for comparisons not involving clinical diagnosis.

Personality Inventory, which had been given to most Extension personnel in Michigan several years prior to the present study. The scores of the four agents and of the administrators interviewed on the rating procedure were checked and tabulated, and the resultant profiles analyzed according to regular MMPI procedures.

In discussing the test results, some points concerning the meaning of the scales should be made. In the first place, each scale is defined in terms of its negative aspects:

- Hs--concern with bodily functions, pessimism.
- D --depression, despondency.
- Hy--immaturity, lack of insight.
- Pd--irresponsibility, defiance, tactlessness.
- Pt--apprehension, insecurity, anxiety.
- Ma--aggressiveness, impatience, drive.

Secondly, the general population mean of scores on all scales is represented by the middle heavy black line with a marginal (Tc) scale value of 50. Each 10 points of marginal scale value above and below the mean line corresponds to approximately one standard deviation from the mean. Values lying between the top and bottom heavy black lines represent generally "normal" scores, although the relationship of scores in the whole profile is generally more analytically important than any single scale taken by itself.

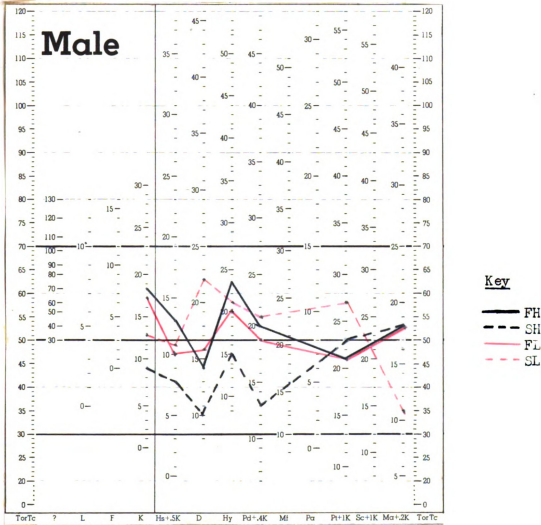
The profiles of the four agents, as shown in Figure 24,



Figure 24: Profiles of Four County Agents, Modified Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

# The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

Starke R. Hathaway and J. Charnley McKinley



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The modification referred to was an abridgement of the original set of questions comprising the Inventory. The profile sheet is the standard form, except that three of the regular scales were not charted.

may be interpreted briefly as follows:<sup>6</sup>

- FH. Poor motivation, functioning below his peak efficiency level. Contented at his job. Responsive to "outside" ideas and an easy person to work with. Generally well-liked and moderately outgoing. His chief defense mechanism would be repression.
- SH. It is not known as yet what such a general depression of the profile (as exhibited by SH) signifies. Considering only the pattern of scores, it may be concluded that he knows anxiety only briefly, since he discharges it in hyper-activity. May have some hysteroid tendencies. Even so he is probably a pretty dependable, responsible person, not given to tactlessness or improvidence.
- FL. Similar to FH in almost every respect, the profile being almost identical, only slightly flatter. Might be considered a "normal" man.
- SL. Exhibits almost profound inertia and lack of ambition. Not disposed to describe himself in overly favorable terms. Moderate depression, insecurity, and apprehension. Yet probably has some individuality in his makeup.

Comparison of the Agent Profiles. Of the group, SL appears to be a deviate. The remaining three, disregarding profile elevation, are generally quite similar. These three would not be particularly disturbed by an unstructured situation. They would likely react against such things as routine and detail.

Some of these interpretations, particularly those of SH and SL, seem to have borne out the conclusions derived from the field work, as well as from the impressions of the

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<sup>6</sup>These resumes and those of the administrators which follow are condensations of the reports made by the analyst previously mentioned.

administrators. Yet, in the cases of FH and FL, there are marked discrepancies between observations and ratings on the one hand, and the test results on the other.

In the field, the resemblances in work patterns and attitudes of FH and FL were sparse. Likewise, the descriptions of the agents by the administrators turned up few similarities between the two men. Thus, it seems unlikely that the psychological or temperamental differences among individuals were systematically arrived at by the administrators, using such standard and statistically reliable tests as the one invoked here. What the administrators have called "personal qualities" refer less to measurable personality characteristics and more to some idiosyncratic idea of adaptability or manipulation of social environment by specific individuals. For surely, if some standard psychological test, such as MMPI, or a battery of such tests, were made the basis of agent selection and subsequent rating of predicted performance, the results would hardly coincide with the ratings now in effect. In other words, if FH and FL, for example, had applied for positions as county agents, and had been given the MMPI, the result would indicate that each would have brought about the same configuration of personality to the job. Prediction of success, therefore, would have been about the same for each man.

The foregoing facts, then, have indicated that administratively rated success is probably not coincident with profiles resulting from MMPI, and that administrators have come to use "psychological make-up," including such things as "spark" and "drive," in much too general a fashion. Furthermore, this loose usage has perhaps obscured the influence of social and situational factors which influence an agent's behavior. This would suggest that the key differentials in performance might be due more to variations in the structure and the behavior patterns of county groups than to personality variations among the agents as individuals.

As a further extension of the psychological considerations just discussed, the profiles of the administrators were interpreted for comparison with those of the agents. Figure 25 shows the entire group<sup>7</sup> of these profiles, without separate identification for each. They will be analyzed and discussed here as a group. Generally, this group has

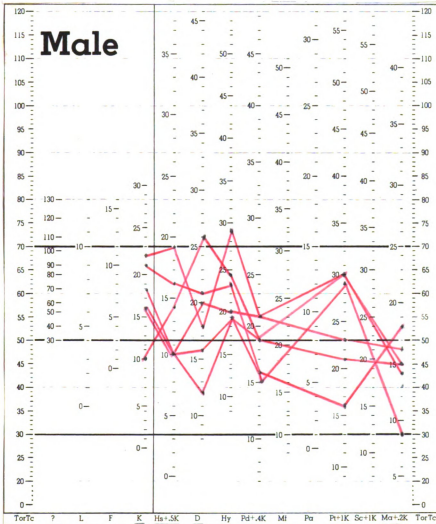
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<sup>7</sup>Inventory data on Administrator "D" was not available at the time of this study, but the profiles of three other top administrators, who were not interviewed, have been included in Figure 25 to give a representation of nearly all the top echelon of the state Extension Service. Although these three "extra" officials were not interviewed because of their unavailability at the time, it was ascertained later that their agent ratings and reasons thereof were consistent with those of the administrators who were interviewed.

**Figure 25:** Profiles of State Extension Administrators, Modified Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

## The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

Starke R. Hathaway and J. Chamley McKinley



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exhibited a fairly high degree of despondency and pessimism, with considerable lack of emotional depth and insight. There is also a noticeable tendency to anxiety and insecurity in at least three of the administrators, and nearly all of them score low in aggressiveness and what they themselves have defined as "drive."

An interesting facet of this syndrome is that it resembles most closely the profile of SL, a low-rated agent. The other three agents had profiles which differed markedly from those of the administrators. Thus it appeared that the administrators were not using their own personality characteristics as criteria for the rating process. SL, who resembled them most psychologically, was not rewarded with a high rank.

In terms of the different types of behavior which the two groups would be likely to exhibit under specified conditions, the professional analysis indicated that:

In a conflict situation requiring a person to stick by a decision engendering opposition by other participants,<sup>8</sup> Group I (administrators) would seek to avoid any overt clash of views but would try to convince the opposition to change its mind. If a show-down came, however, most of the subjects would yield rather than have real strife. Group II

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<sup>8</sup> Such as a county agent might face with respect to pushing an Extension program which the "grass roots" leaders were against.

(agents, excluding SL) would tend to be more vigorous in espousing their own views and less willing to compromise. Their aggressiveness is not absolute, however, but is only relatively strong in comparison with Group I.

Group I men would function best in well-delineated situations where rules and relationships were explicit and behavioral expectations clearly defined. Group II men would be better policy-makers and would probably prefer unstructured situations in which to work. Group I would seem to be more "service-oriented," while Group II would have more interest in political manipulation and upward personal mobility.

From the foregoing, it seems likely that the qualities in an agent valued by the administrators are those which would create difficulties in the administrative process. The high-rated agents are less bureaucratic and less authority-oriented than the low-rated agents. Thus the administrators seem to have rewarded and encouraged action patterns within their organization which have made their own supervisory job more difficult. Certainly, the results of the MMPI analyses cast much doubt upon the use of psychological tests as the major means of selecting or rating agents. In fact, the interviewed administrators were entirely unaware of the similarity of their own personality profiles to that of the lowest-rated agent. All thought they were more like Group II than Group I.

#### D. An Explanation of the Administrative Rating Process

How, then, could the apparently inconsistent conduct

of the administrators with respect to the rating system be explained?

One approach was to find out how the administrators arrived at their judgments of agents, and what factors they considered important in determining the "ideal type" agent. As presaged by the data in the preceding sections of this chapter, there was an almost complete lack of standardized procedures for comparing agents, either on the basis of objective criteria or through psychological investigations. Furthermore, the administrators were imprecise in describing the kinds of things they looked for in the agents; and their judgments, as shown by the data, were often likely to be incorrect when placed against the facts. Furthermore, the administrators were not uniform in the way they received information used to rank particular agents. In general, the entire process was characterized by informality. Administrator "C" said that most of what he knew about the agents was received on what he called a "scuttlebutt basis." That is, rumor, personal opinion, and chance contacts were paramount in supplying rating information. None of the administrators claimed to know very many leaders at the "grass roots" level, except those who visited the state office fairly frequently, or who had organizational contacts with the Extension Service.



Administrators "A" and "D" both mentioned the Farm Bureau particularly in this connection, and pointed out that if the Farm Bureau leaders in a county were supporting an agent, he was likely to be doing a good job. If there were no complaints from such local groups, it was assumed that an agent was doing at least satisfactory work.

Administrator "B" claimed that he had no image of an agent prototype when he was judging performance, or hiring new personnel. He felt that physical characteristics were important (i.e., a big man would have, other things being equal, better chances of success than a small man. However, "B" readily admitted that SH, who was of small stature, did not bear out this contention).

All of the administrators stressed salesmanship as a prime quality in an agent. Yet the county people were apparently to be sold only what they wanted to buy. The administrators felt Extension was the "servant" of these people, and that the agent was the most important link in the chain of contact. As Administrator "A" put it, "People feel the agent is 'their' employee. That's a good thing because it keeps power in the people's hands, and insures decentralization. We expect an agent to be loyal to his county, even if it means telling us off sometimes."

Administrator "B" said, "Agents ought to line up with

county folks. Our policy here is to keep hands off local affairs until we're asked to do something. We interfere as little as possible. We feel an agent knows his county better than we do."

There was consensus that a good agent could be described as the "Mr. Agriculture" of his county (a term which Administrator "D" used in his description), and that he should command the respect of those with whom he worked. The more autonomy and self-reliance an agent showed, the less likely he would respond favorably to coercion or to directives from the state administration.

All of the administrators said they felt secure and at ease in their relations with the Farm Bureau, which they believed to represent the thinking of agriculture in the various counties. Two administrators expressed open dislike for the Farmers Union, characterizing it variously as "radical" and a "trouble-maker." One believed the SCS was "a duplication of Extension to a great extent," while all felt that the PMA had become unnecessary and was now little more than a political device to get votes and make jobs.

The foregoing attitudes and images correspond with the administrators profiles in the MMPI analysis. They were purposely non-aggressive themselves, even though they placed value upon aggressiveness among the agents. They

encouraged independence demonstrated by the successfully rated agents to the apparent detriment of their own authoritative position with respect to those agents.

The major clue for explaining this situation lay in the casual but vital dependence of the administrators' judgments upon the sporadic contacts they had with individual county leaders, and upon the rapport between Extension personnel and the Farm Bureau, the ABA, and other state-wide power groups. The administrators ascribed crucial importance to the feelings and opinions of the leadership of these groups, and considered them as representative of the county at large. This was easy to do, because many of the administrators (including three of the four interviewed) had at one time been agents themselves. They were used to working with the power structure and satisfying its requirements. Now that they were administrators, they constantly "took the role of the agent" and were exceptionally careful to avoid the kinds of behavior they would have disapproved of when they were agents. Thus their new administrative role was constantly being performed in terms of their earlier agent role. This "cross-pressure"<sup>9</sup> weakened the entire administrative hierarchy, and gave an important

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<sup>9</sup>Similar, in its behavioral effect, to the "cross-leadership" of certain leaders in the counties studied.

functional advantage to agents in the field. For the alert agents, the key was thus provided for resolving their dilemmas of divided allegiance. The agent who comprehended the actual state of affairs soon learned that his integration with, and acceptance by, the power leadership in his county were imperative for his rated success. In the examination of agent-group relationships in the four county situations, this integration and acceptance was the main factor which delineated the high-rated agents from the low-rated ones. As has been shown, neither objective accomplishment criteria nor psychological tests were able to account satisfactorily for such delineation.

The conclusion of this discussion, then, is that the agent rating process is dependent upon the ability of the "grass roots" power groups to prescribe the kind of agent behavior which is desirable. This is reinforced by the fact that the Extension administration feels that the "grass roots" leadership must be satisfied at almost any cost. In turn, this co-optive pattern has been justified as being "democratic," as "fostering agent initiative," and as "decentralizing the government." To some extent, all of these things probably occur, but not without consequences for the administrative structure. For by this acquiescence to local power group values and control, the stresses in-

volved in choice of allegiance have been shifted from the individual agent to the administrative hierarchy itself. Since the authority group has accepted external power values in distributing the rewards of its own internal system (via the rating system), the concern of an agent is thus narrowed down to finding ways and means of working with the dominant county power groups. He need not worry about placating his Extension superiors since they would be unable to control him directly. The "feed-back" of county opinions to the Extension administration has prevented repercussions unfavorable to the agent as long as the county power groups have actively supported him.

Now it can be seen that the paradoxical phenomenon of high-rated agents being often less cooperative with the Extension administration than the low-rated agents can be accounted for by the dissection of the processes, images, and attitudes which make up the rating system itself. The detailed analyses of the counties themselves have provided the factual basis for the existence of power and authority groups in each agent situation, and have shown the different adaptations which the agents have tried to make to the social and political environments in which they have to work. It has been suggested that these environments have been more crucial in deciding agent performance than most

previous studies, with their emphasis upon personality configurations, have recognized.

E. Implications of this Research for the Present  
Manner of Rating Agent Performance

As has been indicated earlier in this monograph, the research undertaken here has certain practical implications, in addition to its relation to a general theoretical scheme of behavior. Before treating this theoretical linkage in the final chapter, some interpretations of the data on the practical level may be presented.

At the outset, it was predicated, given the power-authority typology and the history of the Extension Service as outlined in Part I, that county agents would find themselves in a stressful position with respect to their job performance. To study the way in which conflicts of allegiance and behavior were handled, four Michigan counties were studied intensively to see whether there was any difference between high- and low-rated agents with respect to such allegiance and behavior. It was felt that the rating process itself, as a function of the ideology and history of the Extension Service as an authoritative structure, would provide major clues to the differentials in agent behavior.

The description and analysis of the several aspects of Extension work, as seen through the eyes of leaders, administrators, and agents themselves, have indicated the following tentative conclusions:

1. The social and political structure of agriculture in a given county can be classified meaningfully using a power and authority typology of groups.

2. Those agents who were actively supported by the power group leadership were more likely to be rated successful than those who were not.

3. The system for evaluating agent performance was based primarily on the acceptance by state extension administrators of the values and opinions of the power group leadership.

4. Neither objective performance criteria nor a standard psychological analysis of personality characteristics were able to account for rated differences among the four agents studied.

5. The prevalence of power group influence in the rating process enabled, and even encouraged agents to utilize local county support when they desired to act autonomously concerning procedures, policies, and programs sponsored by the Extension administration.

6. The Extension administration, having thus

decided the problem of agent allegiance "against" itself, had justified this behavior in terms of acceptable cultural values such as "local democracy" and "decentralization."

7. This self-abnegation was not recognized by the administration as dysfunctional for control of the agents and for the coordination of a state-wide Extension program.

Assuming that the foregoing conclusions are at least partially valid, there are several alternatives available with respect to the agent rating system in Michigan.

First of all, it is possible to simply continue present practices, and to solidify the influence of the agricultural power groups in the rating process. One almost certain result of this continuation would be a restriction of central administrative control over the state-wide Extension program, and a further legitimation of power group control in the structure of agriculture.

A second course of action would be the adoption of a more rigorous and specific code of conduct by the Extension administration which would utilize more formal and objective criteria for agent ratings. This would mean that the Extension administration would become more bureaucratic and self-contained in its behavior patterns, and less sensitive





to outside influence and domination. In other words, power criteria of evaluation would be replaced by authority criteria, in the sense of the typology employed in this monograph.

A third mode of behavior would be for Extension to become a power group in its own right. This would mean outright competition with other agricultural groups, and an attempt to control them, instead of the other way around. An aggressive program would have to be adopted and pushed forward by every available political and social technique. In short, Extension would seek to dominate agriculture in the same way in which "grass roots" power groups dominate it now. The successful agents would remain power-oriented, but their allegiance would be to the state administration instead of the county groups. Thus, the shift in the locus of power would be the significant factor.

Of these three alternatives, the last one seems least likely of adoption. The whole tradition and history of the Extension Service are contrary to this competitive and autonomous kind of behavior. Furthermore, as revealed by both interviews and psychological tests, the temperament, habits, and personality of Extension personnel, particularly the administrators, has shown that they have little moti-

vation for the aggressive program which a predominantly power orientation would require.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, the more likely choice would be between the first two lines of action. Of these, the first might appear the easiest selection. Yet the data have indicated that behavioral stresses upon the administrators have probably been increasing because of their adherence to the status quo, and that their work efficiency has been severely limited by their lack of functional independence. Furthermore, the successful agents have come to accept their insulated position in current Extension-county relationships as a permanent arrangement which would be traumatic for the administrators to disturb.

There is, then, the possibility that a reorganization of Extension procedures and practices within the system itself could result in stronger external relations, and less co-optation of Extension by outside power groups. Extension administrators may well have underestimated their

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<sup>10</sup>This conclusion might be modified if the Extension Service should discover or create its own power group as a unit contiguous to the present structure. Something of this sort occurred in the case of the Soil Conservation Districts when they organized into a national association with definite power characteristics. This new SCD association has been a vocal pressure group in state and national agriculture, and has openly challenged the old, established power groups such as the Grange and Farm Bureau with respect to control over agricultural policy.

own ability to set standards of performance and judgment for their own personnel, and thereby have perpetuated their own weakness in inter-group action. If, for example, agents knew that their chances of vertical mobility in the administrative system were governed by a set of impartially applied criteria of performance,<sup>11</sup> they might well be encouraged to put forth greater efforts for achievement than now seems to be the case. If Extension administrators should choose the second alternative of the three given here, the revitalizing and objectifying of the system of evaluating agent performance may well be the starting point for a revised structure and set of behavior patterns for the state Extension Service as a whole.

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<sup>11</sup>The administrators interviewed admitted that once a ranking is assigned an agent it tends to become fixed, regardless of his subsequent activities. For instance, if FH were to neglect his work rather grossly for a year or two, his backlog of prestige and high rating would prevent any lowering of his comparative rank. Likewise, exceptional productivity on the part of a low-rated agent would likely go unrewarded, or would be accounted for by factors other than agent improvement.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AGENT RATING PROCESS AND THE THEORY OF CONTROL

In the long exposition and interpretation of Parts II and III of this monograph, one might have wondered whether there would be any return to the theoretical framework proposed in Part I. There has been, of course, some basic connection maintained through the use of the power and authority typology, which has served as an analytical matrix for describing both group structure and group interaction. However, it remains to make the linkage between the conclusions of the empirical section of this study and the theoretical orientation more explicit.

It will be recalled that an attempt was promised to extend the actual research findings up through the several levels of theory considered in Part I. By so doing, it was felt that a current professional tendency to confine theory to a "lower" or a "middle" range would be counteracted, to the benefit of theory and research jointly. Upon this assumption, a rather brief attempt to establish such linkage will now be made.

#### A. The Individual Level--the Role of the County Agent

In many ways, the bulk of this research can be said to

have dealt with the individual level of behavior. While the role of the county agent has thus been central, it has not been treated in isolated fashion. The contiguous roles of county agricultural leaders and of the state Extension administrators have been recognized as essential to the whole fabric of personal interaction as it affects the agents' behavior patterns. The role expectations which the members of each of these groups have had of the other two have been crucial in determining the ratings of the agents and the particular criteria by which such ratings have been made. These role expectations have been derived primarily from the attitudes and images which leaders and administrators have expressed through interviews and observed behavior.

These types of analyses would probably be defined in some quarters as social psychological in emphasis, dealing as they do with imagery and with problems of personality stress and adjustment within a social context. On this level,<sup>1</sup> it was found the role relationships of county agents, in addition to being intertwined with the roles of

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<sup>1</sup>Perhaps it should be pointed out that none of the levels, as used in this monograph, is assumed to be more important or more significant than the others. Each level is useful and necessary in its own right, and contributes in an essential way to the entire theory of behavior.

others, were occurring in a social and political context which exerted its own influence on their behavior.

Obviously, a purely psychological approach would have been inadequate to explain agent behavior, even on the individual level. The concepts of power and authority, as related to the allegiance of agents and the standards by which they were judged, were found to be useful in explaining the ratings of the four agents involved. Therefore, those researchers (see Chapter V) who have placed extensive reliance upon psychological factors in accounting for variable agent performance have been considered as over-stating their case, to the neglect of situational factors. Enough has been said in previous sections of the monograph to eliminate the need of further discussion on this level.

#### B. The Structural Level--the Systems of Organized Agriculture

The interaction of organized groups in agriculture, both public and private, was outlined in Chapter IV. The structural connections between the Farm Bureau and the Extension Service were traced as a means of accounting for their close collaboration as social systems. The purpose of this section will be to discuss the major points made in Part I in light of the findings in Parts II and III.

The first point deals with the fact of Farm Bureau-Extension collaboration itself. The structural alignments found in the four agent situations indicated that the Farm Bureau, wherever it existed, was a potent force in county Extension programs. However, in Oak County, there was no Farm Bureau, and Extension flourished there just the same. Furthermore, those counties having a Farm Bureau also contained other power-oriented groups, such as cattle marketing and breeding organizations (particularly those described as the "old guard" type) which had much influence upon the agent and his work. While no real conflict was found to exist between these two kinds of power groups, they were definitely separate, and were at least a potential source of friction, as well as agent stress. Indeed, it appeared that the county "grass-roots" leadership was undergoing a general transition from the "old guard" to the "new guard" type. The latter were younger, more aggressive, and less concerned with the purely production aspects of farming. Then, too, there were peripheral "outsider" and "minority" power factions which, in the case of Moss-Lilac, demonstrated enough strength to create behavior problems for the agent. In spite of these added complexities,<sup>2</sup> however, there was

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<sup>2</sup>Most of which were unanticipated in the original research plan and set of expectations.



evidence in the counties studied that the interdependence of Farm Bureau and Extension Service did influence agent behavior. The chief finding of the research in this respect was that this interdependence was not exclusive, nor was "grass roots" control always formally expressed via the Farm Bureau system. Other groups both shared and challenged the dominant power structure of the counties. Thus the structural variables, while broadly similar in many ways for all of the counties, could be different enough (as in the cases of Oak and Moss-Lilac) to affect the behavior patterns of the agent.

A second important point in Chapter IV was that over the years, the farmer and business power groups had become merged on an economic and political basis. This was found to be essentially true in the counties, especially in Orange and Aspen. However, the old town and country enmity still asserted itself on occasion. In fact, it was a major issue in Ivy County, where it had contributed to the fall from agricultural favor of SH's predecessor. The activation of this dichotomy has remained a source of anxiety for SH, in spite of his successful avoidance of it up to the time of the study.

There was also some indication that the business and the non-farming elements in the counties, such as service

educational, and civic clubs, were able to recruit members from among the agricultural power leadership, particularly the "old guard" variety. Thus the successful farmers and the merchants discovered they had much in common, and they often stood together in their opinions on public affairs. The "new guard" power leaders were less integrated with the town business groups, seeming to prefer building their own power structure. They put more overt discipline into their ranks than was found among the more informal contacts within "old guard" groups.<sup>3</sup> Thus, at the county level, the Farm Bureau leadership appeared less likely to be "co-opted" by business and commercial interests than was indicated in Chapter IV. However, this finding may be the result of the lack of large urban areas in the counties chosen for study. That is, the more populous and urbanized counties might show a much greater subordination of agricultural leadership by business leadership than was evident in this research.

As has been mentioned previously, there was no indi-

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<sup>3</sup>For example, the community Farm Bureau groups conducted their meetings according to the prescribed formulas of the parent organization. They handled business and even social program matters according to regulations. Yet they considered themselves as independent and self-contained units. The "old guard" leaders were more likely to make decisions talking over a fence or during a card game, and to rely on a personal friendship as a basis for communication.

cation that the extent of an agent's interaction with the major power group structure had any direct bearing on his relation with the local authority group structure. An agent did not necessarily align himself with one type of group or the other. Sometimes, he was integrated with neither, and none of the agents studied had a conspicuous affinity for any of the authority groups, except FL, who worked well with the SCS.

On the level of state Extension administration, it was found that power structure influence, particularly as exerted by such organizations as the Farm Bureau, was of paramount importance in determining agent ratings. The state administrators were highly sensitive to "grass roots" opinions, and their behavior confirmed the kind of dependence on county power structures which has become a hallmark of Extension work. It was suggested that the administrators were perhaps more susceptible to stress than the agents, who often were able to avoid problems of allegiance and loyalty by aligning themselves almost entirely with county power leadership. Those agents who accomplished this alignment successfully had high ratings, while those who did not had low ratings. This was the only dimension of the discoverable rating process which was consistent with actual rated success (since both personality characteristics and objec-

tive accomplishment data showed discrepancies, even among the small number of cases investigated).

Thus, on the structural level, it appeared possible (a) to make comparable classifications of power and authority groups with the counties studied, (b) to delineate roughly the extent of agent interaction with these groups, and (c) to show that agent ratings were linked with varied patterns of such interaction,<sup>4</sup> since the state Extension administration, as an authority structure, had adopted the success criteria of the "grass roots" power groups. The co-optation of the former by the latter, in relation to the rating system, appeared to have been accomplished.<sup>5</sup>

#### C. The Cultural Level--the Value Orientation of America

The task of linking the field research of this monograph to the concept of control becomes more difficult when dealing with the broader and more abstract levels of the

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<sup>4</sup>Naturally, there were too few cases to claim any wide consistency, but the relationship appeared to be more likely than unlikely on the basis of present observations.

<sup>5</sup>This corroborated Selznick's finding with regard to the interaction between the Agricultural Division of TVA and the "grass roots" power structure in that area. See Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950), Chapters III and IV.

theory. The limited and "middle range" hypotheses directly related to the research lose some of their clarity when extended beyond the structural systems to which they directly pertain. Therefore, the following relationships between theory and research will certainly be less obvious and probably less empirically defensible than they have been in the two preceding sections of this chapter.

In Chapter III, the value-orientation of America was conceived as power dominated, deriving its strength from a fortuitous combination of natural resources and a relative freedom from social restraint. This so-called "freedom from" became an institutionalized attitude which characterized the exploitation and expansion of the country. Operationally, it has shown signs of reaching a point of dwindling returns and of increasing conflict of interests for a majority of the population. Certainly, the position of "grass roots" agriculture has reflected this conflict of interests. It is no longer possible to resolve problems by physically moving away from them, frontier-style. The fact that the county power group leaders professed their allegiance to individualism and to local autonomy did not hide the fact that what they meant by autonomy was applicable to local groups, not to individuals, per se. It was commonly recognized that the rewards and benefits of agriculture



could not be achieved by the sweat of the brow alone. It required collective action, but only on the terms which the power groups found acceptable. The local power group thus replaced the single individual as the common denominator of the American ethic. Perhaps the groups themselves would dispute this statement, but the observations in the counties gave little cause to contest it. Even the part-time farmers, who were usually outside the major power structure, conceded the primacy of the group as a vehicle for social and economic behavior.<sup>6</sup>

The predominance of power in American cultural values helped to explain why the power groups were in control of the agricultural structure of the counties studied. Authoritarian values and procedures, as epitomized by bureaucracies and government agencies, aroused the hostility and active opposition of these power groups (i.e., the Farm Bureau's constant attacks upon PMA). In this cultural context of power, the county agent was unable to maintain a position either as a technician or a bureaucrat. That is, he could not do so if he wished to be considered a successful agent. Obliging, the Extension Service, lacking a

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<sup>6</sup>In fact, it had really been "brought home" to them for the first time through their participation in collective bargaining and other union activities.

strong internal authority structure, allowed the agents to make their own terms with the prevalent power groups. This was done, or at least rationalized, in deference to the power ethic. Therefore, as long as the Extension administration accepted the standards of power values, it could not exist as a rationalistic body, at least in the area of agent and county relations. The early scientific frame of mind of Extension became more and more confined to the laboratories and experiment stations, where public relations techniques were less demanding.

Consequently, it soon became impossible to apply standards of rationality to the judgment of agent performance. The trend in successful agents was less in terms of scientific competence (an authority criterion) and more in terms of ability to manipulate and get along with others, as expressed in the term "salesmanship" (a power criterion). If an agent tried to compartmentalize himself as a scientist, a public servant, or a disinterested observer (as SL, and to a lesser extent, FL, tried to do), he soon found that the power groups would not accept him on those terms. He had to be a positive collaborator, or his rating suffered.

The Extension administration, as an authority group, was thus faced with the dilemma which Veblen had foreseen.



Caught in the web of a power ethic, it had either to acquiesce or to reassert its authority on the basis of its own internal values and competence. In the case of Michigan, acquiescence was the selected pattern of behavior, and this was consistent with general Extension behavior throughout the country. Whereas Veblen had conceived it possible, and even desirable in his own terms, for the technicians and scientists to obtain social and economic control of American society, these types of persons in the Extension Service showed little inclination to do so.

Nevertheless, in spite of American cultural antipathy to bureaucracy, the increasing complexity and rigidity of the social structure were compelling many power groups to compromise their "freedom from" values. For example, it was found that many of the local leaders who criticized PMA were, at the same time, accepting its bounties, that many farmers who decried government interference with the raising of crops were simultaneously voting for wheat subsidies and acreage quotas. Yet agents who supported such authoritarian practices would not have been received favorably in the counties. The ethic had to be preached and reaffirmed even though its very proponents seemed to realize that it could not be practiced.

The inability of their ethical standards to give

practical solutions to problems of marketing and the like was profoundly disturbing to the majority power group leaders. It made them anxious, insecure, and defensive. The authority group leaders were much more positive and confident that government programs and agencies would be able to deal with matters too large for local people and groups to handle.

The Extension administrators and agents, although nominally part of these government programs, were too far committed to the power values of the American ethic to consider the confused agricultural situation as an opportunity to change their own orientation in the direction of authority behavior patterns. As long as this outside power commitment remained strong, the agents would apparently continue to be judged largely in terms of their compatibility with the dominant power elements in rural society rather than by standards emanating from within their own administrative organization.

#### D. The Conceptual Level--the Power and Authority Typology

In Chapter II, it was stated that any analytical theory of human behavior involved a conceptualization of control, which was defined as the mastery of material and non-

material resources to realize goals. In this research, the emphasis was upon the group type of control rather than the individual. The individual, as such, was not the focal point of investigation. It was admitted that this "large idea" approach brought with it a considerable imprecision with respect to collecting, handling, and interpreting field data.

The working theory of control was built around a set of operational and structural characteristics of the two polar categories of control groups, designated as power and authority types. These were analytical, or "ideal" types with some mutually exclusive elements, but others which were capable of combination in empirical situations. Given these types, any social group could be placed upon a power-authority continuum according to its basic manifestations of type. Once this were accomplished satisfactorily, the interactive behavior of analyzed groups could then be predicted with considerable accuracy by comparing their relative power and authority configurations.

Obviously, from the above description, the main problems were (a) to delineate the essential type elements, and (b) to place groups accurately on the power and authority continuum. In tackling the first problem, a series of elements was proposed for each control type. The series was

not exhaustive, but was a distillate of the range of structural and action characteristics which seemed relevant in terms of past analyses. Since groups often have mixed orientations (i.e., authority internally and power externally), four combinations were possible, using the typology. An example of each combination was given. The second problem was met only by permitting the investigator to use his own judgment and perspicacity in deciding what the orientations of particular groups were. This was done because no objective criteria existed for making these decisions, and there was no certainty about what such criteria ought to contain. It was hoped that the present research, exploratory as it was, would contribute to the solution of both these problems.

Looking back upon the research, it may be said that its conceptual contributions were rather meager, at least insofar as definitive theoretical results were concerned. In the first place, it was true that the group situation involved in county agent work was fairly well established. Although the details of the process were not reported point by point, the control orientations of the county power groups and of the state Extension administration were found to represent the opposite polarities of type. Other organizations, such as Soil Conservation District boards, were

less definitive and less easily placed. This latter condition was treated empirically in terms of "cross-leadership" which accounted for the more equivocal behavior of such organizations. Thus the classification of these mixed types remained fuzzy, since a comparative evaluation of power and authority factors could not be made. Yet the behavior of both the major power groups and the chief authority groups was a rough vindication of the typology, especially with respect to the element of conflict. Here the authority groups showed the inclination toward conflict-avoidance which permitted the power groups to gain situational dominance. This phenomenon was shown to directly influence the agent rating system and to be dysfunctional for the control capabilities of the authority group.

Undoubtedly, many other varieties of group interaction will be less clearly outlined than the one used here, and numerous intervening variables, such as other groups or unanticipated events, may complicate the picture. Yet if a group's characteristics are at all capable of analysis, the task of "typing" it should be attainable, even though more difficult in some cases than in others. What is needed is a set of indices, tested in a variety of situations, which on the basis of both post hoc and predictive applications

will yield a reliable guide for classification.<sup>7</sup> Aside from its somewhat crude applicability, then, the research done here did not add much to the precision necessary to solve the problem of choosing the elements of power and authority types. It pointed up the need rather than answering it.

The placing of groups on a continuum with some accuracy is linked to the choice of typological elements because it presumes that a continuum can be formulated. One method of placement, of course, would be to use a series of judges<sup>8</sup> and to take a consensus of judgments for the final positioning. However, where this procedure has been tried,<sup>9</sup> it

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<sup>7</sup>The use of quantified and/or hierarchical indices has become common in social research, with such examples as the Sewell and Chapin scales for measuring status and class, the Hagood index for levels of living, and others. Most of these scales have been confined to static or purely observable characteristics, rather than behavior patterns, attitudes, and the like. Of course, Guttman scales and other means for categorizing qualitative and valuational data may help to form indices applicable to the present typology.

<sup>8</sup>This method of relative placement, usually by rank or other hierarchy, has also been widely used, not only by Extension investigators (see references to Stone, *op. cit.*, and Nye, *op. cit.*, Chapter V) but by the Warner method of investigating social class. The reliability of judges is often questionable, particularly in terms of their own relationships to what is being measured.

<sup>9</sup>Loomis and Beegle, for instance, attempted to place social groups on a gemeinschaft-gesellschaft continuum, using college students and experts as judges of the groups involved. Although the continuum was set up numerically, the placement of the groups by (continued next page)

has exhibited the same defects of imprecision and lack of objective uniformity which characterized the judgments of the single investigator in the present research. Therefore, once the typological factors have been selected, they will have to be weighted so that they can be quantified prior to placement on the continuum. The scale of the continuum will, of course, be dependent upon the number of typological factors and the weights assigned to them.

It may be discovered that the data required for these numerical processes cannot be secured feasibly or that they cannot be adapted to the treatments outlined above. If this proves to be the case, the conceptual framework would have to be revised, or perhaps scrapped altogether. In any event, after better operational tools have been provided, two steps should be taken:

1. The whole ground of the present research should be retraced with the improved research tools, and any differences between the new and old results interpreted.

2. Other researches of group interaction, either in

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(continued) each judge was simply a subjective impression based on personal opinions or experiences. See C. P. Loomis and J. A. Beegle, Rural Social Systems (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1950), particularly Chapter I and Appendix A.

the same or in different fields, should be undertaken to check both the conceptual framework and the tools themselves.

Only with wide applicability can the conceptualization of power and authority presented here lay claim to being the basis of a "high range" theory of behavior.



## POSTSCRIPT

### THE RATIONALE FOR THE THEORETICAL APPROACH

One of the observations made in Chapter I was that the development of science as a method of ordering the universe has resulted in constricted, or at least restricted, varieties of social theory. Whether this has been a gain or loss for mankind is, at present, more a matter of personal judgment than of demonstrated proof. In the present context, it was deemed at least a partial loss, in that the scope of most current theory has not responded to the analytic potential of the empirical data available through scientific procedures. This lack of breadth has been attributed somewhat to the adoption of theoretical positions, such as the "middle range," which have either avoided or deprecated the use of so-called "high level" concepts. The "middle range" kind of thinking has not usually concerned itself with extensions of a theory beyond its own conceptual level; however, as an occupational orientation, it has apparently satisfied many of the practical and psychological needs of social scientists in modern Western society.

The initial task of the present research was to provide a wider and more connected frame of reference than that

supplied by the "middle range" idea. The proposed categorizing levels of theory, as outlined in Part I, dealt with several distinguishable theoretical areas. These areas, although not spelled out in great detail, corresponded to several types of research interest (i.e., role theory, social structure, culture patterns, etc.) which are now only vaguely linked in the behavioral sciences. Given this amorphous condition, it was believed fruitful to develop broad theory by handling one cluster of empirical observations on a series of inter-related levels, instead of dealing with diverse clusters of observations on a single theoretical level. Employing the former approach, one set of empirical data could be connected theoretically on several levels of analysis. Additional sets of data could then later be checked with one another on a comparable basis. Cross-reference would thereby be greatly facilitated, and discrepancies more likely discovered. Ultimately, a unification of behavioral theory could be achieved at the highest levels of abstraction.

Within the limitations of the present research, the investigation of the procedures for evaluating county agricultural agent performance has seemed to be adaptable to this multi-level approach. As previously stated, many of the quantitative and measurement problems need to be solved,

either using current methods or some yet to be devised. But it is important to stress again the fact that methodology alone will not provide the key to durable theory. While operational difficulties on the higher levels of theory have been acknowledged as hard to work out, they have to be faced eventually. Modern sociologists, by remaining on the lower theoretical levels, have merely postponed the "facing up," rather than eliminated it. For, as Blumer has pointed out, the problem of establishing meaningful (i.e., accurately communicable) concepts is "the most important part of our discipline (sociology) insofar as we seek to develop it into an empirical science."<sup>1</sup> In striving for even this limited objective, the quest for semantic clarity and concise definitions of words and terms are acknowledged to be inadequate for constructing social theory, in the same sense that mastery of the thesaurus or the dictionary, per se, will not produce good literature. Rather, the examination of whole action situations or social gestalts, is suggested

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Blumer, "What Is Wrong With Social Theory?", American Sociological Review, Vol. 19, No. 1, February, 1954, p. 9. While Blumer's assessment of the problems of social theory is somewhat analogous to that reached in this discussion, it is still confined to the province of science alone. His solutions of these problems (essentially via the formulation of so-called "sensitizing" concepts) are less pretentious, but also somewhat less specific, than the power and authority typology.

as being more productive of meaningful analysis than the narrower single-level approach. What has been done in this monograph represents not only an effort to see the forest instead of the trees, but to counter, as well, the notion that every tree is itself a forest.

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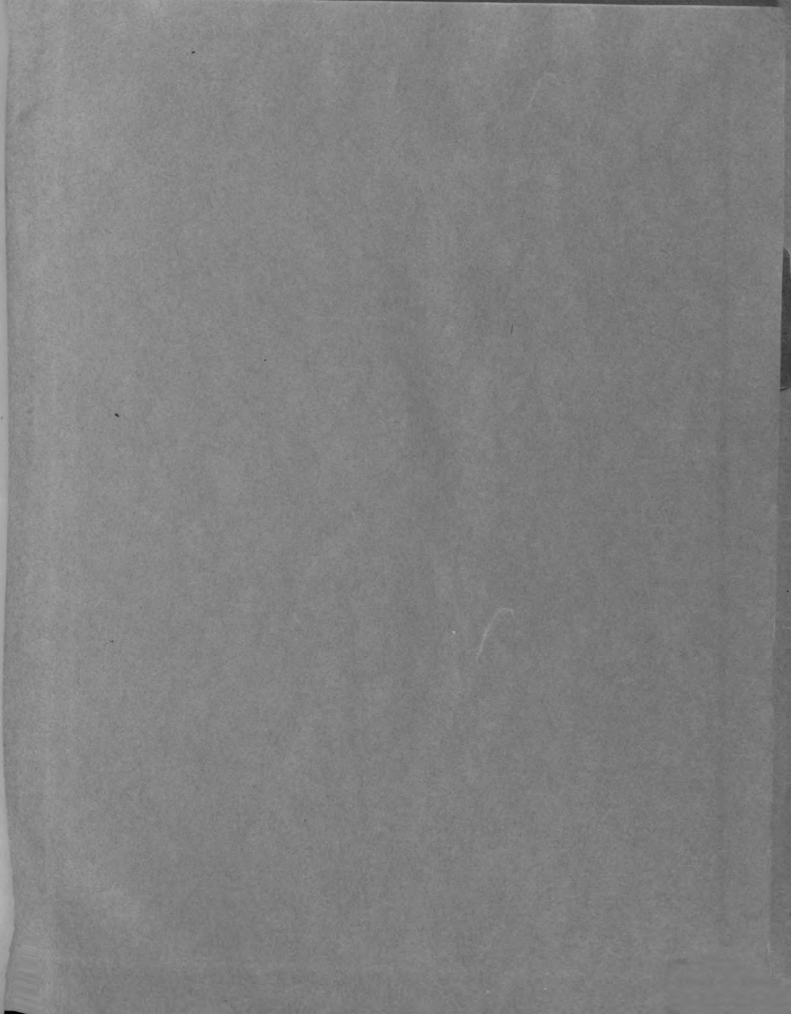
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