This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

Interpreting and Valuing Extension

presented by

Scott M. Preston

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in Communication

Major professor

Date 6 April 1995

INTERPRETING AND VALUING EXTENSION

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Communication

7 April 1995

ABSTRACT

INTERPRETING AND VALUING EXTENSION

By

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This thesis investigates how the members of a university extension organization interpret messages advocating organizational culture change. Since cultural change is introduced through value systems, this research focuses on members' applications of the values formerly accepted by the organization in explaining why members accept or reject a particular change message. Values are standards of preference for selecting between actions based on cognitive, affective, and directional criteria. Thus, an organization's culture shapes the responses of its members to messages arguing for cultural change.

A dual focus on (1) the values used to justify change and (2) those values used to maintain the status quo discovered that the values held by members of the organization differ from the leadership vision in application and importance. Agents' basic assumptions included a county focus, emphasis on practicality, and commitment to their jobs in the field. These differences from the vision led to considerable sense-making around the values of self-learning and being cutomer-driven, with Children, Youth and Family agents accepting key elements of the vision as reflective of their own mission and Agriculture agents rejecting what did not fit their perceptions of what Extension is and does.

PREFACE

The concept of organizational culture is intrinsically interesting to me as an example of how paradigms shape reality. Before coming to Michigan State, I spent a year working the second shift for a silicon wafer manufacturing firm in Bedford, Massachusetts. While there, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the very different cultures that existed for the daytime shift and for their nighttime counterparts. This difference fascinated me, so much so that I jumped at the chance to investigate the cultural revolution taking place in Michigan's Extension service.

My fundamental belief is that people actively construct the reality in which they live, work and play. The ways in which people make sense of their environment are thus a matter of their own choosing. This power to decide is to me the most human of characteristics, and thus one of the most interesting to study. As communication is the medium through which we share our ideas about the world and construct social reality, this study of cultural change investigates the rhetoric of both leaders and members for the structures of meaning which ultimately are the basis for human institutions, among them Michigan State University Extension.

This thesis is part of a larger research project evaluating the effectiveness of the cultural change effort in two Michigan State University outreach organizations, MSUE and the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families (ICYF). Other methods included a survey at two time points, egocentric network analyses of grantwriting in each organization, participant office observation and nonparticipant observation of agents in the field. These multiple methods allowed my research team to combine the richness of qualitative data with the rigor attained by quantitative analyses to present a compelling portrait of the two outreach organizations undergoing cultural change.

In the course of completing this thesis, I encountered many problems and obstacles. The following recommendations for research are intended to be applicable to

similar qualitative approaches, regardless of the type of organization being studied. I hope these suggestions will prove useful to other researchers.

Work with others. This thesis is part of a larger evaluation project, and has benefitted greatly from the critiques of other research team members. The insights of research collaborators are a rich resource, and I cannot imagine attempting such a project without them.

Identify key rhetorical documents early and keep copies handy. The documents used in the historical analysis were all found in the library at Michigan State University, while the vision statements were obtained from official sources. As these documents set the stage for the subsequent analysis, it is crucial to have early and frequent access to them. Having copies constantly available would have saved me much hassle in trying to chase them down to make sure I had not misinterpreted them after having returned them to the library or buried them in my files.

Consult an expert in rhetorical analysis. My department lacks such an expert, and the result was an extensive search of the library and office shelves for resources that could provide a menu of methods and details on their use. This project could have been completed much sooner if I had decided on my methodology before collecting the documents and designing the study. Without expert guidance, I made many mistakes whose correction added to the burden of interpretation.

Work important themes from early interviews into later ones. Many times I found that agents in one interview would briefly touch on values and issues that other agents had discussed in great detail. Comparison would have been much easier if I had the foresight to build recurrent themes into my question probes for the appropriate point in the next interview. Of course, this will have to be balanced against the need to let the agent answer the question in his or her own words without prompting.

When drawing conclusions, think about what your respondents would say. In order to make valid conclusions from a rhetorical analysis, the researcher must be careful

to avoid slipping into prejudice. By constantly asking if the interpretation given would be accepted by the people whose responses were the source of data for that conclusion, this threat can be minimized. Without second-guessing his or her own motives, a researcher cannot be certain that the resulting conclusions do the respondents justice.

This thesis would not have been completed without the assistance of many people. Leah Cox Hoopfer, Doug Brahee, and Maggie Bethel of MSUE were very helpful in editing my questions and locating respondents. The secretaries in the Extension director's office provided access to Extension documents that were crucial to my developing a sense of the values and behaviors of importance within Extension. Extension specialists Cynthia Fridgen and Resource Development Chairperson Frank Fear gave me insightful suggestions concerning the relationship between field agents and on campus staff, a sense of Extension's historical importance, and excellent advice in focusing my interests. Support from MSU's Office of the Vice-Provost for University Outreach, via a grant from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation, enabled me to join a larger research team and carry out the field research and preparation of the thesis. Research team members Gary Meyer and Anthony Roberto provided motivation, supplementary information and valuable critiques through the evolution of the thesis. William Donohue, Cynthia Fridgen and James Dearing were an exceptional committee to work for, both in quality of assistance and efficiency.

Most importantly, the agents who agreed to answer my questions were all extremely forthright and articulate in presenting their perspective of what Extension was, is, and will be. Without their candor, this thesis would not be before you now.

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NOTES ON USAGE

A few important notes on usage are required to make sense of the following presentation of results. First, the term Extension is used to refer to the organization being studied, while extension is used to describe the process used by agents in fulfilling their organizational responsibilities. Second, the historical trends noted in the documents reviewed are collectively termed the Extension tradition; when a program area name is placed in front of "Extension," the specific program area's tradition is being cited. Third, the dates used in the text refer to the specific Extension documents analyzed in Chapter Four. Fourth, the terms "vision" and "MSUE vision" refer to the overall change initiative in Michigan State's Extension service, operationalized as the 1992 presentation at the Extension School and described in the first half of Chapter Five. Fifth, the abbreviations CYF, ANR and CED are used to identify the program area mission statements discussed in the second half of Chapter Five. Finally, the mission of Extension will be contrasted as focused on either empowerment or being empowering. The distinction here is between a view that requires agents to give their clients power in order to empower them for future self-learning (*empowerment*) and a view that Extension helps people recognize how they can empower themselves, a process that is facilitated by but does not require Extension program assistance (*empowering*). Because this distinction is central to the rhetorical analysis, it is necessary to make this distinction clear up front. The implications will be developed in the text.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are an essential part of modern society. They help to structure our everyday experiences. This structuring allows us to function with an acceptable level of uncertainty. By organizing the social world into manageable parts, reality is constructed in particular ways that permit people to focus on what is important to them. For example, churches help people explore their spirituality. Businesses encourage employees to develop product or service expertise. Schools educate students to be critical thinkers.

Every organization, whether a church, business, school, or other type, has a culture with a set of values, norms, and goals that structure the experiences of its members. Understanding an organizational culture requires understanding the organization's mission, history, and people. Then the criteria for evaluating change initiatives can be established, and evaluation carried out. Knowing how an organization measures its success is a key to knowing how to interpret its culture.

Interpreting and Valuing Organizational Discourse

An *organization* is a pattern of communicative relationships directed towards a set of common or complementary goals. The messages sent between people and units within the organization, and between people and units and the external environment, comprise what the organization is and does. Thus, communication is central to organizations and how they organize for action. *Communication* is a process of information exchange in which participants seek shared meaning and understanding. Over time in organizations, repeated patterns of communicating lead to a shared sense of meanings and understandings that we recognize as culture.

What is culture, and why is it important to organizations? *Culture* is a way of seeing the world, legitimized by the consent of its members who have found this vision useful in guiding and operating the organization (Schein, 1992). Culture is a shared way of thinking, a cognitive framework (Kuhn, 1970) that structures one's experience. Gersick (1991) elaborates on Kuhn (1970) to create a model with three basic components: Deep structure, equilibrium periods, and revolutionary periods. Deep structure is:

> the set of fundamental "choices" a system has made of (1) the basic parts into which the units will be organized and (2) the basic activity patterns that will maintain its existence. (Gersick, 1991: 14)

In this model, organizations are essentially symbolic communication systems constructed to facilitate a particular type of exchange with their environments. The development of the deep structure occurs at two levels. In the first, occurring during equilibrium periods, deep structure interacts with the environment to maintain equilibrium and increase the culture's sophistication without altering its fundamental choices. In the second, revolutionary periods, there is a dramatic shift in the fundamental choices of the deep structure, with one set replacing another. These opposite processes are both necessary if an organization is to continue to be responsive to its environment: Sometimes change will be incremental, and other times it will have to replace one vision with another in order for the organization to survive.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines culture as a means of interpreting the world:

> Believing...that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz, 1973: 5).

As symbolic communication systems constructed by their members to facilitate meaningful exchanges with their environments, organizations <u>are</u> cultures. Thus, the study of organizations should be the study of the patterns of meaning adopted by organizational

members to make sense of the world and to structure their actions within it. Messages communicated between members of the organization are, over time, the "webs of significance" that we recognize as culture. The importance of culture is in how it guides and directs our ways of thinking and acting by structuring experiences through the reduction of uncertainty.

Because culture is a symbolic communication system, it is not accessible to normal methods of scientific research. Geertz states that

> the ethnographer "inscribes" social discourse; *he writes it down*. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted. (italics from original; Geertz, 1973: 19)

The scientific method cannot define culture as independent and dependent variables because culture is more a context than an attribute. People belong to a culture, they do not possess it. In studying culture, the researcher must enter into a system of collective symbolizing and strive to make sense of it from within. That is, researchers must observe the ongoing process of social construction between members of an organization as they perform their daily duties and face new challenges (Smircich and Calas, 1987: 244). The goal of culture research is not to predict and control, but to understand:

> Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the "said" of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behavior. In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself - that is, about the role of culture in human life - can be expressed. (Geertz, 1973: 27)

The interpretive method of value analysis used in this thesis is based on rhetorical criticism. *Rhetorical criticism* is a method of analyzing the symbols deliberately formulated by the rhetor to accomplish a specific purpose (Foss, 1989: 5). It assumes that these symbols create the reality in which we live, just as the symbolic communication of

cultures is described as doing. The unit of analysis in rhetorical criticism is the *rhetorical artifact*, the tangible evidence of a rhetorical act (Foss, 1989: 5). The rhetorical act is the sending of a symbolic message, whether it be a speech, publication, painting, or song. The questions posed by rhetorical criticism focus on understanding particular symbols and how they operate (Foss, 1989: 5). In this thesis, the symbols of interest are the values that comprise organizational culture, the standards for justifying the actions of the organization during its campaign for cultural change, and the actions of its members doing their jobs.

In giving up the objective aims of traditional science, researchers take on different burdens. First, in interpretive research, credibility comes from the researcher more than the method. The researcher must persuasively argue for a particular construction, demonstrating its cohesion, explanatory power, and elegance. Second, it is very difficult to systematically assess culture. As Geertz puts it, "We are reduced to insinuating theories because we lack the power to state them." (Geertz, 1973: 24) Third, the researcher must view other cultures as being in opposition, rather than attempting to assimilate them into a dominant paradigm. Smircich and Calas (1987) argue that efforts to extend existing paradigms to encompass different cultures from one's own destroy the important elements of the other culture, forcing it to sacrifice its own uniqueness to gain acceptance under a different paradigm. A *paradigm* is the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques that are shared by the members of a given community (Kuhn, 1970: 175). Given this definition, Kuhn asserts that paradigms (and cultures) are incommensurable: One paradigm cannot be judged by the standards of another.

Cultural values play very different roles in equilibrium than they do in revolution. Equilibrium is a stability that preserves the benefits of a culture and allows participants to communicate with little fear of misunderstanding. In order for this to occur, the elements of the culture must be mutually reinforcing and non-contradictory. To the extent that the culture contains contrary elements, ambiguity will exist in the meanings of messages sent within that context. The more contrary elements exist, the greater the likelihood that a

culture will experience revolutionary change. When a revolution occurs, the basic assumptions of the existing culture are called into question, and a new means of resolving ambiguity is informally negotiated between the members of that culture. This change process will have multiple phases. Members of the culture will "escape" the crisis at different phases, finding a new culture or adapting the old to accommodate the changes they are forced to make. Others will actively or passively resist change.

The focus of this thesis is on (1) messages about change sent by organization leaders, and (2) the interpretations generated by members of the organizational culture in response to leadership messages. In order to make sense of these interpretations, the deep structure of the existing culture will have to be understood. First, common themes of the organization's history will be studied to isolate those values that recur throughout the evolution of the organization's mission, structure, and values. Second, the change initiative by leadership will be presented. Third, organizational members' interpretations of the change initiative will be analyzed and compared with the change initiative itself.

Common Themes, Past and Present

The United States Cooperative Extension Service (CES) was established by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 as part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The organization of interest here is the Michigan state branch, renamed Michigan State University Extension in 1991. The original mission of the CES was to educate U.S. citizens in agricultural know-how, drawing on the knowledge base of each state's land-grant university to solve constituent problems and prepare those constituents to solve the problems themselves in the future. The purpose of the CES in the state branches was to bring education to people who would not otherwise have an opportunity to learn new techniques and develop their full potential. The CES consistently reaffirmed its goal of making its constituents self-reliant and contributing members of society. "Constituent"

initially meant farmers, but the original wording of the Smith-Lever Act and the charters for land-grant universities established under the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 emphasized that the constituents were the citizens of each state, and ultimately the entire country. While agriculture was the dominant occupation in the U.S., it is no longer. Only three percent of the U.S. population is now employed in agricultural production. The dynamics of agricultural production, storage, marketing, and delivery have become dominated by agribusinesses.

As the industry has changed, so too has the mission of the CES. As early as 1948, the Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies, and Goals specifically advocated extending university knowledge to non-farm families in rural areas as part of the mission of the CES. There has been a recurrent concern with the knowledge possessed by county agents. The level of technical knowledge that an agent is expected to have has always been more than was the case for the majority of agents. This has been seen as troublesome whenever their responsibilities have broadened or changed, which has occurred every 10-15 years since 1948. Disciplinary boundaries within the CES that restricted interdisciplinary study and certification have been attacked since at least 1955, but the boundaries have remained largely intact. These facts about the CES are the foundation for the present investigation of a recent attempt to reframe the Extension mission in the state of Michigan.

The need for institutions of higher learning for farmers was noted as far back as 1796 by President George Washington (Rasmussen, 1989: 17). Over the next 60 years, the support for agricultural colleges grew, culminating in the founding of state agricultural colleges in Pennsylvania and Michigan in 1855. Seven years later, the first Morrill Land-Grant College Act gave every state 30,000 acres of federal land for each member of Congress from that state. These lands were to be used as a site or sold and the profits used to set up a trust fund for the endowment of a practical college for agriculture and engineering. Most states sold their scrip and used the profits to establish new agricultural

and mechanical colleges (Rasmussen, 1989: 23). These institutions were established in response to a need for institutions of higher learning apart from the traditional East Coast schools, which were too distant, too expensive, and otherwise not practical for the vast majority of Midwestern and Western farmers. In 1906, the idea of a movable school for teaching farm families about planting, preserving, and marketing had taken form in several states (Rasmussen, 1989: 30). When the Smith-Lever Act was signed into law in 1914, Extension services were organized under each state's land-grant college as a division of the federal Cooperative Extension Service (CES), a division of USDA. The stated purpose of Extension was to aid in the diffusion of useful and practical information to the people of the United States and encourage the application of that information (Rogers, Eveland, and Bean, 1976).

While the same phrases and ideas appear in official documents about the CES from 1948 through the 1980s, their importance relative to each other differs by era. Education was deemed necessary because most farmers were ignorant of the basic principles underlying their profession. To a degree, this initial purpose has continued to characterize CES missions. When discussing CES constituencies, there is disagreement within Extension about how central agriculture should be to the CES mission in the 1990s. If agriculture was initially important because it was the primary industry in the nation, what takes its place now? The broad scope presented in the 1968 report A People and A Spirit about the CES' future concerns and obligations suggests that there are too many candidates for any one choice to be satisfactory to everyone. Agriculture remains an important concern. Early documents that emphasized its fundamental importance to the well-being of the country are not necessarily outdated. That is, the ability to generate enormous food supplies and surpluses remains a mighty pillar of U.S. society.

The structures built to fulfill the Smith-Lever Act's mandate of bringing practical education to the people of the U.S. are almost entirely under the authority of university agricultural departments, and the CES itself has an preponderance of agricultural agents in

positions of power. The organization holds agriculture at its heart. Attempts to change that focus arouse passionate resistance from those whose lives have been spent in this form of service to the citizens of the U.S. In the present thesis, the section on paradigm commitment (Chapter Two) demonstrates the difficulty in making a distinction between what an organization's mission is and what its primary concern is at a certain time, and thereby explains how a position that is known to be false can still remain a potent political issue within an organization.

The need for both better and continuously educated agents continually surfaces because their responsibilities continually increase and diversify. The original two divisions of Agriculture and Home Demonstration have grown to encompass youth work, marketing, conservation, resource development, and environmental protection and restoration. Expecting agents to have useful knowledge about all of these areas is an ambitious expectation, yet one that agents have struggled to meet for decades, often succeeding through determination, dedication, and the insight that comes from long-time familiarity with one's work.

In sum, the history of CES rhetoric gives ample ammunition to the cynic who claims that new ideas in Extension are merely new packaging for the same old dogma. Similar problems are identified in CES reports from the 1940s to the 1990s. It is up to the current leadership of the organization to make the case that the new changes are both different and necessary for the organization to continue to meet its goals and live up to the spirit of its mission. Whether leaders are convincing depends on the common themes they can draw on to make their case without alienating the agents they must convert if the change is to be successful.

Michigan's Cooperative Extension Service: 1914 - 1991

In Michigan, the Cooperative Extension Service has been very successful. By 1920, there was an Extension agent in every county (Olstrom and Miller, 1984). As in other states, the primary mission of the Michigan CES has been agriculture; however, there have been 4-H clubs since 1908, and by 1917 Home Demonstration Agents (today's Home Economists) were officially recognized within the CES. The present historical analysis focuses on: (1) the major events that had an effect on the CES; (2) the structure of the CES in Michigan; and (3) the priority issues in each decade.

Major Events

The CES's contribution to the World War II war effort was to ensure greater farm production. Home Demonstration Agents helped families do their part to save resources for the war, while 83,000 Michigan students worked as farm volunteers in 1943. The CES also played an instrumental role in carrying out emergency programs to take care of imported labor: Housing, transport, food, training and locating programs were all run by the CES through 1947. Agents consulted on everything from draft deferments to farm supply rationing. In these activities, the values of a united effort and the direction of the Extension agents were unquestioned; had they not been, the effort would have failed, for a strong and consistent campaign was necessary to lead the people of the U.S. to triumph through hard work, conservation and sacrifice. If there had been any doubt about the ability of the CES to have an impact on the lives of the people in Michigan, the war erased them.

The period from the end of the war to the University's Centennial in 1955 encompassed enormous growth of both Michigan State College (rechristened Michigan State University in 1955) and the CES. In 1950, Michigan State had 20,000 students, up

from 6,000 a decade earlier, and Michigan farmers doubled the value of their farms between 1940 and 1950.[1] Efficiency was an unquestioned value, both for the new university and for the farmers of the state. By providing the new techniques for farming that were enabling farmers to grow more with less, the CES helped to increase the supply beyond demand. Agriculture branched out into marketing to help farmers deal with surpluses. International exporting became an Extension concern. The number of Agriculture Agents went from 75 in 1950 (many of whom also had Home Demonstration and 4-H responsibilities), to 117 in 1960 (73 County Extension Directors supported by 44 other Agriculture Agents). Overall, there were 418 full-time positions in the CES in 1960 (Olstrom and Miller, 1984).

The number of farmers dwindled from a third of the U.S. population (32 million) in 1910 to a sixth in 1950 (25 million) to only two and a half percent in 1986 (5.2 million) (Rasmussen, 1989: 119). While this trend was accelerating in the 1960s, the CES responded to the social outcries of that era by diversifying its efforts in urban areas and expanding programs to meet a growing number of social ills. In the 1960s, the federal government branched out into a wide array of social services. Some of these services helped the CES; others forced cutbacks, in both county service and size of major divisions (such as marketing). The Home Economists and 4-H leaders moved out from under the shadow of the Agriculture program areas to establish their own programs and increase both their numbers and their role in serving their constituents. The CES Family Living (formerly Home Economics) program area focused its efforts on helping people in urban areas negotiate the maze of federal social programs and began a few of its own. One of the most important of these was the Expanded Nutrition Program (ENP), which arrived in 1968 backed by $1.5 million in federal funds for its first year alone. ENP quickly became a major part of Family Living, funding 136 aides drawn from county volunteers to assist in

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[1] Average acreage increased a mere 15 acres over the same time period.

the dissemination of nutritional information to all the people of Michigan (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 122). While the resources of the CES remained predominantly tied up with agricultural programs, grants and private funding began to be awarded to non-agriculture programs. The CES was no longer a single-purpose entity; it was diversifying in reaction to the changing needs of the people it was created to serve.

By the late 1960s, there was a significant trend towards large corporate farming, as smaller farmers were driven out of the market by their inability to afford the farming equipment necessary to achieve large yields and thus make a living selling crops in a glutted market. U.S. agriculture, guided by the CES, was a victim of its own success. In creating a vast resource to meet the U.S.'s level of consumption, U.S. agriculture forced down the price of its products, with the result that farmers lost money by growing more. What was good for the individual was not good for the collective. As new technologies made it more economically viable for a few people to produce huge yields, hundreds of thousands of farmers lost their livelihood.

Entering the 1970s, agriculture employed a shrinking number of farmers. While the energy crisis raised prices in the early 1970s, those prices had plummeted by the late 70s. By the end of the decade, there were 40,000 farms with sales of less than $10,000, which placed even the thriftiest of families below the poverty line (Olstrom and Miller, 1984). The worst blow came in 1973, when a small chemical company mixed toxic chemicals into a large feed additive order. Thousands of livestock were poisoned and had to be slaughtered, putting hundreds of farmers out of business. There was little the CES could do to ease the impact of this disaster. By 1980 the CES was refocusing its programs on urban audiences, the social problems of farmers, and environmental issues. Agribusiness was a two billion dollar industry, and the private farmer, the traditional constituent of the CES, was becoming scarce.

The Structure of Extension at Michigan State

The CES in Michigan has been under the administration of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University since its founding. However, the three original program areas within the CES - Agriculture, 4-H, and Home Economics - have kept separate lines of authority. In 1941, the three program areas of the CES - then called County Agriculture Agents, Boys' and Girls' Club Work, and Home Demonstration - each had their own leaders at the state level, who were responsible for their program area's programming, personnel management, and supervision. Starting in 1945, there were periodic attempts to make greater sense out of the organization's structure. The 1945 effort proposed grouping specialists in their respective subject matter departments on campus, but it failed to move the specialists out from under the control of the state-level administrators; the value of each program area's autonomy was too strong. 1945 also saw the creation of County Extension Directors (CEDs), who were agents responsible for the administrative duties of the CES in their county. While "permissive legislation" (from Olstrom and Miler, 1984: 24) allowed agents from all three program areas to be CEDs, the first non-Agriculture CED did not take office until 1975. Finally, the Home Demonstration Agents (who were to become Home Economists in 1965) were made extramural faculty in the School of Home Economics (now the College of Human Ecology) in 1945, thus granting them the same stature as the Agriculture Agents, who were traditionally extramural faculty in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 23).

In 1955, CES Director Durward Varner was appointed Vice Provost of the newly renamed Michigan State University, with the responsibility of coordinating all off-campus programs for education, including both Extension and Continuing Education. Continuing Education, initially attempted in 1926 under then-President Butterfield and a permanent part of Michigan State since 1948, was concerned with formal education of adults, as

compared to the informal learning that was the mission of Extension. The uniting of these two classes of programs was part of a larger effort to unify and coordinate MSU's research, teaching and public service functions. It was not successful (Olstrom and Miller, 1984). The coordination of goals conflicted with the values of specialization and program area autonomy, and the refocus never took hold.

The decade of the 1950s also saw the rise of marketing within Extension, as food prices dropped due to agricultural over-production. Michigan State, in a high growth mode led by its internationally minded president, John Hannah, became an international leader in extension. The Institute of Extension Personnel Development was founded at the university in 1957, and quickly became a leading center for extension graduate education. As an example of the Michigan CES' national prominence, directors Varner and Miller both went on to become presidents of land-grant universities following their time as CES directors in Michigan (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 84).

An internal budget crisis in 1965 resulted in a reorganization of field agents, making two to three agents responsible for a multi-county area (as many as 5 counties per office in the Upper Peninsula). The positions of aides and assistants were created to do the routine work, thus freeing up the agents to travel around their counties.[2] Along with this reorganization came several name changes: Home Demonstration Agents were renamed Home Economists, and Boys' and Girls' Club Work became 4-H Youth Development. The 1960s also saw the creation of Economic Development Districts, which were groups of counties organized to plan community development under the aegis of the U.S. Department of Commerce. As community-level service was rising in importance in Extension circles, the CES was a significant contributor to the Economic Development Districts. Community Resource Development became a full partner in the

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[2] Much of the early funding for aides and agents came from ENP grants, and the reliance on "soft" grant money for aides and assistants has continued to this day.

federal CES, raising its number of program areas to five (along with 4-H, Family Living, Agriculture, and Marketing). However, the focus of Community Resource Development (and its future incarnations as Resource Development in 1969 and Natural Resources and Public Policy in 1974) was unclear. Natural and human resources were lumped together under the same name without explanation, confusing the agents who had been socialized to see Agriculture as one part and human development (Home Economics and 4-H) as a separate (but supportive) part of Extension.

During the 1970s, many changes occurred in the structure of the CES. A new personnel rating system was instituted, and used as the basis for granting "continuing employment" (the agents' equivalent of faculty tenure) at the end of 4, 5 or 6 years in the CES. In 1974, Marketing was absorbed by Agriculture, and Resource Development was renamed Natural Resources and Public Policy. The first non-Agriculture CED was appointed in the mid-70s; before the decade was over there were a dozen non-Agriculture CEDs among the eighty or so CED positions. These changes reflected a major shift in the nature of the problems faced by CES agents, and marked the beginning of a rethinking of Extension.

Priority Issues

The issues focus of the CES has changed dramatically over its existence. In the 1940s, increasing farm production and helping people conserve resources for the war were the unquestioned goals of all agents. Over the next four decades, there would be periodic restatements of goals and attempted clarifications of the CES mission. The Scope Report of 1958 underscored program development in the areas of: (1) efficiency in agricultural production; (2) efficiency in marketing, distribution and utilization; (3) conservation, development and use of natural resources; (4) farm and home management; (5) family living; (6) youth development; (7) leadership development; (8) community improvement

and resource development; and (9) public affairs (see Kearl and Copeland, 1959). While the primary goals remained the same, the list grew longer. The value of conserving and cultivating natural resources was broadened to include human resources, although the aim was more often an attempt to ease a crisis than to promote human capabilities. The development of social science in the university paralleled the growth of non-agricultural concerns, and by the 1960s the CES was deeply involved in addressing social issues.

During the 1960s, the other divisions of the CES put forth their own plans for the future. The Marketing division's 1960 work plan emphasized the following services for producers: (1) interpretation of market information; (2) evaluating quality, grades and standards; (3) sales policies; (4) market efficiency; and (5) the interpretation of state laws and regulations. The obvious value in these services was the translation of difficult issues and processes into plain language for the formally uneducated community. As previously noted, the educational mission for the CES had no criteria for evaluating its own success in raising constituents' awareness of important issues. Therefore, it is possible that instruction in basic principles was no longer appropriate for all or even most constituents if their level of education was higher than before. For suppliers and market firms the CES emphasized: (1) the organization of structure of systems and firms; (2) organizational efficiency, procurement, pricing and distribution; (3) financial and legal management; (4) personnel management; (5) product and market development; and (6) market technology and engineering (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 120-1). Here, the dominant values are clearly order and efficiency. The marketing division was concerned with making the right information available to those who needed it, and providing better decision-making processes for business than were currently in use. Unfortunately, the cutbacks of 1965-66 prevented a systematic dissemination of specific knowledge as advocated in the work plan.

4-H clubs set four goals for youth development in their 1961-62 plan: (1) intellectual potential; (2) lasting personal values; (3) healthy minds and bodies; and (4) interpersonal leadership (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 128). The social science influence is

readily apparent here in the value placed on guided human development. Also apparent is the hope that by educating the next generation, the problems faced by the current one can be ameliorated. In 1963, Family Living put out a "Future Directions" report, which stated that its goals were to help families: (1) develop and use the abilities of each individual for productive living; (2) make use of goods and services and other resources; and (3) contribute toward community social improvement (Olstrom and Miller, 1984). The emphasis here is on the values of efficient use of resources and thriftiness in using those resources, goals similar to the drive for efficiency in Agriculture formally recognized in 1959 (Kearl and Copeland, 1959: 4-7).

The national 1968 report A People and a Spirit set as its major goal improving the quality of living, and targeted the disadvantaged and "young marrieds" just starting out. The specific goals were to: (1) enhance the quality of decisions; (2) increase the ability to interact effectively with others; (3) strengthen the ability to effectively utilize and influence community services; and (4) enhance social, economic, and geographic mobility (Olstrom and Miller, 1984: 121). These goals were a far cry from traditional family services for rural farm families. The shift was from the older values of stability and thrift to the values of active involvement and participation by urban and other non-rural constituents, individuals as well as families, in Extension programs. The terminology used suggests the presence of social science ideas derived from the literature on human resources, leadership, persuasion, and decision making. Also present was the idea of interaction between community and extension services, where the community invests in programs developed and run by the CES. The extension methods suggested here are a significant shift from the dissemination focus of the Agriculture programs.

In the 1970s, the growth of tourism into one of the state's three leading industries led to a focus on environmental issues. The 1977 priority issues were defined as job opportunity, energy conservation, and crime prevention (Olstrom and Miller, 1984). The distinction between the divisions of the CES became more and more apparent, as the

Agricultural constituency shrank and social problems continued to escalate. Natural Resources and Public Policy focused mainly on environmental issues, managing the natural resources of Michigan and taking the lead in educating people about how to save energy during the crisis of the early 1970s. However, the structure of the CES remained centered on agriculture even as the ratio of resources to constituency size and need increased. The Extension values of directed education, agent initiative, and a limited focus on issues of obvious practical importance were continuously reinforced and the imbalance of resources unchallenged until the mid-1980s, when a new mission for the CES began to take shape.

The CES today is a sprawling web of diverse programs in hundreds of communities across the country. Instead of a nation of rural farms, it faces a nation of rising high-tech industries, production giants struggling to reinvent themselves, and a suburban majority. Rogers et al. (1976) list the changes in the U.S. since the founding of the CES: (1) small private farms have been replaced by corporate owned agribusinesses; (2) agricultural production is now far higher than demand; (3) the farm population has dropped to 2.5% of the whole; (4) the efficiency of labor has risen astronomically; and (5) the land-grant universities have evolved from agricultural colleges to research universities encompassing a much broader number of departments. In the 1990s, the needs of the U.S. population now center on social ills: Drugs, broken families, crime, and environmental degradation. Social expectations are high for accessible educational resources on a variety of sociological, psychological, economic, and environmental issues, and there is no more extensive network than the CES. The CES met the challenge of agricultural production and triumphed; now it debates its mission, and weighs whether it should attempt to answer new challenges, serve a more diverse constituency, or commit itself to the maintenance of existing programs for traditional constituents.

Michigan State University Extension: 1991 through 1994

In 1987, Paul Dressel's book College to University: The Hannah Years at Michigan State 1935-1969 was published. One of the major themes of the book was the former president's desire for Michigan State to serve its land-grant function in as many ways as possible, including but not restricting itself to agriculture. Dressel (1987) notes that even in the early 1950s, faculty didn't care for extension work: "the faculty now expected public service to yield private gain" (Dressel, 1987: 223). This attitude only grew stronger with time, until the 1980s when the gap between field and campus staff was a yawning chasm with only a few bridges strung precariously across it. The 1989 Cantlon Report documented these problems: Absent linkages between agents with questions and the specialists who could answer them, uneven support for different Extension programs, and underappreciated specialists and field staff. The Cantlon Report recommended improving lines of access for field staff to specialists, rewarding programs that benefitted constituents in a way that did not destroy the program's efficacy, increasing each and every member's involvement with the organizational mission, and the appointment of a committee to update the CES mission and vision. These two documents represented a shift in the way leaders of Extension organizations conceived of the process of outreach, and led directly to the change effort that is the subject of this thesis.

In 1988, Michigan State University began the process of reorganizing its administrative structure and taking another look at its mission as one of the nation's few universities that are both Association of American Universities-designated research universities and federally designated land-grant institutions. The W.K.Kellogg Foundation granted the university $10.2 million to support a new and integrated lifelong education reorganization. James C. Votruba was named Assistant Provost for Lifelong Education. In 1991, Gail L. Imig was chosen as Extension Director, the first non-Agriculture Agent and the first woman to hold that position at Michigan State. An awareness of

demographic and economic shifts committed the university to a campaign designed to change the purpose and process of Extension in Michigan. Votruba and Imig began to reconceptualize lifelong education and certain Extension functions as "outreach." The name of the CES was changed to Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) as a sign of its changing culture. MSUE consolidated the 4-H, Home Economics, and Family Living units under the Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) program area, while Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) were joined, eliminating the Natural Resources and Public Policy program. Together with Community and Economic Development (CED), these program areas represented the new diversity and broader mission that the university leaders wanted for MSUE. In 1991, the university outreach regional offices were consolidated with the MSUE regional offices, signaling a degree of integration of outreach and Extension. A greater integration of Extension with the academic portion of the university was interpreted by some as opportunity, and by others as a threat.

The report Pioneering the Land Grant University for the Twenty-first Century (1991) described the environment of Michigan institutions of higher education as facing constrained resources, shifting interests of students and other constituents, and great dynamism in many fields of knowledge. The Extension tradition of socially responsible, high quality advanced education and research for the public good had to be made relevant to the new environment. This was to require dramatic change. Perhaps the most central value advocated by the report was that of collaboration, a mutually beneficial process of working with the constituent, other agents and campus faculty to apply both university- and community-based knowledge to problems (Roberto, Meyer, Preston, and Dearing, 1994). This was in contrast to the standard model of knowledge dissemination, where knowledge was generated by the university and applied by the agent to solve community-based problems. The new goal was the empowerment of clients, teaching them to answer their own questions, solve their own problems, and teach the next generation themselves.

Yet for many, the new term appeared to have little distinction from what had always been done.

In 1992, the university Provost appointed a university committee comprised of deans, directors, and chairpersons to evaluate the extent and importance of outreach at Michigan State. While the committee deliberated for 18 months, Director Imig and the heads of the three program areas took the lead in an "Issues Identification Process," in line with a national trend by extension organizations. This regionally-based process asked constituents what Extension services they used and what they would need from MSUE in the future. The process was described as "inclusive, continuous, and democratic" (Focus on Michigan's Future, 1992) and divided responsibilities between campus administrators, field staff, and several specially designed "information management" teams. The first phase involved preparation for gathering the needed information by establishing committees and work groups to run the process. The second phase encompassed the identification, clarification, and prioritization of the issues identified through meetings with targeted groups. The third phase involved the identification of needed partnerships within communities and regional synthesis of important issues. Fourth, the results of the overall process and response options were reported back to the central committee. Plans were made to disseminate the results to the organization, its partners, and clientele. Last, the process was to be evaluated and adjusted as needed to ensure that the new institutionalized procedures would be effective in answering client needs.

Through this Issues Identification process, conference speeches, university publications, and word of mouth, the message of change was spread throughout MSUE. Constituents were to have an important and formative voice in MSUE direction. In the generation of issues at the regional meetings, Agriculture was rarely represented in the issues concluded to be "most important." The difference between past and future was readily apparent. The improved coordination of Extension agents, new cooperative arrangements between Michigan State, other universities in the state, and community

organizations, and an emphasis on including constituents in collaborative planning for all program areas are all elements of the vision for the future.

The Importance of Organizational Culture

The central concern of this thesis is to explore the ways in which members of an organization interpret messages that are intended to change their organizational culture. Starting from a definition of culture, this paper will identify the key Extension value clusters present in (1) Extension documents, and (2) interviews with Extension agents. The value clusters elicited will reveal the heart of the existing culture of Extension and the new vision for it. This approach to the problem of cultural evolution and change will lead to a model for interpretation and action by the members of an organizational culture. The terminology will incorporate terms from a number of research literatures, but the major focus will be on culture as a paradigm. Through this focus, the processes by which individual members make sense of their world will be described and categorized, and general recommendations made for future efforts at guiding a paradigm shift within an organization.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Defining Organizational Culture

Cultural Paradigms

Culture is a way of seeing the world, legitimized by the consent of its members who have found this vision useful in guiding and operating the organization (Schein, 1992). This definition suggests that culture operates as a paradigm, a structured world-view that not only defines the content of interpretation but also the process by which this content is constructed and the standards against which it is measured. Thus, a paradigm is not only a map, but also the directions for map-making (Kuhn, 1970: 109).

The elements of organizational culture are threefold, according to Schein (1992): (1) The level of basic assumptions, or deep structure (Gersick, 1991), the foundation for the organization as a social entity; (2) the level of values, which are the means of applying these assumptions to define both what is possible and what is desirable; and (3) the level of artifacts, or behaviors that have meanings within the framework of those values. Organizations begin with the explicit goals of their founders, goals that structure the organization and define the processes used in achieving those goals. These goals are designed to bring the organization into its first equilibrium period (Gersick, 1991). Over time, repetition of communication becomes patterned, thereby embedding values deeply in the processes and explicit goals of the organization. The culture grows stronger with time. When values are left unchallenged, they come to be primary assumptions of organizational members about what is right and good. The values that are referred to most frequently and emphasized with the greatest intensity become the basic assumptions of the organization, and as such structure members' views of the world in which the

organization exists. Thus, the deep structure of organizational culture is created by members' increasing confidence in the values derived from those initial, often arbitrary, decisions about how to behave in the process of achieving explicit goals. Over time, alternatives are inconceivable. At this point the organization is described as mature. Its culture is frozen (Schein, 1992).

The role of values in the everyday functioning of organizations must be examined. Values are standards of preference for selecting between actions based on cognitive, affective, and directional criteria (Williams, 1979; Schein, 1992). Values are touchstones for those who wish to demonstrate their understanding of the organization's history and their commitment to its purposes. To use Williams' (1979) phrase, values are judgments about what *should be*, built upon the framework of what *is*. However, to take values one by one is to ignore their most important attribute: They are relative for any one person or other unit, and so some values are more important than others. Value *systems* must be examined in order to get at the differences between organizations, individuals, or cultures. Therefore, the effect of any one value on behavior is mediated by the place of the value in an organization member's value hierarchy (Rokeach, 1979) and their perception of the degree to which the value is truly relevant to a specific situation.

The idea of a value hierarchy is an important one, but it is not a sufficient definition for a culture. Rokeach (1973) claims that two types of values exist, terminal and instrumental. Terminal values are a desired end-state, whereas instrumental values are the accepted means of working towards that end-state. However, Rokeach errs in separating the two types into separate hierarchies. If instrumental values are important because they provide a standard for judging one's pursuit of terminal values, they should not be separated in measurement. Instrumental values may have varying import for different terminal values. For example, the instrumental value of ambition might be seen as more important when applied to the terminal value of happiness than to the terminal value of salvation, regardless of the terminal value's relative importance in the individual's

hierarchy. The implication for measurement is that Rokeach's (1973) one dimensional, parallel hierarchies cannot represent the complexity of organizational cultures, where different terminal and instrumental value combinations are simultaneously held by members with different organizational roles and responsibilities. Terminal and instrumental values must be measured conditionally in order to present a valid picture of the organizational culture.

Selection into Organizations

Values and basic assumptions are the foundation for socialization into an organization. The mission of leadership is to promote a vision, which serves as a standard for doing things and evaluating outcomes of one's actions (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Leadership is an everyday phenomenon, not an exceptional one; if it is less obvious in the day to day functioning of the organization, it is no less important. Members need to be similar in outlook for the organization to succeed in its chosen purpose.[1] Leaders are responsible for promoting the "cultural paradigm" under which all members are expected to operate. The messages of the leadership socialize new members implicitly more than explicitly via a slow imprinting of the organizational perspective upon their behaviors and judgments. The attitudes and behaviors that are learned by new members are grounded in the organization's values and basic assumptions. In learning them, new members begin to internalize the evaluative standards they need to operate as full-fledged members of the organization. Socialization involves both (1) persuading the organization's new members to adopt the culture as part of the process of committing themselves to the organization

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[1] Note that different types of organizations strive for different kinds of success in their respective environments.

and its mission, and (2) repeatedly reinforcing the culture through explicit appeals to the decisions of those members who have already accepted them.

It is important to note that culture is not a one-way street from leaders to members. As new members enter the organization, they bring different past experiences and motivations for action. Those who bring new and relevant past experiences and are motivated to attempt change will be innovators within the organization. They impact its culture (Weick, 1979; Jones, 1986). However, their success will depend as much on the way in which they are socialized as it will on the attributes they bring. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose six dimensions for socialization, and suggest that different patterns will result in different orientations towards change. There are three possible innovation role orientations, according to these authors. First, the member could be a custodian, one who wants only to preserve things the way they are at present. Second, the member could be a content innovator, one who always tries to do his or her job better by attempting new strategies and tools. Last, the member could be a role innovator, who attempts to redefine what his or her purpose within the organization is at every turn. A role innovator is a paradigm-breaker, someone who has been encouraged to challenge assumptions in every aspect of organizational life as part of his or her organizational role identity. Individual differences such as those noted above will interact with the socialization pattern to determine which end of the continuum the new member gravitates toward. The innovator orientations are generally more desirable, but the role innovator is both rarer and less predictable; in an industry where predictability is necessary for success, role innovators are distinctly unwelcome, and for good reason. Thus, it is important for organizations to select the right kind of people as new members and encourage them correctly to fit them into the existing structure.

As time passes, organizational cultures may grow stronger and more complex. The paradigm that grew out of initial interactions is strengthened by communication and familiarity, to the point where it is unquestioned. Schneider (1987) explains this process

through what he calls the Attraction-Selection-Attrition cycle, by which members learn about, join, and leave an organization. According to Schneider (1987), the people in an organization define the context, and so analysis should focus on the differences between groups and the similarities within them. *Attraction* involves people learning about the organization and being attracted to it to the extent they perceive it as embodying the values they themselves hold. That is, their paradigm is already quite similar to the organization's culture. *Selection* concerns the organization's choice of new members from those applicants who appear most similar in perspective and goals to the organization. If the new member's paradigm is seen as capable of adjusting to the culture by the organization's gatekeepers, the member is welcomed. *Attrition* suggests that new members who fail to accept and internalize the paradigm will remain peripheral members at best, and will most likely leave the organization quickly and with little fanfare, driven out by the dissonance that arises from working in an environment in which they do not accept the fundamental rules for seeing, interpreting, and judging the world.

The Importance of Value Systems

Before delving deeper into the nature and types of value systems that exist in organizations, the relationship between individual value hierarchies (a psychological concept) and organizational value systems (a sociological concept) must be described. Rokeach (1979) argues that values are just as powerful sociologically as they are psychologically:

> It is thus conjectured that the parallelism between societal and individual goals leads to a parallelism between societal and individual values, and consequently that the universe of discourse will turn out to be the same, with the same array of ultimate goals and the means for achieving them meaningful [sic] when attempting to identify, describe, or measure both institutional and individual values. (Rokeach, 1979: 51)

We use the language of goals and values at all levels of human existence. Rokeach (1979) claims that this allows us to draw connections between levels that can explain the relationships of individuals to organizations. In a study of the institutional values of scientists, Rokeach (1979) found that the best indicators of an institution's values were the value system attributed to the institution by its gatekeepers and the personal values of the gatekeepers themselves.[2] These findings support the image of socialization that is proposed here and suggest a method for inferring organization level variables from individual level data.

In assessing types of organizational value systems, we must take into account the environment in which the organization operates. Gordon (1991) argues that companies are founded on industry-based assumptions about customers, competitors, and society, and these elements are the boundary conditions for managers' construction of strategies and structures when the organization is just beginning. In short, the environmental conditions at the time of the organization's founding are incorporated into the organization's basic assumptions. Gordon (1991) argues that this is necessary but not definitive; the organizations within a particular industry will have very different cultures, but all will have to incorporate some basic principles if they are to survive and grow. Cultures do not exist in defiance of reality, they exist in order to explain and operate within it. A culture that assumes the environment is noncompetitive when it is very competitive, or that customers want reliability when in truth they want novelty, will not survive. Thus, the specific characteristics of the industry at the time of the organization's founding will help shape its original values and basic assumptions.

The value system in a specific organization will be shaped by several factors. First, the environment will require that the organization hold particular values concerning

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[2] The worst indicator was the personal values of future gatekeepers currently in training; i.e. graduate students in the physical sciences (Rokeach 1979).

competitiveness, customer/constituent requirements, and societal expectations in order to be successful (Gordon, 1991). Second, the history of the organization within the environment will affect the content and order of the value system. Prior crises that called some values to the fore and relegated others to insignificance will be remembered, and the conditions under which some values hold and others do not will be widely known if not explicitly stated. Third, the origin of values - from crisis, habit, or charismatic leader - will define the conditions under which that value is thought to hold sway (Wiener, 1988). For example, a value of cooperation learned through crisis might not be seen as applicable under normal conditions, whereas a value of cooperation promoted by a highly regarded leader might well be a rule of interaction. In times of crisis, however, the place of cooperation in the value hierarchy might be higher in the first organization than in the second. As noted previously, Rokeach's unidimensional value hierarchies cannot accommodate this fact. Both individuals and systems depend on innumerable contingencies, which Rokeach's (1973) theory cannot accurately address. Thus, organizational value systems should be seen as clusters, with basic assumptions about end states and the desirable routes to those end states at their center and the values that have developed for application to specific situations orbiting them in patterns developed and ingrained over time.[3] This loose construction of cultures allows for evolutionary but not revolutionary change, as the nature of the change it permits is constrained by the order and content of the value systems themselves.

The development of a culture is identical to the development of a paradigm as described by Kuhn (1970). Cultures arise in order to provide a framework for asking questions and testing viable alternatives until a definitive answer is discovered, proved,

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[3] This development parallels that of normal science (Kuhn, 1970): The longer a paradigm is used, the more assistance it offers to members striving to meet the goals of the community.

and replicated. The organization is initially created with certain overriding goals; in order to answer them, a set of principles for operation are created. Some will be explicit, like the organization's rules for standard operation. Others will be implied, such as definitions for basic components of the organizational environment that automatically preclude certain other alternatives from being worthy of testing. Gersick's (1991) punctuated equilibrium model encompasses both these conceptualizations. Under her model, the deep structure defines the process of evolution (organization's day-to-day operations) and revolution (organization's reactions to crisis). The following sections will address each of these processes in turn. First, the process of evolutionary change will be described, focusing on how it grows more complex without ever becoming complete. Second, the means by which revolutions come about will be evaluated, and the factors by which it is shaped defined. Once these processes have been adequately described and their relation to the deep structure of an organization explicated, the questions that researchers should ask about an organization will be clear.

Maintaining the Status Quo

The Incommensurability of Cultures

Cultural change occurs on two levels. On the first, the change is merely an extension of the same basic principles to cover greater ground, and the shifting around of values within their clusters as perceptions of the situation change. The second change involves the replacement of one set of basic assumptions with another; this change is always resisted by the culture and its members. Bartunek and Moch (1987) refers to the first sort as first order change and the second as second order change. In order for first order change to be successful, members must be content innovators (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), willing to adjust their behavior to improve their work. Second order

change requires leadership by role innovators, people who recognize the limits of one culture and devise another to replace the inadequate one. The equilibrium cycle that follows will not be kind to role innovators who continue to introduce uncertainty into the organization when it is not seen as necessary.

Bartunek and Moch (1987) also describe third order change, which is the development of a capacity within the system to change the culture as events require. The resulting organization is equivalent to Weick's (1977) concept of a self-designing organization, where the system includes the capacity to change itself. Organizational capacities for self-design are described in terms of the importance they place on innovation and change. If the entire organization is comprised of role innovators, then the organization is capable of self-design, of continual adjustment. As Bartunek and Moch state, "third-order change attempts aim to help organizational members develop the capacity to identify and change their own schemata as they see fit" (Bartunek and Moch, 1987: 487). This scenario is rare, as the majority of people desire more stability than a self-designing organization can offer. Without socializing members to be role innovators, third order change is not possible because the existing cultural values are incommensurable with the vision introduced to replace them.

The major source of the difficulty in second and third order organizational change lies in the incommensurability of cultures, a condition essential to the effectiveness of the existing culture. Incommensurability means that any two cultures have non-identical standards for judgement; thus, it is impossible to "prove" one inferior to the other in direct comparison, as neither one recognizes the legitimacy of the other's standard (Kuhn, 1970: 97-98). Without this condition, cultures would not grow stronger with time and use, and would not provide the level of assistance that its members take for granted in their work.

Given a sophisticated culture appropriate to the organizational environment, both the organization and its members can achieve great things. Because cultures rule out irrelevant facts at the level of individual interpretation, they help specify the attributes of

the phenomena of interest to allow an investigation of otherwise impossible depth and sophistication (Kuhn, 1970: 24). In addition, they shield their members from an awareness of difficulties and problems not amenable to interpretation under the culture:

> A [cultural] paradigm can, for that matter, even insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the [cultural] paradigm supplies. (Kuhn, 1970: 37)

This is at once a great help and a crucial vulnerability: While freedom from having to worry about large sections of existence is an immense boon, failure to acknowledge these problems as relevant can lead to an inability to adapt when the environment external to the organization and its culture changes. Because they are so useful, cultures are never rejected unless there is another ready to take its place (Kuhn, 1970). Until that time, the benefits of the current paradigm are so great that its limitation of vision goes unrecognized and unmourned.

Cognitive Consistency and Cultural Commitment

Festinger's theory of cognitive consistency (as described in O'Keefe, 1990) provides an excellent rationale for why organization members are often adamant in their refusals to consider any level of cultural change. Cognitive consistency is defined as, "the idea that persons seek to maximize the internal psychological consistency of their cognitions (beliefs, attitudes, and so on)." (O'Keefe, 1990: 61) Thus, cognitive consistency theory is concerned with the balance between mutually relevant beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and values. The other side of this, dissonance, occurs when people experience an imbalance among these cognitions. The theory predicts that when people experience dissonance, they will be motivated to reduce it by one of two means: Either they will attempt to reduce the number of dissonant cognitions, or they will devalue some important cognitions and increase the relative value of others. In the context of changing

a culture, consistency with the original culture will be an unspoken value, and all the specific benefits of retaining the original culture will contrast favorably with the unknown advantage of accepting a change (Kuhn, 1970). Thus, first order change will be far easier than second or third order change. Without faith in the leadership and a careful construction of messages to emphasize continuity on at least some terminal values (i.e. only suggesting first order change explicitly), cognitive consistency theory predicts that members' easiest route to eliminating dissonance will be to ignore the new messages, devalue them, or interpret them as reaffirming the values they already hold. Thus, in order to create value change, the source must shift the burden for easing dissonance onto the old terminal values. At this point, the exact nature of members' commitment to the organization will become crucial in determining their response:

> What one must understand, however, is the manner in which a particular set of shared values interacts with the particular experiences shared by a community of specialists to ensure that most members of the group will ultimately find one set of arguments rather than another decisive. (Kuhn, 1970: 200)

The Attraction - Selection - Attrition model (Schneider, 1987) explains how the members can be jarred into dissonance by the announcement of change. Members originally come to an organization because they believe its perspective complements their own, and are selected to the degree that this is so. Rokeach and Grube (1979) state that members need to organize their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors so that they will enhance their self-conceptions as moral and competent human beings. Thus, members with long tenure will be very selective about accepting proposed value changes because they imply that the members were previously in error. While self-dissatisfaction could lead to value change for those members who feel that the change is due to something they did wrong (Rokeach and Grube, 1979), messages that explicitly state that what was done before was wrong risk alienating their audience, who joined the organization in part due to just that

perspective. Thus, a member's attendance to a message from the organization will be determined by her or his acceptance of the cultural paradigm.

Identification

Members' identification with the organization or a subgroup is an additional source of stability within an organization. Cheney (1983) states, " A person identifies with a unit when, in making a decision, the person in one or more of his/her organizational roles perceives that unit's values or interests as relevant in evaluating the alternatives of choice." Ashforth and Mael (1989) speak of social identification as the perception of oneness with the organization, and label it a perceptual construct distinct from the internalization of values and beliefs. When faced with messages advocating value change, the degree to which a member feels part of the organization - regardless of actual value similarity - will be a strong predictor of whether the member attends to the message's content or simply ignores its import as having no relevance to the situation. A member with a strong sense of identification will attend to all messages, and therefore will be likely to encounter some dissonance when faced with cultural change messages. A member with little sense of identification with the organization will likely fail to attend to the message's implications, hearing the words but failing to see the meaning they hold for her or his own behavior.[4]

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[4] In this case, the member is not committed to the paradigm, and so the message is neither dissonance-inducing or particularly relevant. Should the message become relevant, the member will have an easier time evaluating it on its own merits. However, making the message relevant will require a very different strategy than inducing dissonance.

Summary

Organizational cultures remain stable for three reasons. First, the incommensurability of cultures ensures that change will not be undertaken lightly, as second and third order changes require members to reject one culture for another despite the socialization they have had under the existing culture. Second, the ways in which cultures structure members' experiences prevent them from accepting arguments for change until the burden of dissonance can be eased onto the existing culture; the particular values in the original culture will mediate this process. Last, the Attraction - Selection - Attrition cycle leads to strong identification by members that will likely result in dissonance, but also allows members to ignore messages when they have weak identification with the organization, thus preserving the status quo. These three factors illustrate the processes by which organizational members can deny or downplay the need for change. The next step must be to recognize the processes and conditions under which change messages will be interpreted as relevant and directly meaningful by members.

The Forces of Change

> Doing what you have always done is necessary in short-term adaptations. Doing what you have never done is necessary in longer-term adaptations, and both need to be done simultaneously. (Weick, 1977: 42)

Models of Environmental Change

There are two major theories about how cultural change occurs. First, many researchers speak of cultural change as involving the unfreezing of the old culture, the cognitive restructuring of its values and behaviors, and the refreezing of the new culture.

The old culture must be disconfirmed: A need for change must be recognized by all members, and that disconfirmation must be connected to the members' behaviors and values under the old culture in a way that causes anxiety and/or guilt. In the end, the new solution must provide psychological safety to the members of the organization by demonstrating successful resolution of the problem without the sacrifice of their identity with the organization (Schein, 1992). The difficulty in unfreezing a culture increases with the age and prominence of the organization. A mature organization must face either massive infusions of new blood or a total reorganization process such as that brought on by merger or bankruptcy to cause its old culture to unfreeze (Schein, 1992).

On the other hand, other researchers argue that the creation of ambiguity in the members of the organization can arouse an atmosphere of change. There are four stages to this process: *Envisioning*, where the leaders develop a new vision to address current problems; *signaling*, when the change campaign is announced to the members of the organization; *re-visioning*, where the messages of the leadership are evaluated and responses sent; and *energizing*, when feedback is interpreted by the leaders and the first substantive change activities occur (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). The last two parts of the process are repeated many times, as the new culture is negotiated between the leadership and the members of the organization. The major difference between the unfreezing and ambiguity-inducing theories is in the required severity of the need for change. Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) claim that while a crisis provides a compelling reason, it is the careful management of the aroused ambiguity that encourages a resolution in line with the paradigm advocated by the organizational leadership. Schein (1992) argues that a crisis is necessary for members to overcome the dissonance of rejecting their paradigm and make the required adjustment in their values and behaviors. Neither of these formulations is adequate by itself. Kuhn (1970) notes that while the process of revolutionary change is gradually negotiated at a community level, the shift is a sudden

event for each member. Thus the elements must be combined in a model that addresses both the organizational level and the individual level of acceptance of the vision.

Bartunek (1988) proposes a four stage model of individual member reframing that can encompass the various elements that are essential to an understanding of the cultural change process at both levels. While her stages are similar to Schein's (1992), they are not as rigid or linear, instead leaving room for feedback between members and leaders that lead to a negotiation of the new frame via Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) cycle of sense-making and sense-giving. Bartunek's (1988) four stages are: Unfreezing, preparation, frame generation, and testing. During the *unfreezing* stage, the member perceives a need for change. The strength of this perception depends on three factors, each with an intervening variable: (1) The messages sent from leaders, modified by the member's perception of the leaders; (2) the messages sent by coworkers, modified by the member's perceptions of his/her coworkers; and (3) perceptions of the environment, modified by existing values. The *preparation* stage involves the member's preparation to collect information that will be used to develop new understandings, and eventually a new paradigm. At this stage, there are two variables: (1) The strategic ambiguity of leaders' messages and (2) the member's perceptions of the environment. Once again, existing values act as an intervening variable to modify the effects of the main variables. The *frame generation* stage involves the generation of a new frame, or cultural paradigm, to replace the one that has been called into doubt. The major factor here is the dissonance aroused by the contrast between existing values and the new values proposed in leaders' messages. The final stage, *testing*, involves applying the new frame against the current environment. These four stages encompass all the elements discussed so far, and provide a useful framework for the elaboration of theory and the proposal of a methodology for studying an organization's cultural revolution, one member at a time.

Shifting the Burden of Dissonance

The situational requirements for making change messages relevant to organizational members are different at each stage. First, in order to successfully unfreeze a member's cultural commitment, the change must be readily perceivable as different from the organization's existing values and basic assumptions. If the members do not see the change as one involving fundamentals, the change they make will merely address surface issues, keeping the same structure while altering its facade.[5] That is, a second order change will be enacted as a first order change. Second, unfreezing also requires the connection of the member's current behaviors to the reasons for change. It will be nearly impossible to justify changes in what members do if none of their behaviors are responsible for bringing about the current crisis. Whoever has created the problem will be expected to fix it, and so as many members as possible must be implicated in the need for change. This parallels Kuhn's (1970) point that the original paradigm (i.e. culture) causes the crisis by not being able to answer all the questions its holders want it to solve, and that this inability to move forward is a central motivator in many scientists' conversion to a new paradigm . Third, in collecting information to create a viable new frame, there should be a readily perceivable environmental change in either values or assumptions. Gordon (1991) states that changes in the industry environment reverberate through organizational structures to call into question the value systems on which they are founded. Thus, a change in the important attributes of the environment is the most direct route to calling an existing culture into question. Finally, when it comes time to test the new culture, there must be a good match between the new organizational values and the requirements of the

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[5] Note that this is one of the three outcomes Kuhn (1970: 84) lists for a crisis: Avoiding fundamental change by finding a way to resolve the problem facing it under the rules of the existing paradigm.

environment. If not, the culture will fail the test, and the member will be thrown back into a state of confusion, likely re-embracing the old culture for the lack of a recognizably superior option.

Syllogistic Argument and Strategic Ambiguity

In order to cause cultural change, organizational members must be led to confront inconsistencies between their actions and values and the goals they wish to achieve, both individually and for the organization. Williams (1979) states that values operate as motivations for specific definitions of appropriate goal objects, but they only influence behavior when a cognitive link between the specific situation and the norms governing appropriate and/or mandated behavior activates them. This makes changing values extremely difficult. When a receiver rates a given value very highly, and that value is perceived to be highly congruent with other values in the cultural system to which the receiver belongs, the resistance to change in that value will be at its highest point. If the values in the change message have an opposite direction from members' highly salient values as a member of the organization, then the change message will not be attended to, and therefore change will not occur. Thus, in order to work around this problem of cognitive consistency, there must be multiple paths to the eventual conclusion.

The accepted definitions of what values are relevant to which issue will shape the responses of members to change messages. The value clusters accepted by members of the organization will structure their thinking about what messages are important and how they are to be evaluated. However, while values cannot be manipulated directly, members' perceptions of which values are important to a given situation can be influenced through the conjunction of values accepted by members with the values that the sender wants members to apply to the issue at hand as a justification for a particular course of action. Rokeach and Grube (1979) describe the process of value change as involving an attempt

to increase the self-awareness of the receivers about the contradiction between their values and the values of important reference groups. This strategy involves motivating members through a change in needs and/or perception of societal goals and demands:

> the extent to which individuals will remain satisfied or become dissatisfied with themselves will depend on the extent to which they perceive themselves as conforming to the unidirectional demands of the social groups with which they most identify. (Rokeach and Grube, 1979: 242)

This strategy of value re-education is required by the need for cognitive consistency between one's self-conception and one's values and beliefs. To achieve a change in culture, organizations must preserve the member's identification with the organization while altering the basis on which that identification is built. The route to success involves the use of Eisenberg's (1984) concept of strategic ambiguity.

Strategic ambiguity[6] is the use of indirection to accomplish goals. Eisenberg (1984: 231) states that, "Ambiguity is used strategically to foster agreement on abstractions without limiting specific interpretations." Thus, strategic ambiguity can be operationalized as the number of potential justifications (value premises) for accepting a belief as true that a member can draw from a message. The relationships between values is best expressed by Cheney and Frenette's (1993) three-tiered taxonomy of rhetorical messages. Their first concern is with values, which can be further specified as either instrumental values, justifications for particular courses of action, or terminal values, the desirable end-states that result from those courses of action. Second are logics, which are defined as strategies indicating which interests of the organization should be pursued. Logics are links between individual and collective aims; they operate as meta-values, superordinate value premises around which other values cluster. As such, they are identical to the basic assumptions of Schein (1992). Third are accounts, which are the reasons given for choices made. Accounts are lengthy statements of interrelated thought-

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[6] This is distinct from Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) ambiguity by design, which is a receiver characteristic.

units, from which value premises may be derived. The choices can be for prior, present, or future actions; the reasons being discussed are often thought to be defensive, but this does not have to be the case. When several values clustered around one central value, the central value is assumed to be a logic of the organization. Given this taxonomy, researchers can draw out the rhetorical syllogisms used by rhetors to persuade organizational members and assess the extent and type of strategic ambiguity being used. In the same way, responses to such messages can be compared directly to the syllogistic arguments to evaluate the efficacy of the messages in getting the target to apply new values as desired.

The appropriate method for analyzing values and strategic ambiguity is cluster analysis.[7] What Cheney and Frenette (1993) label as logics are identical to the key terms which ground cluster analytic interpretations of texts (Foss, 1989). Values are found to cluster around these key terms within the framework of accounts; the patterns of clustering within those accounts can serve as an indicator of strategic ambiguity. Therefore, in changing an organizational culture, the leader introduces new values into existing value clusters and uses new and old values in concert to justify preferred actions and beliefs. This connection between the new value and all the instrumental values gives members an alternative structure for the same values they already hold. In this way, members become familiar with the elements of the vision as well as the existing culture. If the leaders can demonstrate how the new terminal value leads to greater success in answering key questions that members ask, the members will be able to start seeing the world through the new vision. If the leader cannot bring members to recognize the alternative vision as an alternative route to fulfilling the same terminal values, the change effort will certainly fail.

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[7] The rhetorical, not statistical variety (see Foss, 1989).

Summary

In conclusion, the model for cultural change depends on the nature of the values in dispute and the leaders' rhetorical use of strategic ambiguity to arouse dissonance among members that can be resolved through the adoption of the vision as the new culture. By incorporating the elements of the new vision into all clusters of accepted values, the leaders will be able to shift the burden of dissonance onto the old culture by associating past acts with present problems. Once the members are primed to see the world through the new structure of value clusters, improving the successful functioning of the organization via the new vision becomes possible. However, leaders must pay close attention to the values in operation among the members of the organization and be very careful to construct messages that shift the burden of dissonance from the need for change to the values and behaviors that were responsible for causing and emphasizing the need for change. Failure to properly appreciate the way in which members see the world will lead to negative results, both for the leaders advocating a change and for the researchers attempting to explain what went wrong.

Research Questions

The following research questions are extensions of the points made in the preceding literature review. First, it has been argued that different environmental conditions will lead to different values being required for organizational effectiveness. This should be reflected in the change in organizational value clusters over time to accommodate the changing environment.

RQ1: How do the value clusters of the CES/MSUE differ across historical eras?

Second, value clusters become reinforced by repeated communications over time. Thus, the historical patterns of values should be expected to influence the current culture and the vision that has been put forward as a new culture. However, the program areas of MSUE have very different environments. Whereas Agriculture faces a dwindling constituency, CYF has more and more program options available. While Agriculture has historically been the most important (and therefore, best funded) division, CYF has been marginalized and seen as a secondary area of concern. Agriculture's production focus allows its agents to often apply known scientific solutions to acute problems. This is in contrast to CYF's focus on improving the lives of members of society, a mission that requires continuous involvement and mutual commitment from agent and constituent. The values that arise out of such different experiences are unlikely to be the same. Over time, the particular responsibilities of each program area lead to the development and reinforcement of organizational systems that are specialized to meet the precise needs of the different program areas. But the greater the focus, the less potential for generalizability exists. This sets up the second research question:

RQ2: How do the value clusters of MSUE differ across the formal mission statements of the program areas?

Just as organizational value structures are reified over time, so too are the value clusters of individual agents. The length of time in which agents have become accustomed to their program area's roles and responsibilities reinforces the particular lens they apply to their work. Given the identification that has taken place to keep them as members of the organization, their particular concerns color their view of the organizational world as a whole. As noted above, the task characteristics of MSUE agents across program areas are very different. The greater the familiarity with a particular task, the more set the solutions and methods of evaluation become. This suggests that agents with different experiences hold different values and thus evaluate messages in different ways. Some options will be less acceptable than others based on the agent's level of familiarity and prior experience with them. Thus, the third research question focuses on agents within program areas:

RQ3: How do the value clusters of MSUE agents differ across the program areas?

Fourth, the section on cultural paradigms suggests that what an agent does on an everyday basis will shape his or her perceptions of what is required to be successful in Extension. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are considerable differences between the perspectives of on-campus leaders and members of Extension in the field (i.e., county based agents). The sense-making process always develops in unexpected ways; how field agents react to leadership messages is a key area of study if our concern is to evaluate the effectiveness of the leaders' change initiative. The fourth research question is:

RQ4: Are the value clusters promoted by MSUE leaders similar to those found in the discourse of MSUE field agents?

CHAPTER THREE

INVESTIGATING MSUE'S CAMPAIGN AND ITS EFFECTS

Research Questions

1. How do the value clusters of the CES/MSUE differ across historical eras?
2. How do the value clusters of MSUE differ across the formal mission statements of the program areas?
3. How do the value clusters of MSUE agents differ across the program areas?
4. Are the value clusters promoted by MSUE leaders similar to those found in the discourse of MSUE field agents?

Data Sources and Analysis

In assessing the value premises articulated by leaders and those of MSUE agents, three sources of data were used. The messages containing new organizational value premises was operationalized as (1) overheads from a speech given by the Extension Director at the annual Extension School held on campus at Michigan State University in 1992, and (2) the 1993 publications describing the specific missions of MSUE's three program areas. Second, a variety of historical Extension documents from 1948 to 1983 were analyzed for value clusters in order to identify the historical roots of the current culture and the new vision. This survey of value clusters at multiple time points before the 1990s will provide a useful comparison of key terms and value clusters both historically and currently within MSUE. Third, interviews with 17 Extension agents from around Michigan and across program areas were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis of value clusters in relation to each agent's personal history, location, and program responsibilities. This data was then compared to the value clusters identified from the

statements of the vision and the historical documents to answer the research questions noted above.

The historical and vision documents are important for two reasons. First, they are formal statements of the organization's mission and challenges. Thus, they define the organizationally sanctioned view of MSUE's purpose and acceptable reasons for particular actions and policies. Second, they are concerned with all levels of Extension, from the federal to the program areas of MSUE. Because these messages are specifically aimed at Extension agents (either nationally or within the state), they are relevant to the internal functioning of the organization. While the diversity of Extension audiences addressed by the historical documents may limit comparability of the documents themselves, it provides a broader picture of the overall cultural environment of Extension. This lack of focus is compensated by the vision statements, which have an audience of nearly all current MSUE personnel, who are expected to attend the annual conference, participate in its events, and read the mission statement for both their program area and for MSUE. Thus, these nonreactive sources provide the basic materials of part of the ongoing socialization process within the organization. In sum, these documents represent a universal, formal targeted message for the members of Extension. This message, more than any other, represents the organizational leadership's position in the continuing negotiation of MSUE's culture.

Interviews offer the researcher rich data in dialogue form. By providing a non-evaluative, confidential channel for agents to voice concerns and champion ideals, the use and evaluation of organizationally sanctioned values can be tapped in a directed manner. By framing the data collection as a personal interview, detailed representative samples of individual member's side of the cultural negotiation can be elicited and recorded for comparison with the recommended values and behaviors drawn out of the formal organizational documents. The questions asked were of three varieties: (1) the agent's personal experiences and responsibilities as an Extension agent; (2) their interactions with

and evaluations of the larger Extension organization, focusing on the county and regional levels; and (3) their perceptions of state-wide Extension and its relation to the university. Analysis of value clusters was intended to answer questions about: (1) the agents' perceived need for change within the organization; (2) the terminal values used to justify or reject recommended actions; (3) the instrumental values held in common by members of a particular organizational division; (4) acceptable definitions of outreach; and (5) the preservation of historical value clusters by current agents. These questions and appropriate probes structured the interviews around the values that define MSUE's culture for its members.

Data Collection Strategy for Documents

Published documents and extensive presentation notes authored by national and state Extension leaders were collected and analyzed for value clusters relating to the mission of Extension. Historical documents covered the time period from 1948 to 1983, while the vision statements were all produced in either 1992 or 1993. The data from the decades before will provide a time series analysis of leadership values which can be contrasted with those emphasized after the arrival of the new Extension Director in July of 1991.

Data Collection Strategy for Interviews

The initial data collection strategy was organized around focus groups held in each of the six regions of the state. A list of research questions and focus group questions was developed and submitted to both an Extension specialist and to the Director of the CYF program area, Dr. Leah Cox Hoopfer. Their insightful comments led to a revision of the focus group questions that was more specific in wording and generalizable across

Extension. Sampling, however, was unsuccessful. Initially, Regional Extension Directors (REDs) were contacted and asked to aid in the recruitment of agents for focus groups. Packets of recruitment letters and research consent forms were sent out to those regional directors who returned telephone calls and electronic mail. This strategy was completely ineffective. Two of the Regional Directors were inaccessible; one did not return my telephone calls, the other had a non-operative telephone number and never answered electronic mail messages. Of the other four, two passed my request for assistance to assistant directors or regional program leaders, who were very difficult to contact. A total of six agents were interested in focus group participation, two in each of three regions.

Several reasons for the low response rate became clear. First, official channels took too much time and were disregarded by field agents, whose concerns are centered in their counties. Second, requiring agents to travel long distances to spend an hour and a half in a focus group was unrealistic. The option of scheduling the focus groups to coincide with a regional meeting was rejected because of the difficulty in finding a time that worked for me and a desire to not interfere with the officially scheduled programming. Third, negotiating a time with eight agents with different schedules proved too difficult a task.

Having failed to devise an effective means of bringing agents together to discuss the change initiative and how it related to their jobs, I resolved to take my data collection to the county offices and perform individual interviews with agents. This overcame several problems. First, the agent no longer needed to travel, leaving him or her free to work immediately before and after the interview. Second, the agent only needed to coordinate his or her schedule with one person. To make their decision easier, I purposefully scheduled blocks of days for data collection, maximizing my own flexibility. Third, I contacted each agent directly by telephone, clearly stating the purpose of my study, the time commitment required, and the nature of the questions that I would ask.

While several agents did not return my calls, every agent who spoke with me agreed to an interview. The list of contacts was developed by selecting names from the 1993-1994 Faculty and Staff Directory for Michigan State University, based on agents' county and program area affiliations.

Interviews were held at locations convenient to the members of MSUE. Fifteen were in agent's county offices, and two in my office on campus. The topical population of interest included Children, Youth, and Family Agents, and Agriculture Agents. Six Children, Youth and Family agents, eight Agriculture agents, and three County Extension Directors with extensive programming responsibilities were interviewed. One County Extension Director had previously been a Home Economist, another was originally 4-H, and the third was hired directly into the position with a background in industrial Agriculture. All six regions of the state were represented. The sample included seven female and ten male agents. One female was an Agriculture agent, and one male was a CYF agent. One female County Extension Director and two male County Extension Directors were included. There was one African-American in the sample; no other agent appeared to be a minority. Six agents had been with Extension for either three or four years, another six had a tenure of six to 10 years and the last five had been in Extension for more than 20 years apiece, with a grand total of 120 years of Extension experience between them. These demographics are representative of Extension as whole. Thus, the sample permits a comparison of program area responses, both separately and in comparison with the other major program area.[1]

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[1] As there are only three Community Economic Development agents in MSUE, that division was left out of the analysis. Three agents, separated geographically, is not a sufficient number for a subculture to develop, and so their perspectives are not relevant to the divisional analysis. The odds of their inclusion in a random sample are small enough to merit their exclusion from the focus groups.

There were three reasons for limiting the sample to CYF and Agriculture agents. The most important one is that these two groups represent the most distinct subcultures within MSUE. Agriculture has a long tradition and many agents in positions of power. Its agents will be the least benefitted by any change, and so are a high priority audience for the vision. CYF is a new creation, but one with the Director's ear and a plan that closely mirrors the direction expressed in the MSUE vision. Thus, these two program areas represent polar opposites within MSUE, and so are the best choices for a study of cultural change. Second, CYF was the explicit focus of the larger research project of which this thesis is a part. Third, CYF and Agriculture are the major players in the cultural debate. The other program areas have less of a voice and less at stake. Community and Economic Development agents are few in number and part of the newest program area. Their subculture is likely to be less well developed than those of CYF and Agriculture, and with only handful of agents spread around the state, they are unlikely to pull together as a unit. Natural Resources was excluded because they represent a relatively small proportion of ANR agents and are likely to be similar though less extreme than Agriculture agents in their opinions. Most importantly, they would have added an additional dimension to an analysis already bursting at the seams. They were excluded because there was not a compelling reason to include them.

Interviews lasted an average of one hour, with the shortest being 40 minutes and the longest nearly two hours. Agent selection was based on location and program area, with the goal being a representative balance of counties and program areas. Participants were asked to provide opinions and justifications on a number of issues related to their work as Extension agents. The interviews were tape-recorded and converted into transcripts for analysis. The value clusters identified from the transcripts were coded like the values derived from the rhetorical analysis of Extension documents to allow for comparison and determine where the rhetoric of leaders has failed and where it has succeeded in becoming part of the organization's culture.

Value Analysis Procedures

The procedures for the value analysis were derived from the chapter on cluster analysis in Foss (1989), with some ideas drawn from Cheney and Frenette (1993). The unit of analysis was the particular document or individual transcript. Four documents relating to the current vision, five historical documents, and 17 transcripts were analyzed using this method. In cluster analysis, there are four steps (Foss, 1989). First, the key terms must be identified. Published documents were read for recurring values in primary locations, such as chapter headings, summaries, and conclusions. Interviews were first coded for accounts, then those accounts were read for important values. Up to five key terms were identified for each document, with the exact number being based on the length of the document and the narrowness of its focus. Second, clusters of other values were identified by reading through the documents and identifying subpoints that used other values in describing or justifying the application of the key term. Third, patterns of linkages were identified by listing the context in which the clustering values occurred with the key term. Last, the motive behind these linkages was determined by comparing clusters across time to note the inclusion of new value linkages within the same contexts as existing linkages. This served as the operationalization of strategic ambiguity.

Value Documentation

Before proceeding to the rhetorical analysis, several notes about values and how they are documented are necessary. First, values are underlined in the text for clearer identification by the reader and to demonstrate how the value clusters are constructed. Second, values are operationally defined as any terms that are used as either an instrumental justification (i.e. the value is important because it leads to a desirable end) or as a terminal rationale (i.e. the value is a desirable end in itself). These definitions are

based on Rokeach's (1973) theory of values and also draw on the definition of value premises discussed in Cheney and Frenette (1993). The distinction between instrumental and terminal values is not applied to individual values because values are often used instrumentally in one cluster and terminally in another. Thus, the distinction is highly dependent on context, where editorial notes would disturb the flow of the text.

Third, different applications of values and different value clusters alter the sense of a value to its holder. Because of this flexibility, a strict definition of each value found in the historical documents, the MSUE vision and the interviews with agents is impossible. However, a general definition of the value's sense is possible; these definitions are provided in Table 3.1. The order in which they are presented may appear haphazard at first glance, but there is an order. Values are grouped with other values for several reasons:

1. The values represent multiple levels. For example, people, community, county, and global are grouped together because they refer to the levels of focus used by Extension, program areas, and agents.
2. The values represent multiple perspectives on a set of issues. For example, focus and selectivity are related perspectives on how Extension priorities are used.
3. The values are thematically similar. For example, opportunism, futuring, and innovative technology are grouped together because they all refer to an innovative, future-oriented approach to Extension work.
4. The values are opposites. For example, generalization and specialization are two opposite approaches to agent knowledge.

By grouping the values in this way, the trends and contrasts described later should be easier for the reader to recognize.

Table 3.1

Definitions of Extension Values

Value	Definition
Education	Providing information to those without it.
Self-Learning	Helping people become able to help themselves.
Staff Learning	Agents' level of formal and informal education and expertise.
Continuous Learning or Lifelong Education	Unceasing availability of information services for those who need them, at any stage of their development.
Collaboration	Incorporating the knowledge of individual and group clients in programs.
Cooperation	Working with other organizations to utilize their resources for a common purpose.
Coordination	Internal organization of Extension and the land-grant university.
Efficacy	Achieving goals as intended.
Efficiency	Timely achievement of goals.
Excellence	Achieving the best possible result.
Equity	Balanced and just treatment or allocation.
Valuing	Judging something by an accepted standard for quality.
Formal	Officially sanctioned system within an organization.
Informal	Personal contacts and a lack of formal requirements or processes.

Table 3.1 (cont.)

Definitions of Extension Values

Value	Definition
Objective	Independent of stakeholder bias.
Research	University-generated information.
Field	Beyond the university and East Lansing, units based off campus.
Knowledge	Definitive true information.
Comprehensive	Inclusiveness of all groups and/or categories.
Diversity	Differentiated groups.
Lifecycle	Across the timeline of human development.
Unity	Common foundation for multiple themes.
Generalization	Being knowledgeable about a wide range of topics.
Specialization	Developing a specific area of expertise.
Participation	Involvement in activities.
Leadership	Responsibility for the direction of activities and/or quality of relationships.
Focus	Marking an issue as important.
Selectivity	Prioritizing in order to select between issues.
Centralization	Bringing different elements together into one location or under one title.
Decentralization	Dispersing elements to many locations or under many titles.

Table 3.1 (cont.)

Definitions of Extension Values

Value	Definition
People	Relevance of individuals.
Community	Relevance of collective group.
County	Relevance of a specific political and geographic area.
Global	Relevance of an international perspective and international issues.
Quality of Life	Desirable experiences in work and play.
Economy	Financial environment.
Competitive	Ability to be a winner in a scenario where some win and some lose.
Opportunism	Always seeing alternative options as relevant to organization.
Futuring	Making decisions with an eye to future conditions and needs.
Innovative Technology	New methods and tools.
Change	Recognition that situation is in flux, unstable.
Tradition	Relevance of past beliefs and behaviors to present.
Management	Methods devoted to controlling and allocating resources as needed.
Translation	Communicating information in a way that accurately depicts content in language the receiver understands.
Customer-Driven	Attending to the needs of clients.
Accessibility	Ability to acquire information or assistance as needed.
Interdisciplinary	Working with other academic disciplines.
Multidisciplinary	Working across academic disciplines.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE VALUES FOUNDATION OF EXTENSION IN MICHIGAN

Since its founding in 1914, the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has experienced many changes. In studying the culture of Extension, it is important to identify the historical and rhetorical contexts in which these changes occurred. Specifying the values of interest requires an analysis of documents from various points in Extension's history to reveal which values have survived, which have perished, and which have changed their meaning within the organization's context. The timeline in Table 4.1 lists the mission statements over the history of the Michigan CES, now MSUE. This chapter addresses the values found in these documents. In light of these historical values, Chapter Five analyzes the recent vision statements to identify the important elements of the change initiative. The results of analyzing the interviews for the values applied in agents' sense-making of the change initiative are reported in Chapter Six.

The Historical Context of Extension Values

There have been periodic shifts in the priorities and definitions of the Cooperative Extension Service every 10-15 years. Documents reviewing the success of Extension work and the goals for the future follow soon after each of these critical periods, marking the shifts in emphasis and definition. This review of Extension documents begins with the 1948 national Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs Policies and Goals and concludes with Extension in the 80's (1983), also a national document. The other documents reviewed include: The 1959 Kearl and Copeland review of the national Scope Report's recommendations, the 1968 national statement A People and A Spirit, and the 1973 Michigan State University Lifelong University report. The presence of only one state-specific report may seem odd, but no dramatic "recipes for change" were articulated

for Michigan until 1973. The federal reports reflect the federal importance of the CES; state extension organizations often adopt innovations that have been promoted at the national level. Also, Michigan Extension has had a major impact on national efforts. The 1948 report was written by a committee chaired by then Michigan State President John Hannah, and the 1958 Scope Report from which Kearl and Copeland elaborate was produced by a committee chaired by the former Michigan CES Director Paul Miller. Current MSUE Director Gail Imig chairs a standing committee of the National Association for State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, which is very influential in national extension policymaking. Another key MSUE administrator, Leah Cox Hoopfer, was Director of the national 4-H program before being asked to direct MSUE's Children, Youth and Families program area. So, the Michigan organization has been and is still closely linked with the national extension service.

Table 4.1

Mission Statements across the History of Extension

Smith-Lever Act, 1914:

> (Extension is) to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same. (quoted in 1948: 6)

Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies, and Goals, 1948:

> The primary function of the Cooperative Extension Service in agriculture and home economics is education. This Nation-wide extension service is performing this function in an ever-widening range of subject matter and with the aid of an increasing number of techniques....It is important to recognize that the application of scientific developments and the adoption of more efficient production methods and practices have always contributed to the general welfare. When farmers fail to adopt improved practices, both the farmer and the general public suffer. (1)

A Guide to Extension Programs for the Future, 1959:

> One thing above all else will govern Extension's "programs for the future" - the needs of those we are privileged to serve. We know that Extension will continue to deal in education, both liberal and practical. We can be certain that it will find its major content in the research activities of the USDA and the Land-Grant system. (2)

A People and A Spirit, 1968:

> (The) Cooperative Extension Service interprets, disseminates, and encourages practical use of knowledge. It transmits information from researchers to the people. But it is also an agency for change - a catalyst for individual and group action. It conducts programs of education for action and stresses organizational and educational leadership. (17)

Table 4.1 (cont.)

Mission Statements across the History of Extension

The Lifelong University, 1973:

For Michigan State University, lifelong education implies:
- A responsibility to foster commitment to lifelong education among its students and audience and to aid them in developing self-learning motivations and skills
- An increased sensitivity to the educational needs of the citizens of Michigan and a dedication to removing barriers to educational opportunity
- A responsibility to actively apply its appropriate knowledge, expertise, and research capacities to assist in solving problems central to lifelong education
- A responsibility to continue and expand the availability of institutional resources for community problem solving
- The examination of existing interinstitutional relationships and, wherever appropriate, the creation of new ones. (14-15)

Extension in the 80s, 1983:

Extension's job is education. The Service transmits practical information produced by research centers and universities to the public. Extension's aim is to help people identify and solve problems, many times through the use of new technology. (1)
-The basic mission of Cooperative Extension is to disseminate, and encourage the application of, research-generated knowledge and leadership techniques to individuals, families, and communities. (7)

1948: The Hannah Report

Key Terms: Education, Coordination.

The 1948 Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies and Goals was created to address the need for changes in the structure of Extension. The Preface states that many of the basic ideas of Extension were formulated before the First World War; with the Second just completed, it was time for a reevaluation of the organization. The general objectives of the study were: (1) An appraisal of the services and experiences of the Cooperative Extension Service for past years; (2) A careful study of the important basic problems in connection with cooperative extension work; and (3) To develop definite recommendations as to how the Cooperative Extension Service can best meet the problems of the future (p.iii-iv).

The 1948 report began with a statement of what Extension had accomplished since 1914. This was followed by a list of objectives and a description of the scope of its mission. The third and fourth chapters dealt with relationships between the CES and the USDA (of which the CES is a part) and with other agencies and groups. Chapter five concerned the Extension services within the Department of Agriculture, and chapter six concerned the place of Extension in the land-grant colleges. Technical matters related to teaching methods, the training of program staff, and financing were addressed in chapters seven, eight, and nine respectively, with the final chapter being devoted to trends and outlook for Extension. Thus, the report was organized to root Extension in its traditional accomplishments and mission, explain how it worked with other agencies and within the context of the land-grant system, illustrate existing methods of organizational operation and maintenance, and project forward into the future. The structure of this report is similar in many ways to the 1992 vision, as we shall see.

Education

As the primary function of Extension, education must be treated as a key term. While this value permits a broad scope, there are limits. For example, agents are not allowed to act as organizers of farmers' groups, manage cooperative business enterprises, or take part in the work of farmers' organizations (1948: 19); none of these activities are educational, and so they fall outside the Extension mission (selectivity). Because Extension is an educational organization, it must remain objective, providing facts and theories instead of serving the self-interest of its members or clients. The duties of Extension, then, are selective: They do not include the provision of services unless that is the only way in which the educational mission can be satisfied.

The broad educational mission of Extension brings together several other values. First, education is based on scientific research, and so the understanding that Extension wishes to impart is more than just technical knowledge: It requires the understanding of the participant, who will not have to continually return to Extension for advice on the same matters. This is captured in the statement that

> whereas extension has done much for people, it is what extension has helped people to do for themselves that achieves the greatest results. (1948: 5)

This suggests the value of self-learning, the ability to learn for oneself. The outcomes of this focus on self-learning are excellence and leadership, as the people who truly understand what they have been taught become capable of teaching and leading others. Thus, self-learning is the foundation for organizational efficacy, because it creates a host of clients who can assist Extension in bringing education to others.

Second, education requires the participation of people in order to be successful (efficacy). If a person does not wish to learn, they cannot be taught. Perhaps more importantly, if they do get involved, Extension becomes more like a service provider and less an educator. This is also true for Extension agents and other program staff, who

should value knowledge and seek to increase their own (staff learning) so they can be better generalists in the field. The technical knowledge can always be taught; however, the right attitude must already be in place for a person to become a successful agent. Likewise, agent education should be supported by Extension through opportunities to visit conferences and organizational valuing of their field knowledge. This valuing should include faculty rank and rewards, such as continuing employment (similar to tenure). Education should be a continual process for both agents and clients: Adult education is never complete.

Third, education has a broad audience, not a restricted one. While historically Extension's audience had been farmers, the 1948 report makes it clear that Extension ultimately serves the entire nation, urban and rural alike. The specifics focus mainly on rural families and youth, non-farm as well as farmers, but urban needs are cited as requiring future investigation. The need for education is comprehensive, so Extension must be prepared to provide education to any and all who require it.

Coordination

While education is the center of Extension's mission, the need for coordination of resources and programs is paramount to the organization's efficacy. Extension has county, state, and federal levels of each of its program areas, and the way in which Extension is integrated into each land-grant university is different. In addition, there are many other federal agencies, both within and without the Department of Agriculture, with which Extension's mission overlaps. Taking advantage of these other agencies is crucial to delivering needed educational programs efficiently and effectively, without duplicating each other's efforts (selectivity) (1948: 15-16). Thus, cooperation and coordination are similar here: Extension resources are diverse and unorganized, and so both internal coordination and external cooperation are necessary to fulfill the mission (efficacy).

In order for coordination to be effective, it requires clear and consistent leadership to make sense of national priorities as well as state and local needs. One recommendation of interest is the grouping of teaching, research, and extension functions within subject matter departments in the land-grant colleges, rather than dividing them up on the basis of on-campus and off-campus education (1948: 28-29). This suggests a unity of function for the colleges, where rewards and status are assigned (valuing) based on quality rather than type of work. In 1948 this seemed achievable; we shall see that later times were not as concerned with equity.

Motives

The 1948 Hannah report set forth an agenda for the nation's land-grant universities, broadening the scope of the mission in spirit to match the words of the Smith-Lever Act that made all citizens of the U.S. potential clients of the CES. Agents were emphasized as content innovators. In addition to increased coordination and cooperation, agents were to take advantage of improved communication and transportation to reach clients in groups, through bulletins, and over the radio. The self-learning of these clients made them into local leaders and even potential collaborators; where it was possible, democratic program planning was recommended. This suggests the idea of empowerment, but it places the power in the university and in the agents who then bequeath it to their clients through education. This is distinguished from being empowering, where power is recognized as already present but unrecognized in the clients themselves.

In essence, the authors of the 1948 report sought to bring about change in methods by expanding the mission instead of limiting it, thereby improving the efficacy of the organization at the same time it was addressing more social problems. This was a first order change, altering the behaviors needed to achieve the same goals as before. The world had been through two world wars and a ten year economic depression since the

founding of Extension; the environmental changes made a shift in the Extension mission necessary.

Table 4.2

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1948,

rank-ordered by relative importance (National CES)

	Key Term		Value Clusters
1.	Education	1.	Self-Learning, Excellence, Leadership, Efficacy.
		2.	Research.
		3.	Selectivity.
		4.	Objectivity, Selectivity.
		5.	Participation, Efficacy.
		6.	Staff Learning, Valuing, Generalization, Knowledge.
		7.	Opportunism, Staff Learning, Valuing, Field, Knowledge.
		8.	Continual Staff Learning.
		9.	Comprehensive
2.	Coordination	1.	Efficacy.
		2.	Education, Efficiency, Efficacy, Selectivity.
		3.	Cooperation, Diversity, Efficacy.
		4.	Leadership, Efficacy.
		5.	Equity, Valuing, Unity.

1959: Kearl and Copeland elaborate on the Scope Report

Key Terms: Education, Opportunism, Participation, Cooperation.

In 1958, the Scope Report[1] set forth the scope and responsibilities of Extension following one of the most prosperous decades in American history. From this, A Guide to Extension Programs for the Future (Kearl and Copeland (Eds.), 1959) was created to detail the program requirements for the areas noted in the Scope Report. Nine program areas were described, starting with an overview of how Extension was relevant to the area and then describing the current situation and recommendations for future programming efforts. The conclusion of the 1959 report made connections between the various recommendations for the different program areas and set up the general framework for all future extension programming.

Education

As in 1948, education is at the center of the Extension mission:

> Extension has a single function to perform -- education for action, supported by facts derived from research, and directed at specific needs and problems. (1959: 48)

Education for action is identical to self learning, which is the primary goal for both clients and agents. Developing local and community leadership is again connected to self-learning. However, staff learning is now intended to be specialized instead of general. The new reaction to a ever more complex world is to increase the expertise immediately available to agents. Continual learning is critical, as most fields change rapidly enough to require periodic updates on new advances to avoid having out of date knowledge. A value new to the education cluster in 1959 is global significance: As the world grows smaller, knowledge of world issues and how one's actions are related to them becomes

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[1] The Scope Report Committee was chaired by Paul A. Miller, the Director of the Michigan CES at that time.

ever more important. Thus, education in global significance is another responsibility of Extension.

Opportunism

This value refers to the proactive seizing of opportunities to extend programs and increase efficacy. Within 4-H programs, opportunism has been a tradition for decades; in 1959 it is applied to other program areas. Opportunism is best suited to times of flux and change, where flexibility in goals and methods is required to remain an active and potent (effective) participant in the organization's environment of interest. It is important for new educational programs because it prepares people for the future (futuring) as well as the present, and it is key to developing leaders because leadership means making leaps of faith in order to better serve one's followers in the present and in the future. The use of innovative technology such as the mass media is one recommendation arising out of the need to seek alternative means of reaching the target audience repeatedly and effectively. In short, opportunism is the philosophy of action, not reaction.

Participation

Before the educational goals of Extension can be achieved, it must get potential clients to be active in programs. Self-learning cannot be achieved without a person's commitment to the ideals and goals of an educational program; thus, participation is a necessary though not sufficient condition for the success (efficacy) of Extension. This also takes place at the group level: Group action is often necessary for effective programs in a community, which is the context of individual development (people). Among specific program areas, it is vitally important that youth be allowed to participate in the design of programs for them once they reach the appropriate stage of development. If youth are not consulted, efficacy will drop and potential leaders will be stifled. The ultimate goal of increased participation is the creation of leaders from and for all walks of life

(comprehensive); in this way, participation has a critical role to play in Extension's educational mission.

Cooperation

Extension is not the only agency that provides educational programming to farmers, homemakers and youth, nor should it act like it. Thus, cooperation with these other organizations has a critical role to play in the effective delivery of educational programs. For example, in the forty years since the founding of the CES, the number and importance of marketing firms has swelled dramatically, to the extent that most farmers in 1959 have little contact with the firm that markets their products (change). In order to increase the efficiency of the agricultural system, there must be cooperative arrangements with the farmer, the marketing firm, the processor, distributor, and retailer (comprehensive). Without these connections, controlling market costs, expanding the market, and helping people understand the whole system are nearly impossible goals. Such cooperation must take place at the county, state, and federal level in order to be effective.

Cooperation is not just important to agricultural production and marketing, but also to natural resources and community development. Nor is it restricted to large firms: Seizing the opportunity to cooperate with local volunteer leaders can make a world of difference for community programs, and their participation has the added benefit of educating them through practical application, which has always been a goal of Extension. Finally, cooperation can be further increased through the use of innovative technology like the mass media to disseminate ideas and information, either within the context of an existing partnership or as first contact with future cooperating agencies and individuals.

Motives

The major purpose of the 1959 report is to provide direction for future Extension work, increasing the sophistication of Extension's educational methods and reaching out to more audiences with better tools. The change is instrumental rather than fundamental: The details may change, but the approach remains the same. Thus, the report encourages content innovators among agents and recommends first order change for the organization as a whole. The elevation of opportunism to the center of a value cluster pushes Extension to seek out new challenges more than it encourages the development of better solutions to problems. However, this shift in emphasis uses opportunism as a tool for staying one step ahead rather than the core value of a new vision. Where role innovators could be encouraged, the 1959 report instead encourages content innovators.

While there are suggestions among the program areas of Family Living and 4-H that the Extension mission is one of empowering individuals to be leaders, the Agriculture and Natural Resources program areas focus more on empowerment, where Extension grants power to its clients through teaching them research knowledge from the university. This distinction makes sense in the abstract, as presented in the document. However, what is most important is how it is translated into practice in the field by agents working with their clients; unfortunately, this comparison can only be made in the present, so we can only speculate on the differences in 1959.

Table 4.3

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1959,

rank-ordered by relative importance (National CES)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Education	1.	Self-Learning.
		2.	Leadership, Community, Self-Learning.
		3.	Specialization, Continuous Staff Learning, Change.
		4.	Global.
2.	Opportunism		
		1.	Change, Flexibility, Efficacy, Participation.
		2.	Education, Futuring.
		3.	Leadership.
		4.	Efficacy.
		5.	Tradition.
		6.	Innovative Technology, Efficiency.
3.	Participation	1.	Education.
		2.	Self-Learning, Education, Efficacy.
		3.	Community, People, Efficacy.
		4.	Leadership, Efficacy.
		5.	Leadership, Comprehensive, Education.
4.	Cooperation	1.	Education, Efficacy.
		2.	Change.
		3.	Efficiency, Comprehensive, Efficacy.
		4.	Opportunism, Leadership, Community, Participation, Education.
		5.	Community.
		6.	Innovative Technology.

1968: A People and A Spirit

Key Terms: Education, Opportunism, Cooperation, Balance.

In 1966, a joint committee of officials from land-grant universities, the USDA, and the federal CES was convened to study the changes in the U.S. and recommend changes in the structure and priorities of Extension. There were three major goals: (1) Determination of major policies and programs needed to serve the public; (2) Establish a base for future cooperation and better mutual understanding of Extension's role between the three organizations represented on the committee; and (3) Identify the public interest which Extension is expected to serve. The 1968 document was the outcome of the committee's deliberations and studies.

A People and A Spirit starts with the history of the United States, its institutions and the goals of its citizens. Priority issues for the U.S. are identified, followed by the presentation of a metaphor: Society is seen as a river, with the mainstream requiring reconnection with those eddies and pools which have become separated in order to serve the whole of society. The place of Extension is then detailed, beginning with attitudes and opinions, followed by future projections and detailed descriptions of program areas. The report closes with identification of needed resources, a review of the relationships in which Extension is enmeshed, and a summary of recommendations for the entire document.

Education

The role of education is central to bringing the alienated and other groups back into the mainstream of society. The goal is comprehensive in scope: All program areas and all people must be included within Extension programming efforts. As in 1959 and 1948, self-learning is the most desired outcome: One should "develop the ability to control destiny" (1968: 59). Continuous staff learning is crucial to success in the future (futuring and efficacy); the types of staff will be diversified, with some retaining the traditional functions, others being more specialized in subject matter relevant to clientele,

and still others being "subprofessional aides," responsible for assisting the other two types of county staff in difficult and large-scale programming (1968: 74). Continual self-learning is an important component of the Quality of Life programs, as the ability to learn is essential to complete human development. Extension is obligated to ensure that all individuals have the necessary physical and social environment (equity of opportunity) in which to develop their full potential (1968: 61). Without this support, the mainstream grow increasingly smaller as people drop out, until the nation cannot hold together anymore. In this way, education is crucial to the survival of the U.S.

The mainstream metaphor also suggests that participation is the key to Extension success in education. Without everyone's (comprehensive) participation, the mainstream will shrink; if enough people drop out, it will become a trickle, and the costs of dealing with so many separate groups will bury the government. When clientele do participate in education, then the best results are obtained (excellence): Leaders are created, communities invigorated, and other agencies spring up in the favorable climate to take part of the burden away from Extension (cooperation). Ultimately, the mainstream brings rewards to all through education.

Opportunism

Taking advantage of opportunity is an American tradition. From the first, pioneers have been the backbone of this country. Having set up this historical background, the 1968 report applies the same perspective to Extension: Success comes from taking preemptive or anticipatory action, not from waiting for the environment to demand a reaction. Thus, the change in the economic and political environment is essential to the value of opportunistic Extension programming. Given the metaphor of the mainstream, opportunities must be taken at all levels, from individuals (people) to communities to global organizations. Extension's role must be that of a leader of other organizations,

being the first to venture forth into uncharted realms. To do less would be to shame the tradition of the U.S. as well as Extension.

Cooperation

The scope of cooperation required by the committee that authored the 1968 report is comprehensive, encompassing other federal agencies within and outside of the Department of Agriculture, land grant universities from 1855 and 1890, communities and community colleges, county and city governments, and the governments of other nations (global). The purpose of these diverse linkages is education, whether it entails collecting resources from a variety of sources or merely referring clients to the appropriate agency for their needs. Coordination is part of cooperation in this document. In order for the recommended changes to be effectively coordinated within the many levels of Extension, there must be cooperation with other agencies:

> An effective program of Extension requires an identification of Extension's role in the field and carefully established relationship patterns with other agencies, organizations, and institutions. (1968: 90)

Among the primary partners in Extension planning are the USDA and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), co-authors of A People and A Spirit.

Equity

The equity term is sometimes called balance in A People and A Spirit; for the purposes of this analysis, they are identical. Unequal opportunity is a devil term[2] in this document, and it is repeatedly attacked across a variety of contexts. Among them are the

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[2] In rhetorical theory, a devil term is one that carries within it the most antithetical message to the one the rhetor wishes to send. In contrast, a god term is one that conjures the most important message the rhetor wishes to communicate.

alienated, those people who have departed the mainstream and do not wish to return (the hippie counterculture is one example relevant to the document), and the Negro land grant colleges and universities (founded in 1890), whose resources are far less than those of the 1862 land grant schools. However, while equity among program areas is encouraged, agriculture is first among equals:

> The basic thrust of recommendations contained in this report calls for the Cooperative Extension Service to adapt its staff and program effort to serve more adequately the broad scope of social and economic problems of the nation while *strengthening* its assistance to the agricultural sector of the economy. (italics added; 1968: 89)

Despite this genuflection to the traditional purpose of the CES, the need for balance in resources and respect is required for effective programming across the diverse functions and program areas of Extension:

> the degree of change can be greatly accelerated if sufficient financial resources are provided to allow for meaningful and significant expansion of program efforts in the nontraditional areas of program activity. (1968: 89-90)

Thus, equity is essential to the change effort recommended by the authors of A People and A Spirit. This recognition of the rising importance of non-agricultural issues to Extension and the nation becomes the core of the 1992 vision.

Motives

In 1968, the U.S. government was still optimistic about the potential for government programs to address and even solve daunting social problems. This optimism is reflected in A People and A Spirit. The authors recognize many problems, and propose a solution for nearly every one. Agents are seen more as custodians of the Extension mission than as innovators in their own right. With the cooperation of so many other organizations at the center of the vision, individual accomplishments are ignored in favor of groups.

The scope of Extension is expanded to encompass many areas only tangentially related to agriculture and education. This change is a second order one, for it changes the mission of the organization. Problems of limited resources and the need for selectivity in programming are not mentioned, leaving the impression that Extension is an organization of enormous capacity existing in a world where all the resources it needs to fulfill its mission are accessible through its own resources and cooperation with other agencies. Empowerment is not present here, as the cooperative efforts of government agencies are depicted as the route to success in restoring the country to its tradition of high quality of life. A grand program is suggested in A People and A Spirit; yet it assumes a world much more plentiful and cooperative than the one most recognize. It is likely that the rosy vision was thought necessary to make the desired changes possible, but there is only so much that wishing can make so.

Table 4.4

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1968,

rank-ordered by relative importance (National CES)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Education	1.	Equity, Opportunism.
		2.	Self-Learning.
		3.	Comprehensive, People.
		4.	Participation, Comprehensive, Excellence, Leadership, Community, Cooperation.
		5.	Continuous Staff Learning, Futuring, Efficacy, Diversity, Tradition, Specialization.
		6.	Continuous Self-Learning, Quality of Life
2.	Opportunism	1.	Tradition.
		2.	Change.
		3.	Leadership, Tradition.
		4.	People, Community, Global.
3.	Cooperation	1.	Comprehensive, Community, Global.
		2.	Diversity, Education.
		3.	Coordination, Efficacy.
4.	Equity	1.	Opportunism.
		2.	Efficacy, Diversity.
		3.	Change.
		4.	Tradition.

1973: The Lifelong University at Michigan State

Key Terms: Lifelong education, Cooperation, Community.

In 1970, then MSU President Clifton Wharton, Jr. established the Commission on Admissions and Student Body Composition to review Michigan State's policies in those areas. One of the Commission's recommendations was an in-depth study of MSU's present and future role in providing ongoing education to Michigan citizens. As a result, the Task Force for Lifelong Education was formed. The document that resulted from the Task Force's two year study was called The Lifelong University, and it focused on the process of lifelong education. This document is important to Extension for two reasons. First, the ideas mentioned within are direct precursors of many of the ideas found in the 1992 presentation to Extension agents and the 1993 Report of the Provost's Committee on Outreach: Extending Knowledge to Serve Society, which emphasized the integration of outreach into the work of faculty at Michigan State. Second, the connection between the two eras of change is the presence of James Votruba, who was one of three graduate student members of the Task Force in 1973 and was appointed Vice Provost for University Outreach in 1991. His current position makes him responsible for the combined educational efforts of what were formerly the Cooperative Extension Service and the Continuing Education Service. This link between the values and responsibilities of the two eras suggests a connection of ideas that must be explored in order to understand the evolution of the Extension culture.

Lifelong education

Given the title of the 1973 report, it is no surprise that lifelong education is the first key term. While lifelong education (elsewhere termed continuous learning) has always been a value of Extension, it has not previously been the centerpiece of the mission. In The Lifelong University, Michigan State is portrayed as having a tradition of lifelong education, with both the Cooperative Extension Service (1914) and the

Continuing Education Service (first proposed in 1926, formally a part of the University since 1948) playing significant roles in the University's land-grant mission. In fact,

> Michigan State is...already a lifelong university. In discussing ideas that we thought were speculation, we often found that they were actually being implemented in programs and activities. this is indicated by the frequency of words such as *expand* and *increase* rather than *begin* or *create*. (1973: 62-63; italics from original)

Thus, it comes as no surprise that lifelong education is treated equitably with the other primary university functions. As a primary function, excellence in programming is required. In addition, lifelong education is a function whose programs must be advertised to Michigan citizens so that they might take full advantage of the improved and expanded programs offered by Michigan State.

The 1973 report explicitly uses the term self-learning to describe the most important component of a successful (effective) lifelong education effort: Teaching people to become systematic, self-initiating learners (1973: 27). This is both a terminal value and an instrumental one: It is a worthwhile goal in itself, and it leads to the achievement of other valuable end states, such as the development of local institutions' collaborative potential in lifelong education. This value cluster foreshadows the clusters found in the 1992 presentation as part of the new vision for Extension.

In order to best accomplish its lifelong education mandate, MSU is expected to act in opportunistic ways to centralize lifelong education responsibilities, coordinate between university units, and create cooperative partnerships with other social and educational institutions. Cooperation is particularly important for reaching into communities; this echoes the Extension value of involving extending knowledge to people who need it off campus. Innovative technologies are one solution to the problem of extending lifelong education into communities, and the participation of community colleges in bringing lifelong learning to all citizens (comprehensive) is seen as a potentially special relationship. However, it is crucial to include means of evaluation (valuing) of how community projects

meet long-term needs (customer-driven) and the relative worth of the multiple models for lifelong education that MSU employs.

Cooperation

Just as Extension repeatedly emphasizes the need to cooperate in order to create the best outcomes through the most efficient use of resources, so too is the lifelong education function best served by the University taking on only the burdens for which it is best suited (selectivity). By being selective, MSU can be opportunistic in its own areas of expertise (specialization) and leave areas outside that specialty to other social and educational institutions (cooperation). These other institutions will be guided by MSU's knowledge of how to maximize efficacy in organizational partnerships beyond the university. By utilizing more and better cooperative arrangements, lifelong education can be brought to everyone who desires it (comprehensive).

Coordination of internal resources is important to cooperative success (efficacy), as MSU must be careful to stay within its means and not duplicate efforts. It also helps when encouraging use and facilitation of programs. In addition, there must be evaluation (valuing) of community programs to ensure the effectiveness of off-campus units. An essential part of this will be to take advantage of the opportunities presented by community colleges to deliver lifelong education programs. It is through such patterns of cooperation that program delivery to communities will be enhanced.

Community

The key to the overall lifelong education effort is encouraging it within Michigan communities. The participation of communities, cooperation between the university and community resource people, and funding from the state, local, and municipal levels (coordination) all contribute to the efficacy of lifelong education in communities (1973: 37-38). Among the Task Force's recommendations is the creation of a visible community

liaison within the new organizational structure of the university. This position could be important in assuring that the lifelong education efforts in a community are customer-driven, and thus relevant to community needs. By bringing lifelong education into communities, MSU makes it accessible to those who cannot live near or commute to campus.

With opportunities for lifelong education in communities, students are expected to obtain some of their formal education in their home communities. This allows them to work and attend classes at the same time, making it easier to afford a college education. Also, professional workers can improve and update their skills without taking an extended leave of absence for more schooling (lifelong education). Again, community colleges provide MSU with an opportunity for extremely beneficial cooperation. Cooperation and coordination are both essential to community lifelong education programs. In order to make sure that the lifelong education programs are excellent, professional evaluators should be brought in to evaluate the programs (valuing).

Motives

The Task Force on Lifelong Education attempted a second order change in the focus of Michigan State, but it was depicted as only first order. The Task Force was careful to note that many of the programs it recommended were already implemented, thus requiring a shift in emphasis rather than values. However, we know from the history of Extension (see Chapter 1) that these efforts were isolated and undervalued by the university; when the Task Force recommends changing university policies, it is asking that the trends it has identified be elevated from tangential to central importance. This is a second order change.

The idea of empowering communities and their residents is explicitly recognized in The Lifelong University. Lifelong education is depicted as the right environment in which people may flourish rather than being the means of implanting potential into people. The

importance of this document to Extension should not be understated: The focus on community and cooperation in order to achieve educational goals for all the citizens of Michigan is what has been advocated for Extension in the three documents discussed previously. However, the 1973 report focuses on the land-grant university instead of the federal Extension service, aiming its calls for change at a much more local level. Many of the ideas presented here will appear later, adding further evidence to the argument that none of what is said is new, it is only rephrased and recombined to meet the needs of different rhetorical environments.

Table 4.5

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1973,

rank-ordered by relative importance (Michigan State University)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Lifelong Education	1.	Tradition.
		2.	Equity.
		3.	Excellence.
		4.	Advertise.
		5.	Opportunism, Centralization, Coordination, Cooperation.
		6.	Self-Learning, Efficacy, Collaboration.
		7.	Cooperation, Community.
		8.	Innovative Technology, Community, Participation.
		9.	Valuing, Community, Customer-Driven.
		10.	Coordination, Centralization, Opportunism.
2.	Cooperation	1.	Efficiency, Lifelong Education, Selectivity.
		2.	Selectivity, Opportunism, Selectivity, Specialization.
		3.	Efficacy, Lifelong Education, Comprehensive.
		4.	Coordination, Efficacy.
		5.	Valuing, Community, Efficacy.
		6.	Opportunism, Community, Lifelong Education.
3.	Community	1.	Participation, Cooperation, Efficacy, Lifelong Education, Coordination.
		2.	Lifelong Education, Accessibility.
		3.	Lifelong Education, Customer-Driven.
		4.	Cooperation, Coordination, Lifelong Education.
		5.	Opportunism, Lifelong Education, Education.
		6.	Opportunism, Cooperation.
		7.	Lifelong Education, Excellence, Valuing.

1983: Extension in the 80's

Key Terms: Change, Tradition, Education.

In 1983, the national CES published Extension in the 80's, a document that was intended to review and restate the roles and responsibilities of the component parts of the Cooperative Extension Service. This effort was to serve as the foundation for a futuring process, extending the role of Extension into those areas where it could retain its relevance and continue its tradition of excellence. The two fundamental questions of the committee that drafted the document were (1) What is the appropriate scope of Extension problems? and (2) How can Extension help solve these problems? The remainder of the document attempts to answer these questions.

Change

Change is an important component of the arguments raised in Extension in the 80's. Changes in available knowledge, in client needs, and in the socio-economic status of the nation required a shift in Extension activities. Extension is described as an agency for change, with a tradition of cooperation with others to bring education to those who need or want it (1983: 1). In order for Extension to remain effective, it must coordinate its organizational structure better, develop a focus on the problems it will address, and equitably parcel out its resources (1983: 5). Extension must also be flexible enough to respond to change for the greater good of people and communities (1983: 5). Thus change in Extension is required; yet the change suggested is only first-order, a shift in activities rather than fundamental assumptions (1983: 24). As Extension is presented as having a tradition of change, altering the course is a natural part of fulfilling the Extension mission, to help people identify and solve problems (self-learning).

Tradition

As noted above, Extension has a tradition as an agency of change that uses cooperation with other organizations to achieve its educational goals. The purpose of the document is to extend that tradition of excellence into the future (1983: 5). This tradition of excellence is particularly apparent in Extension's cooperative work on behalf of commercial agriculture; here, the cooperative element is labelled the key to Extension's efficacy (1983: 17). One of the document's recommendations is an increase in the amount of formal as opposed to traditional informal evaluation (valuing) of Extension programs to better address community needs (1983: 23). Another is using new media (innovative technology) to achieve Extension's educational mission; Extension has a tradition of adopting new media to better deliver its programs (opportunism), adopting radio in the 1920s and television in the 1950s (1983: 21). Last, Extension has a tradition of offering lifelong learning to its clients (1983: 24). In these ways, Extension prepares for the future using the same principles that served it so well in the past.

Education

The tradition of Extension's educational mission to the past is made perfectly clear when the value of self-learning is introduced by quoting the 1948 report:

> whereas extension has done much for people, it is what extension has helped people to do for themselves that achieves the greatest results. (1948: 5; 1983: 4)

Education is implicit in the basic mission of the CES:

> The basic mission of Cooperative Extension is to disseminate, and encourage the application of, research-generated knowledge and leadership techniques to individuals, families, and communities. (1983: 7)

Thus, the values of research, leadership, and community cluster with education. Interestingly, this mission statement does not support the 1948 quote: Dissemination is not self-learning, because the power to decide on what is disseminated resides entirely

with Extension. People are not empowered in this case, as they know only what the CES chooses to tell them.

In altering how Extension operates, greater attention is recommended for target audiences. This focus and the use of innovative technologies such as media to access hard to reach audiences is necessary to provide an increased number of educational opportunities. Also, the document states that continuous staff learning should be valued more by Extension because agents will need to have the opportunity for continued learning and commensurate rewards if Extension is to attract and keep the desired quality of agents (1983: 17-18). Last, research is cited as the basis for the CES' major educational efforts.

Motives

The 1983 report attempts to present a necessary second order change as first order, involving shifts in emphasis without changing the fundamental culture of the organization. To this end, change is paired with tradition to demonstrate the precedent for what the authors advocate: Adjusting to suit the times. Thus, role innovators are encouraged. Cooperation is cited repeatedly as a part of the educational tradition in order to justify changes in funding emphases and greater equity in existing arrangements.

Empowerment is part of the mission, but it is more an issue of granting power than encouraging it in people. Much of the document has an instrumental focus, getting the word out rather than doing what that word actually entails. But by framing change as a minor adjustment, the authors of Extension in the 1980s maximize the chance that their recommendations will be adopted while minimizing the likelihood that change will make a difference. Within four years of this document's publishing, Michigan State began to undergo another change effort, starting with Dressel's (1987) history of the Hannah years, building through the 1989 Cantlon Report, and culminating in the vision presented at the Michigan State Extension School in the fall of 1992.

Table 4.6

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1983,

rank-ordered by relative importance (National CES)

	Key Term		Value Cluster
1.	Change	1.	Tradition, Cooperation, Education.
		2.	Self-Learning.
		3.	Efficacy, Coordination, Focus, Equity.
		4.	Flexibility, People, Community.
2.	Tradition	1.	Excellence, Futuring.
		2.	Change, Cooperation, Education.
		3.	Excellence, Cooperation, Efficacy.
		4.	Valuing, Community.
		5.	Innovative Technology, Education, Opportunism.
		6.	Lifelong Education.
3.	Education	1.	Tradition, Self-Learning.
		2.	Research, Leadership, Community.
		3.	Focus, Innovative Technology, Accessibility, Opportunism.
		4.	Valuing, Continuous Staff Learning, Opportunism.
		5.	Research.

The Historical Mission of Extension

Before delving into the value clusters found around the key terms of these documents, some attention to the mission statements is deserved. As these statements are the summary of the organization's purpose for being, they provide a standard for importance that is too easily lost when working through the details of the documents' recommendations and explanations. Following this discussion, the more specific value clusters will be easier to rank in importance, both within documents and across time.

Education

Every document takes care to state that the primary purpose of the organization is education. There are two themes present: (1) Research-generated knowledge is translated by Extension for practical use by audiences, resulting in effective education; and (2) Encouraging the participation of audiences through education for action, making people active participants in meeting their own needs (self-learning). The 1914, 1948, and 1959 documents all contain the first theme, while 1968, 1973 and 1983 mention both themes. Thus, the empowerment of people to use their own potential (the second theme) is a relatively recent addition to the mission of Extension. In contrast, the earlier missions focus on providing power to people. It has already been noted that not all of the documents have this theme within the overall report; their presence or absence in the mission suggests where it is a key term and where it is only part of a cluster.

Comprehensive

When asking about the breadth of the Extension mandate, all the documents provide the same fundamental response: Extension's audience is every citizen in the United States. However, the programs available are not always comprehensive. In 1914, the program areas for Extension work are agriculture and home economics; 1948 suggests

that the scope is expanding but makes it clear that farmers are the major focus. The other documents do not limit their scope, although 1959 anchors its programs in the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 1968 and 1973, however, there are no limits placed on the scope of Extension's educational programming. 1983 is less expansive, but also does not set boundaries, and in fact advocates the use of new innovative technology in fulfilling its basic mission, which suggests both a drive for greater efficiency and a means of overcoming prior limitations on programming scope.

Level of Focus

The level referred to is the answer to the question: Is Extension oriented at the county, community, state, national, or global level? The 1914 mission is targeted at the national level, which should not be surprising given that the Smith-Lever Act created Extension; the organizational structure was first defined at the national level, then extended downward to states and counties. The 1948 report also takes a national focus in its mission, but later recommendations are focused more on the state level, particularly in the context of the land-grant universities. In 1959, there is a suggestion of a more local, county perspective, but the only explicit mentions are of the federal organization (USDA) and the state-level land-grant college system. The 1968 national report speaks of Extension as a national level organization with responsibilities in communities and to the rest of the world (global); of the five documents, its scope is the most comprehensive. The 1973 Michigan State University mission of lifelong education is coordinated at the state level but implemented in communities. Finally, the 1983 report frames the work of Extension at the state level by referring to Extension's role in transmitting information from universities (state level) to people (an undifferentiated audience that by default is at the state level). It is no surprise that the most specific level is found in the only state-level document; what is surprising is that so few of the others refer to the level at which all the educational work of Extension is done.

Customer-Driven

How are the needs that Extension attempts to meet through its educational programs determined? For most of these documents, this question is not answered directly. In 1914 and 1948, the application and adoption outcomes appear to have less to do with identified needs than with the dissemination of unquestionably valuable research knowledge. The 1968 mission is similarly described, and although it adds a focus on education for action, the mandate appears to derive from the organization and not the people it serves. However, the 1959 mission begins by identifying the people served by Extension as the source of a programming agenda. The 1973 document stresses increased sensitivity to the educational needs of Michigan citizens, suggesting an increased role for the audience in identifying issues. In 1983, formal evaluation (valuing) to ensure that programs meet community needs is recommended. The focus on audience needs appears to be a growing part of the Extension mission, as it appears first in 1959 and is elaborated on in 1973 and 1983. This trend could be useful to the authors of the change initiative as a foundation for advocating improvements.

Conclusion

The Extension mission has remained stable in its fundamentals since its founding in 1914, but the scope of program area and the involvement of its audience in setting the program agenda have changed over time. Level of focus is likely an artifact of all but one of these documents being national in scope, but it remains an important area of concern. If the level of focus is not merely an artifact of a document's scope, level of focus becomes a crucial point of contention between the different levels of Extension. If Extension places more value on state level work than on work in the counties, for example, there will be strife between those who work at the state level and those who work in the counties. This will be a prime issue in Chapter Six when discussing county-based agents' views of the state-level change initiative.

Important Value Clusters Across the Eras of Extension

Having described the value clusters around the key terms at each time point and the evolution of the mission statements, it is time now to compare the value clusters around recurring key terms at different times. The changing clusters of values around the key terms represent the cultural history of Extension. Thus, charting the pattern shifts should suggest the cultural context in which current Extension messages are sent and interpreted. More importantly, knowing what has gone before gives us a baseline for measuring the change in agents' values after being exposed to the new vision. Thus, the historical context described here sets up the current cultural paradigm. If agents deviate from this historical culture on those points of incommensurability with the new vision, then the vision can be said to be potent in bringing about the desired value changes in Extension agents. If not, the change initiative has failed.

Education

Education is the one key term common to all five documents, representing the common focus of Extension throughout its history. In 1948, we find that teaching clients objective research-based knowledge is the route to self-learning, which has the further benefit of producing people fit to be leaders. The goal of self-learning is repeated in the 1959 report, with the addition of a community context in which the leaders Extension helps develop are found. 1968 adds the need for providing equal (equity) opportunity in education to a comprehensive audience to achieve continual self-learning and improve the nation's quality of life. 1973 adds the requirement of education being lifelong and echoes 1959 in placing it within a community context. The 1973 report also identifies an increase in the availability of people and organizations as collaborators through self-learning, which improves efficacy by removing the part of Extension's burden by creating those collaborators who work with instead of for Extension in meeting audience needs. In 1983,

the traditional goal of self-learning through research-based education to create leaders in communities is advocated. An additional route to this goal is through the use of innovative technologies such as electronic media to make education accessible. Thus, the goal of client education remains fundamentally the same over time, with a clearer sense of its benefits for communities through the leaders and Extension collaborators it creates within them.

Because education is so important to Extension, it is also connected to values that concern more instrumental issues connected to the delivery and efficacy of Extension programs. In 1948, education is the basis for selectivity in programming and agent responsibilities: If a program does not have an educational component, then it is not part of Extension's mandate. If an agent is not actively educating in a particular activity, then that activity is outside the scope of his/her responsibilities. This sentiment is only stated explicitly in 1948, but all the other Extension documents refer to it implicitly. The 1973 report recommends that Michigan State advertise its educational programs within the communities to overcome the problem of low turnout. It also stresses the importance of being customer-driven by community needs in order to get the participation required for effective education. This need to advertise and be customer-driven are elements that reappear in the 1992 vision.

The importance of education to the Extension mission covers the learning of agents as well as clientele. The 1948 report encourages staff learning that will make agents better generalists, but all of the subsequent documents recommend specialization instead. In 1959, continual staff learning to develop specialization is recommended to deal with an increasingly complex environment. In 1968, the responsibilities of agents are made more specific and the positions of aides and assistants created to deal with the more mundane details. It is not surprising that the 1973 report recommends lifelong education for staff as well as clients to keep them on the cutting edge. The 1983 report states that the organization should provide opportunities for continual staff learning and include such

learning in their evaluation (valuing) of agents. What is not mentioned in any of the documents is the value of learning in the field; every reference to staff learning is in the context of formal university education. This point will be expanded when discussing the interpretations of agents in Chapter Six.

Opportunism

Seeking out opportunities for better fulfilling the Extension mission is not valued equally across the eras of Extension, waxing and waning over time. Thus, the 1948 report only discusses opportunism in the context of developing staff learning. The 1959 report identifies opportunism as a 4-H tradition and connects it to futuring and the development of leaders. Changes in the Extension environment require agents to be flexible, and one way to achieve that is for agents to be opportunistic in making Extension an effective participant in many varieties of educational subjects and methods. The opportunistic use of innovative technologies in programming is one such method. But it is the 1968 report that places the highest value on opportunism, connecting it national traditions and tying its importance to the level of change in society, which in 1968 was high. Extension's tradition also includes being a leader of other organizations in cooperative efforts, and no such opportunities should be allowed to pass by. Opportunism by Extension was important at all levels in 1968, from individual people to their communities to the world in which everyone lives (global). Only in this way could equal (equity) opportunities be made available to everyone, as required by the mainstream metaphor of society.

The importance of opportunism changed dramatically between 1968 and 1973, when one of the major values connected to opportunism was its opposite selectivity: Michigan State was to be selective in its programming based on its areas of specialization, and be opportunistic in its cooperative efforts to maximize the proportion of its programs that fit under its areas of specialization. Another area of opportunity in 1973 was in centralizing and coordinating the university's lifelong education functions to minimize

overlap between programs and maximize cost effectiveness. The stature of opportunism in 1983 was still lower, with the only two instances being Extension's tradition of opportunism in adopting innovative technologies to improve access to its educational programs and the need to give agents opportunities for continual staff learning. Thus, it appears that opportunism has been on the wane in the recent past. The place of opportunism in the new vision will have to be interpreted in this light, as an attempt to raise the importance of this value through connection to other values has both positive and negative precedents, with the negative being more recent.

Cooperation

As Extension has been the Cooperative Extension Service for nearly 80 years, the value of cooperation has been a key term for a long time. Interestingly, in 1948 it was coordination that was most important to educational efficacy. However, since then cooperation has been essential to educational efficacy by removing some of the burden from Extension. In 1959, change in the environment (e.g., the rise of marketing firms) made cooperation necessary for some issues, such as marketing farm products, often involving all of the organizations involved in the particular issue (comprehensive). This is also important in 1968, when comprehensive cooperation with both community and global organizations is declared necessary for effective programming. Cooperation with community leaders and the use of innovative technology are also cited in 1959 as means of improving educational outcomes.

The 1968 report proposes a different place for cooperation when it suggests that comprehensive participation in the mainstream creates leaders, invigorates communities, and fosters a favorable climate in which organizations with which Extension might cooperate are created. Thus, cooperation becomes an outcome as well as a means to achieving Extension's mission. The 1968 report also makes coordination dependent on cooperation for its efficacy, a reversal from 1948, and reaffirms that education is the goal

of all Extension's diverse cooperating partners. A similar pattern is found in 1973, when improvements in cooperation are connected to more comprehensive lifelong education. An example of this is the greater efficacy of lifelong education due to more cooperation between the university and the community. However, this expectation was not yet empirically proven, so evaluation (valuing) of the efficacy of cooperators in the community was recommended. Interestingly, in 1973 coordination was assumed to be a requirement of cooperative efficacy, the rationale being that Michigan State could not effectively choose areas for cooperation without knowing what it was already doing.

The 1983 document returns to the tradition of Extension cooperation in its operation as an agency for change through education. In fact, cooperation is cited as the key to excellence in Extension work. Thus, over time cooperation has been a stable value for Extension, with other values clustering with it to explain the multiple ways in which cooperation leads to better educational outcomes. However, the success of Extension in maintaining its partnerships may be an issue of concern. For example, in 1959 it was recognized that farmers, businesses, the land grant university and all levels of government were contributors to agricultural success. But in 1983, there was a call for stronger links between those groups. The obvious implication is that the cooperation lapsed, with unfortunate results. This in turn suggests that the reemphasis of historical values is often necessary, and not just an example of cultural inertia. Thus, the importance of cooperation and Extension's success at maintaining its relationships could be extremely important to the change initiative's effectiveness.

Community

The value of community should be of great concern to Extension, because Extension does its work in communities more than in universities, states or nations. In 1948, community was not mentioned, as the primary concern at that time was the coordination of the organization to better disseminate information. While the audiences

who were to receive this knowledge were in communities, there was no explicit recognition of that fact. In 1959, it was recognized that developing community leaders and getting community groups to participate in programs led to effective programs for individual people by encouraging self-learning. Community development was also helped by cooperation with volunteer leaders. Similar outcomes were expected in 1968, when communities were supposed to be invigorated by the participation of people in education. This involvement led to the creation of leaders and gave Extension a favorable climate in which to locate cooperative organizations. The opportunism that fueled so much of the 1968 document's recommendations was applied at the community level as well as that of individual people and of the world in which they lived (global) as part of the drive for better educational outcomes.

The 1973 document was the first to have community as a key term. Community was tightly connected to lifelong education: The only way to make lifelong education possible was to make it accessible in communities. Attached to this were values of being customer-driven in order to meet community needs, being opportunistic in programming by cooperating with community colleges, and using evaluation (valuing) in order to assure excellence in community lifelong education efforts. Finally, the participation as well as the cooperation of a community was connected to the efficacy of lifelong education programs in that community. The focus on community is smaller in 1983, but it is part of the basic mission, which speaks of education based on research knowledge and leadership techniques being brought to individual people and into communities. There is also a continued emphasis on the need for evaluation (valuing) to be certain that programs meet community needs. These trends suggest a fruitful focus for the change initiative and a likely option for strategic ambiguity.

Equity

The value of equity is most relevant when applied to the definition of clientele. All citizens are defined as potential clients in 1948 (comprehensive). In 1959, urban constituencies are specifically addressed as deserving Extension education. "Special" audiences were mentioned that same year; later documents specified these audiences as alienated (1968) and unsophisticated information seekers (1983). The 1968 report makes equity in the educational opportunities available to people a centerpiece of its arguments for change. Educational boundaries are explicitly addressed in both 1973 and 1983 as an obstacle preventing balanced service to deserving constituents. The overall implication is that early distinctions between rural and urban audiences have given way to an explicit mission to serve all citizens (comprehensive), particularly those who are both most in need and least accessible.

Summary

Of the value clusters described, education and cooperation are the most stable. Throughout its history, Extension has had an educational mission, and cooperation has always been key to educational efficacy. Education has two themes, one emphasizing the research tradition of land-grant universities and the other the empowerment potential of Extension education. The former places all the power in Extension and keeps it there; the latter gives it to the clients that Extension helps. The focus on cooperation has been justified by an appeal to thrift: If other organizations have capacities that can benefit Extension programs, then bring them in to take some of the burden off of Extension. Selectivity and cooperation are a consistent cluster, with coordination also being included as necessary to know where cooperation is most needed. Ultimately, the pairing of cooperation and education as imprinting research knowledge on people limit the Extension mission, and it is this confusion of where power really comes from that drives the new vision of MSUE.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE VISION OF MSUE

The Co-Learning Model

Co-learning captures some of the most important aspects of the new vision for MSUE (see Roberto et al., 1994). The model exemplifies the differences between the new vision and the culture it is designed to replace. They are not, however, identical; the MSUE vision contains themes related to the organizational structure that have nothing to do with the co-learning model. Roberto et al. (1994: 7) identified four major components of co-learning: It is a (1) collaborative[1] and (2) mutually-beneficial process of applying (3) university-based knowledge and (4) community-based knowledge in which participants work to solve (5) community based problems. In contrast, the dissemination focus common to Extension before the change initiative is characterized as a one-way dissemination model, which assumes that (1) community-based knowledge is neither as important or valuable as university-based knowledge and (2) any benefits that agents obtain from their work are a result of their developing their own resources and understanding (Roberto et al., 1994: 8). In essence, the contrast is between the historical perception of cooperation as required by a selective environment and a new value of collaboration that makes involvement with individuals and other organizations both necessary to achieve self-learning and resulting in mutually beneficial learning by university and community members.

The co-learning model helps us to understand the nature of the MSUE vision's attempt to shift agent values regarding Extension. This model is designed at the university

1 Roberto et al. (1994: 8) define collaboration as "an interactive process in which participants work together," where this common effort takes equally from all parties instead of privileging the resources of one participant over the other(s).

level, and is intended to be applied to all forms of university outreach, beyond existing Extension programs and initiatives. The particular arguments made by the leaders of Extension are not identical to change efforts made elsewhere in the university, most notably the 1993 Report of the Provost's Committee on University Outreach, which was written for MSU faculty. However, the spirit that drives both sets of arguments is the same: Outreach and Extension must work collaboratively with both community and university knowledge resources to effectively solve community problems.

Bringing the Past into the Present

> MSUE helps people improve their lives through [an] educational process that applies knowledge to focus on issues, needs and opportunities.
>
> (Mission Statement, Overhead 5, Fall 1992 Extension School presentation)

In 1992, the new director of MSUE went before the assembled staff of the Extension service at the annual Extension School on campus to announce major changes in the structure of MSUE and the responsibilities of its members. The director, her program leaders and the regional directors jointly presented an overview of Extension's new vision through a talk with over a hundred overheads. The presentation began with a statement of Extension's new mission, followed by a list of Values and Guiding Principles. The remainder of the presentation detailed the changes in policy and structure that were to be implemented and introduced the Issues Identification process as the new means of identifying critical issues in Michigan.

From this presentation, six key terms can be identified. First, MSUE was introduced as committed to *change*, with the majority of changes being found in Extension policy, particularly for administration. This also included contrasts between past and current policies throughout the organization. Second, *education* was reaffirmed as the central component of the Extension mission. However, the majority of mentions involved the education of Extension staff rather than constituents. Third, developing a *focus* was

advocated for the organization and for its individual members. Fourth, *coordination* or facilitation was important for successful implementation of the new structure as a model for all Extension work. Fifth, customer-driven *collaboration* was key to the change in outlook encouraged by the presentation. Sixth, dynamic *cooperation* in the form of partnerships within and outside of the university was encouraged. Many of these key terms had been used before in historical documents, but the value clusters that were built around them were very different in 1992.

Change

The first part of the mission statement labelled MSUE an organization "Committed to Change," with the additional points that change should be creative and that change was a positive sign of a dynamic (opportunistic) organization. From the beginning, change was associated with organizational efficacy. Given Extension's long history as an educational institution, it was not surprising that education was one of the primary contexts of change. The changes suggested concerned instrumental rather than terminal values associated with education. Staff development and training (staff learning) replaced performance appraisal as the label for agent evaluation (valuing), meaning that the new standards were core expectations and elective expectations assumed by the particular agent. Educational initiatives replaced standards, and agents were expected to meet the specific performance goals of their own development plan (opportunism) instead of being assessed on multiple categories and general opportunities determined by the administration. In short, agents were expected to assume responsibility for and actively participate in their own learning (staff learning). In fact, not only were rewards scheduled closer to the time they became deserved, they were broadened to include more training and additional equipment for one's work as well as pay increases.

Beyond staff education, one of the trends and perspectives focused on "Challenge and Change in Education and Training." This trend was connected to a variety of contexts

within which opportunities for Extension's initiatives existed. These contexts included universities, the workplace, cultural diversity, the connection between work and family, small businesses, and innovative workplace technologies.

Other values that frequently clustered around change were flexibility, decentralization, and innovative technology. The new structure was seen as taking advantage of new technology and its own resources, both material and human, to make a system that placed responsibility for program development in the counties and allowed for a variety of approaches to meeting needs that were identified at community, county, regional, and state levels.

Education

The primacy of education in MSUE is unarguable, as apparent by its position in the mission statement. The inclusion of opportunities among desirable MSUE foci makes this an activist mission, not a reactive one; Extension can draw on university knowledge to identify critical concerns and develop a solution that improves quality of life. As already mentioned above, education was frequently associated with change, both for extension staff and as a need in a variety of work and family contexts. Flexibility and decentralization in staff education (staff learning) and evaluation (valuing) were also common, with the efficacy of both the total Extension mission and individual agents being the expected outcome. Finally, the use of innovative technology in educational program delivery was encouraged for both county programs and for workplace education and training needs.

Focus

The identification of a focus needs to be distinguished from selectivity. Focus involves creating a framework for the investigation of an issue by Extension, marking a boundary around a concept. Selectivity entails using this boundary as a limit on Extension's mandate, thereby providing a justification for not addressing every issue. The vision applies focus to a broad scope of issues without suggesting any standards for selectivity . For example, the introduction of the nine trends and perspectives of importance to Michigan begins with "Focus on Michigan's Future." Each of these nine trends has at least four subpoints; this use of focus identifies critical issues without suggesting how Extension might be selective in its approach to them. Thus, the scope of Extension appears to have few limits.

The idea of focus appears in two important overheads. First, the graphic of a telescope with the word "FOCUS" is used to introduce new buzzwords such as "No Boundary Thinking" (flexibility) and the affirmation that Extension is "Centered in the Present, Connected to the Past, and Focused on the Future." The latter overhead connects tradition and futuring to the idea of focus. Second, the third stage of the Issues Identification process is labeled "Priority Setting" (valuing). As Issues Identification is the formal procedure for recognizing the needs of Michigan communities and formulating a new program structure for Extension that will best address the primary concerns, the importance of focus (but not selectivity) is essential to the new vision.

Education is an important focus, with multidisciplinary programs and appropriate staffing for a county's educational needs being critical elements. Focus is also required for program and agent efficacy, with the precise focus arising out of collaborations with clients. Opportunism is a focus identified in the mission statement, while excellence is linked to focus in the recommendation that Extension focus on the outstanding resources of people and experience (valuing field knowledge).

Coordination

Coordination or facilitation is essential to the drive for decentralization; a coordinated effort at regional and county levels is required for the vision to be realized. Regional and County Extension Directors are expected to coordinate programming and staff development (staff learning), as well as provide leadership to the other agents. Coordination of Extension with University Outreach was cited as necessary to facilitate development of university outreach network and programs. The excellence of educational programming depends on close coordination between Regional Extension Directors and program directors. Finally, coordination of the different program areas' agendas is recommended as part of the effort to turn Extension into a unified (unity), forward-looking (futuring), and dynamic (opportunistic) organization.

Collaboration

The importance of including clientele in issues identification and program planning is essential to fulfilling a customer-driven mission. Collaboration was one of the values explicitly cited by the Director in her portion of the presentation; the other values listed were excellence, diversity, integrity, openness (or honesty), accessibility, and balance (or equity). In addition, the list of guiding principles that followed the values included being customer/issue focused, anticipatory (futuring), community based, knowledge driven, and empowering (self-learning); all of these are dimensions of collaboration. The efficacy of Extension work in the counties is linked to identifying customer expectations across the diversity of those customers and using their input (participation) in decision making. Coordination of on-campus and off-campus Extension staff was important for the customer-driven effort, as was the participation of existing clients in Issues Identification. In sum, the inclusion of client views in the new structures and processes of Extension was presented as a key part of the change effort.

Cooperation

Cooperation involves the creation and maintenance of partnerships with other agencies and institutions to improve the efficacy of programming in meeting the educational needs of the people of Michigan. Note that these programs do not have to be run by Extension; cooperation focuses on meeting the social problem rather than preserving the respective spheres of influence of different agencies. Thus, it is comprehensive in its scope. Cooperation does not have many values clustered around it, but it is central to achieving the mission: "[Extension] Seeks and Develops New Partnership Arrangements Within and Beyond to Enhance Content, Enhance Quality, and Enhance Effectiveness." Thus, cooperation is associated with efficacy and coordination ("within"). In addition, cooperation is linked to education: "[Extension aims for a] Dynamic Partnership Linked in Research Application and Educational Outreach," where the partnerships occur at the federal, state, and county levels for both profit and non-profit organizations. This suggests a comprehensive goal for cooperation Extension work, including all other providers within the overall network of Extension efforts. Finally, it should be remembered that for nearly 80 years MSUE was the Cooperative Extension Service in Michigan, making cooperation a value with a great deal of tradition behind it.

Motives

There are three motives that can be identified from the value clusters described. First, changing the way in which the university reaches out into communities is presented as both necessary and in line with traditional values of Extension. Extending university research into communities and to individual citizens is still the goal, but structural and procedural changes are required to continue serving Michigan. The value cluster of coordination, unity, opportunism and futuring uses the historically accepted values of coordination and opportunism to justify a futuring approach and a perception of the program area agendas as united in their ultimate goals. Second, the essence of this change

is found in the advocation of a active, inclusive method of identifying issues that Extension can and should address. Input from clientele is sought through formal channels, and client participation in decision making about which issues have priority is required. Acceptance of the values of being customer-driven and requiring coordination within the organization are used to encourage participation by people in decision making about program offerings. This develops their collaborative potential and thereby improves the efficacy of Extension by developing additional resources in the people it serves. The desired outcomes are improved responsiveness to community and individual needs and a demonstration of the continuing importance of land-grant universities and their Extension branches to prosperity at the state, region, and county levels. The tradition of Extension's relevance to its clients is based on its choice of an appropriate focus; it is easier to maintain this tradition if Extension looks to the future in order to anticipate future needs (futuring). Third, the need for staff whose ideals are in line with modern issues and concerns is a potent subtext of the presentation. Two value clusters around the key term change are relevant here. First, efficacy and education, two of the more commonly paired and cited values throughout Extension history, are used to justify change as a appropriate response; the central values of Extension are at stake, so change is necessary. Second, the cluster of flexibility, decentralization, and innovative technology makes the change more desirable for agents because it decentralizes responsibility to the county office where agents work, encourages them to be flexible in their programming by removing constraints, and places innovative media technologies in their hands for use in fulfilling the mission of Extension. We shall see if this combination is tempting enough to encourage change in the attitudes and behaviors of Extension agents in Chapter Six.

Fundamentally, the MSUE vision is concerned with changing the definition of self-learning, which is synonymous with the more modern term empowerment. Extension is being moved from envisioning its mission as bringing power from the university to the public to a vision of applying both university and community knowledge in tandem to

solve problems. Labonte (1994) states that the use of *empower* as a transitive verb makes the task self-perpetuating because it leaves power in the hands of the professional agency and its agents:

> Professionals, as the empowering agent, the subject of the relationship, remain the controlling actor, defining the terms of the interaction. (Labonte, 1994: 255)

However, when empower is used as an intransitive verb, reflecting only on itself, it makes power into something that groups and individuals can seize for themselves. In this case, Extension does not give power to individuals, it helps them recognize it and seize it for themselves. The distinction between cooperation and collaboration is important here: Cooperation is based on selectivity in the university's resources, but collaboration is based on valuing field knowledge that can supplement and further inform the knowledge of the university. The change is from *empowerment*, which implies that Extension has to do something to its clients in order for them to develop, to *empowering*, where Extension works with instead of for its clients to develop their competencies and potential for the betterment of both the clients and Extension.

The impact of this presentation, then, should be assessed across three areas. First, are there differences in how the program areas make sense of the need for change and formulate their own missions and procedures? In the past, Agriculture has been the primary focus of Extension work. In this presentation, Agriculture is mentioned within the context of the environmental and economic issues, but the majority of trends and perspectives focus on issues that fall within the scope of Children, Youth and Families programs and work in Community and Economic Development. The changed staff criteria support an activist, continuous learning approach for Extension agents that is itself part of the Children, Youth and Families mission. The type of empowerment described in each program area's mission statement should reflect this, with Children, Youth and Families having a mission of empowering compared to Agriculture and Natural Resources'

empowerment. Where Community and Economic Development will fall is unclear due to its relatively brief history.

Second, how well was the distinction between past culture and present vision communicated to agents? If this distinction was not clear, little change should be expected, as new values will be perceived as existing ones in new wrappings. This is particularly likely for Agriculture and Natural Resource agents, who will have the longest institutional memory and so will be strongly influenced by traditional statements of the Extension mission, which emphasize empowerment over empowering. Children, Youth and Families agents will be more likely to acknowledge the difference because their program area is itself a part of the change initiative, and so salient to them. Community and Economic Development would not necessarily recognize the difference because their program area is too recent to permit a baseline for comparison.

Third, is the new formal structure adequate for the vision? Will formal procedures such as Issues Identification adequately serve the purposes of Extension, or will they be reinvented to fit the preferences of agents who have their own view of what their clientele need? Once again, program area differences are expected to manifest themselves, with Agriculture and Natural Resources rejecting the changes that infringe on their authority while Children, Youth and Families agents accept the changes as opportunities for gaining more resources and respect from the university. Community and Economic Development is unpredictable because its mission is different in its details than the vast majority of past Extension efforts. The first of these questions will be answered by analyzing the mission statements of each program area here; the latter two will be answered in Chapter Six.

Table 5.1

Key Terms and Value Clusters in the 1992 MSUE Vision,

rank-ordered by relative importance.

(Michigan State University Extension)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Change	1.	Creativity, Opportunism.
		2.	Efficacy, Education.
		3.	Valuing, Staff Learning.
		4.	Opportunism, Staff Learning, Participation.
		5.	Education, Opportunism.
		6.	Flexibility, Decentralization, Innovative Technology.
2.	Education	1.	Opportunism, Focus, Quality of Life.
		2.	Change.
		3.	Flexibility, Decentralization, Valuing, Staff Learning, Efficacy.
		4.	Innovative Technology.
3.	Focus	1.	Flexibility.
		2.	Tradition, Futuring.
		3.	Valuing, Community.
		4.	Education, Multidisciplinary.
		5.	Efficacy, Collaboration.
		6.	Opportunism.
		7.	Excellence, Valuing, Field, Knowledge.
4.	Coordination	1.	Decentralization.
		2.	Staff Learning, Leadership.
		3.	Excellence, Education.
		4.	Unity, Futuring, Opportunism.
5.	Collaboration	1.	Customer-Driven.
		2.	Excellence, Diversity, Integrity, Openness, Accessibility, Equity.
		3.	Customer-Driven, Focus, Futuring, Community, Knowledge, Self-Learning.
		4.	Efficacy, County focus, Diversity, Participation.
		5.	Coordination, Customer-Driven, Participation.

Table 5.1 (cont.)

Key Terms and Value Clusters in the 1992 MSUE Vision,

rank-ordered by relative importance.

(Michigan State University Extension)

	Key Term		Value Clusters
6.	Cooperation	1.	Efficacy, Education.
		2.	Comprehensive.
		3.	Efficacy, Coordination.
		4.	Education, Comprehensive.
		5.	Tradition.

Mission Statements for Extension Program Areas

In 1993, each program area of MSUE put out a mission statement describing its mission, values, and strategies for achieving its aims. As one of the major concerns of this study is to identify the differences between how agents in each program area perform their tasks and describe their mission, these documents are an important source of value information. The analysis will begin by analyzing each mission statement for key terms and value clusters. This will be followed by an analysis of the differences between the 1992 vision and the three program areas in their missions and the values clustered around their key terms and those of the historical documents reviewed in Chapter Four. These differences will provide a framework for understanding how agents in each program area should differ in their interpretations of their responsibilities and justifications of their chosen courses of action.

Children, Youth and Families: Catch the Vision!

> Michigan State University Extension Children Youth and Family Programs maximizes the resources within communities and the university to help all individuals reach their full potentials across the life cycle. (Catch the Vision, p.1)

Key Terms: Education, Life Cycle, Diversity, Collaboration.

Education

Education is the goal and primary concern of CYF programs, and is often found in phrases such as "education across the life cycle." This enduring relevance is applied to both the people served by CYF and to the program staff who keep the programs running. Important outcomes of education are self-learning and self-efficacy, which are the ability to learn what you will need to know by yourself and the ability to function without

assistance, respectively. Action plans for education often include cooperation with other agencies in their implementation and opportunism in finding ways to serve diverse audiences. The impact of educational programming on both individuals (people) and communities is expected to be evaluated (valuing).

Lifecycle

The concept of programming across the life cycle is essential to the CYF mission, with explicit connections to the values of diversity (all levels of development and learning styles) and comprehensiveness (everyone is a potential client because everyone progresses through life the same way). Its presence in the vision statement (quoted above) links it to collaboration and self-efficacy. Lifelong education is one of the four major values listed in that section, second only to learning (education) in importance and connected to the value of efficacy in both the present and the future (futuring). Collaboration with individuals (people) is required for efficacy, since the only way for learning to be continuous is for the learner to internalize it by actively working with educators to develop his or her potential. This is empowering, rather than empowerment; the locus of control is in the client, not Extension. By conceptualizing their mission as across the life cycle, CYF sets its three components within a common developmental framework and accepts a broad mandate for problems in Michigan.

Diversity

The diversity of programming efforts, clientele, collaborators, and expertise are all essential parts of the CYF mission. Communities and individuals (people) are both recognized as having diverse strengths and challenges, and the presence of diversity allows for equitable participation in programming. Diversity is the fourth of the four values addressed explicitly in the Values section of the document, along with learning (education), lifelong education (lifecycle), and research-based quality programming. The

implication is that a failure to accommodate the diversity of audiences and their needs will prevent CYF from achieving excellence in its educational programming across the life cycle.

Collaboration

Collaboration is central to the action plans of CYF, and so is closely connected to the opportunism of CYF. Research-based quality programming, one of the four values explicitly addressed in the document, is seen as promoting collaboration and fostering participant and community ownership; thus collaboration is connected to participation and community. Cooperation is linked with collaboration in the mission, where both are to be facilitated by CYF programs, and in the action plan to create new partnerships to include the strengths that arise out of CYF's collaborations. This further enables both Extension and its clients in their respective goals. The futuring action team is expected to draw on the diverse strengths of CYF collaborators and clients to take advantage of opportunities to develop superior proactive programs (excellence and opportunism). Innovative technologies are seen as a new route to developing future collaborations, perhaps one where collaborators create educational programs for CYF program staff. Overall, CYF encourages collaboration at every level and for a comprehensive variety of purposes, in line with the expectations for empowering set forth in the 1992 conference presentation on the new Extension vision.

Motives

The motives of the CYF authors are very close to those of the authors of the 1992 vision statement: Encouraging a proactive, diverse, collaborative effort by staff and clientele to develop new program initiatives and assist people in empowering themselves. The value clusters are similar to those of the 1992 vision, sharing the key terms of education and collaboration, with CYF subsuming cooperation under collaboration.

Change is absent because CYF is the new model for Extension. Thus, the key terms of diversity and life cycle have import for the rest of Extension as well as CYF. The scope of programming initiatives is growing, with focus taking on the connotation of distinction rather than priority. Non-traditional audiences are brought within the range of acceptance, and collaboration with all clients is encouraged to develop the programming that is needed both now and in the future.

Table 5.2

Key Terms and Value Clusters in the 1993 CYF Mission Statement,

rank-ordered by relative importance.

(Michigan State University Extension - Children, Youth and Families)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Education	1.	Lifecycle.
		2.	Self-Learning, Self-Efficacy.
		3.	Cooperation, Opportunism, Diversity.
		4.	Valuing, People, Community.
2.	Lifecycle	1.	Diversity, Comprehensive.
		2.	Collaboration, Self-Efficacy.
		3.	Education.
		4.	Efficacy, Futuring.
		5.	Collaboration, People, Efficacy.
3.	Diversity	1.	Community, People.
		2.	Equity, Participation.
		3.	Education, Lifecycle, Research.
		4.	Excellence, Education, Lifecycle.
4.	Collaboration	1.	Opportunism.
		2.	Research, Participation, Community.
		3.	Cooperation.
		4.	Futuring, Diversity, Opportunism, Excellence.
		5.	Innovative Technology, Education.
		6.	Comprehensive.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

> Michigan State University's Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (EANR) program provides research-based educational programs to Michigan citizens involved in, or affected by, the state's agriculture or natural resources to help them make informed decisions, prosper, and contribute to Michigan's economy and quality of life. This directly or indirectly affects every Michigan citizen. (EANR Mission Statement, p.1)

Key Terms: Education, Management, Opportunism.

Education

Education is the foremost value for ANR, but its scope is more limited than that of the 1992 vision and CYF. While the mission statement quoted above appears comprehensive, the deletion of the clause "or affected by" and the last sentence narrows the mission to a focus on agricultural producers, the traditional constituency of Extension. It is difficult to avoid the impression that the idea of a broader audience is just tacked on, not truly integrated into the mission. The goal of self-efficacy is in line with the other two program areas analyzed and with the Extension tradition of helping people help themselves (self-learning). The efficacy of educational programs in general is touted in descriptions of Integrated Pest Management, Animal Management, and Waste Management programs; that is, in every one of the document's major headings. Enhancing Michigan producers' ability to compete nationally and internationally (global) is a major goal of education, with the logical extension that this increased competitiveness is good for Michigan's economy. Cooperation is cited in the context of working to improve both scouting and grower education regarding pest management and for encouraging better and more pervasive composting as part of waste management. Unlike CYF, the desired outcomes are tangible and specific, which suggests the possibility of determining the right balance (equity) through evaluation (valuing) of concrete program outcomes.

A foundation in research and a contribution to Michigan citizens' quality of life are instrumental and terminal values (respectively) related to Extension's educational mission. One route to this improvement is via the translation of the research into ordinary language for practical use. This transformation is described as educational, not a service, as it helps people apply knowledge to solve their own problems. This fits the definition of empowerment: The university's knowledge is what grants power to people instead of the people discovering the power through Extension's guidance and their own community-based knowledge.

Management

Management is the recommended approach to the problems and issues faced by ANR, where control of the environment is required to ensure the proper outcomes. This instrumental value is tightly connected to economic advantage, and often involves education of the client in the methodology of management so s/he will know what to do in the future (self-learning) to control the source of the problem. It also involves cooperation with other agencies, as Extension sometimes helps people by directing them to a source of information and support apart from Extension. This supports the selectivity of Extension programming, taking advantage of other resources to avoid becoming a service provider in order to better fulfill its obligations as an educational agency. Once again, empowerment is valued over empowering. Another advantage of the management approach is to institute a program that can deal with a problem continuously, rather than having to start from ground zero every time. For the issues addressed - pests, animals, and waste - management must be continual, as all of them are constant sources of difficulty. Developing the right management program involves interdisciplinary work and the adoption of innovative technologies to keep pace with changes in the economic environment. Extension teaches clients how to manage pests, animal products, and waste; its educational goal precludes providing management as a service (selectivity).

Management is applied to natural resources issues in the "Other Educational Efforts" section at the end of the document, where it is recommended for Sea Grant, Water Quality, and Forestry concerns.

Opportunism

Opportunism is the proactive, preventative approach advocated by ANR. Several preemptive programs are described, but there is no information about how future problems will be identified prior to their having negative effects on Extension clients. This absence suggests that the formal issues identification process is not considered a part of the new vision as it pertains to ANR programs. Opportunism is connected to keeping Michigan producers competitive and the economy strong. Problems are not the only area where opportunism is important: Animal production is cited as an area where anticipatory (futuring) expansion could result in beneficial effects (efficacy) as the market for such products expands. Improving trade opportunities for Michigan agricultural products is another area where preemptive education can lead to beneficial effects (efficacy). Once again, while this focus is in line with the1992 vision, it is targeted at specific issues and problems rather than being stated as an essential principle. This makes it an instrumental value like management rather than a terminal value, which suggests that the new vision has been interpreted as a revision of the existing culture instead of a revolution.

Motives

The major motive of the ANR authors is a desire to acknowledge change without admitting to a decreased need for ANR programming. The mission pays lip service to the comprehensive ideal of the 1992 vision, but does not address the need for a new, continual and collaborative process of need assessment. The ANR mission statement speaks of providing empowerment rather than being empowering, holding fast to the tradition of Extension when it was dominated by Agriculture. Opportunism is used to justify the need

for more forward-looking programs instead of change; in this way continuity with past approaches can be maintained and calls for change answered with the claim that "we've been doing that all along." The strategy is to make a second order change in principles and assumptions appear to be a first order change in techniques. The fundamentals of ANR work do not change, but the way in which they are dressed up for public consumption does. Thus, it is likely that the deeper changes sought by the leaders of MSUE will be reinvented as minor instrumental changes through ANR agents' individual sense-making.

Table 5.3

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1993 ANR Mission Statement,

rank-ordered by relative importance.

(Michigan State University Extension - Agriculture and Natural Resources)

	Key Terms		Value Clusters
1.	Education	1.	Focus, Tradition.
		2.	Self-Efficacy, Tradition.
		3.	Efficacy.
		4.	Competitive, Global, Economy.
		5.	Cooperation.
		6.	Equity, Valuing.
		7.	Research, Quality of Life, Translation, Knowledge.
2.	Management	1.	Economy, Education, Self-Learning.
		2.	Cooperation, Selectivity, Education.
		3.	Continuing Program.
		4.	Interdisciplinary, Innovative Technology., Change, Economy.
		5.	Education, Selectivity.
3.	Opportunism	1.	Competitive, Economy.
		2.	Futuring, Efficacy.
		3.	Education, Efficacy.

Community and Economic Development

> Michigan State University Extension Community and Economic Development Program enhances human and economic well being and quality of life in Michigan by providing educational and technical assistance to business, government, and economic and community organizations. (CED Mission Statement, p.1)

Key Terms: Community, Education, Cooperation, Participation.

Community

Community is a relatively new focus for Extension, only recently separated out from other areas of development. The programs for CED are oriented at the community level, and require the cooperation of other agencies, local government, and institutions and the participation of individuals from all corners of the community. Within the mission statement, education, the economy, and quality of life are tied to community. The economy is also connected to community in the principles internal to MSU Extension, where core competencies are to be developed for both community and economic development in each and every Extension programming region. Developing leadership in communities is an important part of human resource development, as is educating community members to understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impacts associated with community action. Also, the competitiveness of Michigan communities and the industries within them are a focus of CED program initiatives. Thus, community operates as both a context for activities and a focus for Extension efforts.

Education

Education is still key to the mission, but for CED it is seen as a type of program delivery that can be contrasted with other methods, such as service provider. In the

context of community, education usually involves the development of some potential, such as leadership or participation in decision making. It also functions to increase the potential for collaboration within communities and improve competitiveness as a part of base program initiatives. Within MSU Extension, it is linked to coordination and participation of both on-campus and off-campus resources to design and conduct the best programs, and is connected to unity of Extension by the recommendation that programs draw on Extension educators from across all program areas.

Cooperation

Cooperation with groups external to MSU is essential to effectively addressing the issues relevant to communities, i.e. being customer-driven. CED maximizes impact through cooperation with other agencies supportive of the program area, which often focuses on leadership development, increased participation of community members in decision making, and developing future (opportunistic) collaborations. Comprehensiveness and coordination are connected to cooperation for principles internal to MSU such as developing and implementing effective strategies for involving all MSU faculty and other university resources. The economic impact of cooperation is mentioned frequently, with the global significance of the partnership strategies detailed under program initiatives playing a role in the global economic situation. Cooperation at the individual level includes working with other agencies to teach (education) employment skills and knowledge that will be useful throughout the life cycle. This is one of the few occasions where the focus is at the individual level (people); nearly all the rest are at the community level.

Participation

Participation addresses the involvement of various individuals, groups and institutions in community decision making. Human resource development includes

leadership and community capacity development for all citizens, which is a comprehensive focus for participation. CED promotes active and representative citizen participation in community and economic decision making and action plans, which suggests that it is connected to the values of community, the economy, and collaboration. Within MSU Extension, both on-campus and off-campus educators are supposed to participate in designing and conducting programs (comprehensive). The strongest connection is with collaboration, as the participation of clients and all members of MSU in Extension efforts is required for collaboration with these different groups to be possible. If clients do not participate in skill-building programs, future (futuring) collaboration is less likely because they will have less to contribute.

Motives

The CED document falls between ANR and CYF in terms of its allegiance to the 1992 vision statement, but is closer to CYF than to ANR. The authors are most concerned with making the community a primary focus of Extension planning and incorporating it within the Extension mission. Accompanying this goal is a desire to increase the amount of cooperation Extension has with other agencies and institutions. However, the emphasis is more on empowerment than on how to be empowering. Both are present, but at this time the more traditional empowerment predominates. In addition, the economic environment is added to the family and natural environments already understood as important contexts for Extension programs and initiatives. Since CED is a relatively new program area, the document describes more initiatives than current programs, which is in keeping with the 1992 vision's call for a shift in resource allocation from 80% program and 20% initiatives to 20% programs and 80% initiatives.

The CED document is an attempt to legitimize the program area as part of Extension by connecting it to some of the values important to both the existing culture and the new vision, namely education, cooperation, and participation. However, by appeasing

both it fails to describe the second-order change required by the MSUE vision, falling back on the more traditional goal of empowerment. While the focus on community increases the comprehensiveness of programming and creates a new realm of educational opportunities, the methods advocated and the goals set forth are more in line with what has been true in the past than what the MSUE vision sets forth for the future.

Table 5.4

Key Terms and Value Clusters in 1993 CED Mission Statement,

rank-ordered by relative importance.

(Michigan State University Extension - Community and Economic Development)

	Key Term		Value Clusters
1.	Community	1.	Cooperation, Participation.
		2.	Education, Economy, Quality of Life
		3.	Leadership, Education.
		4.	Competitive, Focus.
		5.	Economy.
2.	Education	1.	Community, Leadership, Participation.
		2.	Collaboration, Community, Competitive.
		3.	Coordination, Participation, Unity.
3.	Cooperation	1.	Efficacy, Community, Customer-Driven.
		2.	Leadership, Participation, Community, Opportunism, Collaboration.
		3.	Comprehensive, Coordination, Efficacy.
		4.	Economy, Global.
		5.	Lifecycle, Education, Knowledge.
		6.	Focus, People, Community.
4.	Participation	1.	Community.
		2.	Leadership, Community, Comprehensive, Focus.
		3.	Community, Economy, Collaboration.
		4.	Futuring, Collaboration.
		5.	Education, Comprehensive.

Table 5.5

Key Terms Across the History of Extension

1948	1959	1968	1973	1983	1992
Education	Education	Education	Lifelong Education	Change	Change
Coordination	Opportunism	Opportunism	Cooperation	Tradition	Education
	Participation	Cooperation	Community	Education	Focus
	Cooperation	Equity			Coordination
					Collaboration
					Cooperation

1993 Program Areas

CYF	ANR	CED
Education	Education	Community
Lifecycle	Management	Education
Diversity	Opportunism	Cooperation
Collaboration		Participation

The New Mission of MSUE and its Program Areas

In the previous chapter, we inspected both the mission statements and the value clusters of the historical documents over time. Here, we will do the same thing for the MSUE vision and the three program areas. To allow for a comparison with the historical analysis, the same groupings will be used for the mission statements: Education, Comprehensive, Level of Focus, and Customer-Driven.

Education

Historically, the Extension Service has viewed education as its top priority, with improving quality of life as the desired outcome; all of the missions agree on this. However, while the vision remains abstract, the program areas all provide their own slant. CYF focuses on education "across the lifecycle" (continuous learning), while the ANR mission focuses on improving people's ability to make informed decisions and contribute to the state economy via agriculture and natural resources . CED provides "educational and technical assistance" to a variety of different types of organizations to enhance human (quality of life) and economic well-being. Thus, ANR focuses on economic consequences, CYF on the personal side, and CED addresses both.

The historical component applying research-based knowledge through education to benefit clients is repeated in the ANR mission but not elsewhere. The MSUE vision and the CED document do not identify the sources of their knowledge, but CYF speaks of resources being maximized within the community as well as the university. This change is significant, as it suggests the university might gain knowledge from the community as well as the reverse. CYF prefers empowering, whereas ANR prefers empowerment. However, it is still likely that the resources of the community are different than those of the university, and that the necessity of both does not imply their similarity.

Comprehensive

The MSUE vision is apparently all-inclusive; it does not qualify which people it helps improve their lives. The program areas are no less comprehensive. CYF states that its mission is to help all individuals, again unqualified, and CED suggests a state-wide perspective in speaking of human and economic well-being and quality of life in the state of Michigan. ANR appears to be comprehensive: Everyone is affected by agriculture and natural resources in terms of what they feed their families, how they power their homes, and often where they work. However, as described in the analysis of the ANR value cluster around education, the removal of one clause and the last sentence narrows the focus to agricultural producers and those who work with natural resources, a much more limited set of clients. The effectiveness of this phrasing in encouraging ANR agents to be comprehensive in their scope will have to be assessed in Chapter Six.

Level of Focus

In the MSUE vision, education is the process through which improving people's quality of life is achieved. This puts the focus at the individual level (people), where it has historically been. The ANR mission also focuses on individual citizens (people), but considers the entire state perspective as part of its attempt to be comprehensive. CYF helps all individuals (people), but acknowledges the community context in which those individuals are found. CED spends little time addressing the individual level of programming, instead focusing exclusively on the community context. Therefore, CYF is the only one of the program areas to address both the individual (people) and community level, which are expected to be the major foci for agents based in the field.

Customer-Driven

The emphasis on "help" is found in the MSUE vision, CYF, and ANR mission statements. The use of this term instead of a more directive one suggests that knowing

the needs of clientele is important to the organization fulfilling its mission, which is after all education, not service. CED provides "assistance," which also suggests that there must be mutual agreement between the program area and client for Extension to become involved. The ANR and CYF missions reflect their different views of how to empower clients. ANR begins its mission statement with the statement that it "provides research-based educational programming," which suggests that if the university doesn't have the necessary knowledge or doesn't care about a particular customer need, then that customer is out of luck (empowerment). CYF begins by "maximizing resources within communities" (empowering), suggesting greater community involvement in the program than is found in any of the other mission statements.

Conclusions

The mission statements suggest that there is considerable difference between the program areas in the extent of their audiences, level of focus, and attention to the expressed needs of their clients. While the goal of education is the same, the form it takes appears to differ in methodology and value clusters. For a more in-depth comparison of the change initiative and the cultural context of Extension we now turn to the value clusters of the MSUE vision and the three program areas.

Comparison of Vision and Program Area Value Clusters

Just as we have compared the value clusters of Extension over time in Chapter Four, so we shall investigate the value clusters around the key terms for the MSUE vision and the three program areas. The first four key terms will be those covered for the historical documents in order to develop a comparison. They will be followed by key terms from the MSUE vision that should be found in each program area's statement.

Education

Just as it has historically been the focus of all Extension work, education is the key to MSUE's mission, where a focus on issues and opportunities in the educational process leads to improvement in people's lives (quality of life). An important instrumental value for agents is the decentralization of the organizational mechanisms for staff learning and evaluation (valuing), which is intended to lead to greater agent flexibility in educational efforts. Innovative technologies are recommended as a means of facilitating contact between campus and both communities and the agents based in them.

For CYF, education has the most value when it is across the lifecycle, echoing the 1973 report. Self-learning and self-efficacy are the desired outcomes, again taking up a theme already identified in the historical documents although not explicit in the vision statement. Given the high value placed on people in CYF, it is not surprising that the main context for opportunism is in providing education to demographically diverse audiences, as first suggested in 1968. This is in turn expected to result in more collaborative efforts in the communities that provide an arena for individual development, as recognized in 1973. This differs from CED's educational mission, which strives to increase community participation and leadership, with one expected outcome being the greater potential for future collaboration in the community. This is in line with both the trends and perspectives identified in the vision and the community focus found in 1973.

The ANR document has similarities and differences with the CYF document. Its goals are identical, seeking to bring about self-learning and self-efficacy, but rather than having a focus on diversity the ANR focus is on its traditional audiences of agricultural producers, whose demographic diversity is less important than their economic competitiveness. This focus is fairly broad, as ANR recognizes the need to prepare their clients for dealing with a global market. As previously identified in many of the historical documents, translating research knowledge to improve the quality of life of their clients and the rest of Michigan is the fundamental goal of ANR programming. Note that the

success of agricultural producers has a direct impact on food prices and availability and constitutes a major portion of the state economy. Thus, their success is connected to the quality of life of all Michigan citizens.

The value clusters around education in the MSUE vision are different from those found historically, but the program areas all restate common historical themes, albeit not the same ones. When comparing the program areas, CYF and CED appear to have adopted the most ideas from the MSUE vision, most significantly collaboration, community and diversity. ANR appears to be the most traditional, grounding its values in the fundamentals expressed repeatedly since 1914 of translation, research, and quality of life. For diversity, the nature of the ANR focus probably has more to do with its lack of emphasis than an explicit choice: It is more important to make sure producers are productive than to try and make the body of producers more demographically diverse. How ANR agents value diversity in this climate will be interesting in its implications for the importance of job characteristics to acceptance of organizational culture.

Opportunism

Opportunism is one of the new additions to the Extension mission in the MSUE vision, being one focus for education that will improve clients' quality of life. Coordination between the program areas is expected to promote the unity of function, more futuring, and opportunism in programming and initiatives. Opportunism is valuable at all levels of the organization: It is connected to the organization's process of creative change and recommended for individual agents in their (staff) learning. The connection to change is found in 1959 and 1968, while the staff learning context is found in 1948 and 1983. Futuring is an outcome of opportunism in 1959, but the unity of program areas' function is only implied in the 1973 report's emphasis on centralizing and coordinating the functions of lifelong education. This is a major difference between the MSUE vision and the 1973 report: The focus on decentralization in 1992 versus the focus on centralization

and increased coordination in 1973. While the MSUE vision recommends coordination between the program areas, it moves the responsibility for it into the county offices instead of keeping it on campus. This will be a crucial point in the analysis of agents' perceptions: Do they prefer the 1973 structure or that proposed in 1992?

For the CYF program area, diversity is connected to opportunism in several contexts. First, opportunism is recommended in bringing education to diverse audiences. Second, futuring and drawing on the diverse strengths of CYF itself makes it easier to strive for excellence via opportunistic programming and initiatives. Third, opportunism is essential for collaboration to take place. Without it, Extension will only be able to act as a leader of passive audiences. CED makes a similar connection, arguing that cooperation with other agencies is an opportunity to increase collaboration because it improves community leadership and participation, which results in a greater community potential. In contrast, ANR has a very utilitarian view of opportunism, seeing it as necessary to keep Michigan's economy competitive and a good strategy for effective education. Futuring is seen as an opportunity to prepare for and take advantage of expanding markets. Thus, ANR has much more concrete formulations of opportunism as an instrumental value, while the MSUE vision and the CYF and CED program areas set it up as more of a terminal value for the organization.

The historical context supports the ANR view in assumptions although not in their details, with instrumental uses predominating in 1948, 1959, 1973, and 1983. The only case where opportunism is a terminal value, in 1968, is at the opposite end of the spectrum. In 1968, everything is seen as an area of opportunity, and all questions of selectivity and even focus are disregarded in allegiance to the value of opportunism. Whether the change that faces Extension in the 1990s is seen as threatening or beneficial should be key to understanding agents' sense-making of the vision.

Cooperation

Cooperation is no longer part of the name of Extension, but it remains important to staging effective educational efforts in the MSUE vision. This continues the historical pattern of connecting cooperation and efficacy, as found in all of the documents analyzed. Because it focuses on the social problem and not on preserving the turf of various agencies, it is a comprehensive method for fulfilling the Extension mission. This also echoes the past value clusters around cooperation, particularly as found in 1959 and 1973. Given this historical consistency, the statement that cooperation is an Extension tradition is to be expected. In fact, similar sentiments are expressed in 1983.

CYF makes cooperation a part of their action plans for education, thereby tying cooperation to opportunism and their ability to reach diverse audiences. ANR emphasizes that cooperation improves education, but does not make connections to opportunism and diversity. CYF pairs collaboration with cooperation when listing the relationships that its programs facilitate, while ANR subsumes cooperation under management and includes varying levels of involvement from active joint work to referrals. Of the three program areas, it is CED that makes the most of cooperation. Cooperation is essential to being customer-driven in communities and must be paired with comprehensive coordination of MSU resources for the most effective development of program strategies. The latter cluster is also found in 1959 and 1968. By maximizing cooperation, leaders are created, community participation increases, and opportunities for future collaborations develop. The impact of cooperation on the economy is global in scope, but also helps at the individual level by helping create knowledge by educating people across their lifecycle. Thus, cooperation is central to the work done in CED programs, overlapping with CYF and the MSUE vision but going far beyond them in scope.

Historically, cooperation has been key to Extension's success. This is recognized in all the vision and program area documents, with the greatest emphasis being in CED.

This importance at the community level is reflected in the 1973 document, but all levels are important across the history of Extension.

Community

The Issues Identification process introduced at the conclusion of the MSUE vision statement has valuing community input as a key focus. This is a change from 1948, 1959 and 1968, when identification of issues was left to Extension and other agencies. However, the 1973 report makes community involvement very important to being customer-driven, and the 1983 report calls for a more formal procedure for evaluating (valuing) community needs. The MSUE vision also roots collaboration in communities, grouping it within the Guiding Principles of being customer-driven, involving futuring, knowledge-driven, and leading to self-learning. This is a new development, implied in 1973 but not explicitly stated. The past focus on community has focused more on creating leaders and increasing participation, leading to potential for collaboration rather than describing its components, as the MSUE vision does.

There is no mention of community in the ANR document, probably because agricultural producers are seen more as separate individuals than as a group that lives and works together in the same place. With this perception in place, it makes little sense to discuss a community that exists only as a label. CYF emphasizes both the individual (people) and community level in discussing the need to evaluate (valuing) educational impacts of programs. CYF also encourages collaboration through research-based programming that fosters both participant and community ownership, and argues in favor of the diverse audiences within a community having equitable participation in its programs. As noted above, the 1973 and 1983 documents note the importance of valuing impacts in the community, but the rest of the CYF value cluster is new.

Naturally, Community and Economic Development (CED) places the greatest importance on community. CED programs are oriented at the community level, and thus

both require and encourage cooperation with other agencies and individual participation in their educational and economic programs if they are to achieve their goal of improving quality of life in the community. The potential for collaboration depends on involving community leaders and people participating in education; this cluster has been seen before in 1968 and in the MSUE vision. Comprehensive coordination of MSU resources and cooperation with other agencies are important to helping a community; this combines the previously selective focus on either coordination (1948, 1973) or cooperation (1959, 1968, 1983) as key to community efficacy at different eras of Extension. Finally, increasing community competitiveness is an important focus of CED efforts; this value combination would also fit ANR, if the traditional audience of that program area were to be thought of as a community.

The place of community in Extension's value clusters has changed over time and differs across program areas. The history of Extension applies community as one of several levels of program focus, and recently has acknowledged the need to assess the impact of Extension at the community as well as individual level. The vision makes community the focus for the issues identification process and the context in which collaboration will occur, a change from prior formulations that never got beyond identifying sources of collaborative potential. ANR neglects community entirely, while CYF closely follows the MSUE vision and CED expands on both to demonstrate the wide applicability of the community value to Extension concerns. Whether this applicability has been communicated to agents and whether they approve will be an interesting question for the next chapter.

Summary: Program Areas

All three program areas shared the key term education; cooperation and opportunism were both key terms for one of the program areas and frequently clustered with other key terms where they were not key terms themselves. These values are all

important elements of Extension history and the current vision; however, they have a different place in each program area's value clusters. ANR and CYF rate education as the mot important value, which is not surprising given the historical prominence of education in Extension rhetoric. However, education does not go unchallenged in CYF as it does in ANR. Management and opportunism are both instrumental values for ANR, but life-cycle, diversity and collaboration are all terminal values for CYF. CED also has all of its key terms as terminal values, making ANR the exception among the program areas for having one dominant value instead of several.

Program Area Strategies for the Future

The program areas' strategies for the future differ across three dimensions. First, how are the program area missions defined? That is, what are each area's programs intended to do? CYF attempts to set up an organizational structure that meets programming goals for diverse groups across the lifecycle while allowing opportunities for staff learning (a subset of education). CED takes a position as a community leader, catalyst and facilitator, as with the Industrial Extension Service. ANR strives to apply educational programs to address specific problems. Thus, the definition of success varies; whereas ANR has specific targets and a quantifiable measure of its efficacy, it is far more difficult for CYF and CED to empirically demonstrate that they are being effective. The problems of children, youth and families are best addressed through prevention programs and continuing involvement in their lives. In contrast, the measure of success in ANR is the elimination of the need for continual involvement on a particular issue. By taking a broader and enduring perspective, CYF differentiates itself from the traditional Extension paradigm of specifying a problem and solving it, departing once finished. ANR preserves this paradigm, setting up the first contrast between program areas.

Second, how do the procedures developed for the mission differ across program areas? CYF has goals of getting and keeping knowledgeable and effective staff (valuing staff learning), engaging in a futuring process to encourage creative thinking, developing and applying models of development, and using a total comprehensive marketing strategy to reach constituents and involve them in collaborative efforts. CED intends to act as a catalyst for community development by focusing on the educational delivery of programs in human resource development, initiating leadership in communities, balancing economic with environmental needs, and planning for a competitive global marketplace. ANR works to implement an Integrated Pest Management system and an Animal Management Advancement Project, pilot MSU - industry partnerships, target improving trade opportunities, and set up an analytical framework for assessing (valuing) competitiveness. The apparent difference is again in the specificity of issues: Where CYF and CED function on a conceptual level, ANR concerns itself with the implementation of practical solutions to specific problems.

Third, what are the specific issues addressed by each program area? CYF addresses the creation of "cutting edge programs" and an intent to "program across the lifecycle," with specific foci including nutrition, increasing accessibility through innovative technology, superior marketing efforts (advertising), building networks and cooperating with the Institute for Children, Youth and Families (ICYF) and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. CED focuses on developing employment skills across the lifetime (lifecycle), job maintenance and creation, public sector involvement (participation) in communities, developing a common method of training agents (staff learning) for industrial extension, and planning and implementing the Michigan Industrial Extension Partnership (MIEP). Finally, ANR lists pest management, waste management, marketing Michigan products, animal management, dairy, livestock, field crops, fruit, vegetables, forestry, sea grant, turf, consumer horticulture, water quality, floriculture and landscape ornamentation as issues requiring ANR educational programs. Once again, the specificity

of ANR strategic planning is much greater than that of CYF or CED, with concrete issues being set forth in place of abstract concerns about administrative arrangements.

In sum, we can describe the CYF approach as one focused on the creation of a method for delivering programs and developing new ones, the CED approach as organizing communities to improve, and the ANR approach as categorizing existing, concrete issues and recommending the correct techniques to apply.

Implications for Analysis of Interviews

How then should past values be expected to play a role in the negotiation of a new culture? There are three issues to be addressed. First, in which cases are the values found in the historical documents incommensurable with those found in the vision? Incommensurability occurs when applying different assumptions leads to conceptually unrelated decisions. Second, what patterns of strategic ambiguity might be expected given those differences? Strategic ambiguity is the conjunction of multiple values within a syllogistic argument intended to raise or lower the relative prominence of a specific value. Third, which value clusters are likely to be major topics of argument? The answers to these questions will structure the analysis of interview data to mark the points at which members of MSUE abandon the established cultural paradigm and accept a form of the outreach vision encouraged by the MSUE leadership.

There are several points at which Extension paradigms might be incommensurable. First is the distinction between focus and selectivity. The 1948 report uses education as a justification for limiting the organizing activities of agents. The 1968 report creates both a new breed of specialized agent and the position of program aides to increase Extension's capacity to meet client needs. The philosophies behind these two documents are incommensurable on this issue: Should Extension define its niche and do its best to serve the state and nation within it, or should it strive to continually expand the scope of its

mission and responsibilities? The 1992 vision uses focus both in the sense of critical issues and selectivity, but its true emphasis is on foci. The attempt to cover over the difference should not be expected to help the change effort.

The second distinction concerns cooperation. The vision presented argues for MSUE playing a leadership role in bringing together different organizations to provide resources for the many outreach programs that exist now and are being added to fulfill the new mission. However, Dressel (1987: 226-7) gives four reasons why the CES was not established as a single coordinating agency for public service, a similar goal to what is articulated in the 1992 vision statement. These reasons include (1) the preeminence of agriculture from the inception of the CES, which encouraged a tight focus to prevent the diffusion of funding; (2) rapid change in the relationships between experiment stations and departments as the latter took a narrower and more disciplinary view of teaching and research; (3) increasing department and professorial focus on department, discipline, and/or individual faculty advancement over service to society; and (4) the benefits of consulting tempting scholars to practice their skills for both professional and monetary reward, which raised their expectations for all scholarly activities, making service a poor professional risk. In short, specialization has been the operating value for the university since 1959 as Extension developed and expanded its focus. Specialists have been grouped into academic departments and colleges with their own requirements for faculty compensation and reward, while agents have been assigned program areas that serve a similar purpose. In addition, the division between on-campus specialists and off-campus agents has created a sharp distinction between the university and its extension services. By 1955, Continuing Education and Cooperative Extension, originally sprung from the same idea, had evolved into different organizations (Dressel, 1987: 223). They were rhetorically reunited in 1991, when the Assistant Provost for Lifelong Education became the Vice Provost for University Outreach, responsible for both extension and lifelong education, but the success of this union remains an empirical question.

Third, there is an important distinction between the letter and the spirit of the Extension mandate found in both the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. Agriculture was a central industry employing a majority of the population when the idea of a university for practical education came about. However, as the employment patterns and lifestyle of the majority of Americans has changed, the focus on agriculture was no longer in line with the spirit of the land grant university system, which was to provide education to all citizens. While agriculture remains a central focus of Extension efforts, other constituencies have come into being. The mandate to supply accessible education in practical applications of knowledge is appealed to as justification for programs that answer the needs of these new constituents. The problem comes down to an interpretation of the tradition of Extension: Is its defining purpose the education of farmers and related constituencies regarding agricultural technologies, or is it an evolving responsibility to all citizens to provide the opportunity for practical education? These two traditions are incommensurable, and so a paradigm shift is required. Most importantly, this incommensurability is fertile ground for ambiguity. Agents could see Extension as having a tradition of change under either paradigm: The change could be a first order change in the methods used to meet the same goals without changing the focus, or it could be a second order shift to the broader focus with or without the change in method. Thus, agents could go either way depending on their existing values.

The above paradigm differences suggest several uses of strategic ambiguity. First, cooperation (and to a lesser extent coordination and collaboration) and participation are major instrumental values justifying changes in activities and programs. Their greatest concern should be with selectivity, but these values in particular allow for the refutation of selectivity by broadening expectations for the resources available and the proportion that can be put directly into programs instead of going to administrative costs. The unstated assumptions that support this are the benefits of cooperation versus existing competition and duplication of effort, the absence of costs associated with coordinating efforts, and the

resources that are accessible when all are participating in the effort. The mandate implied by these assumptions could easily be misconstrued as a causal force: Because our values would be justified if X were true, X must be true. This error in reasoning is a potent one that, if encouraged, should reap positive results.

Second, the use of selectivity versus focus should be carefully observed. One way in which this contrast can be elided is by using specialization as a substitute for selectivity. If the need is for specialization, then the benefits of cooperation and participation mentioned above can be brought in to justify a broadening of mission based on the wider access to resources and expertise made available under the new systems of cooperation (as in 1968). Selectivity for the whole is no longer a viable concern in this case, instead being redefined as an issue for individual departments and program areas.

Third, the tradition of the CES will be carefully edited to convey a sense of the broader mission of outreach instead of the narrow one of extension. A comparison with statements found in the historical documents already discussed will be illuminating, for revisionism is a primary tool in cultural change efforts. One implication found in the recommendations of the Report of the Provost's Committee on University Outreach (1993) is the drawing of parallels between new plans and existing programs to suggest that the university already accepts the implications of the change, even if that has not been stated in so many words. It is much easier to argue for a revealed truth than a constructed one, so every parallel between existing programs and desired structures will be taken up as further evidence that the new vision has already begun to take hold and is a natural outgrowth of the university's tradition. The Lifelong University (1973) uses this argument in its conclusion. But a tricky problem still remains: How can this be extended from programs where the desired structure already exists to those where it does not? The danger in claiming that a change effort is already taking place is that members might take a complaisant attitude and assume that no further change is necessary. To avoid this, the argument must be phrased as a struggle to avoid falling away from the tradition of

Extension. When a report appeals to tradition as sufficient motivation to adopt the recommendations which improve the efficacy of Extension and addresses the fact of change in the environment (and, by implication, within MSUE), the legitimacy of the argument from tradition rubs off on the argument from environmental change. Thus, when the call to change is paired with the rhetoric of tradition, members trying to argue against the need for change are faced with a Catch-22: If they claim the changes are not needed, they deny part of the tradition they wish to uphold. But if they desire a different form of change, they stray from the mission of the organization. However, the distinction between first and second order change noted above remains problematic; the language of the change will have to be exceptionally unambiguous to demonstrate which sense of change is more in line with the history of Extension. Thus a vision can become a self-fulfilling prophecy by coherently arguing for a return to "traditional" flexibility.

Last, the role of change in the negotiation of the vision must be addressed from the viewpoint of strategic ambiguity. Tradition is one value likely to be associated with the pursuit of new and better solutions to problems, whether of delivery, support, or knowledge. By making innovation into a part of Extension history, future changes take their place in a progression dictated by the mission of the organization. The technical changes that are advocated will be less important than the assumption changes that they mask. By beginning with improvements in delivery, the stage is set for more conceptual changes that make sense of the new structure resulting from those innovations. Keeping the conceptual changes secondary but present will be the major task of strategic ambiguity in this case.

The previous paragraphs have set up the issues of particular interest to this study. The important values of Extension over its history have been charted and are available for comparison with both the 1992 vision and the values articulated by agents in interviews about Extension. The values suggested by the 1992 vision might illuminate the negotiation of the vision with the existing culture. Areas of incommensurability and likely

uses of strategic ambiguity have been reviewed. The next step is to apply these findings to the statements of the people involved in the process, the agents and administrators of MSUE. By using the framework of paradigm theory to organize the suggested value concerns, an accurate and informative account of the negotiation process' successes and failures may be constructed out of members' responses to questions posed in the behaviors, values and assumptions of the culture being negotiated.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIELD CULTURE OF MSUE

The present study of the field culture of MSUE was derived from interviews with agents. This culture will be described in four parts. First, personal experiences of agents will be described in order to set forth the demographics and prior experiences of the interviewees. Second, the fundamental factors in the field culture of Extension will be discussed. Third, the agents' perceptions of extension, outreach, and MSUE's mission will be depicted. Fourth, the details of how agents applied their values to various aspects of their jobs covered in the MSUE vision will be described. Quotes are used to illustrate how agents make sense of their organizational world. In order to preserve confidentiality, the agents are referred to by arbitrarily assigned numbers; Agents 1 through 8 are CYF agents, and Agents 9 through 17 are Agriculture agents. By providing a constant label for each agent, consistencies in particular agents' responses can be followed throughout the discussion. Where necessary, details about the agent's county affiliation and job responsibilities will be provided. In these cases, the number will be deleted to assure that the agent's comments and affiliations cannot be used to deduce his or her identity. Gender is also disguised by alternating between the pronouns his and her, and she and he.

Once this description is complete, the value clusters of Extension history and the new vision will be compared to those identified in this chapter. Following this comparison, the vision's success will be assessed and explanations presented for the results. In conclusion, a portrait of the "new" Extension as it exists in the field is presented.

Personal Experiences

The agents interviewed had a variety of backgrounds. The majority had some contact with Extension before joining the organization. It was difficult to find agents with over 20 years experience. Many older agents retired in the preceding year; in fact, nearly every agent referred to some change in their own position, office, or nearby counties *within the past year*. In most cases, the change came up in a negative context, with the agent describing how his/her job required rebuilding relationships that previous agents had broken. These examples were most often provided by Agriculture agents in rural counties and districts.

There were some differences between relatively new and the more established agents. First, agents with over 20 years of experience had contact with Extension (most in Michigan, a couple in adjoining states) prior to joining, in either 4-H or from farm work. These agents had Bachelor's degrees and no desire for further formal education. In contrast, agents with under 10 years experience were all either working on, or had received, their Masters' degrees. One agent had a PhD. These newer agents had often had some contact with Extension, but several had not before coming across the job opening. This was commonly due to growing up in an urban area before 4-H was there. Most of the less experienced agents (less than 10 years in Extension) had worked in industry before beginning their Extension careers. Thus, they began at a slightly older age than had the more senior agents. There was no difference in the number of Agriculture and CYF agents across tenure.

When asked if anything about Extension had surprised them when they first arrived, county politics was cited as an unexpected obligation, and a universally disliked one. Several agents stated that they would like to be less involved in politics when asked what they would most like to change about their jobs. Several agents with no or little contact with Extension prior to being hired as agents stated that they were surprised with

the full range of Extension work, beyond their own speciality and program area. Several agents mentioned that new agents had no formal direction upon reaching their office, and had to get informal guidance from more experienced agents in their offices, and from experienced agents with similar responsibilities in neighboring counties.

Agent Key Terms

The field offices of Extension agents are a different world from that depicted in official documents. The agents had three fundamental characteristics that serve as "key terms" in this analysis. First, they are concerned with the practical use of knowledge. They have little patience with abstract ideals and fuzzy visions, but want to know the bottom line: Will people understand it? What will it teach them? Can clients continue using the information without returning to Extension for more information? Second, they have a strong allegiance to their counties. They live and work in specific areas with local residents. Third, they love their jobs. The mission of Extension is described as being a sacred trust, as involving missionary work. Agents are committed and self-motivated to help people. They see the results of their programs and have to live with the consequences, good or bad. Extension Agents <u>are</u> the university in Michigan communities, and they are proud of that fact.

Practical

Agents' desire for practical application of knowledge means they do not care for administrative paperwork and meetings that have no concrete results. Agents 10 and 12, both Agriculture agents, call the annual Extension School a waste of time, because they do not think it provides valuable in-service education or adds anything to the work that agents do:

> A lot of times [Extension School's] a big waste of time. And people hate going over there because of that. Unless they're there for a specific committee meeting they're not getting any sound inservice education. (Agent 12: 9)

Agent 10 describes the ways in which agents can avoid contact with administration and get back to their counties as quickly as possible having made an appearance. The same principle applies for administrative record-keeping. Agent 9 comments that it is pointless for her to keep track of the categories of constituents she serves:

> Cause to me, if I'm doing a good job it doesn't matter who it is, or what group they are, they're gonna get just as much attention from me. So I find it tedious to record the different categories. I get a little upset about that. (Agent 9: 17)

These agents are not alone; nearly every one of the agents stated at some point that they wished they had less paperwork to do so they could get into the community and do their real job of helping constituents instead of doing record keeping.

The practical orientation of agents is part of the way in which they differentiate themselves from the university. While they identify strongly with its land-grant mission, they do not believe that the university respects "faculty in the field" as much as they deserve. Therefore, they emphasize the usefulness of their informal teaching in contrast to the rigid strictures of formal education. Several agents had experience as teachers: One had been a substitute teacher, another was a former principal and superintendent of schools, and a third had previously been a professor at another land-grant university. All agents considered informal education the mission of Extension. The difference comes down to formal versus informal procedures: The majority of agents thought that informal structures gave them the flexibility they needed to put knowledge into practice, while formal structures were a waste of time and resources. To the extent that they saw the university as creating formal categories, they rejected its educational methods as inappropriate to the field where they did their jobs. Thus, there is a strong connection between the values of practical use, informal structures, and a county focus.

County Focus

Agents' jobs depend on their serving the counties in which they work. This has three impacts on their perceptions. First, they value knowledge obtained in the field and believe that the university should change its methods of evaluation to reflect the importance of field experience. For example, new agents spend their initial time on campus instead of in the field where they will soon be working. Agent 16, an Agriculture agent with over 20 years in Extension, comments that

> When I went in, you spent a month working with the staff there, Extension staff. You had the opportunity to get exposure across the total Extension....too much of the time now is spent on campus...and then you're put into a county. I think that time spent in another county, learning what Extension is all about, is a lot more valuable than two weeks spent on campus going through those programs. (Agent 16:3)

In fact, the training provided in the field is sorely lacking:

> My biggest surprise and disappointment was that we really do not do a good job of training new people in the organization. You can sit there and read all you want and look at all the pictures in the books, but until you actually are in the role of an Extension agent for a six months, eight months, a year, you really don't have any clear idea of what you're doing. I mean, none. (Agent 11:2)

This leads into agents' second perception, that campus Extension administrators and non-specialist faculty (as well as some specialists) have no idea what's going on in the field, and thus are not qualified for their responsibilities. When asked what would most help Extension work in the field, Agent 4 responded:

> Competent people who understand what it is to work in the Extension staff in the field in programming positions on campus....They don't want to know and all they're concerned about is their little niche in the MSU society and everything else is secondary to that...many times you need to do it the way they want it done or you're in trouble. (Agent 4: 12)

In addition, agents thought that Extension's potential to perform the role of a "front door" to the university was unrecognized by the university as a whole:

> I think they [the university] have no concept of what Extension does, what the possibilities are...they've really got to groom us to be a front door access to people in the community to promote the university. (Agent 6: 23)

The solution to these problems is to get Extension administrators and specialists into the field, where they can learn exactly what it's like. Agent 15 describes the response of specialists who came into the field to work directly with clients:

> state specialists who were involved in my program that came down and said "boy it's good to hear what people think of the way we say you ought to do something versus the way it gets done in the field." (Agent 15: 5)

Extension administrators and specialists who demonstrated their lack of field knowledge were held in uniformly low esteem. Agents had no tolerance for campus faculty who failed to recognize that there is life beyond East Lansing:

> I've had a campus specialist who I asked to look at data on a research project say "well, you can come to my office and look at it." And I went "your office is 5.5 to 6 hours away from me. And you expect me if I want to look at those numbers to drive down to campus." (Agent 1: 9)

This attitude was summed up by the agent who said, "It's a lot further from campus to _____ county than from _____ county to campus."

The third impact of agents' county affiliation on their perceptions was their responsibility to county government for clerical, political and financial support. They were not pleased with administration efforts to take them out of the county:

> I feel that when you take on the responsibility of being a county agent then you base your major parts of your responsibility in the county itself....I feel that we've gotten away from this a little bit. The university expects field agents to spend too much time on committees and things that's occurring at the university and not enough time in their own counties where a fairly sizable amount of our financial resources are coming from. I see new agents coming on, for example, that I feel spend way too many days out of their counties to really get familiar with their counties and their situations. (Agent 14: 6)

Agents also valued their own experience in the field as more educational than campus learning. Agents 1 and 4 both stated that at times, the agents need to get down and dirty with clients in educational activities. As Agent 1 explained:

> I always felt that I couldn't ask a volunteer to do something that I haven't done myself....How could I support that person if I hadn't experienced that myself and knew what to expect? (Agent 1:15)

This was more common to CYF than ANR agents. Agent 17 set the limits on agent's roles in describing his own as "an educator and a facilitator. I'm not a foreman." (Agent 17: 11). However, Agent 17 did serve as president or secretary in several community organizations because it was traditional for the county agent to hold those positions. This need to answer client expectations regardless of campus-generated policy and true need was strongest for the most senior agents, but shared by many with less seniority in both program areas.

The county focus invokes several values. First, it reaffirms the value of informal education, of learning by doing, by program staff as well as clients. Second, it elevates field knowledge over campus knowledge, especially in the area of identifying needs. Third, it places agents' obligations in the county and in communities instead of on campus, and gives them a justification for refusing campus directives and responsibilities that take them out of their counties. The best example of all these values is the insistence that agents should be socialized in the field, not on campus. The field is where agents learn how to do their jobs and make their contacts, and it is the field that they identify with and are committed to serve.

Committed

The most consistent fact about the agents interviewed was that they love their jobs. Every agent took pains to make that clear, although their reasons for commitment

varied. Agent 11 summed up the opinions of many agents when she answered a question about what she would change about her job:

> I wouldn't change my job....Other than the salary. You want my wish? My wish is that I could make about 20% more than I do....I wish we could get paid more. But other than that, my job I love. I wouldn't change...I smile, I'm in a good mood virtually every day I come to work. How many people in America can say that? (Agent 11: 12)

The low pay was used by several agents to demonstrate their commitment: If we aren't committed, the agents argued, why do we work long hours for low pay? This is also reflected in the professional goals agents had. The most commonly articulated goal was doing their best to help their constituents. Apart from this, many agents expressed surprise at the question and responded similar to Agent 17, who said, "Well, I ought to have some, shouldn't I?" (Agent 17: 14). Among those who did have professional goals, further formal education was the most common. Agents 3, 10, and 17 all recently completed or were working on their Masters' degrees, and Agent 5 was considering going for a Ph.D. These agents all had 10 or fewer years with Extension; none of the agents with over 20 years experience thought further education was important for them.

The flexibility and opportunity that Extension work offered agents to do their own thing was a major reason given for agents' commitment. Agent 17 enjoyed the independence of his position, while Agents 7 and 12 stressed the chances they had to stretch their responsibilities into new areas that were of interest to them:

> my philosophy with Extension is that you do anything you want to do until someone tells you no....you make a relationship with one group, or you set up a program in some area and you continue to do those things you think are important and valuable and you test the system to the point where if somebody says no you know you've gone too far. (Agent 7: 4)

The flexibility of the agent and of the organization were both frequently mentioned as characteristics of a good Extension agent: Someone who has the ability and the freedom to deal with a wide variety of issues in a situation-specific way.

The commitment of Extension agents stemmed from the values of having a people focus, creativity, and flexibility. As we shall see in the next section, Extension's mission has always been to serve the people, and this contact is both essential and highly rewarding to agents. Creativity was often coupled with this people focus, as agents enjoyed the chance to be creative in providing the education that their clients needed. Finally, flexibility in their own work and in the requirements of the Extension organization was cited as crucial to both their success and their enjoyment of their jobs. Anything that impeded this flexibility was seen as negative, a detraction from the quality of their experiences as a member of Extension. This value cluster was important to their wanting to remain in Extension; as one agent said, "If I'm really still having fun, I won't retire at 60" (Agent 6: 6).

MSUE and the University

This section looks at the patterns in agents' definitions of outreach and extension, the characteristics they ascribe to the Extension mission, and their interpretations and ranking of the guiding principles recently articulated by the President of Michigan State University. The resulting discussion is designed for comparison with the analyses of mission statements in Chapters Four and Five. The degree of comprehensiveness, extent to which they are customer-driven, the level of focus, and the values associated with education will be assessed to determine whether the vision and program area mission statements are reflected by agents in their own thinking.

Outreach

The most common definitions of outreach were getting out into communities (Agents 2, 3, 4, 6, 13, 14, and 17) and reaching out to people (Agents 1, 7, 15, and 16). The former has a community-level focus, while the latter targets individuals instead.

> it's how the university and their resources go into the community and work...effectively there to help people....it's the way that we let people know that we have something that can help them. (Agent 6: 13)

The tradition of translating research into practical information was only mentioned by Agent 11, but being customer-driven by answering people's needs was cited by Agents 5, 8, and 9.

> Outreach is really looking at all of the surrounding audiences and trying to thoroughly understand the needs of the people and the surrounding audiences....Looking at, and examining thoroughly, what those resource needs are and then really taking it there and delivering it (Agent 5: 16)

Opportunism was present in the definitions of Agents 13, 14 , and 17:

> [Outreach is] providing people with educational opportunities that they wouldn't have inside their community. (Agent 13: 15)

All of the definitions were comprehensive: Outreach was any effort to reach outside the university. However, there appeared to be an association of outreach with formal education for Agents 3 and 10:

> for me outreach has been more formally associated with the university as opposed to Extension personnel teaching those things. (Agent 10: 12)

This could be a reference to the Continuing Education Service programs, which were consolidated with the Extension Regional offices in 1991 when the position of Vice Provost for University Outreach was created. However, this is not a widespread association among the agents interviewed, so in the interests of brevity we will not go further with this speculation.

Extension

Most agents thought extension was very similar, if not identical, to outreach. The main connection was understood to be the comprehensive people-focus of extension and of university outreach:

> there's absolutely no difference, because regardless of what I'm doing, I'm trying to involve people. (Agent 4: 15)

In elaborating on their definition of outreach, several agents emphasized the customer-driven nature of extension, particularly Agents 1, 2, 3, and 10.

> It's adult education and through our contacts with our clientele, either through advisory boards or through contacts, we draw the conclusion that something is important and it's an issue...that needs to be addressed. Then we go ahead and put on some educational type function to address it. (Agent 10: 12)

Education also crept in to many more definitions, such as those of Agents 3, 6, 10, and 13:

> Outreach may have different goals than us, but reaching out to everyone is what we're all trying to do. Trying to educate everyone. (Agent 13: 16)

One difference in method was the perception that extension was more opportunistic than outreach, as expressed by Agents 9 and 10.

> we're actually relatively organized in doing it (outreach)....a purely teaching faculty, or research faculty person, has plenty of opportunities for outreach but they are rarely planned into their schedule....Whereas, we are looking at every opportunity to do it. (Agent 9: 17)

Thus, the general perception was that extension was already what university outreach wanted to be.

Summary: Extension and Outreach

In the 1992 vision, extension and outreach are portrayed as complementary processes, a connection that takes on added baggage for agents. Opportunism, one of the key terms in the ANR mission document, was cited by three Agriculture agents for outreach, but was even more important when describing extension. One CYF and one

Agriculture agent saw Extension as a coordinating agency for outreach, and another Agriculture agent saw the extension process as more focused. This difference suggests that extension was being interpreted as a model for outreach by the rest of the university:

> I think it's basically the same thing except we're trying to get more of this institution to be involved with it [extension]. And I think that's a plus. (Agent 16:16)

The problem is that this could lead to agents' opinions of extension being reaffirmed rather than changed. This would prevent the leadership from achieving what several agents recognized as the reason for the creation of the new term "outreach:"

> There may be people in the field and communities that have a connotation of extension that's not broad enough to include outreach....In some counties I think extension is defined as agriculture....calling it outreach is an attempt to get people to realize that MSU is involved in more than agriculture off campus. (Agent 7: 12)

Note that success is based in the field, not on campus. If the university is to succeed in broadening its approach, it will need to convince both field staff and their clients together, because field staff will follow clients' wishes more than they will the university.

Mission

The mission of Extension took several overlapping forms. Empowerment was the goal for five agents (Agents 2, 3, 7, 12 and 15). Agents 2 and 3 stated that the means to this end was bringing university research to the public:

> Our mission is to bring research-based information to the public. And to help them put that knowledge to work for them. (Agent 3: 12)

This is empowerment, not being empowering. University resources were used in education to improve clients' quality of life for Agents 1, 8 and 11:

> [Extension's mission is] to improve the quality of people's lives in Michigan through education...using the resources of MSU to accomplish that. (Agent 1: 13)

Educational opportunities were the goal for Agents 4, 6, 10, and 13:

> my mission is to provide educational opportunities, provide opportunities of a...program nature, of an activity nature, to the greatest number of clientele using the least financial resources possible. (Agent 4: 16)

Finally, helping people meet their needs was key to the mission for Agents 9 and 17:

> our goal ought to be to work...on a local basis responding to community needs. I think it ought to be one of our major goals...to assess community needs and respond to them based on some kind of legitimate process. And that's gonna vary from county to county. (Agent 17: 21)

Thus, the Extension mission is seen as involving education, taking a comprehensive scope, and being customer-driven.

The values found in the mission statements of agents were very similar to those articulated in the historical documents. The basis in research and its practical application has always been important. Extension's comprehensive mission was recognized, but it did not go beyond traditional phrasings. Agriculture agents tended to state that they served all people with agriculture questions equally, but did not address the rest of the county except as their quality of life improved through better agricultural practices:

> I do my best to allow, to help, individuals achieve their goals, whether they be agricultural or just not having a fly in the house, by providing them information, training, or education from reputable sources (university or otherwise) through a program that looks at local needs to decide what sort of things should be provided to the people in the area. (Agent 9: 17)

Interestingly, the customer-driven agents were all from Agriculture. However, the concern is not whether they respond to client needs, but rather how they determine what those needs are. CYF agents are less vocal in their allegiance to customer needs, perhaps due to the fact that the educational programs they offer for children and youth depend on the agents' recognizing what the clients need to learn and then teaching them as required. Education may be an unquestioned goal, but the real outcomes and their connection to Extension's sustainability in the counties is quite complex.

Guiding Principles

Toward the end of each interview, each agent was shown a list of six guiding principles for the university recently put forward by the President of Michigan State and asked them to rank them in order of importance. The principles were Access to Quality Education and Expert Knowledge, Active Learning, New Knowledge and Scholarship across the Mission, Problem Solving to Meet Society's Needs, Diversity within Community, and People Matter. While all agents were asked to rank them, some simply grouped them in categories of important and not important without distinguishing between them within those categories. Others simply talked about the values, claiming they were all equally important. This makes rank-order correlation impossible, but it does provide some insight into how agents make sense of formal value statements when they are confronted with them.

The principle that elicited the most consistent agreement across the agents was People Matter. The most common argument was that without people, there would be no purpose to Extension. Agents were frequently surprised that this value even had to be mentioned, because it is the whole purpose of Extension's existence. Access to Quality Education and Expert Knowledge was second in importance. Education is what Extension does, and bringing knowledge to the people wherever they are is the whole idea behind the Extension service. Two agents thought that New Knowledge and Scholarship across the Mission was identical to Access to Quality Education and Expert Knowledge, which suggests that Extension's mission of providing research knowledge was particularly salient for them. These first two values were considered to be important by nearly every agent; the worst any agent could say was, "How do people not matter?" (Agent 2: 14).

The remaining principles were all questioned by some of the agents, and so must be considered less important than the first two. Third in importance is Active Learning; Extension education is characterized by being informal adult education, and so the active involvement of clients is essential to its success. Active Learning was seen as an

instrumental value that followed from the previous two, and so it was not ranked as high. Problem Solving to meet Society's Needs came fourth. While many agents agreed that problem solving was what Extension was for, several questioned whether Extension could meet all of society's needs:

> My only concern with that is we cannot solve every problem in society. No matter how big or diverse and organization we are. We're not going to be able to solve every problem. (Agent 11: 18)

Another concern with society's needs was identifying what they are. Agent 13 stated

> I think society has enough trouble trying to decide what the problem is that needs to be addressed. (Agent 13: 17)

Thus, the emphasis that several agents read into Society's Needs determined their response more than the actual approach of Problem Solving, which was taken for granted.

The final two principles were never considered absolutely crucial to the success of Extension. Diversity was often recognized as important, but mainly because it was politically beneficial to do so. Several Agriculture and a few CYF agents pointed out that while serving everyone was key to the mission of Extension, increasing diversity in the people who chose to come to Extension programs was often pointless for their major audiences. If the swine producers in the county were all white males, there wasn't much the agent could do regarding diversity. Agent 15 put it this way:

> I think of diversity more in terms of producer size and economic base versus simple cut and dried things like racial background. (Agent 15: 6)

These agents recognized that barriers existed to increasing diversity in such fields, but they did not see it as an educational problem, and so it was placed outside the mission of Extension.

New Knowledge and Scholarship across the Mission was widely regarded as the province of the university, not Extension. When asked if the university would order the principles differently than Extension, New Knowledge and Scholarship rose in relative importance for a majority of agents; no other principles were thought to be different by

more than one agent. New Knowledge and Scholarship was ranked first by three agents, but two of them did so because they saw it as identical to Access to Quality Education and Expert Knowledge. New Knowledge and Scholarship also earned skeptical evaluations from several agents. Agent 1 commented, "sounds kind of flighty to me. Put that in real words" (Agent 1: 16). Agents 16 and 17 ignored it in their discussions. One agent began her discussion of the principles by picking New Knowledge and Scholarship as the least relevant principle for Extension:

> We quite often are busy just making sure that good old information gets to the right place and quite often we are able to answer things fine as long as the person just had a question and they didn't know the answer to it. It doesn't have to be new research to answer it.

Interestingly, this agent was the best educated of all the interviewed agents, holding a Ph.D. While this might mean that the agent simply knows enough in her area of expertise to not require constant updating, the agent's Agriculture responsibilities went well beyond that area. If the best educated agent is strongly against placing a high value on new knowledge in Extension, it seems likely that formal education is not important when evaluating this principle. Program area also appears to be relatively unimportant: Of the agents who ranked New Knowledge and Scholarship as important (regardless of ordinal ranking), four are CYF and five are Agriculture. Thus, no consistent pattern appears to exist in the data.

Summary

Agents appear to perceive outreach as a more comprehensive version of extension. This comprehensiveness comes from one of two sources. First, outreach is an attempt to involve more of the university in extension-type work, as noted in the quote from Agent 16. Second, outreach is seen as involving more formal methods of teaching, as quoted above from Agent 10. However, agents do not universally favor formal education; Agents 3, 9 and 17 state that they would enjoy the opportunity to teach formal classes, but most

of the other agents claim they are already too busy. Apart from being more comprehensive, agents interpret outreach as attempting to be what extension already is: Bringing university knowledge into communities to help people improve their lives through education. Extension, however, is seen as better focused and more opportunistic, and thus superior to outreach.

When discussing the guiding principles, agents often had questions about their usefulness and meaning. Agent 16 commented that they were all very broad, and so difficult to discuss in a meaningful way. The quoted opinions of several other agents from both program areas support this perception. What we can draw out of these principles is a reaffirmation of the fundamentals identified earlier. People are once again the focus of agents' concerns, and their access to education and knowledge is the traditional mission of Extension. Active learning, which was generally interpreted as hands-on, participative learning, was widely recognized as the method of choice, supporting the distinction between the university's formal educational system and the informal one of Extension. Diversity was seen as something to be counted and used for political reasons on campus, and so was outside the range of most agents' concerns. Finally, the concern of several agents over the lack of selectivity implied in Problem Solving emphasizes the agents' concerns with being practical and rooted in a county context. Society is too broad and complex to have definite paramount needs that can be addressed by Extension alone. These results provide evidence for the claim that agents actively apply their fundamental biases consistently across program areas to make sense of messages concerning the abstract elements of their work. The next step is to investigate how they interpret messages relating to specific aspects of their work as agents.

Agent Sense Making

The following observations are grouped into three subheadings: Perceptions of constituent relationships, perceptions of quality, and issues identification. Once again, quotes will be used to illustrate agent responses. The summary paragraph for each subheading will address the values at play for the agents. The use of these values in the ongoing process of sense-making begun by the presentation of the 1992 vision is of greatest importance here. However, while these values are not universally accepted, the extent of particular values' sway in the field culture of MSUE can be estimated based on value clusters across agents.

Client Relationships

Many agents initially defined their constituents as all the people in their county or counties (several had appointments in two counties); however, long time ANR agents stated that their constituents were the members of the county's agricultural community.

> You look at the whole Extension and the land grant philosophy [and it's to] disseminate information from universities to [agricultural] producers. And to me, those are the most important people. (Agent 16: 4).

Agents in rural counties usually went no further without prompting, as they were often either the only agent or one of a small number (particularly in the Upper Peninsula). Agents in urban counties defined their constituents in line with their official responsibilities, which were either by geography (e.g. CYF agents in Detroit and Ann Arbor) or program area (e.g., consumer agriculture or horticulture for ANR agents in Detroit). However, one urban CYF agent, Agent 5, described his efforts as focused on whatever the greatest need was at a given time:

> I spend the most time where the greatest need is at a given time...wherever the gravest need is at a given time in a community, that's where I am. (Agent 5: 5-6)

This suggests that agents need to be attuned to the specific needs of their clients in order to be successful. Thus, being customer-driven is one value active in this arena.

In describing their relationships with constituents, the first response was always "good," meaning that the agent felt she got along well with constituents. Volunteers were often included as constituents. Leadership was frequently mentioned, but it was usually qualified as being initially necessary, but ultimately being turned over to clients to achieve the goal of self-learning:

> I really try to help my clients become the leaders rather than myself. There are a lot of times when I'm the only resources person and in that case I would probably be the leader. But I think our main focus is to help them become leaders. (Agent 12: 5)

In some cases, the agent led when he had expertise no one else had, and collaborated when the agent did not know more than his clients:

> I take the leadership role as far as addressing how we handle this problem. What can we do to address that issue. Then, as far as collaborations, I collaborate with producers whether it's in test plots, having them come in to speak on areas where they're very comfortable or very proficient. I can't claim to be the most knowledgeable Ag person in the county because I have to know so many different areas. So I count on them. (Agent 11: 5)

The above examples are both from Agriculture agents. CYF agents are more likely to describe their relationships as essentially collaborative:

> If you develop your 4-H program using a developmental-type system where a lot of your volunteers are involved and you have a variety of committees and councils, and so on, that can really help determine some of the directions you want to go in. (Agent 4: 5)

However, the difference is one of degree, not kind. CYF agents are leaders when necessary and collaborators when they can be. Agriculture agents are more likely to describe the process as one of making their clients into leaders, a common value in Extension history, and speak more of cooperation than collaboration. Yet they do not see themselves as doing different things. In fact, some Agriculture agents argue that it is CYF that is inherently less collaborative:

> Adult education demands a different strategy than education of youth. Because adults...analyze, and they talk back and forth, and they question the rightness or wrongness of things. Whereas, youth and children tend to be more of a school-type learning where we have a knowledgeable person telling them exactly how it is. And adults are WAY different than that. (Agent 15:5)

It is interesting to see the argument that agriculture is only dissemination, one of the underlying reasons behind the new vision, turned on its head. This argument suggests that Agriculture agents recognize the criticisms leveled against them and are not willing to submit to labelling without counterattacking the new perspective on its own terms.

To summarize, the agents recognized the values of the MSUE vision as important and reflective of the work they actually do. Being customer-driven was suggested, and empowerment of people to be self-learners and leaders was advocated as the goal of all programs. Collaboration was one route to success, but it was not appropriate or possible in all situations, including one that could have been taken directly from the MSUE vision.

Quality Extension Work

Agents were fairly consistent when asked what made someone a successful agent. Flexibility in the face of diverse problems and people was the most common element, mentioned by 10 of the 17 agents interviewed. However, there were two types of flexibility mentioned. The first was the agent's flexibility in dealing with radically different situations from day to day:

> I handle a wide diversity of personalities. From old, crusty guys to really young, aggressive guys, to mellow laid back producers that don't let anything bother them. And you have to be adaptable to all those types of personalities. (Agent 11: 7)

The second concerned the flexibility of the organization. A lack of interference and oversight was considered very important to agent success by several agents:

> What helps me to be successful...I would say the ability to have the flexibility to do the job that I need to do without interference from a lot of supervisory people or administrative people. (Agent 7: 4)

It is important to recognize that these forms are complementary: An agent cannot be truly flexible in her personal manner unless the agent knows that her decision will not be second-guessed by others in Extension. Agent 4 states that

> Many times you do things because politically, locally, you better do it. Well, a lot of times you just don't make a lot of noise while you're doing it to bring anybody to take too close a look at what you're doing. And you do it because that's an expectation. And every county has those. And basically I learned that sometimes you keep your mouth shut. (Agent 4: 7)

In this case, by maintaining silence an agent can succeed in meeting his county obligations as required by the local expectations. As mentioned previously, agents affiliate themselves with their county more than the university on campus. When they must choose between university-based demands and those of the county, agents choose the county.

People skills was another common response, with many agents emphasizing the need to be able to make and maintain contacts in the community:

> you have to be able to go into any setting like that and not be afraid of...not knowing what's going on and certainly having no fear of not being able to answer, because you might not be able to. But make yourself the connection between those people and the university or whatever other organization you can help them get connected with that solves the problem. (Agent 9: 9)

Knowing how to deal with people is more important than technical knowledge; being competent is also necessary, but if you cannot deal with people your knowledge will never come into play.

> you have to be knowledgeable without being a know-it-all....You have to be familiar with the topic you're discussing with a producer, but you better not act like you know everything about the topic. They tend to resent that a great deal and they'll pin your ears back in a hurry if you come in and you're too talky....If you know it, say it. If you don't know it just say "I don't know" flat out and "I'll get back to you with the answer." They'll have a whole lot more respect for you. (Agent 11: 7)

Part of being able to deal with clients is being honest about the limits of your own knowledge. As just described, the agent who knows everything will be resented, and the

agent who is caught pretending to know when she doesn't will not be successful in working with the people of the county, and that will lead to Extension's efforts failing.

Other important factors in being a good agent included being a self-starter and committed. As Agent 6 said, "you just have to have the heart for it." (Agent 6: 6). Agents working in small offices and those serving the particular needs of a large county's entire population stressed time management and office organization as essential to getting their jobs done. Finally, developing a reputation as someone who was trustworthy, honest, and reliable was very important to continued success in a community. There were no differences in emphasis across program area, nor did agents believe that the necessary skills had changed over time.

Quality Extension programs were often described as excellent because they mobilized constituent volunteers to help their communities themselves, as in the Master Gardener program. Interestingly, while agents recognized this, in at least one case campus staff did not understand the benefit:

> unless we train other people to actually teach the programs for us, we're not going to get the word out. So that is one of the things that is spoken of, but the interesting thing is that when I called campus to suggest that this program be videotaped, the resistance was because I wasn't actually teaching the class. And it took a lot of talking on my part to get her to realize that this was even better because it was enabling - or empowering actually - experience where you get somebody else to do the class for you. (Agent 7: 5)

Collaboration and cooperation were other attributes of successful programs. CYF stressed collaboration, while cooperation and leadership development were cited more often by ANR agents. An example of an accessible, cooperative, customer-driven program is described by Agent 14:

> that was a good extension work effort because of the fact that this is an area where there wasn't a great deal of expertise....They all needed very similar types of education, they all needed similar types of marketing skills developed, and things like this. We were able to do this through the association that I established. (Agent 14: 4)

By setting up an organization to deal with specific needs through cooperative efforts, the agent was successful in delivering education to those in need. Thus, being customer-driven and accessible to audiences are important; this applies for both program areas.

When it came to evaluating Extension programs, there were several opinions put forth. Several agents discussed how programs used to be evaluated based on sheer numbers, then commented on the various reasons why that was not valid. Agent 11 described a program with ten participants who represented huge amounts of land in the agent's county.

> There, you went from...40% of your group utilizing the practice to 90%, and soon to be 100%. That's a successful program. I don't care that there were only ten people there. Those ten people represented about 40,000 acres of ground. (Agent 11: 8)

Agent 17 argued that small numbers had a large impact on a small community:

> those 25 farmers...that voice of 25 businesses, they're significant businesses given our local economy. Any businesses where hundreds of thousands of dollars of money goes through it every year is significant. (Agent 17: 7)

Thus, numbers of people doesn't necessarily make a difference in evaluating the effectiveness of programs, at least for Agriculture agents. The need to do what the community expects of you has been mentioned previously; it is also important for evaluation of effectiveness. Note also the implication that economics are the important factor; in CYF, demographics play the major role.

Tradition plays a big role in determining program effectiveness: Not only do you have to recognize new and coming needs, you also must continue to meet your traditional obligations. Several CYF agents stressed the need to continue serving traditional audiences. One rural county CED with a programming history in CYF states:

> We are really viewed and seen by the agricultural community as their agency to assist and to help the rural families. And I totally don't want us to lose that.

Evaluation of programming impact goes beyond numbers. It deals with the perceptions of one's clients that the agent is committed to them and will deliver the programs they believe they need. Several Agriculture agents see that as fading when the administration moves to issues identified for communities across the state, and warn that it will make the sacred trust between their clients and Extension wither away:

> It used to be farmers turned to the university for that neutral information. Now they've [industry] got their salesman out there and they're just pushing these guys saying "look, this is the result of our trial" and they [farmers] don't think to look to Extension as much any more - it's just go to the chemical companies. (Agent 11:16)

Essentially, Extension is seen as risking its unique status as an objective research-driven vehicle for agricultural education by following regional and state level issues rather than county needs and/or expectations (not necessarily the same thing). Extension success will have no foundation if it violates the expectations of its clients.

On a different tack, Agent 4 notes that the sure way to know your program is successful is to see who comes to it:

> School systems here are allowed one field trip per year and when they select yours, I guess that's telling you something, that you're offering a quality program. (Agent 4: 9)

Other CYF and ANR agents agreed that this type of customer-driven demand was a sure sign that a program was successful. The cost of one failure could be quite high:

> If you piss them off in the first program, they'll never be back. Never. And if you run a shitty program, they'll never be back. That's just the way it is. (Agent 11: 9)

Agriculture agents are more concerned about losing one client because they have fewer and they do not turn over as quickly as (for example) youth do. What they will not agree with is that their farm producers are any less important as an Extension audience.

The value of being customer-driven is more complex for Agriculture than CYF agents. They see it as a simple choice: Either continue to serve agricultural clients as in the past through providing objective research knowledge without the potential bias of

using grant money from industry to fund research and programs, or give up Extension's unique status and provide the same services that other organizations do. The latter option is seen as ultimately leading to failure because agents who do not do what their clients expect damage the relationships in the county that they need to remain effective. CYF agents recognize the importance of Agriculture to their counties, but they do not see the change in policy as nearly as threatening as Agriculture agents do. This difference will be further discussed in the next section, dealing with perceptions of the process used to identify issues for future Extension programs.

Issues Identification

Agent responses to the question about how the issues identification process did or didn't change agents' behavior aroused strong feelings among agents. The one constant was that no agent felt that he or she personally had changed in response to the process, for the same reason that they had always been doing the same thing before it was named issues identification. This was common for all agents, regardless of tenure in the organization, program area, or region. There was a minority of agents (four CYF) who believed that the process improved identification of needs:

> this was a major, major effort to bring together people and have them identify what their real issues and concerns were. Where before, maybe we had sort of a feeling as agents with a small number of advisory board people. But now we went to the people and asked them and that probably has been one of the major changes. (Agent 3: 3)

This was the most positive statement about the process from all the interviews. While several applauded the sentiment, and Agents 1 and 6 stated that the process helped identify needs better, the attitudes towards the process ranged from ambivalence through frustration to hostility.

The single most common complaint raised against the issues identification process was that it had no useful application. One CYF agent participated in the process in two

counties, one region, and statewide. The process was admitted to be interesting, but the results of the process were negligible:

> it was an interesting process but nothing has materialized....We have gone back to our advisory councils. We have nothing to report. Nothing has happened with that. Yea, they set up funds. I'm not sure I agree with the way the funds have been allotted....where's the money for us to do parenting education in the county? That was identified as an issue. How many years has it been? We have no money.

Another major complaint was that the final results at the state and even regional levels were completely meaningless. The three state issues identified were thought too broad to have any practical meaning:

> we took all these issues that came out of these counties and we kept distilling them down and distilling them down, and distilling them down until they actually had no meaning. (Agent 8: 8)

A couple of agents showed me their detailed county issues that they sent along to the regional meeting, and pointed out that they could not see how their issues became part of the three identified for the state.

The preceding quotes demonstrated the dissatisfaction of CYF agents with the process. Agriculture agents were less ambivalent and more frustrated and angry. Agent 17 had hoped that specific "canned" programs would come out of the process. Agent 10 stated that it was poorly executed because it was scheduled for a time of the year when the farm population was too busy to attend. Agents 11 and 16 expressed grave concern over whether the shift in focus would lead to cuts in support for Agriculture; Agent 16 was particularly concerned over the perceptions of agricultural community, expressing his fears that the emphasis on social programs would lead to a drop in the commitment of agricultural producers to Extension. This echoes the argument presented in the previous subsection, that Agriculture agents feared for the tradition of Extension that they could identify with and which kept them motivated in their jobs.

Agriculture agents were less than happy with the issues that were finally identified because they were not connected to Agriculture and were too broad to have any practical use. Agent 13 cynically noted that the only Agriculture issues brought up in her county was the one she put forward during the process, and noted that it had been added to the list of programs she was responsible for as much because it looked good as because it was needed in the county. Agent 17 did not have a problem with the process per se, but noted that the issues identified were actually more relevant to his county than traditional Agriculture was. Agent 12 argued that the process was a waste of time once it left the county:

> I don't think an issues identification process should have to take as long as that took. I don't think that they needed to have a state issues identification group after the counties already did it. I think it was a big waste of their time....because the people that were recommended for the issues had already gone through the issues identification process once. Now why would they go to the state level and do it again? (Agent 12: 7)

This echoes some of the concerns found among CYF agents. But where CYF agents were merely frustrated, the Agriculture agents were very concerned.

There are considerable differences between the two program areas in evaluating the issues identification process. CYF agents thought that it helped improve need identification and increased participation in program planning, but were frustrated at the lack of tangible outcomes. Agriculture agents had problems with the timing of the process, the deemphasis on Agriculture among the issues identified, the consequences of the process in the perceptions and expectations of their agricultural clients, and the final product of the lengthy process. The program areas agree on the lack of tangible outcomes and the relative uselessness of the state based issues for county programming, but disagree on the import of the formal process. CYF agents see it as a formalization of what has always been done, and while they begrudge the additional effort it requires of them, they do not see it as threatening their effectiveness. Agriculture agents believe that the process

will be seen by their clients as a dramatic shift in Extension priorities, violating both the sacred trust that Extension has shared with the agricultural community since its founding in 1914 and the mission of the land-grant university as formulated in 1862. They will not be as effective if the process turns their clients away from them; as several agents pointed out, the success of one's programs can be measured by who chooses to use them. The Agriculture agents wonder if they will have anyone willing to use their programs if the organization devalues Agriculture to the status of just another topical area and Extension to just another agency.

Conclusion

Overall, the differences between CYF and ANR agents appear to be centered in the shifting foci of Extension. The apparent problem is that ANR agents perceive the presence of a focus as a requirement for selectivity. They warn against "robbing Peter to pay Paul" and "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." They point to the tradition of Extension agriculture and demand to be told why they are no longer valued as highly as before. They are not opposed to the CYF agents; several CYF agents state that agriculture is and should remain an important part of Extension. Neither does Agriculture claim CYF is less important; one of the strongest advocates of Agriculture, Agent 11, points out that the return on CYF programs in the future may be ten times greater than the return on Agriculture programs. The point made by the agents is that there exists a balance in Extension, and the attempts of administration to shift it are not taken well. On this, the agents stand together: The Extension administrators do not know the field, and they are not doing all they could do to help Extension fulfill its mission.

Syllogisms and Strategic Ambiguity

From the values described above, we can identify the areas where the MSUE vision has been accepted and where it is not. For clarity, the areas of incommensurability will be segregated across program areas. Incommensurability refers to the inability to compare cultures directly because their criteria for evaluation are too different to be comparable. CYF and Agriculture are very similar on some points, but their differences need space to be developed sufficiently.

Children, Youth and Families

The MSUE vision is fundamentally different from agent values on four points. First, the vision advocates increased coordination of programs and more contact with campus by field agents. CYF agents accept the need for more coordination in the county office, but go no further than that. Because they are located in the county and identify with their clients more than their administrative superiors, agents do not see the benefit to increased coordination by on-campus administrators. Moreover, agent resentment at being undervalued by staff on campus leads them to close ranks and point to specialists in the field as proof of their worth. From their perspective, there is no reason why agents should accept campus coordination given that they know more about what is really important in the counties.

Second, the MSUE vision requires formal participation of community members in issue identification in order to achieve the goal of being customer-driven. But informal participation is the tradition. The attitude is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The existing system is faster, more comfortable for the clients and agents, and equally effective. The proposed vision yields no practical benefit beyond an official sanction for the issues identified. One factor that must also be addressed is the attitude of agents towards campus telling them what to do. Agents identify with the county and do not think the

university and campus staff have a good idea about what happens outside of East Lansing. For the campus administration to require a process that only adds additional work without providing practical benefits to agents, there must be a serious misunderstanding of agent values.

Third, the concept of statewide issues appears ill-conceived from the agents' perspective. What matters are the issues identified in the county; if there is a connection between state and county issues, that is fine. But the lack of any such connection, the absence of a practical purpose for the state level issues identification, means that agents have nothing to say to their constituents. Abstractions do not matter in counties; they want programs, new knowledge, concrete items that they can see in action. Without a practical application, which many agents hoped for from the issues identification process, agents see the process as a waste of time. The state level issues are a rhetorical device that carries little weight in the practical atmosphere of the county Extension office.

Fourth, the concept of change as a necessary ingredient for Extension's continued efficacy does not carry the meaning that Extension's leaders intend. Tradition is a powerful force in determining what county agents believe their clients want and how it should be delivered. While new methods are welcome, changing the priorities is not. Agents believe that Extension must continue to serve its traditional clients or fail to be customer-driven. The dilemma is this: Extension wants to serve its clients better. However, the clients do not recognize the nature of the change. Part of the change is moving away from the agents' deciding what is best for the clients towards joint programming efforts. Yet this spirit of collaboration is violated if Extension undergoes the change in priorities in contrast to the expectations and desires of its clients. Some of the strongest supporters of the vision are careful to say that they do not want to lose the special connection that Extension has with its clients around the state; but the change suggested is seen by many as leading to exactly that outcome.

While the vision has failed in several areas, it has succeeded in some of its most important goals for CYF agents. In particular, the elevation of self-learning and collaboration appear to be widely accepted. The harshest critics of other parts of the vision, particularly the issues identification process, advocate collaborative efforts and empowering individuals and communities to do for themselves what Extension has taught them to do. This theme in Extension history is further supported by CYF methods that encourage active involvement and interaction with clients, which are essential activities for empowering clients. Thus, it is not surprising that the vision is readily adopted by CYF, because their own traditions encourage the behaviors and attitudes advocated in the vision. Helping people solve their own problems, working to educate as opposed to serve, and the goal of human development are all historical themes that the vision elevates. The problem is that the vision does not capitalize on this tradition to encourage the adoption of other parts of the vision.

Agriculture

Where the CYF agents were unconvinced, the Agriculture agents were cynical or highly concerned. First, the vision describes Extension as an organization "Centered in the Present, Connected to the Past, Focused on the Future." Agriculture agents quarrel with this description by attacking it on its own terms. If Extension is centered in the present, then look at where it is. In a time of shrinking budgets and a changing environment, Extension must be selective in its programming. Therefore, the question should be, what does Extension do well? The answer, unsurprisingly, is Agriculture. Agents point to the sacred trust Extension enjoys with the agricultural community, with whom they have greater and more enjoyable contact with than the campus administration, and ask why it should be devalued. They look at the CYF programs and point out that other organizations are addressing the same problems in ways very similar to what the vision and other messages propose for Extension in the future. The logical question that the

Agriculture agents ask is what kind of future Extension is looking for by turning away from their traditional clients. How can agents be effective in their counties if they do not have something different to offer from everyone else? Agriculture agents see the vision moving away from the past tradition of Extension and refuse to believe that the future will be one they will be able to be a part of if current trends are allowed to change what makes Extension unique.

Second, the Agriculture agents are even more leery of the issues identification process than the CYF agents were. The dilemma noted there is even more pronounced in the Agriculture context: If people do not understand what is at stake or how agriculture works, then they cannot be effective participants in the process. Furthermore, the Agriculture agents believe they are customer-driven; if they are not, they will not have anyone showing up and will get no support from the county. Informal issues identification is part of their job, they know and accept it. Thus, they take offense when they are told that a process whose effects they see all the time is not working by administrators on campus who have little or no contact with the county. The benefits they see arising out of the issues identification process are in advertising the range of Extension resources for audiences that may not realize them. In effect, the issues identification is worthwhile if it makes informal issues identification easier by increasing agent contacts within the community.

Third, the idea that "Dollars follow Vision" is widely criticized by Agriculture agents. The unique attribute of Extension is its commitment to its clients and their needs, and in particular the educational needs of agricultural producers. To place funding sources before client needs, as this statement appears to do, is to violate clients' expectation that Extension will provide objective research-based information to help educate them to meet future challenges without assistance. Instead, money drives services. This suborning of attention to clients to the need for soft money is another example of campus politics having a negative effect on field work in the counties. Since

campus doesn't know the counties, it is not expected to be able to set an agenda for them. Once programs are based on non-community factors such as which grant it is politic to pursue instead of county need, clients will lose their trust in Extension. It has already been noted that most agents could tell a tale of an agent who burned bridges in his or her county; the Agriculture agents fear that the bridge will be burned for all of them.

Fourth, the need for a change in focus to follow society's development runs afoul of the agents' interpretation of focus. Knowing that Extension is in a time of financial trouble, and experiencing the issues identification process where no issue related to traditional agriculture was identified at the state level, Agriculture agents interpret the talk of a new focus as meaning that Extension will be selective in its use of resources. That is, Agriculture is out, Children, Youth and Families and Community and Economic Development are in. Agriculture agents respond that this shift in emphasis will have dire consequences, because agriculture has effects on the quality of life of everyone in the state through food prices, availability, and the economic health of a major state industry. If Extension pulls out, then the effects would be felt far beyond the relatively small number of Extension's agricultural clients. This is because Extension is unique in having the resources of a class one research university that also has a land-grant mission to draw upon in dealing with issues other agricultural service organizations rarely if ever address. This author is not competent to assess the validity of this claim; the very fact that Agriculture agents believe it is extremely important for understanding their rejection of the proposed change in focus.

Even with all these differences between the MSUE vision and Agriculture agents' cultural values, there are still some areas where the vision has been effective. In particular, the move to decentralize authority for evaluating agent performance and increase support for agent specialization in the field has met with a positive reception. Decentralization plays into the county focus of agents, and recognizing them as having expertise is a change long desired by agents in general. Agents agree that their County Extension Director

knows them best and is the best person to evaluate them because they are in the county and know what is going on. There were no complaints about County Extension Directors from Agriculture agents; this could be a reflection of the fact that the majority of County Extension Directors are still from an Agriculture background. The areas of expertise were seen as valuable because they increased the agents' flexibility and improved their technical knowledge in a field context. However, the acceptance of these changes did not affect the basic opinion that on-campus administrators did not know what Extension was really about in practice; they merely were a sign that the administration was beginning to recognize its own ignorance.

Summary

CYF and Agriculture agents had similar outlooks on many parts of the vision; they differed when it came to those parts that elevated the status of CYF. The key values of a county focus, the traditional sense of Extension, and the importance of field experience led the agents to reject those parts of the vision that competed with them. Agents did accept those elements of the vision that took a traditional value and connected it to other values in order to improve the functioning of the organization. However, as the strife over the extent to which the issues identification process was customer-driven attests, agents were quick to find fault with elements that violated their perceptions of what was practical and useful. In short, agents were quite happy to accept those elements of a first order change that agreed with their existing values, but tenaciously resisted arguments that advocated a deeper change by attacking the way in which the leaders of the change initiative tried to justify them.

The Values of the CES, Co-Learning, and the Agents of MSUE

To conclude this chapter, the value clusters from the historical documents will be compared with those of the proposed vision of MSUE and those observed in the field culture described in the interviews. The first value cluster concerns the level of focus and emphasis on centralization found across the three chapters of this rhetorical analysis. The historical documents have a national focus, with the sole exception of the 1973 Lifelong University report. They also recommend centralization at the level of the state university. In the MSUE vision, the regions and counties of Michigan are emphasized, and the decentralization of agent evaluation and knowledge resources into counties is advocated. The field culture embraced this decentralization and county focus, primarily because it increased the flexibility of the organization and the agents.

Second, access to education and the goal of clients' self-learning were recurring themes in the historical documents. The vision rephrased this, taking up the 1973 report's emphasis on lifelong education (or continual learning) and joining it to opportunistic education. In the field, access to education and self-learning in communities were cited as key elements of agents' jobs, drawing on their allegiance to the county population and the tradition of Extension procedures and rhetoric. While opportunism was mentioned, it was as an instrumental value to the terminal ones expressed above.

Third, the historical documents focused on national priorities and how the diffusion and translation of research from the land-grant universities could be used to improve the quality of life in the United States. The MSUE vision focused on county, region, and state priorities by identifying them in a formal issues identification process whose purpose was to improve Extension's relevance to society. The field culture of MSUE accepted the tradition of informal issues identification at the county level to improve the quality of life of all the people in the county, and, taken as an aggregate, the state. State level issues were thought worthless because they were too broad to have any

meaning for the practical work needed in the county. The formal process was only worthwhile to the extent it improved contacts and helped agents do their informal issues identification better.

Fourth, the historical documents based the success of Extension in its educational mission to the participation of people and communities in programs that created leaders and self-learners. The MSUE vision advocated collaboration with people and communities for mutual learning as the route to success. The field culture of MSUE rated the participation of volunteer leaders in the community and cooperation with community groups and organizations as the keys to educational success. Collaboration was accepted as a goal, but it was also recognized as requiring a certain base of knowledge before it could be truly effective with groups and individuals. Mutual learning was accepted more by CYF agents, who deal with people on subjective issues where their personal knowledge is essential to program success. Agriculture agents did not mention mutual learning, with the exception of client feedback on what worked and what did not in their educational experiences.

Fifth, the historical documents place high value on formal staff learning and specialization, in terms of what agents have already achieved and in the development of greater agent knowledge while an agent. The MSUE vision recognizes the value of agent knowledge and the importance of their continued learning to stay up to date, and provides a means by which agents' field knowledge can be officially certified and their responsibilities changed to reflect their expertise. The field culture of MSUE values their own field knowledge and their informal knowledge; they accept the recognition given them by the vision as their due. However, the field wants more: Agents should be rewarded for being better agents in one location as much as for taking on administrative responsibilities or developing areas of expertise.

Sixth, both coordination of activities at the university level and cooperation with other organizations are cited as crucial to achieving the Extension mission in the historical

documents. Cooperation and collaboration are cited as the key in the MSUE vision, while coordination of activities between counties and cooperation with other organizations are the important elements for the field culture of MSUE. Collaboration is seen more as an outcome than a process for Agriculture, made possible by educating clients on particular subjects. CYF leans towards accepting collaboration, with some agents recognizing that clients are empowered through the opportunity for learning rather than the material they learn. However, it should be noted that both views could be highly effective, even necessary, given the particular nature of their programming.

Seventh, the history of Extension identifies both focus and selectivity as relevant to Extension success at different times. The MSUE vision speaks of focus, but the field culture sees selectivity. In dealing with the realities of budget and staff cuts, agents see focus as selectivity. If an area is identified as important, more resources will be devoted to it. In a situation where resources are limited, this means that some other, less important areas will have to go without. This is the central problem that Agriculture agents have with the vision: It claims that it proposes a shift in focus, but it really means that they are about to lose much of what is valuable to them, not least among those values being tradition and effective education of clients when and where they need it.

Eighth, Extension has a tradition of opportunism in education; selectivity occurs whenever the issue lacks an educational component. The MSUE vision points to the tradition of change and opportunism in Extension, and calls for a focus on issues identified by clients through a formal process. The MSUE field culture suggests that MSUE has a tradition of change cycles; nothing really changes, but it is necessary for the organization to struggle with its mission and program responsibilities to keep itself focused on the right issues. As expressed in the historical documents, the mission of Extension is opportunistic education, being selective wherever the need for education is absent. In fact, Michigan State is encouraged by several agents to specialize in what it does best, then cooperate

with other land-grants with different specializations to offer higher quality educational programming.

Summary

Over time, Extension has remained remarkably stable in its fundamental values. The historical allusions to building an agency for change are as applicable to the organization itself as to its mission. Agents see Extension as sufficiently capable of adjusting to the needs of society as required to remain relevant and effective. They fail to acknowledge the need for change except in areas where the organizational structure blocks them from being flexible and opportunistic in their attempts to meet client needs through education. The historical values of Extension are alive and well. To the extent that the vision for MSUE overlaps with them, it is successful. To the extent that it contradicts them, it has failed to convert agents.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHANGING THE EXTENSION PARADIGM

In Chapter Two I set forth four research questions concerning Extension values. The first dealt with the change in value clusters over time, and led to the discussion of historical value clusters in Chapter Four. The second focused on differences between the values put forward in official program area documents, as described in Chapter Five. The third asked about the differences between agents' values across program areas, and was addressed in Chapter Six. The fourth and final research question was concerned with the difference between the values set forth in the MSUE vision and the values cited by agents. This question was answered in Chapters Five and Six. Two primary value systems lie at the root of the existing culture: The traditional Extension model derived from Agriculture and the more recent collaborative model derived from Home Economics, 4-H, and Expanded Family Nutrition - which are now components of CYF. In this chapter, I will first review the findings for each of the research questions and demonstrate the relevance of the two value systems, then return to the theorists described in Chapter Two and attempt to pull together the many strands of this analysis into a final conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the change effort and suggest recommendations for the Extension leadership.

RQ1. How do the value clusters of the CES/MSUE differ across historical eras?

The value clusters across the history of Extension are consistent on their key terms, with education and cooperation consistently being cited. There are three major areas of difference: (1) The increasing importance of being comprehensive, particularly since 1968; (2) The rise of opportunism to highest importance in 1968 and its subsequent decline to lesser significance; and (3) The increasing importance of community from 1968 onward. It appears that 1968 marked a key transition in Extension's values, with

opportunism reaching its peak as community issues were recognized as important and the need to be comprehensive in programming was emphasized. The combination of these factors suggests that Extension 's value context diversified in 1968. 1968 was also a time when human development and community issues were being recognized as important in their own right, garnering increased funding and staff. Thus, we can identify 1968 as the point where the CYF subculture got its first recognition as a part of the Extension value system. The differences between the values of the overall Agriculture culture and those of the new subculture will be detailed under Research Question 3.

RQ2. How do the value clusters of MSUE differ across the formal mission statements of the program areas?

The 1993 mission statements for the three program areas of MSUE differ greatly in their value clusters. While education remained the most important value for CYF and ANR, it took very different forms. For CYF, education was advocated across the lifecycle in order to bring about the self-efficacy of as many clients as possible, whatever their age or condition. For ANR, education had a more practical aim, that of sustaining a competitive economy and preserving a high quality of life for the people of Michigan, but especially agricultural producers. CED connected education to community leadership and participation, which in turn led to more opportunities for collaboration in the community. Futuring and diversity were clustered with opportunism for CYF, while ANR connected opportunism to economic competitiveness. CED stressed community above everything else, but was very close to CYF in the importance it placed on collaboration and participation. If CED had more staff and clout, it would have been another interesting subculture to investigate. However, given its small size and relative youth, it cannot be said to be a major alternative in the choice between the cultures modeled after the traditional Agriculture view of Extension and the subculture that became CYF.

RQ3. How do the value clusters of MSUE agents differ across the program areas?

This research question addresses the first of the two major barriers to the vision's success: The different value systems in place within Extension. Research question four addresses the second barrier, that between campus administration and field staff. As described in Chapter Six, CYF agents linked collaboration with high quality Extension work, while Agriculture agents emphasized cooperation and leadership development. Being customer-driven involved a much closer relationship with clients for Agriculture than for CYF agents. Knowing they have to continue interacting with the same small group of clients for the foreseeable future makes it critical for Agriculture agents to serve them well, which means doing both what is needed and what is expected, even when the expected is beyond the call of duty. The new focus on CYF issues is interpreted by Agriculture agents as selective against their clients; those clients are described as major supporters of Extension efforts, without whose support Extension cannot be effective. Perhaps most importantly, CYF agents advocate an empowering approach, while Agriculture agents focus more on empowerment. The distinction is based on where the power comes from: In empowerment, the agent gives clients power. When an agent is empowering, the power is recognized as part of clients' potential, not a gift from outside. I argue that this distinction is rooted in necessity: Agricultural science must be learned from the beginning, and so agents must give their clients power. In contrast, human development involves everyday life, and so every client has rich resources that they can access with proper guidance and support. Thus, CYF and Agriculture agents do not differ as much as might be expected. In fact, the most important difference within Extension is between campus and field staff.

RQ4. Are the value clusters promoted by MSUE leaders similar to those found in the discourse of MSUE field agents?

The simple answer is no. While there are areas of value agreement, particularly regarding the need for organizational flexibility and decentralization, the value clusters are different. As noted in Chapter Six, one of the key terms of agents is their county focus, as opposed to the campus offices where the Extension leaders dwell. Every agent, both CYF and Agriculture, had something to say about the differences between campus and the field, and few were complementary towards campus. Even when the vision strikes a chord, as it did with decentralization, it is thought appropriate because the campus-based administration does not know the field, and so does not deserve the authority it previously held. The values of being customer-driven and flexible are elevated, while research and comprehensiveness drop in rank. Opportunism is important for each agent, but the overall efforts of the organization are seen as needing a defined scope instead of an open-to-all-comers vision. Collaboration is still a goal rather than a frequently used method. In the final analysis, the values expressed by agents have more in common with each other than with any one formal document. This is fitting, as formalization is one of the least appreciated values by agents.

Having recapped the basic findings of this thesis, we will now move on to the theories of organizational culture change and equilibrium. There are many factors that must be accounted for in evaluating a cultural change effort. Within the organization, the processes of socialization and sense-making are central to both preserving cultural equilibrium and encouraging change. External to the organization, the social, political, and economic environment establishes the conditions under which the organization can successfully achieve its mission. This external reality takes first priority, as we cannot hope to understand the reasons behind an organization's success without first comprehending the opportunities present in the environment.

Extension in the 1990s is facing a very different society than the one it was originally intended to serve. Within Extension, the two program areas of CYF and Agriculture perceive their respective environments differently. That is, the perceived difference in the Extension environment between the two program areas is based in a real difference in their respective worlds. The program areas serve different clients through different programs and receive support from different sources; these parallel lines of service within Extension date back to the inception of the organization. Thus, there is not one Extension culture, there are two: The traditional Agriculture-based dissemination model, and the collaborative model suitable to CYF programming efforts. For either program area to improve, it must be free to apply its own model. The problem is the assumption that both program areas can be served best by the same model.

Gordon (1991) sets forth three dimensions relevant to an organization's environment: The competitive environment, customer requirements, and societal expectations. The current competitive environment is seen as complex and of low munificence, i.e., there are many firms out there doing what Extension does and the environment cannot sustain more growth. Agriculture agents interpret this as meaning that Extension must close ranks and focus on its areas of expertise rather than attempting to diversify into other program areas where the same job is already being done. CYF agents are less pessimistic, recognizing the other organizations as potential clients and collaborators, which makes the environment rich in opportunities for more relationships.

Customer requirements are either concerned with reliability or novelty. Reliability means that promised services will be performed as promised without fail. Agriculture's long tradition of serving its clients in a particular way makes this requirement paramount in their minds. CYF agents favor novelty, or the diversification of service delivery options, because their program area is much more flexible in effective programming methods and more diverse in both needs and necessary solutions. Without novelty, CYF agents could not be effective in meeting their clients' ever-changing needs. While

Agriculture agents recognize the need to stay up to date, the more formalized university knowledge of e.g. effective farm and marketing procedures make novelty less important than reliability. CYF agents in turn recognize the importance of reliability in their programs, but it will make no difference if they do not keep pace with their clients' changing needs.

Societal expectations of land-grant colleges are changing. It is no longer enough to help only farmers and their families; the vast majority of the population that pays taxes to support publicly-funded agencies such as MSU and its Extension service also wants some direct return. Agriculture has little to offer them in its traditional programming; home horticulture and composting have broader applicability, but relatively small amounts of Agriculture's efforts are focused on these issues. The major issues identified in the formal issues identification process were CYF and CED issues, and so the emphasis of Extension rhetoric is shifting. Unfortunately, there is no carrot to go with the stick when encouraging change in Agricultural programming and methods, and so Agriculture agents refuse to accept the results of a process they do not respect as valid.

Gordon (1991) notes that there is no one best structure for a particular environment, although there are those that will fail and others that will succeed. The problem for Extension is in trying to serve two masters: Either the Agriculture or the CYF model may be viable, but the two cannot be combined successfully. The MSUE vision, based on the needs of CYF and CED programming, is significantly different from the existing culture based on Agriculture. It is a second-order change, an attempt to move from one value system to another. The problem of all such change efforts is that they must overcome the barrier of incommensurable paradigms, i.e. two world-views that have non-identical standards of evaluation, such that neither can be adequately understood in terms of the other. Kuhn (1970) states that the decision to shift one's cultural paradigm across the chasm of incommensurability cannot be made solely on the basis of rationality, because the rational response is to forgo the unknown in favor of the known status quo.

Thus, the status quo must be called into question on its fundamentals for agents to consider converting to the new cultural paradigm.

People identify with organizations that share their existing values and beliefs (Schneider 1987), and suffer both cognitive dissonance and emotional strain when that identity is threatened. The Extension agents interviewed in this thesis identified with the traditional Extension service focused on Agriculture. Schein (1992) states that the values of an organization are initially created by the actions of leaders at the formative stage of organizational development, when the culture is still developing and procedures are not yet ingrained. The early leaders of Extension were Agriculture agents and administrators with Agriculture and farming backgrounds. They found the dissemination model to be useful and effective in achieving their goals of empowerment for farmers and rural families. The actions they took and the successes that resulted strengthened the traditional Extension values associated with Agriculture, shaping them into the basic assumptions that the MSUE vision is intended to change. What I call the CYF subculture probably began around 1968, when the amount of funding and staff for non-Agricultural programming increased dramatically. Because the different program areas have separate lines of authority, they can develop different approaches without realizing the extent of the difference within the overall organization. Thus, the CYF subculture developed as distinct from the Agriculture-dominated culture due to the different audiences served and methods employed. Thus, the vision is really directed at two audiences, not one: The traditional Agriculture agents and the CYF subculture.

An audience's sense-making is based on their values and basic assumptions, which are both responsible for their current membership in the organization (as described in Schneider's (1987) Attraction - Selection - Attrition model) and are continually influenced by the socialization systems of the organization. The consequences of this relationship are significant. First, the values under which most agents joined Extension were those of Agriculture; the older the agent, the more likely he or she was to have experienced

traditional Extension programs such as 4-H fairs, Home Economist classes, or have dealt with Agriculture agents while working on a farm. For these agents, the new values are a threat to their identification with the organization, and so they have great incentive to resist. Second, agent socialization is a continuing process throughout one's career. Agents learn the most about Extension and its values from two sources: Their fellow agents and their clients. Extension is defined as the university in communities. This message is powerfully supported by the everyday contact agents have with each other and their clients. The county's needs are the primary concern, and county problems have a face for agents. Politically and financially, agents depend on county support for their jobs and for their opportunities. All of these factors combine to create a powerful barrier to change messages that do not match up with agents' experiences and values. Thus, there are two obstacles to the vision: The division between program areas, and the division between campus and the field.

At this point, the nature of the vision's success and failure should be set within the context of Bartunek's (1988) model for sense-making. The four stages are unfreezing the existing culture, preparing the members for a shift, the generation of a new frame, and testing that new frame in practice. Of these, the first two are the most important for understanding agent sense-making of the MSUE vision, as the latter two are not engaged for the majority of agents interviewed. Together, the requirements for unfreezing and preparing agents for the shift explain how and where the vision was unsuccessful.

Unfreezing

Agents' perceived need for change is key to unfreezing the existing culture, and encompasses three factors: Messages sent from leaders, messages sent from coworkers, and perceptions of the environment. The first two factors are modified by the agents' perceptions of the sender, the third by agents' current values. First, agents do not perceive the leaders of the organization as understanding the field in which they work. Thus, they

assign little credibility to recommendations from campus that tell them how to operate in their counties. The only messages they do accept are those that reaffirm existing values, such as decentralization, cooperation, and education for self-learning. Because agents are unanimous in this perception, their discussions with each other reflect and intensify this perception. Thus, the second factor supports the first: Messages from coworkers are generally supportive of the status quo, and those coworkers are generally perceived as competent by virtue of their being in the field. While not all agents have the same level of respect from others, most are far more credible to their coworkers than the Extension administration.

It is not enough to include coworkers, however; clients are also a source of persuasive messages, and they are even more important than coworkers in determining what agents believe to be important. This ties into the existing values of Extension: Being customer-driven means that clients must be attended to or the special relationship they have with Extension will be lost. Clients are an important lens for both messages about what Extension ought to be doing and perceptions of the environment. Here the difference between CYF and Agriculture becomes clear. CYF agents hear messages from clients that are supportive of a shift in focus to social needs and human development programs. Agriculture agents are told by clients that Extension is becoming irrelevant to their needs, and that these clients will soon be looking elsewhere for research knowledge and assistance. Thus, CYF agents are more likely to accept the change initiative because they perceive an environment where clients need more of the education CYF provides, while Agriculture agents are more likely to reject the change initiative because their clients are beginning to use other organizations to meet their needs.

Preparation

When we look at the preparation for the cultural change, the strategic ambiguity of leaders' messages and members' perceptions of the environment are key factors, both

mediated by the existing values of Extension culture. The existing values of greatest importance are self-learning, selectivity, flexibility, and a county focus. The self-learning of its clients is the traditional mission of Extension; however, there are two interpretations of it. It appears possible that the requirements for Agriculture and CYF are fundamentally different. The distinction between self-learning as empowering and as empowerment focuses on whether the empowering agent bestows power on the client or works with the client to bring about a realization of the power the client already had. In some cases, the client will have to receive something from the agent before being able to recognize any power potential within herself. This is the tradition of Agricultural Extension, where the client must have a base of knowledge connected to formal education in order to be capable of telling the agent something that the agent did not know about the practical and abstract issue. Agriculture is a physical science concerned with living things; it requires a foundation to build a self-learning structure. Thus, Agriculture programs are based on the assumption that the agents know more than their clients about science. Most importantly, until the clients have learned that science, their field knowledge is of no use to their learning or to the Extension agent.

CYF programs do not face the same obstacles that Agriculture programs do. The issues concerning social and human development make community knowledge an explicit part of the process. Clients' social knowledge and behavior are the academic material required for making a contribution in a collaborative educational process. Everyday acts and experiences are the foundation needed by both client and agent to create an environment where clients are empowered and agents learn something new from the process. This is very different from the Agriculture program area, where everyday experiences do not prepare one to plant or harvest or eliminate pests. Dressel (1987) describes the primacy of the Agricultural extension model:

> Extension could be viewed as a mediating role between those having knowledge - professors and researchers - and those needing to use it -

> farmers, homemakers, engineers, and such. Such a mediating role is clearly one of instruction oriented to what to do and how to do it rather than to why or how something works. (Dressel, 1987: 214)

The MSUE vision, and CYF, attempt to change this to recognize the benefits of incorporating client knowledge. Unfortunately, the directive style of learning suggested by Dressel makes such a change a fundamental shift, and raises the possibility that the vision and CYF share a culture that is incommensurable with that of Agriculture. If this is true, then Extension must find another basis for professing the unity of its mission.

This fundamental difference in the subject matter of Extension's educational programs means that one vision may not fit both program areas. Knowing the importance of practical application to agents, different messages must be sent to both groups. Strategic ambiguity is not enough; agents can see through it by attempting to apply the lessons in the field, where the differences will be manifest. While the author is not an expert in either agricultural engineering or human development, there is a chance that it will be impossible to successfully promote a single vision to the two program areas.

Selectivity is an important value for agents, as it is historically relevant and is related to the MSUE key term focus. This connection creates problems for leaders attempting to use strategic ambiguity: While focus is a term used to highlight important issues, selectivity carries the connotation of prioritizing in the service of necessary choices. This is especially important to Agriculture agents, who do not see the concerns that they believe their clients have being reflected in the foci for future Extension work, and so believe that Agriculture will lose the resources currently devoted to it. CYF agents do not see their reason for existence being threatened, but they do recognize that focus entails some form of selectivity in an environment with limited resources. The credibility of Extension's leadership is lessened when they imply that Extension can apply itself to all the foci it names as serious concerns, as agents know the pressure for selectivity exists and must be answered if Extension is to remain effective.

Flexibility is essential to good Extension work in the minds of agents. Agents value their autonomy and the expertise they develop in the field to meet their clients' needs. Thus, the area of greatest success in the vision concerns changes in organizational structure to increase agents' autonomy and flexibility in doing their jobs. Both the flexibility of the organization in allowing agents to do as they believe best and the agents' own personal flexibility in responding to specific situations are very important to agents' perceptions of quality work and their commitment to their job. What is surprising is that other values are not paired with flexibility to encourage (e.g.) more collaboration. However, it is possible that the different needs of CYF and Agriculture (described above) make this use of strategic ambiguity impossible.

The key term of county focus is perhaps the most important value for understanding how agents evaluate leadership messages. From a socialization perspective, it is easy to see where agents learn about their organizational roles. They learn it from every client they deal with, from every cooperative effort that succeeds or fails, and from their daily interactions with coworkers in the county office. The university campus is not important to them. They spend only a few days a year there for the Extension School and begrudge even that time. Once they arrive in the field, they are left on their own, without formal guidance to learn any particular procedure for doing their job. Thus, they learn from watching and talking with other agents, from the advice of older mentors, and from trail and error as they venture forth into the county to learn clients' expectations. In this situation, leadership messages have little credibility: The source is distant, does not understand the particular county situation, and has too many additional concerns not connected to the practice of the Extension mission. If the goal of a leadership message is to change agent behavior, the source will be as important as the content in determining how agents interpret it.

Consider the example of the annual Extension School on campus. Agents do not care for Extension School as a formal event: It forces them to drive as long as eight hours

to get there, they do not believe that it provides them any in-service training, and it brings them face to face with Extension administrators. This confrontation is a problem based in the organization's structure: Administrators are distant beings whose main purpose appears to be telling agents how to do their jobs without ever coming out to see what extension means in practice. A presentation on campus on how agents must change, coming from administrators who agents rarely see elsewhere, has extremely low credibility for agents. This is not the fault of the administrators themselves. They have their own work to do, and it leads to a different world-view than that of agents. But no matter how well-crafted the presentation, no matter how potent the arguments, the setting and the people who deliver the message are the first obstacle to getting the message across, and it is apparent that it has not been effective for the agents interviewed.

Frame Generation

The issues identification process is a crucial component of the attempt to generate a new framework based on the vision, as it is intended to define the scope of Extension programming. Thus, it is a significant indicator of the viability of the new vision. The widespread condemnation of the process suggests that the vision is not seen as a viable alternative by many agents, particularly those in Agriculture. Agents' arguments that the process was not scheduled at a good time for farmers to participate, failed to suggest any issues that were not already known, and provided no real help to agents in their counties return us to the prior stages of Bartunek's model. Agents applied existing values to the vision, and so the vision was doomed to failure because of the incommensurability of the two cultures. The formal empowering structure set forth in the MSUE vision is different enough from the existing culture that any evaluation of the vision will be poor. Without systematically calling into question the values of the traditional Agriculture focused, informal education for empowerment culture, the leaders of the change effort cannot

justify the need for change, and so the cycle of sense-making is strongly biased in favor of the status quo.

Recommendations for Extension Leaders

The following recommendations are derived from the information presented in this thesis for the purpose of devising a more effective change initiative for the Extension service in Michigan. First, the message must be brought home within the county context. That means that processes like issues identification must be focused on providing practical assistance in meeting specific county needs. This will lead to problems in the allocation of resources, and will not result in state-wide issues; so be it. Agents do not care about the state wide issues unless they can be shown to be relevant to their county and its problems. Therefore, the change initiative must involve three elements:

1. The administrators must present it within the county context, and regularly reinforce their message through visits and involvement in programming.
2. The emphasis on decentralization and flexibility should be increased. This is one of the few areas where the vision met with highly positive agreement. This agreement should be cultivated and connected to other parts of the vision as an additional argument for the vision's worth.
3. Create a formal channel for agents to provide feedback about specialists and connect good evaluations to organizational rewards. This will validate the importance of the field and make it in the specialists' best interest to be effective providers of university knowledge. The good ones will be rewarded, and the bad ones identified.[1]

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[1] The Report of The Provist's Committee on University Outreach (1993) has proposed changing the evaluation of faculty on campus to include outreach work among the critieria for tenure and other rewards. Advertising this to

Without changing the perception that they are distant, uncaring and unknowledgeable about the field, campus administrators cannot be successful in changing agent values.

Second, the change initiative should be brought directly to clients in the counties. The problems associated with being customer-driven can be met by bringing clients to understand the vision. The people focus emphasized by agents should be a fundamental part of the change effort. If agents hear similar things from both their clients and the administration, they will be more likely to consider the administration in touch with the field and the vision as having some worth. But the effort must practice what it preaches: When dealing with Extension clients, Extension personnel should recognize the validity of their perceptions and be prepared to reject preconceptions if they prove invalid. If the vision is truly intended to promote collaboration as both a means and an end, it must begin here.

Third, Extension leaders must address the differences between program areas if they truly wish to enact change. The empowerment of Extension clients, i.e. encouraging self-learning, has been a tradition in Extension, growing more salient in recent times. However, the requirements may be very different for CYF as opposed to Agriculture. Attempting to promote a single vision and approach that does not fit all parts of Extension only serves to further undermine the credibility of the Extension leaders by demonstrating their ignorance (willful or otherwise) of field practice. The only way to escape this is to admit difference at the practical level while maintaining the unity of Extension's mission. Agents are willing to accept abstract unity so long as the practical realities are accurate; this leaves the door open for future efforts at strategic ambiguity.

Fourth, if Extension is truly committed to shifting its emphasis towards issues relevant to CYF and CED, socialization will have to play an important role. Kuhn (1970) states that the most effective way of achieving a paradigm shift is simply to wait until the

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agents will send the message that campus is beginning to recognize the importance of extension and outreach.

adherents of the old paradigm retire or die, leaving the field free for the holders of the new paradigm. Time and the gradual retirement of agents who are deeply invested in the traditional model of Extension will bring about change. It appears that this strategy has already been partially implemented as part of the downsizing effort from 1991 through early 1994. However, the new members who have been socialized by these long-time agents will likely pass it on to future members, thus preserving continuity. In order to minimize the transmission of the traditional Extension model in the new environment, Extension must intervene in the socialization process in the counties. The suggestions regarding involvement of clients in the negotiation of the vision and a greater involvement of Extension leaders at the county level are crucial here.

The implications for instigating cultural change come down to recognizing the values at work within the existing culture, carefully designing a message campaign that uses high credibility sources and targets key audiences, and executing it consistent to the values being espoused. The differences between the program areas in their subject matter and where relevant knowledge is found may be the cause of the different perceptions of CYF and Agriculture agents. There is no guarantee that the change initiative can succeed without sundering Agriculture from the rest of the organization if this difference is as fundamental as it appears to be. Better means are available for delivering the vision to agents and encouraging more agreeable sense-making, but the outcome is unpredictable across the program areas.

Limitations

There are several important limitations to this study. First, the Extension service is a unique organization with a long and rich history. The amount of historical work done and the value analysis itself may be neither appropriate or necessary for other organizations. Second, the data have been represented as static points rather than parts of

a continuing process. This makes it easier to identify relationships between values, but sacrifices a sense of how the whole functions as a system. Future research should attempt to locate values in interactions and observe how they are actively used in the sense-making process between leaders and members. Third, as in all interpretive studies, the final conclusions are more insinuations than bold claims. In order to preserve the richness of the data, researcher-constructed categories were avoided, despite the greater certainty that such organization might have brought to the analysis. It is hoped that the other methods used in the larger evaluation of Extension will compensate.

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