

THE INFLUENTIALS IN A SELECTED RURAL COUNTY:
THEIR SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The constantly growing and changing clientele of the Cooperative Extension Service, which has demanded increased involvement in resource development programs, has made the job of the county extension agent exceedingly more complex today than it was twenty years ago or even ten years ago. In recent years the county extension agents have been asked to assist with programs that are unlike the traditional agricultural and home economics programs with which they are familiar.

Resource development programs are being initiated in a number of counties in Virginia and are involving new clientele that many extension agents have not worked with in the past. Programs of this nature encompass large numbers of people and deal with broad social and economic problems in the county.

It has been found in previous studies, that the success or failure of new programs depends to a large degree on the involvement of the influentials or local power structure in the early phases of the program. The Director of the Cooperative Extension Service at South Dakota State University, John T. Stone says:

Research has shown that successful community social action efforts depend on the appropriate involvement of key leaders in the community. These individuals, by virtue of their position in the community, are able to strongly influence most community decisions involving issues such as industrial development, recreational facilities, hospitals and school reorganization.

Knowledge of and about these prime movers of community change is essential to all persons charged with the responsibility of initiating change. Among such persons are ministers, teachers, extension workers and executive secretaries of Chambers of Commerce, industrial corporations and charitable organizations.¹

Indications are that these key leaders need to be involved or informed of programs that are of major importance to the community or county. Many of the routine problems or projects are of little concern to these individuals, because they do not affect their position in society or their relationship with lesser leaders in the community.

Boek says:

At the same time that all people have power in a society, everyone is limited in his control by the society. An individual's power is measured by the type of people who respond to his desires and the kind of response they make. The vast number of decisions or actions taken in communities by citizens in their day-to-day lives are of little concern to the topmost power leaders.²

Boek also indicates that:

When a man has control of a community, it is easy to assume that lesser leaders are making independent decisions on minor and even major community projects. However, careful evaluation will usually show that those decisions are within the parameters established by the top leader. The judgment of the top leaders in the decision is there in a highly potent, but latent form, and when those boundaries are overstepped, pressure comes down on the transgressing individual.³

¹John T. Stone, preface to, Identifying the Community Power Structure, by Ronald C. Powers, North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 19, NCRS-5 Leadership Series No. 5 (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service, November, 1965), p. 3.

²Walter Boek, "Field Techniques in Delineating the Structure of Community Leadership," Human Organization, XXIV (Winter, 1965), p. 359.

³Ibid.

Although Boek, in the above quotation, was speaking of top leadership as found in one individual, it could be in a number of persons or perhaps different persons for different issues. This makes it even more difficult to identify people the extension agent must work with on various programs. Charles Freeman,⁴ Extension Sociologist at Pennsylvania State University, in discussing rural areas development, the forerunner of resource development work, says that program initiation involves planting or sprouting an idea among a few people and nurturing it through informal discussions into a suggested project or program to be launched. Often initiation is done behind the scenes. This makes it all the more important that rural areas development personnel or others in extension know what happens as action is initiated. A particular problem in rural areas development in some parts of the country is that there are several sets of legitimizers for different subgroups in the area. A major job of any rural areas development personnel is to find out who wields power in the area and get to know them personally. Their support is needed not only in initiating action but in legitimizing decisions all the way through.

In discussing the extension program planning process and the process of change, Pesson indicates that:

Each of the clientele groups are composed of one or more social systems. . . The power structure in each of these systems is composed of "key" individuals who have influence over the action of other individuals in the system. The identification of these systems and the "key"

⁴Charles Freeman, "Organizing for Rural Areas Development," Educational Problems of an Economic Development Program, Special Report Federal Extension Service, U.S.D.A. Series 4, Washington, D. C., July, 1961, pp. 17-18.

individuals within them is an important step in planning and effecting change. Winning the approval of these "key" individuals is a critical step in the change process. Disapproval, on the other hand, by these individuals can be a deadly blow to any planned change involving a particular system.⁵

In certain counties where a limited amount of work has been done requiring the involvement of new clientele outside of the field of agriculture, many of the influentials may be unknown to the extension agents. In other counties where county extension staff changes take place and new agents are brought in from other counties it may take several years for them to identify the power structure through routine contacts.

The power holders in a county are not easily recognized or identified. They can not be identified by naming the people who hold appointed or elective positions of authority as some believe. Some of the researchers have indicated that many local governments are weak power centers and merely respond to pressures of others. Research work in other states has shown that few of the people in authoritative positions and few public professional workers are found in the power structure. According to Powers, "a consistent finding of power research is that the major component of power for top power figures is derived from their influence and not from their authority."⁶ In a direct relationship with extension

⁵Lynn S. Pesson, "Extension Program Planning With Participation of Clientele" The Cooperative Extension Service, ed. H. C. Sanders, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 102.

⁶Ronald C. Powers, "Power Structures and Pressure Groups," Role of Rural Sociologist Proceedings of Regional Seminar on Resource Development, Extension Service Publication MM-236 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, December, 1963), p. 65.

work he also says, "most of the research in social power has concluded that the public professional in the community is not a part of the top power structure. This includes the county Extension staff."⁷

Experience as well as social research has shown that determining who the top influentials are and finding out how they operate can be a vital step in program development for the initiation of planned change in any community. This has been an often overlooked phase of the development work in a number of county programs in Virginia.

There is no indication of any type of research identifying or describing the influentials and related power structure in Virginia, as determined by a review of the literature. At the present time only a limited amount of work of this nature has been conducted on a county basis, most of the studies have been conducted in large cities or small towns. In the reports of studies concerned with the power structure of a county, none were of a completely rural county. Although the state of Virginia is more urban than rural, there are yet many such rural counties. These rural counties are generally in greater need of some type of development program than are urban counties or cities.

The importance of identifying and working with influential leaders in county programs has been emphasized by many knowledgeable individuals. Our lack of information in this area in Virginia is apparent. This points out a need for an intensive study, relating to influentials and their related power structure in a rural situation, to determine what exist and determine how extension can best work with and through these

⁷Ibid.

influential leaders. For these reasons, plus the fact that the county is the basic extension unit, a completely rural county in Virginia was selected for this study. Other criteria included the need for resource development work and limited experience of the agents working in the county.

BACKGROUND ON SELECTED COUNTY

The county selected for the study has two extension agents, both with limited experience in extension work in the county. One of the agents was employed by the Cooperative Extension Service and had previous experience in the county between 1941 and 1944. At the time the study was initiated both had been working for a period of approximately six months as extension agents in the selected county.⁸ Resource development work such as industrial development was indicated as a need by county residents and by outsiders with a knowledge of the county.

Presently there is very little in the way of industry in the county. It is primarily an agricultural county, however many of the farmers are part time farmers, that is the farm does not offer full employment for the owner or operator.

The only type of county industry outside of the several small sawmills include two small garment plants that employ women. Combined employment for the two garment factories ranges from 450 to 550 persons, and each of the small sawmills have a work force of less than twenty people.

⁸This study contains certain personal information about individuals in the county, therefore, the name of the county and names of persons in the study will not be used.

Many of the residents are commuting to adjoining counties and towns to work. According to the 1960 census 30.7 per cent of the labor force was employed outside of the county.⁹ Those employed in these adjoining counties and towns are gradually moving to these areas of employment.

Between 1950 and 1960 there was a 7.8 per cent loss in population.¹⁰ In 1960 the total population of the county was approximately 10,000 which included the county seat town of slightly less than 500 persons. The county seat town is the only incorporated town in the county. Negroes comprise only five per cent of the total population.

The median school years completed for persons over 25 which includes both male and female was 7.5 years, and the median family income for the county in 1960 was \$2,994.¹¹

Farm products account for the largest single source of income from within the county. The value of the farm products sold in 1964, which is the latest information available, was \$2,877,867.¹² The county ranks among the top three in the state having the largest per cent of rural farm persons. In 1960 there were 57 per cent rural farm persons in the county compared to the state of Virginia with an average of 10 per cent.¹³

⁹U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, Vol. I: Characteristics of the Population, Part 48, Virginia, p. 144.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 12.

¹¹Ibid., p. 288 and p. 144.

¹²U. S. Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1964, Preliminary Report, Series AC64-P1, Virginia Counties, p. 2.

¹³Virginia's Changing Population Picture, Agricultural Extension Service, Miscellaneous Publication No. 5 (Blacksburg, Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1963), p. 13.

Politically the county was divided into six magisterial districts, and each represented by a member of the board of supervisors. At the time of the study there were three republican and three democratic members on the board of supervisors. The incorporated town is politically a part of the county, however the towns municipal affairs are under the direction of a mayor and a four-member council.

There are several school communities in the county, with the population in these communities being dispersed over a large area. The county is crossed by north-south and east-west two-lane primary highways, and has many paved and unpaved arterial roads. Outside of these highways, of which only one is served by bus service, transportation is extremely limited. The county even lacks the services of a railroad, or small airport.

GENERAL PURPOSE OF STUDY

The primary purpose, of this study, was to gain more knowledge and understanding of the influential leaders in a rural Virginia county. The purpose first of all was to identify the influentials and related power structure, determine the salient characteristics and factors that contribute to their influence, and draw implications from this study as related to Extension work in a rural county.

Due to the limited experience of the county extension agents and the need for resource development work in the selected county, a study of this nature was perceived to be of definite benefit to the extension program. As has been cited these top influential leaders play a vital role in the decision-making process and the implementation of programs

of a county-wide or community nature. A working relationship and knowledge of how they operate are considered as vital to the work of any change agent.

A secondary purpose of this study was to determine the ability of the Extension agents who have been working for only a short period, to recognize the influential leaders in the county. The ability of a retired agent with over twenty-five years of experience in the county to identify the influentials was also included as part of the study.

This study can add to the body of knowledge on the study of influentials and their characteristics. This is a relatively new field of study and the research findings are somewhat limited. Most of the studies in the area of social power have dealt with influentials in metropolitan areas and small towns. Few studies have been conducted on a county basis.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

A lack of knowledge exists concerning the top influential leaders and social structure of power in many Virginia counties and more specifically the county selected for study. A lack of knowledge concerning these important individuals at the time a new program is being planned and put into action can be a limiting factor in the success of the program.

In the past little or no effort has been made to help new extension agents recognize the influential leadership. Also the experienced extension agents many times have not identified those persons, outside of the field of agriculture, who are influential in the county.

No doubt the limited success of some of the former rural areas development programs could have been improved through proper involvement of the influential leaders. Many extension agents have limited knowledge concerning the top influential leaders and fail to recognize the importance of getting to know them and how to involve them in extension programs.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to increase the present knowledge concerning the existence, characteristics and operational patterns of those reputed to have social power in the selected county.

More specifically the objectives of this study are:

1. Identify the influentials in a selected rural county through the reputational technique.
2. Determine the informal structure and interrelationships of these influentials.
3. Determine certain characteristics of the influentials such as:
 - a. age
 - b. sex
 - c. income
 - d. occupation
 - e. education
 - f. years of county residence
 - g. membership in organizations
 - h. past and present formal leadership positions.

4. To ascertain the extension agents ability to identify the same individuals perceived to have influence as the ones identified through the reputational technique.

5. Determine the factors to which influence could be attributed.

6. Derive implications from findings pertinent to Cooperative Extension work.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will be limited to a rural county having a population of 10,000 including the individuals in the small county seat town. A county is the basic unit for an Extension field staff, as well as for school administration, and the local governing base.

A multi-county study or a study that crossed county lines would not be feasible. Few people would have influence that would traverse county boundaries. A large area study would also be very time consuming and expensive.

The study was mainly concerned with those persons reputed to have influence, by county leaders and other influentials. These are the individuals who are the informal decision-makers for the county that can cause things to happen or prevent them from happening. Those persons nominated the most times were considered to be the top influentials and were studied in depth as to characteristics, and relationships through the use of an intensive interview schedule. This schedule was administered to those individuals named 3 or more times in the reputational technique.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

County Extension Agent - as used in this study refers to both the male and female employees of the Extension Division, V.P.I. working at the county or unit level. It is used synonymously with county extension worker.

Resource Development - refers to the process of working with people in rural and urban situations in the development of human, physical, and institutional resources.

Influence - refers to the control over others which does not come from the authority a person has in an appointed or elected position, but from his attributed ability to affect the decisions, opinions and actions of others. It is the power an individual possesses and is derived from the facilities or means valued by others which he has at his disposal.

Influential - a person in the county or a community who is attributed a high degree of influence.

Power Structure - means the informal pattern or grouping of influential leaders in community or county who cooperate or compete to exert influence on the decision-making process.

Decision-making - the process by which choices among alternative courses of action are made. It is the means by which civic issues are resolved and public policies established.

Interrelationship - a mutual association, action or connection among individuals in business, civic, social, religious, or political affairs.

Selected Informants - the individuals, in positions of leadership and representative of the various major interest groups in the county, who served as the starting point in the study and nominated the influentials for the first phase of the study.

Nominated Informants - the individuals named two or more times by the selected informants. These individuals also served as a committee to make further nominations in the first phase of the study. The list of nominations made by the selected informants and the nominated informants were combined and those persons receiving three or more nominations were considered to be the most influential in the county.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PURPOSE

The "review of literature" was made with 3 major purposes in mind. The first purpose was to develop a concept of social power and influence as a theoretical framework for this study. Many definitions are found in the readings concerning power and influence. An effort was made to bring together certain of these ideas and develop a concept to be used in this study. The second purpose was to review the methods used in the study of social power and more specifically the reputational method which was employed as a part of this study. The strengths and weaknesses of the reputational method were weighed in relation to findings in various studies. The third purpose was to determine the type of communities previously studied, and determine what was found as to structure, interrelationships and characteristics of those individuals identified as being influential, or power holders.

A THEORETICAL CONCEPT OF SOCIAL POWER AND INFLUENCE

Background

It does not matter whether we like to admit it or not, the truth is some people have more power or influence than others. This was pointed out by Goldhammer who said:

For though we tout ourselves on having built a "class-less" society in this country, access to social rewards, or prestige, or power is by no means equal among its members.

As any public official can verify, there are always a few persons who are able to exert greatest influence within a community.¹⁴

According to Dahl:

That some people have more power than others is one of the most palpable facts of human existence. Because of this, the concept of power is as ancient and ubiquitous as any that social theory can boast.¹⁵

Although many people recognize the existence of social power, few understand its importance or understand how power holders operate. One reason for this is because it has been only in recent years that studies have been made dealing with social power in the community.

Powers¹⁶ indicates that research has shown that social systems of all types--family, organizational, community, political party, etc.--have individuals who predominate in the decision-making of that system. These individuals referred to variously as power actors, key leaders, influentials and legitimizers--can and do influence the changes to be made in the social system. They do this by exercising their social power.

Power and Influence Defined

Many writers in discussing social power and influence use the terms synonymously, yet others make definite distinctions between these two

¹⁴Keith Goldhammer, "Profiles in Power," Overview, Vol. 2 (July, 1961) p. 25.

¹⁵Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," Introductory Readings in Political Behavior, ed. Sidney S. Ulmer (Chicago: Rand-McNally and Co., 1965), p. 342.

¹⁶Powers, Identifying the Community Power Structure, p. 5.

terms. One of the definitions that makes such a distinction, and one that has wide acceptance is by Loomis and Beegle who say:

Power as we use the term, is control over others. Power has many components, which we classify under two major headings: authority and influence.

Authority may be defined as the right, as determined by the system, to control the actions of others. Implied in this concept of authority is the uncritical acceptance of this right on the part of subordinates and certain immunities from influence on the part of superiors. Sanctions, . . . also are implied.

Influence may be regarded as control over others which is of a non-authoritative nature. Such influence may be based upon skills in human relations, social capital based on such things as past favors, superior knowledge of interrelations of members, certain types of wealth, or even outright blackmail. Some aspects of influence in a given social system may be derived from relationships outside of the system.¹⁷

Some situations exist where it may be extremely difficult to distinguish between authority and influence. Authority and influence at times may be exercised by the same person, though not at the same time. Powers¹⁸ indicates that influence resides in the individual on the basis of his own facilities or abilities. Authority is determined by the system, in the formal role or position a person holds. Therefore, a person in a position of authority may possess certain facilities or abilities that give him influence. According to Powers,¹⁹ "a consistent finding of power research is that the major component of power

¹⁷Charles P. Loomis and Jr. Allen Beegle, Rural Sociology, The Strategy of Change, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 4 and 5.

¹⁸Powers, Identifying the Community Power Structure, p.6.

¹⁹Powers, "Power Structure and Pressure Groups," Role of Rural Sociologist, p. 65.

for top power figures is derived from their influence and not from their authority. Miller²⁰ says people in official positions may be influential or they may be shields for influential people.

The word "power" is sometimes preceded by the word "social" or "community" to help distinguish it from other forms of power such as "mechanical" or "atomic" power. The word community is also used to help localize the source of power, because we can have power holders at many different levels including state or national levels.

While some authors indicate that influence is an integral part of power, others have tried to distinguish between influence and power, using power and authority as being synonymous.

Bierstedt²¹ in discussing the relationship between influence and power says there is an intimate connection but, for reasons which possess considerable cogency, it seems desirable also to maintain a distinction between these two terms. The most important reason, perhaps, is that influence is persuasive while power is coercive. We submit voluntarily to influence while power requires submission. The power a teacher exercises over his pupils stems not from his superior knowledge (this is competence rather than power) and not from his opinions (this is influence rather than power), but from his ability to apply the sanctions of failure. He may withhold academic credit, to the student who does not meet set standards or requirements. The

²⁰Van Miller, "Educators and the Influentials," Overview, Vol. 1 (July 1960), p. 42 and 43.

²¹Robert Bierstedt, "An Analysis of Social Power," American Sociological Review, Vol. 15 (December 1950), p. 731.

competence may be unappreciated and the influence may be ineffective, but the power may not be disputed.

According to Hunter:

The term "power" is no reified concept, but an abstract term denoting a structural description of social processes. Or, in simpler terms, power is a word that will be used to describe the acts of men going about the business of moving other men to act in relation to themselves or in relation to organic or inorganic things.²²

It does not matter whether we consider "influence" as being a part of social power or something closely allied with it. Influence, any way you look at it, is a very important ingredient in the study of community decision-making. As has previously been stated, those with influence can and do affect those in positions of authority. Studies have shown that influence is the main factor in determining what takes place in a community.

Influence Bases

What gives a person influence and how do they exercise this influence?

Lasswell and Kaplan indicate that:

To exercise influence is to affect the policies of others as to weight, scope, and domain. The "base value" of the influence refers to the causal condition of its exercise: that which gives the influence its effectiveness. Since to have influence is to occupy a high value position, we can describe the conditions for exercise of influence in terms of values. Whenever X has influence over Y, there is some value with regard to which X enjoys a favorable position, and because of which he can exercise influence over Y. This is the base value of the influence

²²Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 2 and 3.

relation, or the influence base. Note that there can be a chain of values operating as bases in a given relation. X may use wealth to influence power which in turn affects the wealth of Y.²³

The bases of influence are many and varied. Lasswell and Kaplan²⁴ say the exercise of influence may rest on well-being, on the physical strength of the person exercising it, as in the forms of influence known as "intimidation" and "brute force," for example. It may depend on wealth, as in the case of bribery; on skill, as in the influence of the expert; or on enlightenment, the influence of the teacher. Influence may rest on power, as exemplified by indoctrination; or on respect, the influence flowing from reputation. Rectitude is an influence base in the case of moral authority; and affection is the influence exercised by friends and loved ones. They say that in any given influence relation there may be several base values; and no one of them is necessarily present in every case.

How Influence Is Exerted

It is interesting to note that some writers indicate that influence can be both intentional as well as unintentional. Jennings says:

Political influence is a generic term referring to the relative impact of individuals or groupings on decisional outcomes with widespread effect on the community. According to this nominal definition, influence may be either intentional or unintentional. The latter type appears when an individual affects an outcome even though he may not have consciously been involved in the issue. It is the product

²³Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 83.

²⁴Ibid, pp. 83 and 84.

of such phenomena as anticipated reactions, behavioral contagion, and referent power.²⁵

Jennings uses the word "political" in describing influence. This does not limit the definition that he gives for influence in any way. Both social power and influence have political implications and are of great interest to political scientists.

Social power may vary greatly from community to community even among those with similar economic and social backgrounds and numbers of people. Some communities may have power structures, that is a number of people who work together on certain issues or are interrelated in some way, other communities may have a pool of influentials who may or may not work together. Goldhammer²⁶ tells us that occasionally, power figures represent no particular group; they are persons who have acquired prestige through birth into the "right" families or outstanding personal success. This gives them a halo of authority on many issues, even some outside the area of their competence. Such persons may not consciously exert control or influence, but do so anyway because of their position.

Influence and Leadership

Influence as well as being closely related to or more specifically a part of social power is also closely related to leadership.

Haiman points out that "in the broadest sense, leadership refers to that process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences, or

²⁵M. Kent Jennings, Community Influentials, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 20

²⁶Goldhammer, op. cit., p. 25.

controls the thoughts, feelings or behavior of other human beings."²⁷

In this definition by Haiman, influence can be viewed as a part of leadership, or as leadership itself. We recognize that there are many different types of leaders that serve many purposes. It does not matter what the purpose may be, the leader that can exert leadership through his influence rather than position is considered a better leader.

According to Haiman "there can be no leadership without followership."²⁸ A similar statement can be made concerning influence. Influence results from the willingness of one person (the influencee) to have his decisions, opinions, or actions altered by another person (the influencer).

Importance of Social Power and Influence

Social power or its major component influence is important in the functioning of all communities. Goldhammer says "without some influence binding the people of the community together and exerting leadership over them, the community would not act or it would act erratically."²⁹

Some have the opinion that influentials, especially those with a reputation for influence, mainly support the status quo of the community. Gamson³⁰ in a study of reputational leaders found that these leaders

²⁷Franklin S. Haiman, Group Leadership and Democratic Action (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 4.

²⁸Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹Goldhammer, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁰William A. Gamson, "Reputation and Resources in Community Politics," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 72 (September 1966), p. 129.

when united and active, supported the side favoring change more than twice as often as they supported the side favoring status quo.

Hunter³¹ indicates that although the top power holders in Regional City had a personal interest in the economy and tax control, they were interested as well in many other projects that would improve the community. Not only were they interested but they supported and encouraged the active participation of others.

Persons who have social power in a community play an important role, because they are usually the decision-makers or can affect the decisions of others. They are the individuals who can cause things to happen or prevent them from happening in a community.

Summary

For the development of a frame of reference of social power and influence for this study, the writer has drawn heavily from the disciplines of sociology and political science. It is recognized that many different concepts and definitions of social power exist. No attempt has been made to point out all of the different views, or all of those that are closely related.

In this study power and influence will be used in a manner similar to that stated by Loomis and Beegle.³² Power will be considered as control over others and influence, which is the major component of power, as control over others which is of a non-authoritative nature. Power as used by the author in this study includes the influence component.

³¹Floyd Hunter, op. cit., pp. 171-206.

³²Loomis and Beegle, Loc. cit.

Influence is derived from certain factors or bases such as wealth, superior knowledge, reputation, or other things that are valued by the people of the community. Influence is persuasive and results from the willingness of others to be influenced.

Influence is closely related to leadership in that leadership can be exercised through influence alone or in combination with other factors.

That some people have more power than others, whether it be of an authoritative or a non-authoritative nature, is a well known fact.

A REVIEW OF METHODS USED IN STUDYING COMMUNITY POWER

Description of Methods

Methods used in the study of community power have created much debate among certain authors. The main conflict is between political scientists who question the merits of the reputational method and sociologists who have used and support this method of identifying power holders. Due to this controversy and the fact that several methods have been successfully used; special emphasis is being devoted to a review of methods.

First, the various methods that have been used will be briefly discussed. Walton lists and describes four of the most commonly used methods of identifying community power:

1. The Reputational Method

Informants are asked to identify the most influential people in the community. Leaders may be nominated directly, in a one-step procedure, or nominees of informants may be interviewed and leaders designated by this second panel.

2. The Decision-Making Method

Historical reconstruction of community decisions are made using documents; active participants are defined as leaders.

3. The Case Study Method

Includes less explicit approaches based on general observation.

4. Combined Methods

Simultaneous use of 1 and 2.³³

Another method which Walton did not describe is the "positional method." At one time this was a much used method in power studies. The advocates of this method believe that the power holders in the community can be identified by listing the individuals in positions of leadership and authority. Some still recommend that the positional approach be combined with other methods of identifying power holders.

Schulze and Blumberg³⁴ suggest that a study based on position be combined with the reputational method. They say the power elite defined by reputation, differs from that defined on the basis of superordinate positions in both the economic and political-civic institutions. Different panels for the reputational method were tried in identifying the leaders; however, no significant differences could be found among panels.

Even though their study was based on only one community they strongly suggest studying community power by both position and reputation. It is not a question of whether one or the other is right. Rather, by using both and determining the nature and degree of similarity, valuable leads can be found as to the structure and dynamics of local power.

³³John Walton, "Discipline, Method, and Community Power: A Note on the Sociology of Knowledge," American Sociological Review, Vol. 31 (October, 1966), p. 686.

³⁴R. O. Schulze and L. U. Blumberg, "The Determination of Local Power Elites," Introductory Readings in Political Behavior, Sidney S. Ulmer, ed. (Chicago: Rand-McNally and Company, 1965), p. 439.

Reputational Method vs. Decision-Making Method

One of the points of debate between sociologists and political scientists, concerns the power elite or structure found by sociologists using the reputational technique. Anton cites a reason for this difference:

The 'reputational' school, based principally on sociology, views the community as a system of action and examines the structure of political roles involved in setting community policies. The 'pluralist' school, based principally on political science, views the community as a collection of individuals and attempts to measure in quantitative terms the amount of power held by each individual.³⁵

Much of the debate concerning power structuring, and the merits of the reputational method, started after Community Power Structure by Floyd Hunter³⁶ was published in 1953. Hunter was among the first to use the reputational method for identifying community power.

Polsby³⁷ questions the accuracy of the reputational method. He says some that show up may not be influential while people not on the list may be influential.

Wolfinger, one of the strongest critics, says "it requires a factual assumption that is obviously false; its findings are often invalidated, and never confirmed; and its product conveys very little information about a local political system."³⁸

³⁵Thomas J. Anton, "Pluralism and Local Politics," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 7 (March, 1963), p. 425.

³⁶Hunter, op. cit.

³⁷Nelson W. Polsby, "Community Power: Some Reflections on the Recent Literature," American Sociological Review, Vol. 27 (December 1962), p. 839.

³⁸Raymond E. Wolfinger, "A Plea for a Decent Burial," American Sociological Review, Vol. 27 (December 1962), p. 847.

Referring to the above quotation in a footnote Wolfinger³⁹ says that he does not mean that perceptions of political phenomena are invariably incorrect, or that the reputational method could never produce a valid ranking of the powerful. His argument is that it cannot be relied upon to do so, and therefore its findings must be verified in every research situation. Since this pittance of data can be discovered by other research techniques, there is nothing the method can do that cannot be done better by other means.

However, Wolfinger does not suggest what other means to use. He has been criticized, along with other authors, for condemning the reputational technique without suggesting better methods. Wolfinger's criticism takes on the appearance of a personal feud, at times, rather than a scientific debate.

The decision-making method sometimes called the "issue study approach" has won the most support by political scientists. This method also has certain limitations. Powers says "this technique is time consuming. In addition, it assumes that the power actors visibly 'do something.' The power actors may or may not take 'visible' actions."⁴⁰

A combination of the decision-making method and reputational method has been used by both political scientists and sociologists. As well as being used in combination for identifying the power holders, it has been used to check the reliability of the reputational technique.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Powers, Identifying the Community Power Structure, p. 8.

Blankenship,⁴¹ in a study comparing the two methods in two small New York communities, says there was little difference in the findings. Considerable overlap was found by the two measures of power and in a sense said to be homogenous: reputation and action join. The sharp distinction was not found that some writers said would exist. There was considerable variation between the communities, which was attributed primarily to economic differences in the two communities.

D'Antonio and Erickson⁴² in a comparative study said the reputational technique does seem to measure general community influence when the question is stated to get at this factor in decision-making. Respondents did not just repeat the same names when questioned on various issues. There was a significant overlap; a group of about one dozen persons consistently reappeared on all lists.

D'Antonio and Erickson further indicate that the reputational technique seems to be highly reliable. In six communities studied simultaneously, high correlations were found between those chosen as influentials in a specific area (ideal hospital project) and those chosen as general community influentials (those immediately below the top influentials) were found active on different issues.

The authors also say the question is not whether to abandon the technique in favor of some alternative, but rather to find out

⁴¹Vaughn L. Blankenship, "Community Power and Decision-Making: A Comparative Evaluation of Measurement Techniques," Social Forces, Vol. 43 (December 1964), pp. 207-216.

⁴²William V. D'Antonio and Eugene C. Erickson, "The Reputational Technique as a Measure of Community Power: An Evaluation Based on Comparative and Longitudinal Studies," American Sociological Review, Vol. 27 (June 1962), pp. 374 and 375.

under what conditions each technique provides the most fruitful approach.

A number of variations of the reputational method have been used. A study by Sollie⁴³ in a low-income watershed area in Mississippi, tested four different reputational techniques. These were: (1) the panel-of-experts, using three long time residents with knowledge of the area, (2) the community sample which consisted of 294 interviews, one fifth of the population, with heads of households, (3) the "snowball" list, which was made by random interviews, and (4) community leaders named by the panel-of-experts. The study indicated a fairly high level of agreement between the four techniques, measured in terms of a simple "percentage confirmation" procedure. Results indicate the simple "snowball" technique to be as valid as more complicated methods.

Powers⁴⁴ used the issue approach as well as seeking influentials in general affairs. Some overlap was found in that different power actors from a central group were drawn into various issues.

An analytical framework for Powers study of a small town was used. This required finite limits, and required that data be dealt with objectively and that criteria for measurement be spelled out. He states that although this type of framework has its advantages, it also has certain disadvantages in the study of social power. The thread of

⁴³Carlton R. Sollie, "A Comparison of Reputational Techniques for Identifying Community Leaders," Rural Sociology, Vol. 31 (September 1966), pp. 301-309.

⁴⁴Ronald C. Powers, "Social Power in a Rural Community," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 1963) pp. 118 and 141.

continuity in the social reality which is observed does not seem amenable to the hypothesis testing technique such as was used in the study. Thus the alternative of descriptive analysis might be considered although it too has certain limitations.

Summary

The reputational method even though it has certain limitations, does seem to have a place in the study of community power. In some respects the advantages seem to outweigh the disadvantages.

It is one of the fastest and least expensive methods of studying community power. A case study or decision-making method may take months or years and run into considerable expense. The reputational method can be used in all types of communities from large cities to small rural towns, as shown by actual studies. In small communities, where there is little activity, there may be a shortage of recent decision-making situations to study. As pointed out by Powers, the decision-making method may not identify those that are not visible or active in community affairs.

It is true that no means exist to verify the final list of names obtained by the reputational method, other than the repetition of names. In comparative studies using the decision-making method as a check on reputation, significant similarities were found in the final list of power holders in several studies.

All studies using the reputational method have administered an intensive interview schedule to those receiving the most nominations. This is necessary in order to find interrelationships and personal characteristics of the power holders.

FINDINGS OF RELATED STUDIES

Some states have had only a small percentage of their communities analyzed in respect to social power, and there is a lack of evidence of a single study in other states.

It is considered to be impossible to identify actual power holders in a community without an in-depth study of that community. However, some generalities can be drawn from other studies as to what might be found in a community depending on its size and economic base. As additional studies are conducted in various types and sizes of communities more specific conclusions may be possible.

City Studies

Although the present study was concerned with a rural county, certain studies conducted in large cities do merit discussion for comparative purposes in relation to the operational patterns of influentials.

Hunter⁴⁵ studied the power structure of a southern city of a half a million people and identified 40 persons as the most influential. He found "certain crowds" made important decisions on various policies and activities in the city. The top influentials were mainly business executives, or persons who controlled the jobs of a large number of people. All influentials were not involved in each issue, but different influentials, from a central group, were involved in different issues.

Other studies have also examined the operational pattern of influentials, and found other types of structures to exist.

⁴⁵Hunter, op. cit., pp. 12 and 113.

Miller,⁴⁶ in a study of an American and an English city, found group patterns but not a rigid clique structure with specific clique leaders. However, on certain issues a high degree of clique solidarity was evidenced. The English city showed no hierarchial dominance by industrial sectors.

Small Town Studies

Findings from the study of community power in small towns have added much to the total body of knowledge of social power. Studies have been conducted to seek out certain specific information relating to power holders and related structures as well as general characteristics.

Powers,⁴⁷ in an analytical study of a small town found the following:

1. That the pool of power actors from which individuals are drawn into relationships for a specific issue is monomorphic; whereas, the core or primary structure (clique) is polymorphic, i.e., changes from one issue to another.

2. That the persons perceived as making the decisions in various issue areas are also the persons responsible for executing those decisions.

3. That the power structure involved in a major issue will not act as a structure on minor issues but individuals from the structure may be highly involved in minor issues.

⁴⁶Delbert C. Miller, "Decision-Making Cliques in Community Power Structures: A Comparative Study of An American and An English City," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 64 (November 1958), pp. 299-310.

⁴⁷Powers, "Social Power in a Rural Community," p. 141.

4. That the total power of power actors is unrelated to the authority which they have or have had.

5. That there is a possibility that the question of monomorphic versus polymorphic may actually be a question of the relevance of a power actor's resources to the solution of problems.

6. That there is a set of expected role performance and the power actor's currently increasing in power are now performing the roles which the power actors now stabilized previously played.

7. That the reputational approach is capable of generating an index of the actual power of power actors.

The findings stated in number seven above indicates the reputational approach can determine actual power. This is supported by Gamson⁴⁸ who says there can be little doubt that reputation for influence is highly associated with activity on issues in the communities he studied. He studied 18 New England communities and found that 82 per cent of the reputational leaders were active in at least one issue, and 41 per cent were active in a majority of the issues studied.

Others have found more specialization. Fanelli⁴⁹ found that in a question concerning different projects, only one person, a newspaper editor, ranked high in all three. There was overlap among a dozen others; however, in general the roles were specialized in this Mississippi town of 5,000 persons.

⁴⁸Gamson, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴⁹Alexander Fanelli, "A Typology of Community Leadership Based on Influence and Interaction Within the Leader Subsystem," Social Forces, Vol. 34, (May 1956), pp. 332-338.

Characteristics of those reputed to have influence has also been the object of several studies.

Mitchell and Moore,⁵⁰ in an Ohio study, found the influentials were all white males between 35 and 65 years of age, and were long time residents of the town. Only two had resided in the community for less than 10 years.

Of 18 reporting church membership, 18 were protestants. Seventeen of the twenty perceived influentials were Republicans. Occupations included: bankers, a restaurant owner, insurance agent, merchants and a judge. Of the six perceived as the most influential of the 20, all were affiliated with one of three banks as officers or directors.

Mitchell and Moore say "community programs of any consequence would need the approval of these six men. They and some of their close associates were the legitimizers for the Twintown community."⁵¹

In relation to personal characteristics, Merton,⁵² in a study of "Rovere" on the Eastern seaboard, recognized two distinct types of influentials. One type he called "locals," the long time residents who were older men and had gained their influence not from what they knew, but from whom they knew. The second type, called "cosmopolitans," had not lived in the town as long and were interested in outside places, as

⁵⁰John B. Mitchell and Ralph W. Moore, "Small Town Power Structure," Journal of Cooperative Extension, Vol. 3 (Winter, 1965), pp. 213-218.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 216.

⁵²Robert K. Merton, "Patterns of Influence: A Study of Interpersonal Influence and of Communications Behavior in a Social Community," Communications Research 1948-1949, ed. Paul T. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), pp. 180-219.

well as Rovere. He indicated that the prestige of the cosmopolitan's previous achievements and previously acquired skills made him eligible for a place in the influence structure.

Young adults have seldom been found in the influence structure. The age for the influential has generally been from 35 to 65 years and above.

A study by Mitchell, Given and Schriener,⁵³ conducted in 10 small Ohio communities, indicated some men tend to be influential long after they reach retirement age of 65.

They also found the influentials were predominately town residents, with 70 per cent having incomes of \$10,000 or more. The professional, manager and proprietor categories accounted for 88 per cent of the community influentials.

Only a few women have been identified among the top influentials. Women are thought to be more or less limited to certain spheres of influence.

Brown⁵⁴ indicates that power or influence has been studied and analyzed in the man's world which is different from the woman's world. In her study she sought out and identified the women influentials by asking women leaders to name women perceived as being influential. Those named were over 36 and had husbands who were in executive, business and professional occupations.

⁵³John B. Mitchell, C. William Given and Eldon C. Schriener, "Characteristics of Leaders in Small Communities," Ohio Report On Research and Development, Vol. 50 (Sept.-Oct. 1965), pp. 70 and 78.

⁵⁴Anna B. Brown, "Women Influentials," Journal of Cooperative Extension, Vol. 2 (Summer, 1964), pp. 97-104.

Merton says there is a ". . . tendency for men to report the influence of other men, whereas women reported male and female influentials in almost equal numbers."⁵⁵

County Studies

Acker⁵⁶ found in his study of a county in Florida that most influentials were businessmen, bankers and professionals. Most were long time residents and resided in the county seat, the only city in the county. Most had held public office at some time or were presently holding public office. He indicated the monopolistic power structure which was found was a very important passive force in the decision-making process.

It is interesting to note that although the above study was a county study, the power actors were concentrated in the only city, and their characteristics and operational patterns were very similar to other city studies.

Scaggs,⁵⁷ as well as identifying the power holders, identified their norms and resources in a Florida County of 70,000 inhabitants. The following norms were suggested: (a) a belief in the Protestant Ethic, (b) a belief in offering consideration to others, (c) a desire for harmony, (d) a desire to project an image of community service and (e) a normative preference for informality in decision-making.

⁵⁵Merton, op. cit., 212.

⁵⁶Roy Dean Acker, "The Influentials in a Selected County and Their Involvement in the Decision-Making Process," (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of Florida, 1963).

⁵⁷William F. Scaggs, "The Influentials in a Selected County School Administration Unit: Their Norms and Resources," (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of Florida, 1963).

Influence resources found included: (a) social class, (b) control of fiscal services and mass media, (c) tradition, (d) expertness, (e) public office, (f) control over jobs, (g) wealth, (h) esteem, (i) organization affiliations and activity, (j) interactions and (k) state influence.

A study by Sollie⁵⁸ was conducted in a rural area in Mississippi. This was a watershed project area that crossed county lines and included 33 neighborhoods. Among the top influentials were three county supervisors. Only three full time farmers were found among the top 12 influentials.

It is somewhat questionable as to whether or not a study of a watershed area that crosses county boundaries affords a good setting for the study of power. Few problems or issues are likely to affect the people in the area as a whole. They have no common governing unit in this area.

Summary

Power studies in general have indicated power to be concentrated among a few individuals and structured or interrelated in some way. Most of those in these top groups were men between the ages of 35 and 65. Town or urban areas were found to be the main location of power holders even when studied on a county basis. Businessmen were in most studies, the largest single group represented in the power structures. Power holders were, by in large, natives or long time residents of the area.

The question of what would be found in a completely rural county without an urban center has not been answered.

⁵⁸Sollie, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study designed to identify and describe the reputed influentials and their interrelationships in a selected county. The rationale of certain parts of the study relating to structure and interrelationships will rely upon findings of previous studies pertaining to influentials and their related power structures.

POPULATION

This study is directed at a select group of reputed influentials in a completely rural Virginia county with 10,000 inhabitants. The reputational method was employed in the selection (identification) of the 23 influentials in the selected county. One hundred per cent of the identified influentials cooperated by participating in the intensive interviews which were conducted by the writer.

REPUTATIONAL METHOD

Committee of Selected Informants

A committee, often called a panel, of selected informants was used as the starting point in identifying the reputed influentials in the county. The committee consisted of 17 long time residents of the county who were selected on the basis of their leadership activities or position in the county. Most of the 17 were life long residents of the county, six years being the shortest period of residence for any committee member. The persons selecting this committee, consisted of the two county extension agents, two extension resource development project leaders and the writer.

Areas of interest of those selected for the committee included, a bank president, chairman of the board of supervisors, the superintendent of schools, presidents of the Young Farmers and Farm Bureau organizations; also a retired postmaster, a local businessman, a community action program employee, president of the A.S.C. county committee, presidents of a Garden, Home Demonstration and Woman's Club, and the executive vice-president of the local bank.

The members of this committee were contacted individually and asked to name issues or problems of current concern and to name persons who were influential in the county (see Appendix A). The interviews, in this first phase of the study, were conducted by the two county extension agents, working with resource development personnel from V.P.I. and the writer. A team approach was used for the initial interviews, with one of the agents working with a person from the resource development department or the writer.

In order to confirm the number of years the informant had lived in the county they were asked this question during the interview. Other information noted by the interviewer during the visit included the magisterial district, place of residence and an estimation of the informants knowledge or judgement concerning county affairs. Pertinent comments relating to issues and individuals were recorded during or immediately after the visit (see Appendix A for the form on which the information was recorded).

The 17 selected informants were asked for a minimum of five names. All responded by naming five or more people. A total of 141 nominations

were made by these 17 informants. Out of this total number 19 individuals were named two or more times and received 48 per cent of the nominations.

Committee of Nominated Informants

The committee of nominated informants consisted of those persons nominated two or more times by the committee of selected informants. These were the persons named as being the influential leaders in the county.

Among the list of 19 people named two or more times were four of the selected informants who had been contacted previously. These four persons were not included on the committee of nominated informants. The 15 remaining individuals were interviewed in the same manner as the first committee and were asked the same questions (see Appendix A).

The 15 informants cooperated by making 85 nominations, with 16 individuals being named two or more times. Those named two or more times received 44.7 per cent of the nominations.

Outcome of Committee Nominations

To obtain the final list of reputed influentials, the nominations from both committees were combined. Those individuals named three or more times were considered to be among the most influential and their names listed on the intensive interview schedule (see Appendix B).

A total of 23 individuals were nominated three or more times as influentials by one or both committees. Table 1 shows those nominated three or more times by the two committees before and after the lists were combined.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF NOMINATIONS BY COMMITTEE OF SELECTED INFORMANTS
AND COMMITTEE OF NOMINATED INFORMANTS FOR INCLUSION
ON FINAL LIST OF REPUTED INFLUENTIALS

*Name	Committee of Selected Informants (N = 17)	Committee of Nominated Informants (N = 15)	Total
E	9	3	12
V	5	5	10
K	5	2	7
Q	4	3	7
M	4	2	6
N	5	1	6
R	4	2	6
I	2	3	5
T	4	1	5
F	4	0	4
A	1	2	3
B	1	2	3
C	1	2	3
D	1	2	3
G	3	0	3
H	2	1	3
J	3	0	3
L	1	2	3
O	1	2	3
P	3	0	3
S	2	1	3
U	1	2	3
W	2	1	3

*Code letters are used rather than names to protect the identify of the individuals.

Members of the committees making the nominations were from all six magisterial districts. The committee members did not confine their nominations to their own district. Some named individuals that resided in a district located on the opposite side of the county. The number and distribution of the nominations received by each reputed influential from the six magisterial districts can be seen in Appendix C.

The nominations of the reputed influentials as made by the committee of selected informants and the committee of nominated informants can be seen in Appendix D.

DEVELOPMENT OF DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The instrument used for gathering data pertaining to the 23 reputed influentials in this study was in the form of an intensive interview schedule. The schedule was developed after a thorough study of instruments used in other investigations. The schedule developed for this study included some of the features of instruments used by Powers,⁵⁹ Acker,⁶⁰ and Mitchell, Moore and Schriner⁶¹ in their related studies.

The informant was asked to check the amount of influence of others on the list as categorized on the schedule. He was also asked to rank the top five checked as having strong county-wide influence, and select the factors that contribute to the influence of the top five individuals.

⁵⁹Powers, "Social Power in a Rural Community."

⁶⁰Acker, "The Influentials in a Selected County and Their Involvement in the Decision-Making Process."

⁶¹Mitchell, Moore and Schriner, "Characteristics of Leaders in Small Communities."

Questions were asked concerning hypothetical projects in the county to determine areas of perceived influence and determine if persons named as influentials would also be named to active committees, or identified as "behind the scenes" influentials. Personal information was asked to determine characteristics, organizational membership and interrelationships with others on the list of reputed influentials.

The interviewee was assured that his name would not be identified in any way with the information. The data-gathering instrument appears in appendix B.

Pre-Test of Data-Gathering Instrument

The interview schedule was pre-tested on three individuals in the selected county that had been nominated two times in the first phase of the study. These were individuals who had not received enough mentions to be included on the final list of reputed influentials. They were not informed it was a pre-test of the instrument that they were helping with. The pre-test was conducted in the same manner planned for later interviews. The time required for completing the interview ranged from 50 minutes to one hour and 10 minutes. The amount of time required for the completion of the interview did not seem to be of any concern to those in the pre-test.

It was found that only two changes needed to be made in the instrument. Response to a question having a list of items for the informant to check, relating to factors giving a person influence in the county, had to be limited to five items of major importance. The pre-test respondents stated that all on the list were important and could be

checked. It was also found in the pre-test that it was less complicated to have the respondent rank individuals and place letters corresponding to factors contributing to individual influence directly on the hand-out sheet rather than asking for names and factors and the interviewer writing it down.

Other than the two above changes, no further changes were made at any time.

Scheduling of Interviews

All interviews in the first phase of the study, which involved selected informants and nominated informants, were scheduled from one to two days in advance by phone. Interviews in the first phase were conducted in March, April and May, 1967.

A letter signed by the extension agent in the county preceded the scheduling of visits to the reputed influentials in the second phase of the study. The purpose of the letter was to help legitimize the writers visit or phone call scheduling the visit, and explain briefly the aims of the study (see Appendix B for a copy of the letter).

Interviews in the second phase were also scheduled by phone, and about one-third of informants were scheduled for an interview within a time period of about two hours following the phone call. Others were scheduled from one to two days in advance. Those which had to be scheduled more than three days in advance were informed that they would be called again on the day of the appointment to determine suitability. Three appointments had to be rescheduled due to unexpected circumstances involving the informant. All interviews in the second phase of the study were conducted by the writer during the month of June, 1967.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The information concerning the reputed influentials is of a qualitative nature. Due to the design of this study a descriptive analysis was selected for primary use in analyzing and presenting the data. The reputed influentials are described as a group and individually as to characteristics, structure and bases of influence. This was supplemented with selected types of sociometric analysis through the use of such devices as the sociogram. Mutual selections and interrelationships were analyzed in this manner.

Weighted scores, using the inverse system of weightings were used to analyze rankings of individuals as to certain attributed characteristics. Where a measure of central tendency was required for analysis the median was used. Percentage and frequency distribution was used for the grouping of certain types of data.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE METHODOLOGY

For the benefit of others interested in doing future research relating to this study a brief critical analysis of the methods used in the study will be given.

One concern of the writer was the validity of the list of influentials. Was the reputational technique able to seek out and identify the actual influentials in an apparently inactive rural situation? Due to the fact that there was a very limited number of actual issues to study there could be no check made between actual influence and attributed influence at the time of the study. Other investigations as found in the review of literature have found a high correlation between actual and attributed influence.

It should be noted, however, that attributed influence can be as important a factor in some situations as actual influence. If others perceive a person as being influential they are likely to be influenced by him. This influence may be either intentional or unintentional on the part of the perceived influential.

A second area of concern centered around the limited amount of time the committee members had in deciding on nominations of those perceived as being influential. Most were asked to nominate people during the initial contact. Would they perhaps have named additional people or some different people if they had had more time to think about individuals in the county? This point was emphasized when one individual not on the list included with the final schedule was nominated several times when a question was asked about others who were influential that should be added to the list. This individual was named by several of those in the final interview that had been a member of the selected informant or nominated informant committee and had not mentioned this person at that time. However, this was the only person mentioned three or more times in the final interview for inclusion on the list.

The time factor may also have contributed to the fact that some ranked certain people on the list higher than the individuals that they had named, that also appeared on the list.

It may have proved beneficial to have had a letter, explaining and describing the type of individuals to be named, precede the interviews of those in the first phase of the study. There is no indication that this was done in other studies, or that the above circumstance existed.

Perhaps it is a normal human factor that could appear in any type of social study. It is also possible that the list of names included with the schedule in the second phase helped broaden the perspective of the informant and helped him think of people in areas and occupations not previously considered.

The final factor in question was related to the number of individuals involved in the mutual ranking and classification of the reputed influentials according to the amount of influence they were perceived to possess.

An additional panel of raters could have helped substantiate the mutual ranking of the 23 reputed influentials. One of the major problems that is involved here is the selection of this additional panel. A random sample taken in this rural county, where some are employed in other areas, may not have produced enough people who were well enough informed on county affairs to do a creditable job of rating.

Although the final group of individuals making the mutual ranking numbered only 23, it was apparent from the response that most were well informed on county affairs and acquainted with those on the list.

There were some definite strengths in the methods used in this study that helped uncover and overcome the weaknesses.

The reputational method employed in this study proved to be the best and the only method that could have been used for identifying the influential leaders in this inactive rural county. The issue or decision-making method would not have been capable of identifying the influentials due to the lack of issues.

Another strength existed in the procedure of having the respondents in the final phase name others for inclusion on the list of influentials. Had this not been done, one of the persons showing a great deal of influence, who was not previously mentioned, would have been missed completely. However, the fact that this was apparently the only person missed in the first phase of the study indicates that the procedures used and the nominations made by the informants were of a reliable character.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

The data in this study will be analyzed and described first in relationship to the total group of individuals identified by the reputational technique. This group will then be divided into county influentials and local community influentials and each subgroup analyzed separately.

Following the group analysis each influential will be described individually as to his characteristics, organizational membership and ties with other influentials.

DETERMINATION OF COUNTY INFLUENTIALS

The inverse system of weightings, as described by Best,⁶² was used to determine positions. The county influentials were separated from the local community influentials on the following weighted column placement:

Column 1 -- Strong County-wide Influence	5 points
Column 2 -- Some County-wide Influence	4 points
Column 3 -- Local Community Influence	3 points
Column 4 -- Little Community Influence	2 points
Column 5 -- Don't Know Person	0 points

Inverse values were assigned each column except that column 5 was assigned no point value. Two related studies used a two point spread, however, the same results were obtained by using the one point inverse weighted system of assigning values.

⁶²John W. Best, Research in Education, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), pp. 188 and 189.

The maximum possible score was 5 x 22 (the maximum score times the number of mutual ratings excluding a self rating) or 110 points.

The ranking of the top five individuals checked in the strong county-wide influence column was also used in determining the county influentials. The rank position was also assigned inverse values as follows:

Rank Position number 1 -- 5 points

Rank Position number 2 -- 4 points

Rank Position number 3 -- 3 points

Rank Position number 4 -- 2 points

Rank Position number 5 -- 1 point

The weighted scores were then combined for the final determination of county influentials. Results of the weighted scores can be seen in table 2.

Twelve of the reputed influentials were identified as having county-wide influence and 11 of the reputed influentials local community influence.

MUTUAL RANKING BY THE TWENTY-THREE COUNTY AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

Table 3 shows the influentials that were ranked among the top five in the county and the person assigning them a placing.

Each person perceived as having county-wide influence was ranked number four or higher two or more times. Only three of the individuals identified as having local community influence were ranked in the top five. Two of these persons were ranked number five and the third person received a fourth place ranking.

TABLE 2

WEIGHTED SCORE DIFFERENCES IN COUNTY INFLUENTIALS
AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

Name	Weighted Column Placement	Weighted Rank of Top Five	Total Weighted Score
I	108	71	179
L	105	50	155
B	98	28	126
R	92	23	115
U	98	17	115
E	90	22	112
D	97	12	109
Q	96	10	106
G	86	13	99
K	84	12	96
V	81	14	95
S	90	4	94

P	83	1	84
M	80	2	82
J	78	0	78
T	74	1	75
N	74	0	74
F	65	0	65
A	58	0	58
C	57	0	57
H	57	0	57
W	50	0	50
O	42	0	42

County-wide
Influentials

Local
Community
Influentials

TABLE 3

MUTUAL RANKING OF TOP FIVE INDIVIDUALS SELECTED AS
HAVING STRONG COUNTY-WIDE INFLUENCE

Name of Person Ranked	Person Ranking				
	1	2	3	4	5
I	A D H J K L R W	G M Q V	B O U	C F S	
L	B I O U V	F H W	J Q T	M P	
B	E F T	N	M W		H K U
R	C S	U	K V	B	F
U		C P T	H		M V
E		D J K	P	G H U	T
D		E	C S		O P
Q		B	F	V	G
K		S	G	E J	C
G	M		D E	O	
V	N P			T	B D
S				K R	
P					S
M				D	
J					
T					E
N					
F					
C					
H					
A					
W					
O					

Note: Each column does not contain the same number, as less than five individuals were sometimes selected as having strong county-wide influence.

Appendix E gives the raw data of mutual selections for column placement according to the amount of influence a person was perceived to possess.

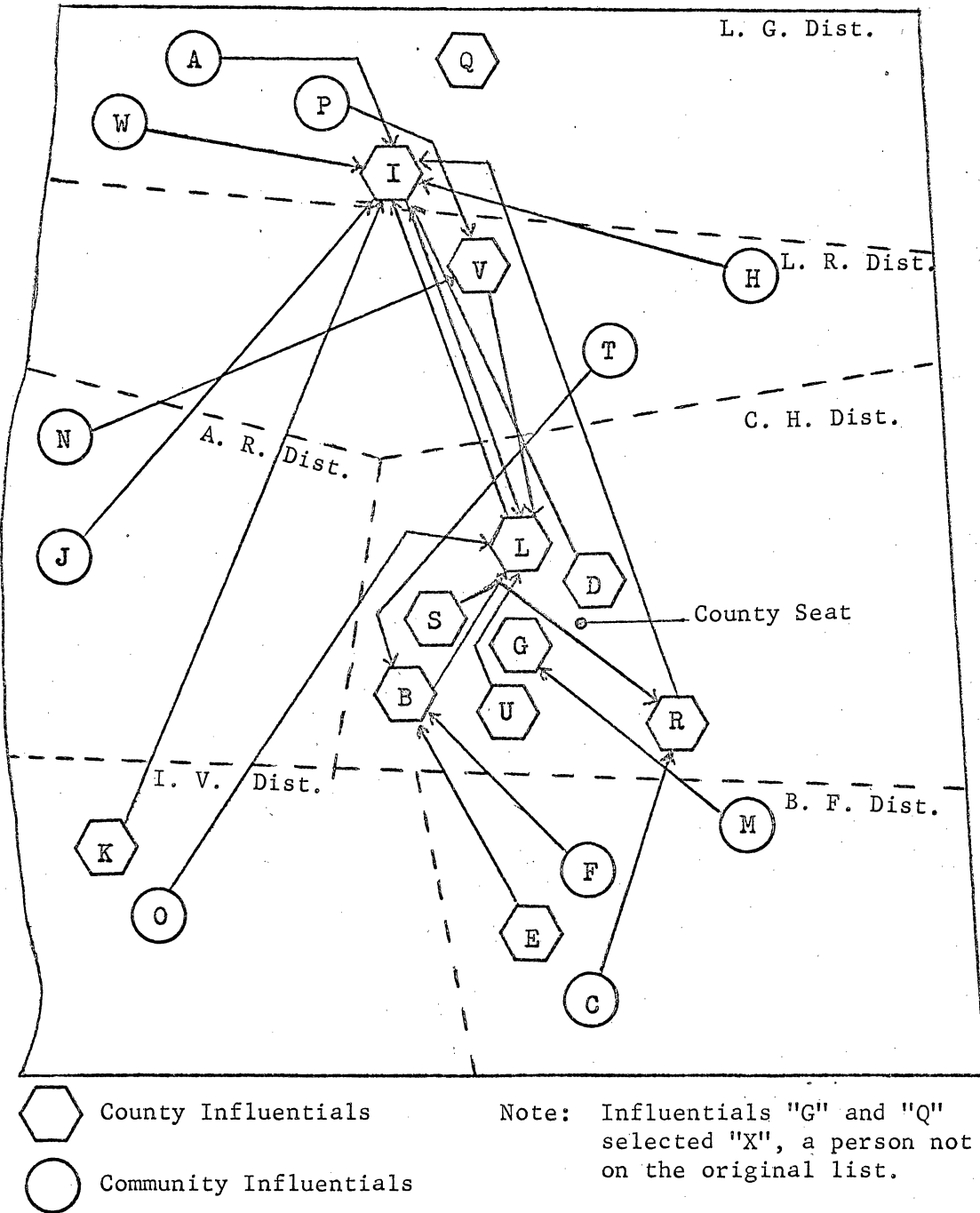
Mutual ranking and column placement both show striking differences before and after weighing. Mr. "I" was placed in the strong county-wide influence column 21 out of 22 times, and was ranked among the top four in the county 18 times. Mr. "L" was placed in the strong county-wide influence column 17 out of 22 times and was ranked among the top four 13 times. This seems to indicate that certain individuals are definitely perceived as having more influence than others in the county.

Four individuals were not placed in the strong county-wide influence column a single time, and three others received only one or two mentions in this column. However, all but one of these seven individuals were placed in the local community influence column from 10 to 13 times. The seventh person received eight placements in the local community influence column. This person also received eight placements in the "Don't know" column indicating he was not very well known. Each of the seven were also selected from three to eight times as having some county-wide influence. This would seem to imply that a person may have a great deal of local community influence and not have much influence over people in other areas of the county.

When asked to select the most influential person in the county, seven different people received nominations. Two of these individuals, "I" and "L," received over 50% of the nominations as being the most influential. Figure 1 shows the approximate location of the influentials in the county and mutual choices of the most influential person. This

Figure I

Location of Twenty-three Influentials Within
Magisterial Districts of the Selected County
And Choices Made of Persons Perceived As
Being the Most Influential



sociogram shows that choices of the most influential crossed community and magisterial district lines. Each of the magisterial districts had one or more identifiable communities. It can be noted on the sociogram that the majority of the county influentials were concentrated in or near the county seat town. However, all but one of the magisterial districts also had one or more county influentials.

During the mutual column placement and ranking of the list of 23 reputed influentials, each was asked if there were others that should be included on the list. Fifteen individuals were named for inclusion on the list, however, only one individual was named three or more times by persons other than the ones who had previously nominated him while serving as an informant in the first phase of the study.

This individual was nominated for inclusion on the list by seven individuals, and noted as having strong county-wide influence by all seven. He was also ranked among the top five by six of the seven persons.

During the first phase of the study this individual, Mr. "X," was nominated by only two persons, therefore, was not included on the list. Due to the fact that he was omitted from the list and was not mutually ranked or rated by other influentials, he was not included in the following group analysis. However, Mr. "X" was interviewed and was described individually along with other influentials in the study.

Mr. "X" was considered to be among those with county-wide influence. He received a top rating and ranking by the seven individuals who named him, and received a weighted score of 57 points. If assigned the average

possible score, 3.5 points, on column placement alone, he would have a weighted score high enough to place him among those considered to have county-wide influence.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFLUENTIALS

Sex of Reputed Influentials

All 23 of the influentials identified by the reputational technique were all white males. The committee of selected informants contained representatives of several women's organizations, and these women did name other women as well as men. Twenty-three women were named; however none were mentioned by more than one person. Five of the women named had a spouse among the final list of influentials. These women were located in various parts of the county.

Most of the investigations, as reported in the review of literature, have found few women among the top or most powerful influentials. The few that were named among the top influentials possessed considerable wealth and were prominent in community social circles.

There is little indication that women in the selected rural county possessed the economic power or other major factors that were attributed to the male power holders.

Although women may not be found very often among the top influentials, they are influential in various aspects of community life. Brown⁶³ indicates that women are influential in the educational affairs and cultural affairs of the community. She suggests that women may wield

⁶³Brown, op. cit., pp. 98 and 99.

their power through memberships in associations and boards of social agencies, rather than through political and economic structures.

The reason for the total absence of negroes on the final list of reputed influentials was attributed to the fact that they only constituted five per cent of the population.

Years of County Residence

Twenty-one of the influentials were natives of the county and had resided in the county all of their lives, except for short periods of time at school and in the armed forces. Two had lived and worked out of the county for a short period of time.

One of the local community influentials had moved to the selected county fifty years ago from an adjoining county. The other person, also a community influential, had lived in the county for the past 16 years.

There was a noticeable absence of professional workers and others who have moved to the county within the past 10 years on the final list of reputed influentials. However, due to the rurality of the county and limited employment opportunities, the number of people moving into the county is small. Powers⁶⁴ indicates the public professional has not been found in the power structures of studies conducted on social power.

Age of Reputed Influentials

The age of the 23 influentials ranged from 32 years to 81 years of age. The median age for all influentials was 53 years.

⁶⁴Powers, "Power Structures and Pressure Groups."

The median age for the 12 persons exhibiting county-wide influence was 61.5 years, or 17.5 years above the median age of 44 years for the community influentials. Four of the county influentials were above the usual retirement age of 65, however, only two were actually retired.

The above seems to indicate that the decision makers for the county are found among the older citizens, and few of those 40 or younger have much influence on the affairs of the county. It is also possible that age is an important factor associated with influence in the county. The distribution of county and community influentials by age is shown in table 4.

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY AND COMMUNITY
INFLUENTIALS ACCORDING TO AGE

Age Grouping	County Influentials	Community Influentials	All Influentials
30 - 39	0	2	2
40 - 49	3	6	9
50 - 59	3	2	5
60 - 69	4	0	4
70 and above	2	1	3
Totals	12	11	23

Formal Education of Reputed Influentials

Formal school years completed by the influentials ranged from seven to 18 years. Table 5 shows that 13 of the 23 influentials had a high school education or better and 10 had less than a high school diploma.

TABLE 5

FORMAL EDUCATION OF REPUTED INFLUENTIALS BY
TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED OR COMPLETED

Formal Education	County Influentials	Community Influentials	All Influentials
College graduate or beyond	2	1	3
Some college	1	1	2
High school graduate	3	5	8
Attended high school	3	3	6
Completed grade school only	3	1	4
Totals	12	11	23

The median school years completed for the combined group was 11 years. The median number of school years completed for both the county influentials and local community influentials was also 11 years. Thus showing no difference between the two groups. The median school years completed by all males 25 and over for the county in 1960 was 7.3 years, or 3.7 years less than the group of influentials.

Generally the influentials were better educated than the median of other males; however, the wide variation in the years of formal education of all influentials suggest that formal education is important but not the major determinant of influence in the selected county.

It should also be emphasized that formal education was asked for and this in no way measures the intelligence of those identified as being influential. The level of education for the older county influentials was

generally lower during their school age years, and the seventh grade was considered to be adequate by many persons.

When asked the question about formal education a number of the respondents stated they did not have the opportunity to attend or complete high school. One of the county influentials indicated that he had only seven years of formal education, but had also been taught informally at home by his father who was a former county judge.

It was observed during the interviews that the individuals with less than a high school education were more hesitant in giving this information than any other personal data.

Income of Reputed Influentials

Twenty of the 23 influentials responded to the question concerning family income. The annual net family income of those responding ranged from under \$3,000 to over \$15,000. One-fourth of the respondents had a net family income of \$10,000 or over. The median income for all influentials was \$7,500. The median income for both the county influentials and community influentials was also \$7,500. The median income of the influentials was well above the 1960 median income of the county. The income of the influentials was two and one-half times greater than the \$2,994 county median. Only one individual had an income of less than \$3,000 in the group of influentials. The person reporting the income of less than \$3,000 stated that this was retirement income, and that his income had at one time been above this figure.

Other studies as found in the review of literature also found the incomes of the influentials to be considerably higher than other citizens,

however, others found a higher percentage in the \$10,000 and up category than was found in the selected county under study. It should be pointed out that most of the other studies were of urban areas or counties containing urban areas. The rural county in this study did not offer high paying employment opportunities, or executive type positions that are usually found in urban areas.

Occupation of Reputed Influentials

Past occupations and part-time jobs will be considered as well as the present major occupations. It is possible that some of the former occupations or part-time employment of the influentials is a major factor contributing to their influence.

Table 6, giving the present major occupation of the influentials in the selected county, shows the largest category of all influentials as well as county influentials to be full-time farmers.

Other studies noted in the review of literature have indicated that few farmers were found among the influentials. However, most other studies were not conducted in a rural farming county. The largest category which included eight individuals, was the full time farmer. This was 35 per cent of the total group of influentials; however, it was short of the 57 per cent of rural farm persons in the selected county.

These farmers represented several different types of farming operations, with grade A dairy farms being predominant. The person receiving the highest weighted score, Mr. "I," was a beef cattle producer and presently farming full time; however, in the past he had served as county treasurer for 16 years before deciding not to run

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS
ACCORDING TO MAJOR OCCUPATION

Occupation	County Influentials	Community Influentials	All Influentials
Full-time farmer	5	3	8
Service and Supply dealers	2	0	2
Retail merchants	2	4	6
Sales	0	2	2
Lawyer	1	0	1
Company executive	0	1	1
Retired	2	1	3
Totals	12	11	23

again for re-election. He is also presently serving as a bank director and president of the local bank. Both his past occupation and present position in the bank were cited by some of the informants as being the basis of his influence.

The next largest category for all influentials was retail merchants, this was the largest group for the local community influentials. Five were owner operators of general stores in various areas of the county. One was a feed, seed, and fertilizer store owner and operator located in the county seat town.

One county influential and one local community influential also served as a rural postmaster, at a post office set up in their general

store. Another store owner also had represented the county in the House of Delegates at Richmond 10 years ago.

Three of the influentials had been retired for several years. Two of these were county influentials, one a retired postmaster had served the county seat town for over 30 years, the other was a retired minister who had also been engaged in farming. The community influential was a retired grade A dairy farmer with two sons who took over operation of the farm after his retirement.

Other occupations found in the group of county influentials included an owner operator of a laundry and dry cleaning business and a lawyer who was former Commonwealth Attorney and a former state delegate.

Community influentials included an insurance agent, a salesman who worked for a farm and industrial equipment company in an adjacent county and a company executive who also worked in another county. All three of these also owned farms.

It seems possible that former occupations, of certain of the influentials, which brought them in contact with a lot of people or important people, could be an important factor in the present influence that is possessed.

Political Position of Reputed Influentials

Influentials in the selected county were predominately Republican. Table 7 shows seven county and seven local community influentials listed as being Republican. Three of the four that considered themselves to be Independents, indicated they were close to Republican beliefs. Twelve of the 14 Republicans indicated, on the hand out sheet which was a part of the interview schedule, that they were Conservative Republicans.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS
ACCORDING TO POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

Political Party	County Influentials	Community Influentials	All Influentials
Republican	7	7	14
Independent	1	3	4
Democratic	4	1	5
Totals	12	11	23

Democrats were represented by four county influentials and one community influential.

In response to the question on political position, 19 of the respondents of both parties, as well as Independents, indicated conservative views; while only three indicated liberal views. One respondent, a middle of the road man, showed no preference.

The conservative nature of the leadership may have meant slower adjustments to changing conditions.

In response to a question asking if people with opposing political views worked together on major issues; 18 said "yes" and 4 said "sometimes." One individual did not respond to the question.

There was no indication that politics was involved in the selection or ranking of influentials. Individuals with differing political views both selected and ranked each other.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE

Organizational Membership and Leadership of Reputed Influentials

Table 8 shows that 21 of the influentials held membership in one or more organizations during the past five years. Fourteen were presently holding or had held an office during the five year period.

The Farm Bureau led other groups with a total of 14 influentials as members. Thirteen of the influentials were members of the county recreation association. This association had been newly organized and at the time of the study, had a golf course and swimming pool under construction. Three of the influentials reporting membership, stated that they did not plan to participate actively in the recreation, but had joined to help the county and provide recreation for others.

Three Ruritan clubs were the main civic organizations in the county. The three Ruritan clubs, although located in different areas of the county, do have some joint fund raising projects and activities. Members sometimes attend the meetings of other clubs to make up attendance due to an absence at his own club.

It was through the efforts of the Ruritan Clubs, and some of the influentials who were members, that the recreation association was formed. These clubs also have active industrial development committees and perform many other such functions since the county does not have a Chamber of Commerce.

Interrelationships exist among the influentials in the overlapping contacts in the various organizations. In the last column of table 8, overlapping contacts of present members can be seen for the influentials

TABLE 8

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES
HELD BY COUNTY AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS
DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS

	Name	L. G. Ruritan	C. H. Ruritan	B. F. Ruritan	Mason	Odd Fellow	Recreation Association	V.F.W.	Farm Bureau	Local P.T.A.	Total Memberships	*Over- lapping Contacts
County Influentials	I	M			M		M		M O		4	30
	L		M		M	M	M O				4	24
	B		M O				M		M O		3	28
	R								M O	M	2	0
	U		M O		M O				M O		3	21
	E			M	M O		M		M O		4	30
	D		M O			M	M		M	M O	5	30
	Q									M O	0	0
	G		M O				M			M O	3	17
	K						M				1	12
Community Influentials	V					M O			M O	M	3	13
	S								M	M	2	0
	P	M O							M O		2	13
	M			M			M		M O	M O	4	25
	J										0	0
	T						M	M	M O		3	26
	N		M O				M				2	17
	F				M			M		M	3	8
	A	M O			M		M	M			4	22
	C			M			M		M		3	25
Totals	H							M		M	2	3
	W								M	M	2	11
	O						M		M		2	23
Totals		3	6	3	6	2	13	4	14	9		

M = Present Member

O = Present Officer

M = Former Member

O = Former Officer

*Note: Overlapping contacts are derived from present organizational memberships of each influential plus other influentials in these organizations. This column does not contain former memberships (M) or Parent Teacher Associations, as various associations are represented.

and organizations listed. Overlapping contacts are determined by the number of organizational memberships of the influential, plus the number of influentials in the organization who are presently members.

Nineteen of the county and community influentials had contact with each other at the time of the study in one or more of the organizations.

Church membership offered opportunities for a few contacts between influentials. Nineteen of the influentials reported that they were church members. These 19 individuals belonged to 13 different protestant churches. The largest denomination represented among the groups of county and community influentials being Methodist, with 10 influentials.

Little observable difference existed between county and community influentials as to membership and offices in the organizations in the county.

Appointed and Elected Positions of Reputed Influentials

Certain influentials were interrelated through formal appointed or elected positions. As well as the interrelationships, it is conceivable that certain of these positions were factors which helped contribute to the influence that the individual possesses.

Table 9 shows four bank directors listed among the influentials. One of these men, "I," is also president of the bank. Three of the directors were identified as county influentials and one a community influential.

Influentials who were members of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation, County and Community committees comprised the largest group of interrelated individuals. These committee members are elected by the

TABLE 9

PRESENT AND PAST APPOINTED AND/OR ELECTED LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
OF COUNTY AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

	Name	Bank Director	Board of Supervisors	School Board	Electoral Board	Tele. Coop. Director	House of Delegates	A.S.C. Committees	FHA Committee	Officer Political Party	Appointed State or Fed. Position	Other Elected Offices	Total Each Influential
County Influentials	I	X	X										3
	L	X					X					X	3
	B			X				X	X				2
	R							X					2
	U			X				X			X		3
	E			X	X				X	X-D			3
	D									X-R			1
	Q			X			X			X-R			3
	G											X	1
	K	X						X	X		X		2
Community Influentials	V							X					1
	S				X	X		X	X	X-D	X		6
	P							X					0
	M	X						X					1
	J							X					2
	T								X				1
	N												0
	F										X		0
	A					X							2
	C							X					0
Total	H							X					1
	W							X		X-R			1
	O							X					2

X = Present Position

X = Former Position

X-R = Republican

X-D = Democrat

farmers in the county. Eight who are presently members and two previous members are included in the column listed as A.S.C., committees in table 9.

Other present and former positions are listed that do not provide interrelationships among the influentials; however, these positions show present and past contact with citizens of the county.

Eleven of the 12 county influentials were either holding or had held in the past one or more appointed or elected positions in the county. The positions which were presently being held included: chairman of the board of supervisors, school board members, members of the electoral board, postmaster, chairman of the Republican party and chairman of the A.S.C. County Committee. Former positions held by the county influentials included: county treasurer, Commonwealth's attorney, members of the House of Delegates and past chairman of the Democratic party.

Only three of the community influentials held such positions. These positions were postmaster, Republican committeeman, and former A.S.C., County Committeeman.

This seems to indicate that appointed and elected positions are interrelated with reputation for influence in the selected county.

It was found that all influentials have membership in organizations and/or hold positions of leadership in the selected county. It appears that most have opportunities to contact other influentials concerning community and county affairs through their organizational affiliations or positions.

Associations Among the Influentials As Perceived By the Influentials

The informants were asked during the course of the interview to check the names of individuals, on the hand out sheet, with whom they had frequent contact in groups or organizations. Frequent contact meaning at least a weekly or bi-monthly association with the person. The largest number of mutual and single mentions was among the 12 county influentials, with 60 mentions out of a possible 132.

An apparent disagreement existed in the perception of contacts between county and community influentials as shown in table 10. The group of community influentials mentioned having a total of 57 contacts with county influentials. However, county influentials reported only 32 contacts with the community influentials or 25 fewer contacts than mentioned by the other group. In reality the figures of the two groups should have been identical.

This does seem to suggest that community influentials may be more aware of the presence of a county influential in a group or meeting than county influentials are of community influentials.

Business associations were another source of interrelationships among the influentials. The county influentials had the most contact with each other through business with 50 mentions out of a possible 132. The number of community influentials having business contacts with other community influentials numbered 27 out of a possible 110. Contacts between the two groups ranged from 29 as reported by the community influentials to 35 reported by the county influentials, or a total of six more reported by the county influentials.

TABLE 10

CONTACTS IN GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS BETWEEN COUNTY
AND COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS AS PERCEIVED BY
COUNTY VERSUS COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

		County Influentials												total	
		I	L	B	R	U	E	D	Q	G	K	V	S	"X"	"O"
Community Influentials	P	X		X		X	X	X		X		X		7	
		O		O					O	O					4
	M		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		8	
			O	O			O			O		O			5
	J													0	
														0	
	T	X		X	X	X	X					X	X	7	
				O			O					O			3
	N		X	X		X	X	X		X				6	
			O	O			O		O	O		O			6
	F			X										1	
						O	O	O		O					4
	A	X					X	X		X			X	5	
							O	O		O			O		4
	C			X			X	X		X				4	
				O						O					2
	H	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	9	
														0	
	W	X		X	X	X						X	X	6	
		O						O	O						3
	O	X			X						X		X	4	
									O						1
														Total "X" for all lines	
														57	
														Total "O" for all lines	
														32	

Key: X = County Influentials named by Community Influentials

O = Community Influentials named by County Influentials

(Blocks containing both "X" and "O" represent a mutual choice.)

Few of the influentials had relatives among the group. For purposes of the study a relative meant first cousin or closer. The sociogram in figure 2 shows the existing kinship among the influentials. For a rural county with few people moving into the county the number of related influentials seemed to be rather small.

In reply to a question asking for an estimate of the number of adult relatives, first cousin or closer, living in the county, the estimates of the county influentials ranged from 4 to 100, with the median number reported being 28. County influentials estimates ranged from 0 to 150, with a median of 15 being reported.

Those interrelated through visits in the home are shown in the sociogram in figure 3. A visit in the home meant a visit by either party in either home. These visits are probably one of the most important interrelationships of the influentials. It can be noted on the sociogram that the majority of the visiting took place between county influentials. Visits were also made between county influentials and community influentials; however, little visiting took place between the community influentials.

The lines representing visits on the sociogram suggest direct lines of communication between influentials.

It is apparent that the influentials are interrelated in numerous ways in the selected county. The county influentials are more closely interrelated than the community influentials; however, ties do exist between the two groups.

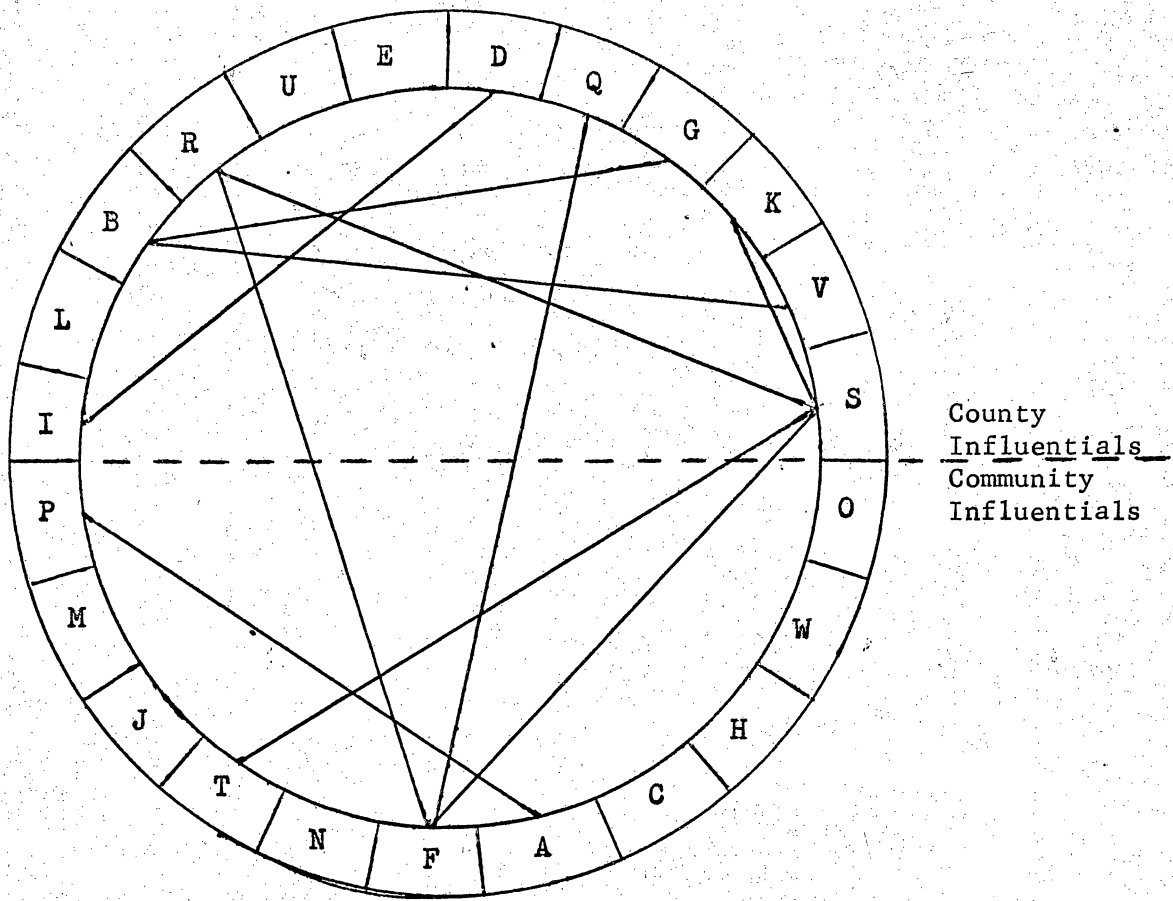


Figure 2. -- Interrelationships of county and community influentials through kinship.

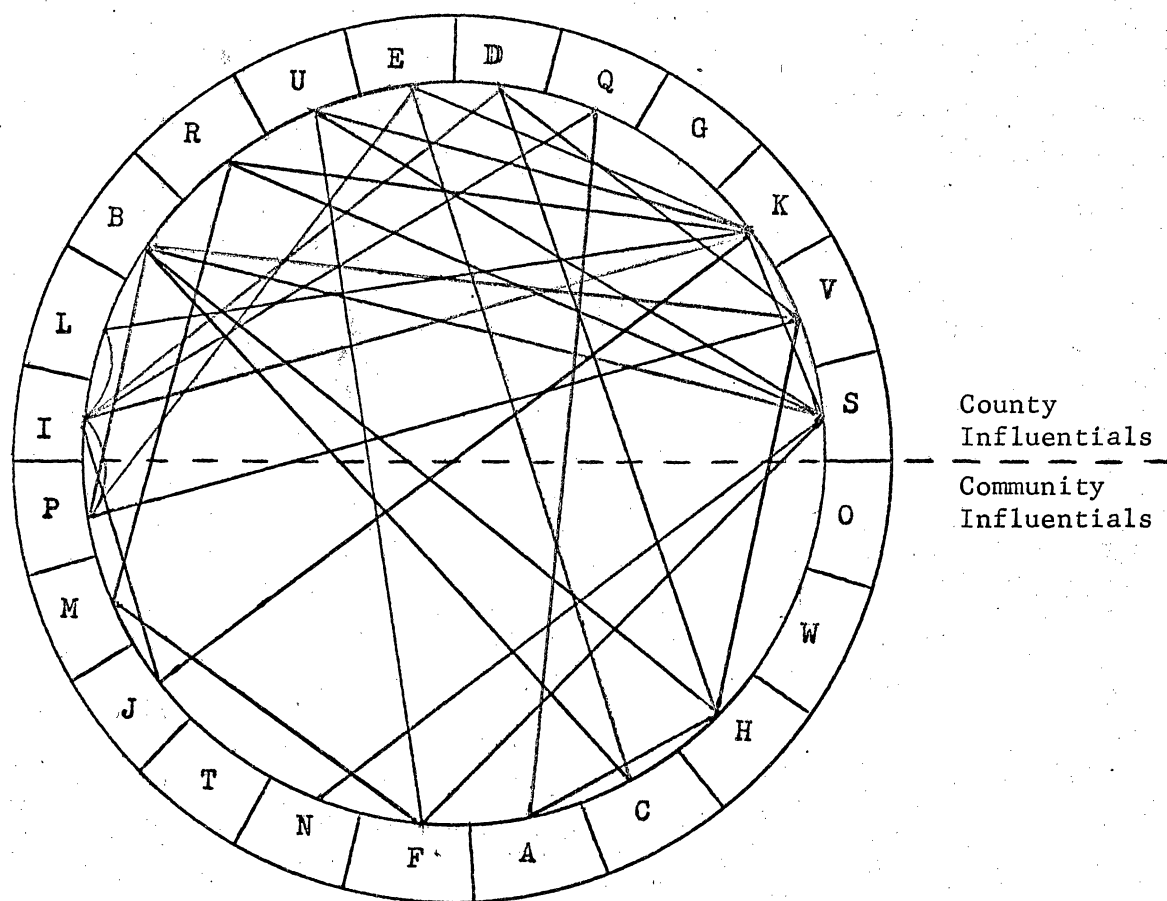


Figure 3. -- Interrelationships of county and community influentials through visits in the home.

Selection of Reputed Influentials and Other Citizens for
Resolving Imaginary Issues

Due to the apparent inactivity in the county there was a shortage of actual issues available for study; therefore, imaginary issues were used.

It was found that when questions were asked concerning the various issues that certain individuals were named more times than others. In most instances they were the same individuals identified in the first phase of the study through the reputational technique. It was also found that different individuals were named to work on different issues.

In response to the questions a number of people were named, with some named several times and some only once or twice. For purposes of simplification as well as strength in results, only those persons named three or more times were described. Code letters will be used for all influentials. For more information on these individuals see the section on individual descriptions.

Question -- If a decision were to be made in Richmond that affected the county, who do you think would be the best man in this county to get in touch with state officials?

Two attorneys, Mr. "L" and Mr. "X," received six nominations, one was a former member of the house of delegates, the other commonwealth's attorney for the county. A third person, Mr. "Q," received three nominations; he too was a former member of the house of delegates.

Several respondents said that this question involved politics and the best qualified person may not fit politically at Richmond.

Question -- Who would you suggest to be the best person to get in touch with federal officials in Washington on some local problem?

The two attorneys mentioned above again received the most votes. Mr. "L" was named 10 times and Mr. "X," six times. A third attorney, not included on the list of influentials, was named by five individuals. This attorney is the youngest of the three practicing in the county seat town. He had been in the county for six years.

Question -- If important decisions needed to be made concerning the location of an industry in the county that would employ local men and high school graduates, who would you like to see working on the project?

The mayor of the county seat town, Mr. "G," received 12 nominations. Mr. "D," who was at that time serving on a Ruritan industrial committee, received 10 nominations. Others named to the committee were Mr. "I," Mr. "L" and Mr. "E."

Question -- Who do you see as the persons that would work "behind the scenes," I mean the ones who would not actively serve on a committee, but be very influential in making a decision or influencing decisions of others concerning industry?

The only person receiving three or more votes was a person not on the list of influentials, who was called Mr. "T" Sr., because he was Mr. "T's" father. Mr. "T" Sr. was a retired farmer and large property owner, and said by some to be quite wealthy; however, due to his age he was not in very good health.

Question -- If a major crisis faced the schools in the county who would you like to see on a committee that would make decisions concerning the schools?

Mr. "N" received the most votes, which was seven. He in fact named himself and stated that he was very interested in the school system. He indicated he had helped with getting the county to enact the sales tax for school purposes. Others named from three to four times were Mr. "G," Mr. "S," Mr. "T," Mr. "B," and Mr. "R's" father who the writer called Mr. "R" Sr. Both Mr. "B" and Mr. "R" Sr. are members of the school board, Mr. "R" Sr. being president of the board.

Question -- Who do you see as the persons that would not serve actively, yet work "behind the scenes" in influencing decisions of others in school affairs?

Mr. "I," who is president of the bank and chairman of the board of supervisors, was the only person named three or more times.

Question -- Supposing the county was faced with the relocation and possible improvement of highway ____ (a highway that runs the length of the county). Who would you like to see working actively on a committee concerning this matter?

Persons receiving three or more votes were Mr. "I," Mr. "L," and Mr. "E."

In a question concerning "behind the scenes" people on highway issues, none received more than two votes.

Question -- If the farmers of the county were faced with a new livestock disease, that had to be controlled in order to save the sheep, beef, and dairy cattle, who would you like to see on a committee that would have the responsibility of making decisions on this matter?

Mr. "E," a large grade A dairy farmer, received 14 votes, Mr. "T," a large beef cattle farmer, received 10 votes and Mr. "V," a grade A

dairy farmer, received 9 votes. The county veterinarian also was named by nine different individuals. Mr. "M" was also named to the committee and received 5 votes.

Question -- Who's decision or opinion would the larger farmers most likely accept if there were no committee on the disease problem?

Mr. "E" again received the most votes, followed by the local veterinarian. Others named three or more times included Mr. "S," Mr. "V," Mr. "T," and the extension agent, agriculture.

The many interrelationships of the reputed influentials, as well as the repeated naming of the reputed influentials for resolving imaginary issues, as summarized in table 11, does seem to indicate the existence of an informal power structure.

Indications are that most of the reputed influentials work together or are willing to work together on county affairs. This was illustrated by the mutual naming of persons with opposing political views, and different occupations to committees. This was also shown in the mutual rankings and ratings.

In the selection of persons for resolving imaginary issues it was found that the reputed influentials were named the most times. Both community and county influentials were named to help resolve certain issues. This indicates a possible specialization on the part of the influentials, and suggest that the type of structure may be a "power pool."

From a power pool type of structure different individuals from the pool may become involved in different issues. It is similar to what

certain other writers have called a "coalitional structure," where certain individuals form a temporary alliance for joint action.

Two individuals within this pool of influentials are closely inter-related, and seem to possess more influence than others; however, there is no indication that they have an excessive amount of control over others in the pool. In other words, these two individuals do not seem to run the county.

TABLE 11

SELECTION OF REPUTED INFLUENTIALS AND OTHER CITIZENS
FOR RESOLVING IMAGINARY ISSUES

Issue Area	Individuals Named
Best person to get in touch with state officials	L, X, and Q
Best person to get in touch with federal officials	L, X, and new attorney
Help locate industry in the county	G, D, I, L, and E
Behind the scenes man in industry	T, Senior, a retired landowner
Resolve crisis facing the county schools	N*, E, S, T*, B, and R, Senior the School Board President
Behind the scenes man in schools	I
Highway relocation and improvement in the county	I, E, L
Decision on controlling livestock disease problem	E, T*, V, M* and veterinarian
Decision of person farmers most likely to accept	E, S, V, T*, veterinarian and county extension agent

*Denotes community influentials

INFLUENTIALS IDENTIFIED BY THE EXTENSION AGENTS

At the beginning of the study the two extension agents in the selected county, as well as a retired agent who had retired in the county six months prior to the study, were asked to list the persons they perceived as being the influentials. Each completed a list which was put in a sealed envelope and placed in the secretary's desk.

Table 12 illustrates the results of these three lists as compared to the total list of reputed influentials. The extension agent, home economics, named five of the 13 individuals identified as county influentials or 38.4 per cent. Six of the reputed county influentials were named by the extension agent, agriculture or 46.1 per cent. The retired agent named eight of the final 13 county influentials, or 61.5 per cent. The extension agent, agriculture and home economics each named one community influential and the retired agent named three community influentials. As noted in table 12, the total number of persons named by each agent varied from 13 to 21.

The extension agent, home economics named four women and the retired agent named five women as being among the influentials. No women were identified in the study; however, it is possible that some are influential in certain issue areas such as family life and other social and cultural affairs. Other studies as reported in the review of literature have found this to be true.

Table 12 also shows that all three individuals failed to name certain individuals that were identified as county influentials. The individuals not mentioned by either of the three include Mr. "L" an attorney,

TABLE 12

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EXTENSION AGENT'S PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENTIALS
IN THE SELECTED COUNTY, A RETIRED AGENT'S PERCEPTION AND THE
INFLUENTIALS IDENTIFIED BY THE REPUTATIONAL TECHNIQUE

Name of Influential	Extension Agent, Home Economics	Extension Agent, Agriculture	Extension Agent Retired
I	X	X	X
L			
B		X	X
R	X	X	X
U	X	X	X
E	X		X
D			X
Q		X	
G			
K			
V	X	X	X
S			
County Influentials *X			X
-----	-----	-----	-----
Community Influentials P			X
M	X		X
J		X	
T			
N			X
F			
A			
C			
H			
W			
O			
Totals	6 (N = 13)	7 (N = 15)	11 (N = 21)

*Note: "X" was the individual named for inclusion during the final interviews.

The total number of persons named by each agent is enclosed in parentheses after the total agreeing with reputational list.

Mr. "G" a businessman and town mayor, Mr. "K" a merchant and postmaster and Mr. "S" a farmer.

This suggests that possibly the agents are overlooking people in certain occupational areas. This could be attributed to a limited involvement in problems in the past that would include these individuals.

The apparent low percentage of agreement does seem to point out the need for an organized identification process for experienced extension agents as well as new extension agents.

It should be pointed out that although the extension agents were not able to identify all of the reputed influentials, they named as many or more than some of the informants.

The retired extension agent and a retired postmaster, Mr. "U," each named 10 of the persons identified in the first phase of the project plus influential "X" who was added to the list during the second phase of interviewing. Ten, or 11 including Mr. "X," was the largest number of influentials named in the study by one person. Reputed influentials which were named by "U" and other informants can be seen in Appendix D. The retired postmaster and extension agent had seven matching names out of the 11 influentials they nominated. The list of names compiled by the two men also contained most of the persons receiving the highest weighted scores. The extension agent failed to name "L" the second highest individual according to weighted score in the study and the postmaster failed to name "B" the third highest in the study.

It was also noted that the superintendent of schools named eight of the same persons that appeared on the final list of reputed influentials and the executive vice president of the bank, the person who

actually operated the local bank named seven of those found on the final list of reputed influentials. These two men as well as Mr. "U" were asked to name a minimum of five persons. Each named more than the minimum; however, they may have named even more of the influentials than they did, had they been asked to name a larger number of persons.

The above indicates that the extension agents, as well as persons in the other occupations mentioned do afford a good starting point in the naming of influentials. It also shows that each may not perceive exactly the same individuals as being the most influential, although some overlap was found in the nominations made by each of these individuals.

FACTORS TO WHICH INFLUENCE WAS ATTRIBUTED

Certain studies, as reported in the review of literature, found that some individuals are able to affect the decisions, opinions and actions of others because they possess certain factors which are valued by others in the community.

In order to determine what some of the factors were in general that contribute to the influence of people in the selected county, the informants were asked to check from one to five of the factors listed on a handout sheet. They were also encouraged to add other factors to the list.

Table 13 lists the factors in order of importance as perceived by the reputed influentials. "Past achievements" was selected the most times or by 16 of the 23 influentials. "Leadership in county groups" which is closely related to past achievements was selected by 14 of the

TABLE 13

FACTORS PERCEIVED AS CONTRIBUTING TO INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUALS
IN COUNTY IN GENERAL, AND TO SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS NAMED
AS BEING AMONG THE TOP FIVE COUNTY INFLUENTIALS

Name of Factor Contributing to Influence	Number of times Mentioned As Giving People in the County Their Influence	Specific Individuals Mentioned 2 or more times as Possessing One of the Factors
Past achievements	16	I, B, E, L, R, U
Leadership in county groups	14	I, B, R, V
Good source of ideas	10	G, V
Family background	8	
Control of money and credit	8	I
Long time resident	8	B
Past participation in groups	7	L, B, R, U, D
Contacts with lots of people	6	I, L, D, G, K
Has a position of authority	6	I
Formal education	5	L
Human relation skills	5	
Kind of occupation	3	
Access to important people	3	K
Has the time	3	
Middle age or older	2	
Kind of business or farm	2	E
*Christian and church worker	2	B
*Good farmer	1	
*Good citizen	1	
*Good money manager	1	
Control over jobs of others	0	
Size of land holdings	0	

*These four factors were named by the informants for inclusion on the list.

influentials. "Good source of ideas" was indicated as important by 10 individuals. Three other factors, each selected by 8 of the influentials, included: "Family background," "Control of money and credit," and "Long time resident of county."

This perhaps indicates that it would be difficult for a relative newcomer to the county to be attributed a great deal of influence.

In order to determine what factors contributed to the influence of those identified as being the strongest influentials, each informant was asked to select from the list of factors, on sheet number one, or name other factors that they saw as giving the person influence. The informants listed one or two factors for each influential ranked among the top five in the county.

Table 13 lists the individuals that were named two or more times as possessing the factor listed on the left. For example I, B, E, L, R, and U were attributed influence because of their past achievements by two or more individuals. Only "I," the president of the bank, was perceived to get some of his influence through the control of money and credit.

As can be noted in table 13 some individuals were identified as possessing several of the factors listed, indicating that an individual may derive his total influence from several different factors.

Indications are that the influence of four of the individuals may have been partly derived through inheritance in that their fathers were considered by some to have been influential persons in the past. The existence of this type of situation makes it even more difficult for others, especially persons moving into the county to enter the structure.

Judging from the individuals who were attributed influence in the selected county, being a "long time resident" was perhaps more important than was indicated from the data shown in table 13. Another closely related factor was age which was observed to be important as most of those attributed county-wide influence were well past middle age.

Past achievements including formal positions held and doing well in a chosen occupation, seem to have been a major consideration as to whether or not a person was attributed influence. The formal elected or appointed positions of authority, which were previously found to provide a number of interrelationships, seems to be closely associated with influence in the selected county. Indications are that it may be a key factor which helps contribute to the influence of the power holders. However, this does not mean the people of the county look to the courthouse for leadership. The positions held may have given the reputed influentials the opportunity to become known county-wide. This is supported by the fact that "contacts with a lot of people" was among the most named factors contributing to a persons influence.

The fact that past and present positions held was closely related to the power of the influentials in the selected county was not in agreement with what Powers⁶⁵ found in his study of a small town. He found that past and present authoritative positions were unrelated to the power of power holders in a rural town.

The key factors found to be of importance in giving a person influence in the selected county were all closely interrelated. It is likely

⁶⁵Powers, "Social Power in a Rural Community," p. 142.

these same key factors contributing to the influence of the power holders in the selected county also apply to other rural agricultural counties.

A RESUME OF THE SALIENT
CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH INFLUENTIAL

Brief Profiles of County Influentials

All of the persons identified as county influentials were natives and life long residents of the county.

Only the pertinent characteristics will be listed for each individual. The influentials are listed in order, starting with the person having the highest weighted score.

Influential "I" -- This individual was a Conservative Republican and 66 years of age. Although he did not have an opportunity to complete high school, he was a prominent farmer, president of the local bank and chairman of the board of supervisors, as well as a former treasurer of the county for 16 years. Mr. "I" was a Mason, treasurer of the local Methodist Church, Ruritan member, and director of the county Farm Bureau. He was the father of five children, four of them over 18 years of age.

Influential "L" -- "L" was a 66 year old attorney who considered himself to be a Conservative Republican. Former positions held included: school teacher, commonwealth attorney, and member of the House of Delegates. He was married with no children, and his wife was employed by a federal government agency. He was a Lutheran, Mason, Odd Fellow, Ruritan member, a director of the local recreation association and director of the local bank. Mr. "L" also owned a farm in the county.

Influential "B" -- A Conservative Republican who was 77 years of age and retired. He was a former Church of the Brethern Minister and had also operated a farm until recent years. Mr. "B," who had two years of college, was also a former school teacher a number of years ago. He was, at the time of the study, a school board member, member of the state education association, Chaplin in the Ruritan Club, Farm Bureau Director, and county A.S.C. Committeeman. He had three children, one a medical doctor in another Virginia county.

Influential "R" -- A Conservative Democrat who was 47 years old and a county beef cattle farmer. Mr. "R" was a high school graduate, a member of the Baptist Church, Chairman of the County A.S.C. Committee, and member of the local P.T.A. He was a former member of the Farm Bureau, Young Farmers Club and F.H.A. Advisory Committee. All four of his children were under 12 years of age. Mr. "R's" father, who was 73, was said by a number of informants to have been very influential in county affairs in the past.

Influential "U" -- This individual was a retired postmaster of the county seat town, and a 77 year old Conservative Democrat. He also owned a beef cattle farm on which he now resided. Mr. "U" was married and the father of six children. Although he had not had the opportunity to get a high school education himself, all six children were college graduates and two had doctors degrees. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, a Mason, Ruritan member, and A.S.C. Community Committee member and Chairman of the Farm Bureau membership committee, and a director of the local medical clinic. He was a former secretary-treasurer of a farm loan

association. His father was a county judge many years ago in the selected county.

Influential "E" -- A man who was 53 years of age and a "grade A" dairy farmer, who considered himself to be politically closer to a Liberal Democrat. His formal education included high school; however, he did not graduate from high school. He was married and the father of three children, all over 21 years of age, and his wife was a teacher in the local school system. Mr. "E" was a Steward in the local Methodist Church, past Master of the Masonic Lodge, a director of the Farm Bureau, a member of the county electoral board; also a F.H.A. Advisory Committee member, Ruritan member and a past Chairman of the county Democratic Party.

Influential "D" -- "D," age 59, was a merchant in the county seat town for the past 23 years. He was a Conservative Republican, married and the father of five grown children. His wife was a bookkeeper for a local business in the town. Mr. "D," who had less than a high school education, had been a Sunday School teacher at the local Methodist Church for 20 years. He was also an Odd Fellow, a Ruritan member, Farm Bureau member, vice-chairman of the Republican Party and a past president of the local P.T.A.

Influential "Q" -- "Q" owned and operated a general store in the county. He was a Conservative Republican and 29 years of age. He was a college graduate and former school teacher in the county, and from 1948-50 served in the House of Delegates at Richmond. Present positions included school board member and secretary-treasurer of the county

Republican Party. He was married with four children, all under 21 years of age.

Influential "G" -- This man owned and operated a business in the county seat town. He was a high school graduate, 54 years of age, and considered himself an Independent, but close to a Conservative Republican. Mr. "G" was married with two children over 18 years of age. He was the mayor of the town, and had previously served as councilman for 18 years. He was past president of the Ruritan Club, P.T.A., and fire department, and a member of the Methodist Church.

Influential "K" -- For the past 39 years "K" had been a rural merchant and postmaster, as well as the owner of a large farm. He was 64, a Conservative Republican, and had attended high school and had some business training. Presently he was serving as a director in the local county bank, and was a former vice-president of an insurance company. Mr. "K" was married with no children, and considered himself to be a Protestant.

Influential "V" -- This influential, age 46, was a "grade A" dairy farmer and a Conservative Republican. He was married and had three children, all under 21 years of age. Mr. "V" was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, an Odd Fellow and past Grand Marshall. He was president of the County Farm Bureau and a member of the local P.T.A. He was a former A.S.C. committee member, past president of the local A.B.A. and past board member of the local D.H.I.A.

Influential "S" -- "S" was a 64 year old Conservative Democrat and farmer in the selected county. He was married and the father of four

children, all over 18 years of age. Mr. "S," a Methodist, was serving as a member of the F.H.A. Advisory Committee, a director of the local telephone cooperative, and as a member of the county electoral board. He was a former game warden for the county, a former A.S.C. Committee member and Farm Bureau member. He had also served as a P.T.A. member and was a former chairman of the Democratic Party.

Influential "X" -- Mr. "X," a local attorney, was serving as the Commonwealth Attorney, a position he had held for 16 years. He was considered politically to be a Republican. He was 59 years of age and single. He was a vice-president and counselor for the local bank, a Ruritan member, a Mason, an Odd Fellow, member of the American Legion, and member of three different bar associations. He was a life long resident of the county; however, he had few relatives living in the county.

Comments Concerning the County Influentials

During the course of the interviews certain statements were made voluntarily about the persons listed on the schedule that seemed relevant to the study. The names of the places and individuals have been purposefully omitted to protect both parties. These are not verbatim statements of the respondents. The partially paraphrased statements made concerning certain county influentials are as follows:

Mr. . . . [a county influential] controls the votes over in the . . . community, some people say he tells all the people over there how to vote.

It is well known in the county that a lot of people call . . . [a county influential] the "mayor" of . . . community.

You know. . . [a county influential] is supposed to be a Republican, but he has been a friend of the Byrd family for years.

. . . [a county influential], I would say, has been an influential person, but he has been drinking too much lately, and this has probably caused him to loose some of his influence.

Some people thought. . . [a county influential] was involved in a bank scandal a while back, I would say this caused him to loose a good bit of his influence.

I got to know almost everybody in the county while I was game warden.

I have to spend so much time here on the farm trying to make a living, that I really don't spend as much time helping with things in the county as I should.

I am not sure who originated the idea, but I think I was one of the persons that kept the recreation project from falling through.

I can tell you about the politics or almost anything else about the ones you have on this list. If that's what you want to know, there are only about two people on this list that I don't know.

No one really has the influence or controls the county like. . . [a deceased lawyer] and. . . [a deceased lawyer] who had a law firm here about 15 years ago. Of course both of them are dead now.

Brief Profiles of the Community Influentials

Influential "P" -- This individual was a 58 year old insurance agent who farmed part time. He had moved to the county 16 years ago and was married to a former home demonstration agent from an adjoining county, they had no children. Politically he was a Conservative Republican, formal education consisted of a high school diploma. He was a Baptist, a member of the Farm Bureau, Ruritan Club president, a director of the Feeder Cattle Association, and a director of a life insurance association. He had no close relatives living in the county.

Influential "M" -- This person was the youngest of the group of influentials, at 32 years of age. He was employed as a sales representative by a company in another county, and also operated a farm of his own. He was a Methodist and superintendent of the church school, president of the Young Farmers Club, vice chairman of the Farm Bureau and a member of the local Ruritan Club. He was also treasurer of the local P.T.A., a S.C.S. district director, A.S.C. community committeeman and a D.H.I.A. member. He was married and had one child, his wife was also employed outside of the home.

Influential "J" -- This influential was an 81 year old retired "grade A" dairy farmer. He had moved to the county about 50 years ago, and taught school for a short period of time even though he had not completed high school. He was married and had three children, two of them had taken over operation of the farm. Mr. "J" was a member of the Church of the Brethern, a bank director, and had served on the county A.S.C. for 26 years before mandatory retirement. He had also served as chairman of the county A.S.C. committee.

Influential "T" -- "T" was a 38 year old, beef cattle farmer who usually ran about 500 head of cattle on his farm. Politically he considered himself to be close to a Liberal Republican. His formal education included a high school diploma. Organizations he belonged to included: the Baptist Church, Young Farmers Club, V.F.W., and Farm Bureau where he was a director. He was also a P.T.A. member and former F.H.A. Advisory Committee member. He was married and the father of five children, all under 13 years of age. "T's" father, a retired farmer and

property owner, had been considered to be an influential person in the past.

Influential "N" -- "N" was a college graduate and a company executive for a large company in an adjoining county. He also owned a farm, where he lived with his wife and two teenage boys. "N" was a Conservative Republican and 40 years of age. He was a trustee and Sunday School Teacher at a local Methodist Church and is chairman of the county Boy Scout Council. He was also a Ruritan member and a member of a professional organization.

Influential "F" -- "F" was 40 years old, a Conservative Republican an owner, operator of a rural general store. He was a high school graduate, married and the father of four children, all under 18 years of age. Organizational memberships included: the Methodist Church, Masonic Lodge, V.F.W. and P.T.A., Treasurer.

Influential "A" -- This individual was a 54 year old rural merchant and postmaster. He was a high school graduate, and a Conservative Democrat. He was married with no children. Mr. "A" was Board Chairman of the Methodist Church, a Mason, Ruritan past-president, V.F.W. member and director of the county telephone cooperative.

Influential "C" -- "C" was a sawmill owner and a beef cattle farmer, who considered himself to be an Independent, but close to a Conservative Republican. He was 42 years old and had attended high school. He was married and had two small children. Organizations included: finance board chairman at the Church of the Brethern, Ruritan member, and Farm Bureau member.

Influential "H" -- This individual was a 48 year old "grade A" dairy farmer, and former veterans instructor. He had one year of college, was married and was the father of four children, all under 18 years of age. Politically he considered himself to be an Independent, but close to a Conservative Democrat. He attended the Baptist Church and was a member of the Farm Bureau, V.F.W., A.S.C. Community Committee and state director of the A.B.A.

Influential "W" -- "W," a "grade C" dairy farmer, was 44 years of age. He had not had an opportunity to attend high school; however, the oldest of his 3 children was a recent college graduate. He was a Conservative Republican, Farm Bureau member, P.T.A. member, A.S.C. Community committeeman and a member of the local Methodist Church. "W's" father, who was retired, was also mentioned by a few of the informants as having been influential in his community in past years.

Influential "O" -- This individual owned and operated a rural general store and service station, and owned a farm in the community. He attended high school, was 44 years of age and the father of four children. Politically he was a Conservative Republican, and he was presently serving as a committee member. He was a Protestant, a Farm Bureau member, and past member of the A.S.C. Community committee.

Comments Concerning the Community Influentials

A number of voluntary statements were made concerning the leadership and activities of the community influentials. Names of places and individuals have been omitted to protect the privacy of both parties. The following statements were related to community influentials:

I really don't care much for. . . [a neighbor] because he tries to tell people around here what they should do.

. . . [a county influential on the list of names] our supervisor, said he is not going to run for re-election. He came over to see me, and asked me to run, but I declined.

I think. . . [a community influential] is a fine young christian boy, he gave a talk at our church recently and I thought he was a real good speaker. I would say he has a lot of influence in his community.

I really don't know too much about what goes on in the county, because I work at. . . [a town in another county] and have very little contact with people in . . . county.

The only time I go to. . . [the county seat] is for an A.S.C. meeting or to pay my taxes. I know more people in . . . [a neighboring county] than I do over here.

How did my name get on this list?

General Observations

During the interviews only one person seemed surprised to see his name on the list of reputed influentials provided with the interview schedule.

When the informants were making the column placements they were neither told to check by their own name, nor to omit a self rating. Only one individual voluntarily rated himself. The rating he gave himself was lower than that given him by other influentials. Others on the list either skipped their own name without comment or said, "I don't guess I have to check by my name." Some said, "I wouldn't know how to rate myself."

Most of the persons interviewed gave their full cooperation, and seemed very conscientious about answering the questions.

Only one person, an elderly gentleman, was at all hesitant about rating persons on the list and supplying other information about persons in the county.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY

Background Information

This study was conducted because there was an apparent lack of existing information concerning the influentials in rural farm counties, and because few studies of any type related to social power have ever been conducted in Virginia.

Certain related literature as reported in Chapters I and II emphasize the need for change agents to identify the influentials and related power structure and involve these individuals either directly or indirectly in programs involving change.

The purpose of this study was to identify the influentials in a selected rural agricultural county through the use of the reputational technique. After identification, sociometric data were collected to determine the interrelationships, structure and salient characteristics of the reputed influentials, and determine the bases for their influence.

The ability of the extension agents to identify the influentials was determined. Implications were also drawn from findings in the study that related to extension work.

A rural agricultural county was selected for the study that had 10,000 inhabitants. Other characteristics included in the selection was the need for resource development work and the limited amount of experience of extension agents working in the county. By identifying the influentials in this type of county situation it was perceived that it

could put new extension agents months or years ahead in their resource development programs.

The selected county had a declining population brought about primarily by the lack of employment opportunities. This lack of employment opportunities contributed to the county's low family income. Income for the county, which was earned primarily from the sale of agricultural products and some out of county industrial employment, was \$2,994 per family in 1960.

In past years little or no effort was made to help new extension agents recognize the influential leadership. Experienced agents in some counties have also needed help in recognizing those persons outside of the field of agriculture who are influential. One of the purposes of this study was to determine if an organized identification process was necessary for extension agents.

The reputational technique, employing a committee of 17 selected informants and a committee of 15 nominated informants were used to nominate the influentials in the selected county. Those persons nominated three or more times by the two committees were considered to be the most influential. A total of 23 individuals were identified through this process. Information was then obtained from each of the 23 persons, through the use of a pre-tested schedule.

During the interviews the 23 persons were asked to name others who were influential. One individual was named more than three times and included as an influential; however, due to a lack of ratings by others he was described separately.

Summary of Major Findings

The 23 reputed influentials interviewed were all males between 32 and 81 years of age, with the median age being 53 years. All but two were natives and life long residents of the county. One of the two that were not natives had resided in the county for 50 years and the other for 16 years.

Formal education ranged from 7 to 18 years with the median being 11 years. The median income was \$7,500, or two and one half times greater than the county median.

All of the respondents reporting church membership were Portestants. Politically the group consisted of 14 Republicans, five Democrats and four Independents. Occupationally, the group was predominated by full time farmers and retail merchants, and also included three retired persons.

The 23 reputed influentials were found to be interrelated in various ways. Membership in formal organizations and business associations provided the largest source of contacts. Family visits and contacts through the holding of formal positions included other sources of inter-related activity. Four of the influentials were bank directors, and others were drawn together through agricultural committees, political party meetings and appointed positions such as the county school board.

A survey of the issues and projects in the first phase of the study showed apparent inactivity in the county. In response to imaginary issues, the reputed influentials were named more times than were other citizens and there was an indication of perceived spheres of influence.

Extension agents in the county, including a retired agent, were not able to identify more than 62 per cent of those determined to be the most influential through the reputational technique. However, the extension agents were able to identify as many or more of the influentials than some of the informants.

It was found that some of the influentials were attributed county-wide influence while others were perceived as having only local community influence. An analysis of the group of county influentials and the group of community influentials disclosed a difference in age, associations, and present and past formal positions held. The county influentials were older, had more associations with each other and had held more elected or appointed positions.

Farmers, although comprising the largest single category, were not found among the group of influentials in proportion to the number of farm people in the selected county.

It was found that the number of times a person was nominated by the informants did not necessarily have a bearing on the amount of influence possessed by the individual, as determined by the mutual ranking and ratings of each reputed influential.

CONCLUSIONS

Data collected and analyzed in this study indicate that some individuals do possess more power than others in a rural agricultural county. Certain individuals were perceived to possess county-wide influence, others possessed only local community influence.

The type of power structure which was determined to exist through the closely linked interrelationships was a unitary structure which resembled that of a "power pool." This conclusion is supported by an analysis of other small community studies.

Factors associated with influence in the county are likely to greatly restrict the entrance of young professionals and other newcomers to the county from becoming members of the power pool. Being middle age or older and a long time resident were two of the key factors relating to influence. Other key factors contributing to the influence of power holders included being "a native of the county" and a persons "past achievements," including positions held. Present and past formal elected and appointed positions appear to be closely associated with county-wide influence in the selected county.

It was also concluded that individuals identified as having the strongest county-wide influence derive their influence from several different factors or sources.

Formal education was apparently not an important factor in determining whether or not a person possessed influence in the selected county.

The out-migration of human resources and the limited in-migration of professional and other well educated persons due to the economic situation reduces the possibilities of a change in the characteristics of the structure in the near future.

The influentials did not appear to be actively trying to bring about change, yet neither were they content with the present conditions

of the county. This conclusion was drawn from the fact that influentials serving as informants could name few projects that were being actively pursued; however, each did name a number of items that needed to be changed or improved.

The reputational method using selected informants and nominated informants can be used as a means of identifying influential leaders in a rural county. Those persons attributed influence are also willing to rate other individuals in the county and supply information about others as well as about themselves.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION WORK

Extension agents need to recognize that the most influential persons found in a county may not be in the occupational areas in which they have been working primarily in the past, such as the various agricultural occupations.

The power of the influentials can be an important resource which can be employed in bringing about change in the community, especially in initiating an all encompassing resource development program.

Extension agents need to become familiar with the influentials and related power structure. They need to know whether or not the structure is unitary or divided into competitive factions.

Extension agents working at the county level, as well as learning to identify the influentials, must seek their cooperation and determine how best to involve them in extension programs. Involvement may be accomplished by having the influentials serve on committees or by establishing communication with older and inactive influentials.

Extension agents can use the reputational method of identification, and add to the data while performing other duties in the county. The agents in a county will not necessarily have to conduct a rigid interview with each person identified as was done in this study. Observations can be made as to wealth, age and certain other characteristics. Organizational memberships and activity can be obtained from other sources.

The omission of an interview schedule requiring the ranking of each person may mean the agent will not be able to determine those individuals possessing the greatest amount of influence; however, he can determine the total group of the most influential persons in the county.

The process of identifying the influentials and determining current issues or future needs can be a most important public relations and educational venture for extension agents. The contacts brought about by the process can lead to a mutual understanding between the influential and the extension agent. It can help establish a line of communication between the two that will be useful in later work. An organized process of identification affords the extension agent an opportunity to better understand his county and gives the influential an opportunity to gain more knowledge of extension work. The time consumed in conducting an identification program will be time well invested.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This investigation did not cover all of the areas of social power and influence that show a need for additional study; however, it has revealed a number of closely allied areas that do merit further investigation. Other studies that would be beneficial to Extension include:

1. Studies should be made in other rural counties of similar size and socio-economic base, and results compared. Additional research of this nature could lead to more generalizations about such counties in areas where studies have not been conducted.

2. Studies should be made in Virginia counties relating to the areas of influence occupied by women.

3. Studies should be made to determine the type of structure that exist in various sub-cultures with which Extension works.

4. Studies should be made of the influentials to determine the best methods of involving them in extension programs.

5. A study should be made in the selected county after a period of 8 to 10 years to determine the changes that have taken place in the power structure.

6. Studies should be made to determine the results of involvement of influentials by Extension units that have carried out an identification program and worked with and through these influentials in carrying out programs in the county.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Schedule A -- Data Collecting Instrument
for Selected Informants and
Nominated Informants
and
Recording Form

Schedule A -- Selected Informants and Nominated Informants

Personal Introductions:

Purpose of Visit:

Mr. (Mrs.) _____ we in Extension work want to find out more about _____ County. We are mainly interested in learning about the general affairs or issues of a county-wide nature and about the people who other county folks look to for decisions or for approval of their decisions. You might say the influential people in _____ County. In order to learn more about the county and its leaders we are contacting several people like yourself who have a great deal of knowledge about _____ County. We would like for you to help us by giving your frank opinion on 2 or 3 questions about the county affairs and leadership.

Anything you might say about county programs or people will not be connected with you in any way.

Do you have any questions about what we are doing?

1. What, in your opinion, are the most important issues (or problems or projects) of general concern in _____ County? (Probe: These may be issues that have already been decided or will need to be decided in the near future.)
2. What individuals would you consider as being most influential on the major issues of the county? (Probe: Who are the individuals that really cause things to happen or keep them from happening in _____ County?) We would like to have about 5 names.

Recording Form

Date _____

Schedule No. _____

Interviewer _____

1. Name of interviewee _____

2. Address _____

3. Occupation _____

4. Residence in County:

_____ All my life
_____ Years

5. Place of Residence:

Town of _____
Rural non-farm _____
Farm _____

6. District:

_____ I. V.
_____ B. F.
_____ C. H.
_____ A. R.
_____ L. R.
_____ L. G.

7. Estimation of Interviewee, knowledge or judgement:

Superior _____
Excellent _____
Good _____
Fair _____
Poor _____

ISSUES

COMMENTS

Names (Check (X) those said to most influential)

Comments

Comments by interviewee:

APPENDIX B

Letter Sent to Reputed Influentials Prior
to the Scheduling of Interviews
and
Intensive Interview Schedule B

Cooperative Extension Service
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

_____, Virginia
June 7, 1967

Dear Mr. _____:

In recent weeks the Extension Division, through efforts of the Extension staff has been working on a leadership identification survey. This effort has been well received and has had full participation of the staff in resource development at VPI.

_____, who is presently on leave doing graduate work at VPI is conducting a study of county leadership as part of his graduate program. He is working with _____ who has helped with the recent survey on leadership identification. _____ thesis is primarily concerned with certain types of leadership and its structure, how it operates, etc. He would like to have your assistance in answering a few questions concerning leadership in _____ County. I am sure that you can be of help to him in this study. However, if you do not wish to participate, please let me know.

_____ has indicated that he will be available to contact you within the next week or so and will arrange a convenient time with you. Thank you for your help on this, I feel that it will strengthen our entire extension program.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed by agent in the selected
county.)

Extension Agent, Agriculture

Intensive Interview Schedule B

Name _____

Date _____

Time _____

Schedule No. _____

Personal Introductions:

Purpose of visit:

As a part of my graduate program at V.P.I., I am making a study of leadership in this county. To do this, a number of people like yourself are being asked to help by supplying certain information for this study. A number of your fellow citizens have indicated that you are interested and active in county affairs. Your views and frank opinions about county leadership and persons having influence are necessary in order to make this study a success.

All information given will be kept confidential. True names are never used in the final summary nor are personal opinions revealed to anyone else.

Do you have any questions on what I am doing or why the information is needed?

Note: (The original schedule was mimeographed and was printed on legal size paper. The original also contained the name of the county and actual list of reputed influentials.)

1. Some individuals are able to affect the decisions, opinions, and actions of others because they possess certain factors or means which are valued by others in the community. Of the following factors, please check from one to five of the ones which you believe give a person influence in _____ County. (Hand informant sheet number 1.)
2. We would like your best judgment on the leadership your fellow citizens are taking or would take in county affairs. We have talked to others like yourself, who have helped us compile a list of persons believed to be the most influential in county issues, which include problems and projects in _____ County.

(Hand informant list of names, sheet number 2.)

Please look over this list of names and check the column that best describes the influence that each person has. Please add names of others that you see as being county influentials.

In column 1, by strong county-wide influence, I mean the ability to affect the decisions, opinions and actions of key people in the county on a variety of issues, and really cause things to happen or keep them from happening. By key people I mean governing officials and other leaders.

In column 2, some county-wide influence means a person who is able to influence key people to a lesser degree. By lesser degree I mean fewer key people and not on as many issues.

In column 3, local community influence indicates the ability to affect the decisions, opinions, and actions of others in the community

where they live. That is in their school, community or magisterial district.

3. If a decision were to be made in Richmond that affected _____ County who do you think would be the best man in this county to get in touch with these state officials?
- _____

4. Who would you suggest to be the best person to get in touch with federal officials in Washington on some local problem?
- _____

5. Who are the five persons on the list that you believe have the most county-wide influence? I would like for you to rank these people 1 through 5 starting with the one who has the most influence. (Place the number in front of the name on sheet number 2.)

6. What factors, listed on sheet number 1, do you feel have contributed to the influence of each of the 5 persons you selected with the most influence. Select one or two of the main factors that gives this person his influence. (Place letter representing factor to the right of the name on sheet number 2.)

(Hand informant sheet No. 3.)

7. I would like to know how well you know these people and your associations with them. Please check the column or columns that best describes your acquaintance and associations.

In Column 1, by a relative I mean first cousin and closer relationships.

In Column 2, a visit in home, means you visit in theirs and/or they visit in yours.

In Column 4, frequent contact in groups or organizations means at least a weekly or bi-monthly association with the person in civic clubs, committee meetings or informal groups.

8. (a) If important decisions needed to be made concerning the location of an industry in the county that would employ local men and high school graduates, who would you like to see working on the project? (Ask for 4 or 5.)

(b) Who do you see as the persons that would work "behind the scenes," I mean the ones that would not likely serve on an active committee, but be very influential in making a decision or influencing decisions of others concerning industry?

9. (a) If a major crisis faced the schools in _____ County who would you like to see on a committee that would make decisions concerning the schools? (Ask for 4 or 5 names.)

(b) Who do you see as the persons that would not serve actively, yet work "behind the scenes" in influencing the decisions of others in school affairs?

10. (a) Supposing the county was faced with the relocation and possible improvement of highway _____. Who would you like to see working actively on a committee concerning this matter?

- (b) Who do you see as the likely persons, that would not be seen actively working on a committee but could work "behind the scenes" in influencing decisions of county people on this matter?

11. (a) If the farmers of _____ County were faced with a new livestock disease, that had to be controlled in order to save the sheep, beef, and dairy cattle, who would you like to see on a committee that would have the responsibility of making decisions on this matter?

- (b) Who's decision or opinion would the larger farmers most likely accept, if there were no committee?

12. In your opinion could a person who is influential as a farmer be influential in other issues of a non-agricultural nature in _____ County?

13. (a) I understand the county has a new golf course and recreation area under construction. Were you active in any way on this project?

Yes _____ No _____

(b) If no, are you interested in this project? Yes _____ No _____

(c) Who initiated the idea that led to the work on the golf course?

14. (a) Who in the county do you feel you could count on most for support, as a political friend, if you wanted to start a county-wide campaign to expand the _____ County Clinic into a small hospital, through the use of federal, state and local funds.

(b) Which person(s) in this county might cause you the most trouble in putting across a project such as a small hospital?

(c) Would these same individuals cause trouble on other county issues? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____

15. Do people with opposing political views work together on major issues in _____ County? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ Don't know _____

16. Have you worked on or discussed any county issues with other citizens during the past 12 months? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, who were these persons?

What were the issues?

17. General Information

A. What kind of work do you do? _____

B. Does your wife work? Yes_____ No_____

C. How many years have you lived in the county?

All my life_____ or _____years

D. Marital status M_____ S_____ W_____ D_____

E. Year of birth _____

F. How many years of formal education have you had?

Grades: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

College: 1 2 3 4

G. Do you have any children? Yes_____ No_____

If yes, what are their ages: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 Adults_____

H. Now I would like to obtain a list of the organizations that you now belong to or have been a member of in the past 5 years.

Are you now or have you been a member of...(read in type of organization listed below).

For each organization named ask the following:

Name of Organization	Presently a member	Was member in past years	Officer		
			Yes	No	Name of leader position
1. Civic Clubs: including C. of C., Ruritan, etc.					
2. Farm Organizations					
3. Educational: PTA, etc.					

Name of Organization	Presently a member	Was member in past years	Officer		
			Yes	No	Name of leader position
4. Church Denomination and Church organ.					
5. Fraternal Orders:					
6. Veterans:					
7. Social Groups: Country Club, etc.					
8. Federal and State Agencies: A.S.C. Ext. Comm., etc.					
9. Elected Positions: School Board, Board of Super.					
10. Political, Business and other					

I. About how many adult relatives do you have living in this county outside your own home? I would like to have a good estimate including parents, your children, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and first cousins. None _____ Number _____

18. (Hand informant sheet No. 4.) On this final sheet, would you mind checking the categories in question (a) and (b) showing your political position and an estimate of your income? This is optional, and if you would rather not give this information no questions will be asked.

Confidential

Sheet No. 1

1. Of the following factors, please check the ones which you believe give a person influence in this county.

- A. ☐ Past achievements
- B. ☐ Formal education
- C. ☐ Family background
- D. ☐ Kind of occupation
- E. ☐ Control of money and credit
- F. ☐ Long time resident of county
- G. ☐ Past participation in county groups
- H. ☐ Contacts with lots of people
- I. ☐ Good source of ideas
- J. ☐ Human relations skills
- K. ☐ Control over jobs of others in county
- L. ☐ Leadership in county groups
- M. ☐ Has a position of authority
- N. ☐ Access to important people
- O. ☐ Has the time
- P. ☐ Size of land holdings
- Q. ☐ Middle age or older
- R. ☐ Kind of business or farm
- S. ☐ Other _____
- T. ☐ Other _____

Confidential

Sheet No. 2 (Extent of Influence)

In column 1, by strong county-wide influence, I mean the ability to affect the decisions, opinions and actions of key people in the county on a variety of issues, and can cause things to happen or keep them from happening. By key people I mean governing officials and county leaders.

In column 2, some county-wide influence means a person who is able to influence key people to a lesser degree. By lesser degree I mean fewer key people and not on as many issues.

In column 3, local community influence indicates the ability to affect the decisions, opinions and actions of others in the community where they live. That is their school community or magisterial district.

In column 4, little community influence means a person who can affect others in the community to a lesser degree.

*List of County Leaders	(Check one)				
	1. Strong County-wide Influence	2. Some County-wide Influence	3. Local Community Influence	4. Little Community Influence	5. Don't Know Person
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					
L					
M					
N					
O					
P					
Q					
R					
S					
T					
U					
V					
W					

*(Actual names were used on the original schedule and listed in alphabetical order.)

Confidential

Sheet No. 3

7. Please check the appropriate column(s) on the following list of county leaders.

We would like to know how well you know these people and your associations with them.

*List of County Leaders	1. Is a relative	2. Visit in home	3. Know only in business	4. Frequent contact in groups or organizations	5. Know but seldom see
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					
L					
M					
N					
O					
P					
Q					
R					
S					
T					
U					
V					
W					

*(Actual names were used on the original schedule and listed in alphabetical order.)

Confidential

Sheet No. 4 Optional

19. (a) Which of the categories below best describes your political position? (Check one)

- ☐ A. Conservative Republican
- ☐ B. Liberal Republican
- ☐ C. Independent but close to conservative Republican
- ☐ D. Independent but close to liberal Republican
- ☐ E. Independent
- ☐ F. Independent but close to conservative Democrat
- ☐ G. Independent but close to liberal Democrat
- ☐ H. Conservative Democrat
- ☐ I. Liberal Democrat

(b) Which of the categories below best estimate your average gross family income including wife's income. This would be approximate adjusted gross income for farmers. (Check one)

- ☐ A. Under \$3,000
- ☐ B. \$3,000 - 3,999
- ☐ C. \$4,000 - 4,999
- ☐ D. \$5,000 - 5,999
- ☐ E. \$6,000 - 6,999
- ☐ F. \$7,000 - 7,999
- ☐ G. \$8,000 - 8,999
- ☐ H. \$9,000 - 9,999
- ☐ I. \$10,000 - 14,999
- ☐ J. \$15,000 and up

APPENDIX C

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE NOMINATIONS RECEIVED
BY THE REPUTED INFLUENTIALS ACCORDING TO THE
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT WHERE THE SELECTED
AND NOMINATED INFORMANTS RESIDED

Name Listed in Order of Weighted Score Received		Magisterial Districts					
		B.F.	C.H.	L.R.	I.V.	A.R.	L.G.
County Influentials	I	1	4				0*
	L	1	2*				
	B		2*	1			
	R	1	4*			1	
	U	1	1*	1			
	E	3*	6	1	1	1	
	D		2*				1
	Q	1	5	1			0*
	G		3*				
	K		5		2*		
Community Influentials	V		4	2*		2	2
	S		2*	1			
	P		1	1			1*
	M	1*	2	1		1	1
	J	1	1	1		0*	
	T	2	2	1*			
	N		5		1	0*	
	F	0*	2		2		
	A	1	1				1*
	C	2*	1				
	H		1	2*			
	W			1			2*
	O	1	2		0*		

*Denotes the district in which the reputed influential resides.

Number of informants from both committees by district:

B. F. - 3

I. V. - 3

C. H. - 14

A. R. - 3

L. R. - 3

L. G. - 6

APPENDIX D

NOMINATIONS OF THE REPUTED INFLUENTIALS AS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTED INFORMANTS AND COMMITTEE OF NOMINATED INFORMANTS

Committee of Selected Informants	Nominations	Committee of Nominated Informants	Nominations
I	V, P, W	E	C
R	B, E, U, J, M, T	Q	I, W, A
U	I, E, R, G, L, V, S, P, M, A	G	I, Q, K
M	R, E, T, C	S	B, U, E, K
4	E, Q, V, K, N, F, C, O	P	D, V, M
5	D	J	E, V
6	I, E, V, S, K, H	T	B, U, V, S, H
7	R, E, Q, G	N	V
8	Q, K, G, J, T, N, F	F	L, E, Q, C, A
9	E, K, F, O	H	V, T
10	None	W	None
11	K, N, F	1	R, M
12	R, E, V, M, T, N	2	D, N
13	L	3	I, R, Q, O
14	None		
15	N		

Note: Numbers are substituted for the names of all informants that were not identified as being an influential.

Numbers nine through 15 were the selected women informants.

Nominations made of persons not on the final list of reputed influentials are not shown.

APPENDIX E

DISTRIBUTION OF MUTUAL SELECTIONS ON COLUMN PLACEMENT
MADE BY ALL INFLUENTIALS

Name	Number of Placements Received in Each Column				
	1. Strong County-wide Influence	2. Some County-wide Influence	3. Local Community Influence	4. Little Community Influence	5. Don't Know Person
A	1	4	11	2	4
B	12	8	2	0	0
C	1	5	10	1	5
D	12	7	3	0	0
E	10	7	4	0	1
F	0	6	13	1	2
G	8	7	4	1	1
H	0	4	13	1	4
I	21	0	1	0	0
J	5	8	7	0	2
K	8	8	4	0	2
L	17	5	0	0	0
M	5	8	7	1	1
N	2	8	10	1	1
O	0	3	8	3	8
P	6	9	5	1	1
Q	11	7	3	0	0
R	10	7	4	1	0
S	8	9	4	1	0
T	5	7	7	0	3
U	11	10	1	0	0
V	7	8	4	1	2
W	0	5	10	0	7

Note: Influentials "G" and "Q" failed to be placed (checked) by one person. Each was assigned the average weighted value of other placements received.

THE INFLUENTIALS IN A SELECTED RURAL COUNTY:
THEIR SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS

ABSTRACT

by George C. Abbott

This study was prompted by a lack of information concerning influentials in certain Virginia counties, and the limited involvement of these individuals in Cooperative Extension programs.

The reputational method was employed in identifying the influentials in a selected rural agricultural county in Virginia with 10,000 inhabitants. Additional information was collected with a pre-tested interview schedule.

The following objectives constituted the framework for the study:

1. Identify the influentials and determine and describe their salient characteristics.
2. Determine the interrelationships and informal structure.
3. Determine the factors to which influence was attributed.
4. Ascertain the extension agents ability to identify the influentials.
5. Derive implications from findings pertinent to Cooperative Extension work.

The 23 persons identified as being the most influential were all males who were between 32 and 81 years of age, and all except two were county natives. Occupationally the group was predominated by full-time farmers and retail merchants.

The 12 persons attributed county-wide influence were older, had more associations with each other and had held a larger number of formal positions than the local community influentials. All were interrelated through organizations and business contacts and appeared to comprise a

unitary structure similar to a "power pool." Each influential in the pool possessed several interrelated factors which contributed to his power. Past achievements was perceived to be one of the most important factors.

Results of the study indicate the need for an organized identification program for extension agents and the recognition of the power structure as an important resource in conducting Extension programs.