Comparative Characteristics of Special Functionaries in the Acceptance of Agricultural Innovations in Two Missouri Communities, Ozark and Prairie

HERBERT F. LIONBERGER AND H. C. CHANG

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by Herbert F. Lionberger and H. C. Chang*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of friends and neighbors in decisions to adopt new farm practices has been well documented; also that different people perform different functions in the decision making processes. People who perform the various functions have been referred to as innovators, adoption leaders, opinion leaders, influencers, local influential, or simply as leaders, often with little specification of actual function performed. Innovators have usually been defined as persons first to try new farm practices locally. Those serving as information communicators and decision influencers have been defined in a variety of ways, namely, by asking farmers from whom they obtained farm information in general or about specific farm practices, who influenced their adoption decisions, or simply whom they talked to most frequently about matters related to farming. Some...

* Professor and Research Assistant, respectively. Department of Rural Sociology

1 For a general treatment of the importance of research findings relating to personal information sources and influence in the adoption of new practices, see:
For publications reporting specific research findings on the importance of personal influence in personal adoption decisions, see:

Some studies relating to the differential importance of particular persons in decisions to adopt new ideas or practices include:
Lionberger, Herbert F., "Some Characteristics of Farm Operators Sought as Sources of Farm Information in a Missouri Community," Rural Sociology, XVIII (December, 1953).
Rogers, Everett M., Characteristics of Agricultural Innovators and Other Adopter Categories (Wooster: Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 882, May, 1961).

Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, op. cit., pp. 149-168.
Wilkening, "Informal Leaders and Innovators in Farm Practice," op. cit.
Lionberger, "Some Characteristics of Farm Operators Sought as Sources of Farm Information in a Missouri Community," op. cit.
times they have been defined by asking people whom they influenced or by a combination of methods. Although functions performed have generally not been the primary focus of the research, their importance in the acceptance of changes in farming has been apparent.

This study is concerned with the characteristics of three types of functionaries,

1. Innovators, defined as persons named as being first to try selected new farm practices
2. Key communicators, defined as persons sought as initial or additional sources of information about specific farm practices
3. Legitimators, defined as persons most influential in final decisions to try the practices considered.

The innovator and decision influencer functions have been well documented but generally with little effort to distinguish either from the communicator function. Proposal of a separate communicative function is based on repeated indications that farm operators use different information sources at different stages in a frequently used five stage adoption process (awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption). Those used at the first two stages have tended to be quite different from sources used at the evaluation stage, thus suggesting different information requirements and differences in the ability of different sources to supply the requisite needs. Thus, in terms of the frequently used individual adoption model, mere communication of factual information is likely to be paramount in supplying initial and additional information about new farm practices, while the legitimation role would likely be of prime importance at the evaluation stage. The last closely parallels the role of influence described by Merton, Katz, and Lazarsfeld.

Posing of a separate communicator functionary is not to deny that innovators and legitimators are also communicators. Rather it is that communication of information is paramount.

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5 Merton, op. cit., pp. 184-185.
Rogers, "Opinion Leaders in the Communication of Agricultural Technology," op. cit.
Katz and Lazarsfeld, op. cit.

6 This process-stage construct was first described in:

Also see:
Lionberger, Adoption of New Ideas and Practices, op. cit.
Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, op. cit.

8 Merton, op. cit.
Katz and Lazarsfeld, op. cit.

9 Although some realignments of function with stage may occur, recent findings of divergencies from the five stage model does not invalidate the relationship of functionary roles with the stages in the adoption process. For some findings regarding the divergencies from the original five stage model see:
Innovators

Although in a broad sense innovation refers to a departure from a conventional practice or situation, it is here used in a restricted sense; namely, the introduction of new farm practices into an immediate locality and innovators as persons named as being first to try specific new farm practices in the communities studied. This is in contrast to its use in farm practice adoption studies where the tendency has been to define innovators in terms of persons actually first to try new ideas or practices in the immediate locality. The innovator referent definition was selected here in preference to the “actual first” because of the role of innovator in decisions of local referents is more likely to attach to those perceived as being first than those who are actually first where divergencies occur.

Whether deviation from usual modes of behavior will be rewarded or condemned is conditioned by the favorability with which changes are viewed, societal expectations in regard thereto, and the success of the innovator in achieving ends valued by a group or society. Innovators may be marginal men or misfits where deviations exceed bounds permitted by society. However, where change is gradual or where individualistic innovative effort is at least condoned, innovative behavior may be rewarded.

Although expectations for the innovator role in the adoption of farm practices must be largely inferred from research incidental to this purpose, some are strongly suggested. Where most farmers want to see new farm practices tried locally before they try it themselves, which is frequent, innovators serve a “demonstration of local adaptability” function. Having little opportunity to consider the results achieved by others, they take more time from first trial to adoption than later adopters. They are essentially on their own during the trial period. In a sense, they do for others what there is no local precedent for doing. In their willingness to try new things, in the face of unknown economic consequences and often in the face of unfavorable opinion they probably assume financial and status risks that others are not willing to take. They also perform a communicative function in that their innovative activities are closely watched even though they may not be frequently sought as personal information sources or for advice.

Also, being less bound by tradition and perhaps better equipped to deal with abstractions, they are more able than other farmers to make direct application of general ideas and information to the local situation. Rogers suggests that they refine, modify and perfect new ideas about farming after their original development by others; also that they help correct imperfections in new practices before they are adopted by others.
It has also been suggested that they influence change agents. Innovators are sometimes aware of new practices before local extension and other agency personnel. Their interest is often sparked by the action of inquiry of local innovators. This may in turn provide an incentive for the encouragement of the inventive ideas that may otherwise be neglected.

Communicators

Posing of communication of farm information as a special province of persons labeled as communicators is not to imply that innovators and legitimators are not also dispensers of farm information. It is to suggest that there are those who communicate farm information to other farmers quite devoid of the innovator and legitimator roles. They were operationally defined in this study as persons named as first or additional sources of information in decisions to adopt a new farm practice or to make a change in the use of farm supplies. Again, what is expected of such persons can only be inferred. However, it is likely that communicators have developed a reputation for being informed without necessarily developing a reputation for good farm management. Those who consult them may expect to get information but not advice. The latter, if given, may be discounted or even disregarded. Perhaps no evaluation of information is expected from communicators in the restricted communicative sense. One requirement in arriving at adoption decisions is acquisition of additional more detailed information. Sources used for this purpose tend to be different from the ones used for the evaluation of ideas and the application of them to one's own situation. Thus, people who are best qualified for each function may be differentially selected for each purpose just as in the case of information sources.

Legitimators

Legitimation refers to the process by which fears are dispelled and favorable disposition leading to acceptance of an innovation is achieved, and legitimators as those who perform this function for others in their adoption decisions. Performance of this function very closely coincides with the evaluation stage of the individual farm practice adoption process. At this stage, an individual carefully weighs the pros and cons of new ideas or practices before trying them.

Legitimators have been described as being like other people in a given locality except more so. They are regarded as reflecting and supporting the norms of the local communities in which they live. Being people trusted for their good judgment, they may be expected to have higher prestige and to be somewhat more in a favorably situated position in other respects than innovators or other farmers in general.

15 For examples of cases where a conceptual distinction has been made between becoming informed and being convinced, see:
Ryan, Bryce and Neal Gross, Acceptance and Diffusion of Hybrid Corn Seed in Two Iowa Communities (Ames: Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 372, January, 1950).
16Rogers, Diffusion of Innovation, op. cit.
What is expected of them is probably better known than expectations for the other functionaries. First they must surely have a reputation for good judgment. People who discuss impending adoption decisions with them want more than information. They want opinions about what is transmitted and about its application to the local situation. Perhaps they are also expected to be well informed. Merton has suggested that influentials consume information (keep informed on a subject) partly for status considerations, while those not frequently consulted tend to consume information for their own use.\textsuperscript{17} The personal cost of a reputation for knowing and the attendant rewards is to know when asked. It was also in relation to the communications behavior of influentials (here referred to as legitimators) that the two-step information flow idea was formulated.\textsuperscript{18} This theory held that influentials who are more exposed to outside information sources transmit what they know to persons who are less exposed. In a sense they provide low resistance avenues for reaching other persons less receptive than themselves to new ideas about farming.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Determine the extent to which these functions are performed by the same or different individuals.
2. Examine the comparative characteristics of these functionaries.
3. Assess the significance of their characteristics for the performance of the respective functions in the individual adoption process.

**METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

**Rationale for Selecting the Communities**

Farmers living in two widely different communities in Missouri were selected for study. Prairie, in northwest Missouri, was selected because it was assumed to represent a position on a postulated sacred-secular continuum tending toward the secular.\textsuperscript{19} In accord with this assumed position, a high degree of rationality was expected to prevail in decisions to adopt new farm practices and purchase farm supplies. In this part of the State, farm incomes were among the highest in the State and conditions were generally highly favorable to the corn-hog-beef cattle operations which prevail in the area. Except for those in semi-

\textsuperscript{17}For a discussion of the differential uses of information sources by opinion leaders and others see: Merton, *op. cit.*, p. 186.


For a modification and application of a similar construct to "diffusion" research in agriculture, see: Benvenuti, Bruno, *Farming in Cultural Change* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962).
retirement, most people living in the open country were actively engaged in farming operations on a near full-time basis. The culture core area of which the community is a part has been referred to as Social Area AB₁ by C. L. Gregory.²⁰ (See Figure 1).

Ozark, located in hilly south Missouri, was chosen to represent a position tending to the sacred end of the continuum, where less rationality is assumed to prevail in the decision-making process relative to farming operations. Here the farm incomes were well below the state average and conditions were generally unfavorable to generalized commercial farming. Even though a tendency to a traditionalistic orientation in thought and action was assumed, economic necessity had forced farmers in Ozark to turn first to commercialized farming operations and later to part-time farming as a means of supplementing meager farm incomes. This community was selected from the culture core of Social Area D. Over half of the households in the trade area community were so little involved in farming that they were excluded from the study. In the 238 households retained, 41 percent of the household heads (farm operators) and 20 percent of the spouses had earned off-farm incomes during the past year. In 20 percent of the cases, off-farm incomes exceeded estimated net farm incomes. Thus, Ozark

²⁰For a description of the social areas from which the two communities were selected, see: Gregory, Cecil L., Rural Social Areas in Missouri: An Analysis of the Social Structures (Columbia: Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 665, April, 1958).
selected as representative of a tendency to adhere to tradition had actually been forced to make changes not yet necessary in the more prosperous Prairie community.

**The Farmers Interviewed**

Except for less than a 5 percent refusal, all bona fide farmers in each of the two communities were interviewed; 219 in Prairie and 238 in Ozark. Each was asked questions regarding his use of recently introduced farm practices and recent changes made in kinds or brands of farm supplies purchased. Those most recently accepted were selected for more detailed investigation. Although an attempt was made to obtain an approximately equal number of simple and complex practices for each farm operator, the limited number of recent changes enumerated often made it necessary to examine all of the changes listed. The farm practice decision sequence enumerated for each farm operator ranged from zero for 6 farm operators to 6 for one, the modal number being three in Ozark and two in Prairie. The modal number of farm supply decisions per farmer was one in Ozark and two in Prairie; the range per person was from zero to three. Questions regarding each practice were directed to where the farmer first learned about a new practice, where he got additional information about it and the information source most influential in his decision to adopt or use the new practice or product. Also, regarding farm practices each person was asked who was first in the community to adopt each new practice considered.

**Procedure and Operational Definitions**

Mentions as being first to adopt the specific farm practice considered was taken as the definition of the innovator referent, mentions as first or additional sources of information to define communicators and mentions as being most influential in a practice decision as a legitimation mention. The number of mentions per person for each functionary was taken as the dependent variable in the study. Chi-square tests were used to test the significance of relationships of personal attributes and characteristics to the various types of mentions. "V" was used as a test of closeness of association of various attributes to types of functionary mentions for comparative purposes. Finally an attempt was made to determine whether people who perform several functions have different characteristics than those who perform only one.

By the operational measures used, 62 persons were named as those usually first to adopt the specific new farm practices considered in Prairie (innovator referents), 174 were named as first or additional sources of information (communicators), and 73 were identified as most influential sources of individual farm operator decisions to adopt specific farm practices (legitimators). In a similar manner, 45 innovators, 161 communicators and 50 legitimators were identified in Ozark.

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21For a description of the use, limitations and methods of using "V" see:
The distribution of personal mentions for each of the functionary types indicates a concentration of mentions for each. (See Tables I and II). The innovative and legitimation functions tended to be performed by a smaller number of farmers than the communication function in both communities. The percentages of persons mentioned for these two purposes ranged from 18.9 to 21.0 percent in Ozark and 28.3 to 33.3 percent in Prairie. On the other hand, 67.7 percent of the farmers in Ozark and 79.5 percent of those in Prairie were mentioned as first or additional sources of farm information for the specific farm practices adopted by individuals. It will be further observed that choice of persons for decision legitimation and innovator referents was more restricted in Ozark than in Prairie, thus suggesting a smaller number of persons acceptable for this purpose.

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

A variety of personal characteristics of varying significance to the performance of the respective functionary roles was included; age because of its likely
relation to change proneness; education because of a rather generalized faith in educational attainment as a means of achieving instrumental ends in whatever line of endeavor; and conception of community norms because of the importance of local group pressures and likely attendant reprisals or rewards for the quick adoption of new farm practices and perhaps the favorability with which persons quick to adopt new farm practices are likely to be viewed as potential sources of farm information and as legitimators. Also included were improved farm practice rating (percent of applicable new farm practices which the person was currently using on his farm) and receptivity to new farm information. Both are indicative of competence as a communicator of farm information. Other considerations were orientation to farming as a way of life vs. farming as a business, and the prestige of the farm operator as viewed by his peers.

**Age**

The relationship of age to innovativeness in farming was inconclusive and was probably conditioned by other factors associated with age. Young farmers are sometimes thought to be more change prone than older farmers but may lack resources for putting their ideas into practice. Perhaps age alone, within the limits of sustained competence as a farmer and continual alertness to new developments in farming, was not highly significant to the performance of the functions considered. However, in the absence of these requisites and the presence of societal conditions which favor seeking advice and information from elderly persons, the consequences can be restrictive. This is particularly likely if age is also fortified by disproportionate control of resources and the exercise of power over others as is often true in the joint family or even in father-son farming arrangements.

Although not statistically significant at the 5 percent level for legitimator mentions, the general pattern in Prairie was for those receiving functionary mentions of any type to be younger than those not mentioned. (See Figure 2). Also there was no notable inclination to distinctive age variation by functionary type.

All functionaries in Ozark tended to be somewhat older than in Prairie. However, except for legitimator mentions, age variation by type of functionary mention was nil. Even though not statistically significant, high mention legitimators were about 10 years older than either the low or no mention ones. In like manner, high mention legitimators were about 10 years older than high mention functionaries of each other type. This undoubtedly reflects the selective survival of farmers capable of adjustment to difficult economic circumstances that have prevailed in Ozark in the past decades. Thus, those who have remained in farming have virtually been forced to adopt new farm practices and even change farming enterprises. Others unable to adapt or who had insufficient resources to do so lost out in the struggle and thus were lost to the occupation of farming.

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Years Schooling Completed

Amount of schooling as an instrumental factor in achieving role expectations for innovator, communicator, or legitimating referent status possibly could be limited to rather elemental abilities to read, write, and do simple mathematical computations provided special capacities are developed by other means than formal education. Certainly, success as a farmer requires almost continual access to information sources about new developments in farming and their application
to the local situation. However, there are many ways that information can be obtained other than reading research reports and other highly abstract materials. Even so, short circuiting of the circuitous route by which farm information is received by most farmers and the means of legitimation upon which they habitually depend would require ability to abstract meaningful content from research reports not written specifically for farmers and, thus, an ability which could be enhanced by academic training of the type available through the public school systems.

In Prairie, a significant positive relationship between schooling and mentions as an innovator referent and as a communicator of farm information occurred but not with mentions as a legitimator. Persons mentioned as a communicator and as an innovator had about two more years' schooling than those not mentioned. Innovators had slightly more schooling than communicators. (See Figure 3).

In Ozark, years schooling completed was positively related to mentions as an innovator at or above the .001 confidence level and negatively related to mentions as a legitimator at the .05 confidence level. Age differences by communicator mentions were nil. High mention innovators had about one more year of schooling than those not mentioned. The somewhat lower educational level of high mention legitimators than for other functionaries was probably caused by their higher age level and a commonly found negative association between years schooling and age.

**Concept of Community Norms and Own Rate of Adoption**

Where a person stands as an acceptor of new farm practices in relation to others and the relative speed with which he views himself as adopting surely influences his perception of the relative speed with which others accept new farm practices. On the contrary, the way he views others in the community and his own feeling of need to comply with community norms in this regard is likely to influence his own rate of adoption. The assumption here was that innovators, being regarded as somewhat out-ahead of others in their adoption behavior, would view the community as being slower to adopt new farm practices than other functionaries. This proved to be true in Ozark, but not in Prairie, when farm operators were asked to indicate how they thought their own community compared with other communities in the adoption of new farm practices. This might suggest that innovators in Ozark were more change-minded than those in Prairie. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference occurred in regard to this view by number of functionary mentions of any type in either community. However, in the aggregate, almost twice as many farmers in Ozark viewed their community as being relatively slow to adopt new farm practices than in Prairie. Very likely the farm operator's view about the willingness of the community in general was reflective of his own rate of adoption. He would view the community as slow if he had been fast in adopting new practices, and vice versa. Should this stand, this slow-adoption view of the community might be an
indication that farm operators in Ozark were generally quicker in adopting new farm practices than those in Prairie.

**Orientation to Farming as a Business vs. Way of Life**

Traditionally, farming has been viewed essentially as a way of life, perhaps rationalizing economic disadvantages in terms of benefits assumed to derive to family and self from family farm. Yet, with the growth of commercialized agriculture and attendant price-cost squeeze, the business aspect of farming has become paramount. Although the view of farming as a way of life vs. a business may not be entirely incompatible, views mainly in terms of the latter would
seem to better qualify persons for at least the innovator and communicator roles. For legitimation the situation could be different in that persons may be required to exhibit cherished views about farming as a way of life as one requirement for being influential. This is particularly likely if nostalgic views of farming as a way of life persist.

The business-way-of-life orientation to farming was assessed by a series of statements indicative of the two points of view ordered by the Thurstone technique of attitude scaling. High scores on the scale represented a tendency to view farming as a business and low scores as a way of life. Typical of items indicative of the latter view were: “A farmer should butcher and cure his own meat supply;” and “A person who is willing to work can always make a living on the farm;” and of farming as a business, “A farmer should keep records on his crops and livestock;” and “It is better to borrow money from a bank than from a relative or friend.”

Orientation to farming as a business was positively related to mentions for each functionary type of both communities with the exception of legitimators in Ozark. (See Figure 4). But the relationship was only significant for innovators and communicators in Prairie. This view was most noted for variations in innovator mentions in both communities. Although variation in orientation score by type of functionary mention tended to be more nearly uniform from one type to another in Prairie than in Ozark, business orientation was less associated with legitimator mentions in Prairie and communicator mentions in Ozark than for the other functionary types.

Technological Competence

Perhaps, technological competence as a farmer is most central to the performance of the functionary roles considered. Two indicators of this quality were available, namely, percent of a list of applicable improved farm practices that the farmer was using on his own farm and his receptivity to new ideas and information about farming.

In regard to the former, use of improved new farm practices increased sharply with each type of functionary mention in both communities. In both instances, association was higher with innovator than with legitimator and communicator mentions. (See Figure 5). Selectivity was distinctly highest for innovator mentions in Ozark. Thus being recognized as being out-ahead in the adoption of new practices was most prevalent for innovators in Ozark. In a sense, this is merely a recognition that people generally regarded as being first to try new farm practices in fact tended to be first.

Following each interview, the interviewer was asked to rate the farmer in terms of his apparent receptivity to new ideas and practices in farming into categories of actively seeking, receptive, indifferent or complacent and self-sufficient or antagonistic. Again for all functionary types, there was a significantly positive association between number of mentions and inferred receptivity to new agricultural developments. Again it is not surprising that this quality was most recog-
Median Farm Practice Rating

Number of Mentions as an Innovator Referent

Median Farm Practice Rating

Number of Mentions as a Communicator

Median Farm Practice Rating

Number of Mentions as a Legitimator

Figure 5. Median Improved Farm Practice Rating of Farm Operators by Functionary Mentions in Prairie and Ozark

nized in the innovator referent than for any other type. This was true in both communities.

**Prestige**

Prestige was referred to as “standing in the community” by farm operators who did the ratings. This terminology carried the intended meaning for rating purposes. Prestige and prestige differences are likely to be related in a number

of ways to the performance of the three functions considered. Persons may look up the prestige scale to get information or advice, but, if the distance is too great, cleavages in communication and exercise of influence may occur. However, in the absence of same, high prestige doubtless adds an increment of weight to information and advice that might not otherwise accrue. Although the fact that persons may be named on a prestige rather than on an actual functionary basis when asked to designate others for different referent requirements, the bias introduced was probably mitigated by asking farmers about functions related to specific farm practice adoption decisions they had recently made.

Whether opinion leaders (combination of communicator and legitimator) are above average in social status or scattered throughout the social status continuum varies. The former tended to be true in an earlier Missouri study, while the latter tended to be true in a number of urban situations. In a changing society, it appears that influentials or legitimators are likely to be high prestige persons respected for their good judgment. Where a premium is placed on the maintenance of the status quo this would seem slightly less likely.

Whether innovators are high prestige persons is even more open to question. Barnett and others have found them to be essentially misfits or marginal men and therefore most certainly of less than highest prestige. Under other circumstances the reverse may actually be true. In a series of Missouri studies, prestige and adoption of improved farm practices were positively related. Also, Havens found a positive correlation between innovativeness and various measures of social status in 11 studies where such tests were made.

However, it should be recognized that deviancy of innovators in this and other agricultural adoption studies refers merely to the introduction of new farm practices into a given locality. More often than not the new practices have been tried and tested elsewhere often under similar conditions.

The relationship of prestige to functionary mentions was positive and highly significant by all types in both communities but was most in evidence for innovator mentions. This was particularly true in Prairie. The magnitude of the relationships was much the same in both communities in relation to each of the functionary types (See Figure 6). In both instances, prestige was less associated with mentions as a legitimator than for the other types. Certainly, one conclusion which may be drawn is that people who were regarded as first to try the specific new farm practices considered were held in high esteem by their fellow farmers. The extent to which prestige may serve as a restricting influence on

27For examples, see:
Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, op. cit., p. 50.
Stewart, op. cit.
communication and the exercise of influence as prestige distances between the seeker and sought increase will be the concern of another publication.

**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

Social participation of two general types was considered in this bulletin, namely, that of an essentially personal nature involving such informal social groups as cliques, neighborhoods, and mentions as a social associate and the
more formal secondary groups characterized by formal membership requirements, special programs and activities and regulatory measures for membership. Formal groups were further sub-divided into sacred (mainly church) and secular groups or those dedicated to the attainment of instrumental ends; also on the basis of the degree to which membership was drawn from outside of the immediate locality.

Social participation is important to the performance of the various functionary roles because of its bearing on local accessibility considerations and need for contacts with influences outside of the immediate locality; this is quite aside from the manner in which group norms and mechanisms operate to mete out rewards and reprisals for conformity to group expectations of failure to conform.

**Participation in Informal Social Groups**

*Mentions as a social associate*—Perhaps the best indicator of integration into the informal social structure of the community and thus of local social accessibility is the number of times a person is named as a most frequent associate by others. Although mentions as a most frequent associate was positively and significantly related to mentions of all functionary types, closest association was with communicator mentions in both communities (as measured by V). Of the two, association in Ozark was considerably higher than in Prairie. Thus, it would seem that social accessibility is a more important consideration for performing the communicative function than for performing the others. (See Figure 7). Even so, high mention innovators in Ozark received the highest number of mentions as an associate of any of the functionary types, while in Prairie the highest mentions went to the high mention legitimators. Thus, it is that high level functionaries of all types were distinctly more integrated into the informal social structure than the less mentioned counterparts.

*Clique membership*—Clique membership (group defined on the basis of friendship, visiting, and social association) may facilitate communication about farming among members but restrict communication with others through mechanisms of self inclusion and other exclusion.²⁹

Looking first at the situation in Prairie, the only functionary type with which clique membership was related significantly (.01 confidence level) was mentions as a key communicator. Thirty-one and one-tenth percent of those not mentioned as first or additional sources of information about specific farm practices adopted (communicator mentions) were clique members compared to 62.3 percent of those most frequently mentioned. The proportion for the 1-2 mention group was an intermediate 48.5 percent. Only 54.2 percent of the high mention innovators and 43.8 percent of the high mention legitimators were clique members.

The situation in Ozark was similar in that the only statistically significant association of clique membership with functionary mentions was with those named as first or additional sources of information about the farm practices that farm operators in the community had adopted. The proportion of persons who were clique members increased from 16.9 percent for the no communicator mentions group to 60.3 percent for those who received the 3 or more mentions. In the intermediate group, the proportion was 34.9 percent. Although the same general tendency to an inverse correlation was noted for both mentions as an innovator and as a legitimator the differences were not statistically significant at
the accepted level for those functionary types.

*Neighborhoods*—Neighborhoods are locality groups which in this instance were defined as areas in which local residents regarded themselves as belonging, quite aside from any distinctive associational patterns which may or may not have existed therein. Each, however, bore a name and a locality identification which local judges recognized in designating who belonged and who did not. Being locality inclusive, variation on a personal attribute basis within the areas was likely restricted as with neighborhoods generally so defined. Also, restrictive influences on communication
\[10\] and on the adoption of farm practices have been noted elsewhere.

In both communities no significant difference was found between neighborhood residence and functionary mentions. In Prairie, innovators were more likely to live in neighborhoods than communicators and legitimators, whereas in Ozark none of the functionaries exceeded the community as a whole in the chances of being regarded as neighborhood residents.

*Participation in Formal Social Groups*

Such groups included organizations with specific programs or goals, elected officers, committees and written rules regarding activities and membership. Typical of same were churches, PTAs, local lodges, book clubs, farm organizations, commodity groups, and local chambers of commerce. The relationship of participation in such groups to mentions as an innovator and as a communicator was significant at the .001 confidence level in Prairie and for legitimator mentions at the somewhat lower level (.05). The same general pattern prevailed in Ozark in regard to innovator and communicator mentions (.001 and .02, respectively). Although the positive relationship did occur between total participation in formal social groups and legitimator mentions, the relationship was not statistically significant. In viewing high level functionaries, innovators were most active as participants in formal groups followed by legitimators in both communities despite the relatively weak overall association of legitimation mentions to total social participation in formal groups. Thus, both high mention legitimators and innovators were very active in formal social groups. Communicators differed from innovators and legitimators only in degree.

Participation in formal groups with membership confined to the immediate locality, as for example, local PTAs, was not significantly related to any functionary mention in both communities. On the other hand, for organizations drawing membership from a larger area, as for example, farm organizations, the relationships of participation to all functionary mentions was statistically significant with the exception of legitimators in Prairie and most marked for high mentioned innovators in both communities. (See Figure 8). They were considerably more involved in the broadly oriented formal groups than the other high mention functionaries.

High mention innovators, communicators and legitimators in Prairie were more active in sacred social groups (mostly church) than those less frequently mentioned. The relationship of church participation to functionary mentions was statistically significant for the first two but not for legitimators.

In Ozark, the only statistically significant relationship was with innovator
referent mentions. High mention innovators were more active than others in sacred (mostly church) activities. For legitimators the converse tended to be true although the relationship was not statistically significant.

For participation in instrumental end directed (secular) groups, the relationship of functionary mentions was universally positive and most evident for the high level innovator referents in both communities (See Figure 9). The relationship was also very distinct for legitimator mentions in Prairie. Although communicators were more active in secular social groups than persons not so designated, the differences were not so great as for the other two functionary types.

Figure 9. Median Secular Social Participation Score of Farm Operators in Prairie and Ozark
Two economic characteristics were considered, the size of farming operations, and the gross farm income. In a highly competitive society characteristic of the United States, both are regarded as symbols of success and, thus, of likely consequence in the manner in which persons are selected and used as functionary-referents in decisions to adopt new farm practices. For example, it has been said that innovators are in an economic position to assume risks that others cannot or are not willing to take. Another view is that they are sufficiently insured against risks to be relatively free of uncertainty attendant with the trial of new farm practices.\textsuperscript{31} Although the risk insured hypothesis warrants careful scrutiny, this study must be content with the comparative characteristics of the three functionary types in the two communities studied.

**Acres Operated**

Size of farm operated increased consistently with number of mentions as an innovator referent and as a communicator of farm information. Differences were statistically significant at the .001 level in both instances with high mention innovators operating the largest farms of the high mention functionaries by a wide margin. (See Figure 10). The relationship of farm size to legitimator mentions was not statistically significant at the .05 level, in that high mention legitimators actually operated smaller farms than those mentioned 1 to 2 times and in fact had farms that were only slightly larger than the community average.

In Ozark, farm size was positively related to all functionary mentions, but the relation was statistically significant only for innovator referents and legitimators. Again high mention innovators operated the largest farms of the high mention functionaries. Thus, in terms of acres operated, high level innovators were the largest operators in both communities.

**Gross Farm Income**

Gross farm income may be regarded by many farmers as a direct manifestation of success in farming. Although not capable of precise determination by other farmers, it can be reasonably well inferred by observations of what the other fellow has to sell in the market. Figure 11 reveals that gross farm income tended to distinguish all of the special functionaries from the rank and file operators. In both communities, income increased in direct relation to the number of functionary mentions of all types and the relationships were statistically significant.

In Prairie, innovators earned the largest annual gross farm income from their farm; communicators earned the smallest with legitimators occupying an

\textsuperscript{31}Myren, Delbert T., "The Role of Information in Farm Decisions under Conditions of High Risk and Uncertainty," (paper presented at the First Inter-American Research Symposium on the Role of Communications in Agricultural Development, Mexico City, Mexico, October 5-13, 1964), pp. 10-11.
intermediate position but being more like innovators than communicators in the amount earned during the previous year. Gross farm income for high mention innovators and legitimators was $21,000 and $20,000; for the high level communicators, $9,615. (See Figure 11). This may be compared to a community average of $6,520. It should be observed that the high level legitimators in Prairie who had smaller farms than the intermediate mention legitimators ac-
Figure 11. Median Gross Farm Income of Farm Operators by Functionary Mentions in Prairie and Ozark

tually had farm incomes over twice the size of the intermediates. This ability to achieve high level gross farm sales from relatively small acreages surely must have been an important factor in the frequency with which they were chosen as legitimators in farm practice decisions.

In Ozark, the same tendency was found despite the fact that gross farm income for the community ($2,797) was only two-fifths of that for Prairie. The gross farm income of high mention innovators was $8,000 and for high mention legitimators, $6,333 compared to an intermediate $4,667 for the high mention communicators. Thus again, it was the highest mention innovators who had the highest gross farm income, but, unlike Prairie, this income was derived from
slightly larger farms. Even so, income increased far out of proportion to size of farm, thus, again, suggesting superior management ability within the commonly accepted mode of farming operations locally.

COMMUNICATIONS BEHAVIOR

The propensity for individuals to perform various functions in the individual adoption process is partly contingent upon the way they are integrated into the communicative influence and social associational patterns of the local community and beyond. Participation in social groups and integration into the informal associational patterns of the community as communicative accessibility factors were discussed in a previous section. Although primarily social-associational in nature, matters related to farming are doubtlessly often discussed.

Persons Most Frequently Talked to About Farming

A question, directed to whom each farmer talked most frequently about matters related to farming, provided a measure of relative integration of functionaries into the interpersonal farm talk patterns of the community. Interestingly, high mention innovators in both communities were more frequently mentioned as the persons most frequently talked to about farming than either high mention communicators or legitimators. This indicates that communication with persons regarded as being first to try a specific new farm practice was frequent and relatively unrestricted (See Figure 12).

Figure 12 reveals that high mention legitimators in Prairie were also frequently mentioned as persons most frequently talked to about matters relating to farming. Yet, we shall see that aggregate association was strongest for persons who were mentioned as first or additional sources of farm information regarding the new farm practices which they have adopted. This is simply to say that communication about matters related to farming in general was very closely related to acquisition of specific information about farm practices adopted.

In Ozark, a slightly stronger general association of mentions as persons most frequently talked to was found for legitimators than for innovators, although it remained the strongest for the communicators as indicated by V’s (See Table III).

Most Valued Personal Source of Farm Information

A question designed to elicit whose opinion about farming each farmer valued most highly provided a basis for assessing the relative value placed upon information obtained from each of the functionary referent types. Although it has sometimes been assumed that information from innovator referents, if obtained at all, is not as highly valued as from other personal sources, it was the high mention innovators in Prairie who received the highest mentions as a most valued source of farm information. Of the high functionary mention categories, legitimators rated a close second and communicators third. (See Figure 13). It
could very well be that each was valued for different reasons. However, this was not a consideration in the original research design.

In Ozark, essentially the same relative pattern prevailed with high mention innovators again in an even more distinctive lead as persons named as most valued sources of farm information. Legitimators and communicators rated second and third in succession.

Thus, in both communities, innovators took the highest honors as most valued sources of farm information with legitimators a close second in both communities. When mentions as most valued sources and mentions as persons most frequently talked to are viewed together, it could be concluded that all
### TABLE III
CLOSENESS OF ASSOCIATION (v) BETWEEN PERSONAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMUNICATIONS CHARACTERISTICS AND MENTIONS AS FUNCTIONARIES AND FUNCTIONARY OVERLAPS PRAIRIE AND OZARK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Innovator</th>
<th>Communicator</th>
<th>Legitimator</th>
<th>Innovator-Communicator</th>
<th>Legitimator-Communicator</th>
<th>Triple Functionary</th>
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<td>.262*</td>
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<td>.267*</td>
<td>.235*</td>
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<td>.190**</td>
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### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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### ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

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### COMMUNICATIONS CHARACTERISTICS

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</table>

### Level of Significance

- 
  - * = .001
  - ** = .01
  - + = .02
  - ++ = .05
functionaries were more closely tied into the informal network of communication and influence than other farmers with innovators and legitimators being more so than communicators.

**Information Sources Used**

The kind of farm information sources used by intermediaries and the frequency of their use are key factors in the dissemination of farm information through the interpersonal communicative network. Exposure of some people to sources of farm information, to research findings or other outside sources of in-
formation provides one requirement for the dissemination of scientific farm information through the interpersonal communicative networks. The more authentic and direct the sources used by intermediaries, the better situated they are to serve as communicators of high quality information in the individual adoption process. Exposure to an outside authentic farm information may often be coupled with an ability to receive information of a more abstract nature than those who seek information and advice from them. Thus, an adaptive function may be performed by the intermediary. Also, if high mention functionaries are more receptive to new ideas about farming than those who are less mentioned, they are in a position to serve as low resistance avenues for communicating farm information from outside sources. This was found to be true in both communities.

Use that various functionaries made of selected agricultural agencies, mass media and selected professionals as sources of farm information were used as the basis for indicating contact with outside farm information sources. Observation of Figures 14 through 25 discloses a general inclination for the proportion of persons using almost all sources to increase with all the types of functionary mentions. It is further apparent that the greatest increases occurred in the use of sources closely related to the experimental work at the College of Agriculture and those requiring active participation of those obtaining information as for example, attendance at meetings and adult classes (See Figures 23 and 24).

Perhaps the most direct source enumerated was from the University. This was the source most distinctively used by the innovator referent (See Figure 14). Over 45 percent of the farm operators named three or more times as innovator referents in Prairie said they got farm information from this source compared to only 18 percent of the high mention communicators and 19 percent of the high mention legitimators. The community average was 12 percent. The same general pattern was true for what is probably the next most direct source of farm information, college bulletins. These were used as information sources by 67 percent of the high mention innovators and 39 percent for the communicator and 31 percent of the legitimator counterparts in Prairie (See Figure 15). The proportion for the community was 29 percent.

Adult classes, perhaps requiring the most active effort in acquiring information of all sources considered was used by 79 percent of the high mention innovators, 48 percent of the high mention communicators and 63 percent of the legitimator counterparts in Prairie. About 34 percent of all farm operators in the community obtained information in this manner (See Figure 23). A second high effort source was farm meetings, used by 79 percent of the high mention innovators compared to 69 percent for both high mention communicators and legitimators. Approximately 52 percent of the farm operators in the community said they got information from this source (See Figure 24).

Other farm information sources disproportionately used by each of the func-

---

tionary types in Prairie in statistically significant proportions were county extension agents and vocational agriculture teachers. Eighty-three percent of the high mention innovator referents and 81 percent of the high mention legitimators said they obtained farm information from the county extension agent compared to 75 percent of the high mention communicators (See Figure 16). The use of vocational agriculture teachers ranged from 53 percent for the high mention communicator to 67 and 68 percent, for the high mention innovator referents and legitimators respectively (See Figure 17).

In Prairie, the one notable exception to increased use of an information source with mentions as an innovator referent was the almanac. Only 13 percent of the high mention innovators said that they got farm information from this
source compared to 32 percent for the community as a whole (See Figure 25). No statistically significant differences occurred in the use of this source by number of communicator or legitimator mentions. Thus innovators were more discriminating in this regard than legitimators or communicators. Also, it has been shown elsewhere that a general avoidance pattern occurs in the interpersonal communications network for use of the almanac as a source of farm information.33 In other words, instead of the interpersonal network facilitating the flow

33 Lionberger, Herbert F. and Rex R. Campbell, The Potential of Interpersonal Communicative Networks for Message Transfer from Outside Information Sources (Columbia: Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 842, September, 1963).
of information from the almanac on a 2 or multi-step basis, opportunity for information transfer from the network was actually restricted. For agricultural agency and most mass media sources it was facilitated.

Although the proportion of farm operators using the various mass media as sources of farm information in Prairie tended to increase consistently with functionary mentions, these and personal sources of farm information tended to be much more universally used than sources of information directly related to the college research agencies. Only two statistically significant differences in the use of the mass media occurred, the percent of communicators obtaining farm information from daily newspapers and television (See Figures 19 and 21). Perhaps the former is peripheral as a commonly recognized source of farm informa-
Patterns of farm information source use in Ozark by the various functionary mentions were much the same as in Prairie. One notable exception was the relatively small proportion of farmers obtaining farm information from adult classes in Ozark (5 percent) compared to Prairie (34 percent). This is probably a function of relative opportunity and partly a function of pressures of a second job which farmers found more necessary in Ozark than in Prairie. Even so, seven times as many high mention legitimators as those not so mentioned and about three times as many high mention innovator referents as those not mentioned for this purpose obtained farm information from this source (See Figure 23).
Yet, these differences were not statistically significant. Farm meetings which required considerable effort on the part of the recipient to obtain farm information were most used by high mention innovators (83 percent) followed by 77 percent of the high mention legitimators and 61 percent of high mention communicators who obtained information from this source.

There was also a general tendency in Ozark for high mention functionaries to make more frequent use of information directly from the College of Agriculture research sources but not without exception (See Figures 14-16). Differences in the proportion of farmers obtaining information directly from the University by communicator and legitimator mentions was not statistically significant. Like Prairie, the only functionary type by which significant differences did occur in
acquisition of farm information directly from the University was for innovator referents. Thirty-three percent of the high mention ones received information from this source compared to only 11 percent of those not so mentioned (See Figure 14). Unlike Prairie, no significant difference in the use of a vocational agriculture teacher as a source of farm information occurred by any of the functionary mentions. This is no doubt a reflection of a general tendency for adults to make less use of the vocational agriculture teacher as a source of farm information in Ozark than in Prairie. This in turn is probably a partial reflection of a greater adult teaching activity in Prairie than in Ozark and the unique role of the vocational agriculture teacher as a fertilizer salesman and consultant in Prairie.

Figure 19. Median Percent of Farm Operators Obtaining Farm Information from Daily Newspapers by Functionary Mentions in Prairie and Ozark
Although the proportion of farm operators in Ozark obtaining farm information from the county extension agent increased appreciably with number of mentions as a legitimator, the differences were not statistically significant. However, for innovator mentions the differences in use rates were larger and statistically significant. Percents ranged from fifty in the mention category to 83 percent of the high mention ones. (See Figure 16).

As in Prairie, significant differences occurred in the proportion of farm operators in Ozark using the daily newspaper as a source of farm information for innovator referent mentions and legitimator mentions but not for communicators. In the use of television, the only significant difference was found for innovators.

Figure 20. Median Percent of Farm Operators Obtaining Farm Information from Radio by Functionary Mentions in Prairie and Ozark.
In both communities, a general observation was that the greatest variation and the greatest number of statistically significant differences in the proportion of farm operators using various information sources occurred for innovator referent mentions and generally for information sources representing relatively direct connections with the Agricultural Experiment Station at the College and those requiring relatively high effort to obtain information when compared to such passive means as watching television, listening to radio or reading local newspapers. The College of Agriculture, its bulletins, and its staff of county extension agents were definitely a part of the communication line to those regarded as the most highly innovative in both communities. Legitimators in Ozark and communicators in Prairie were close competitors as users of the more
direct sources of farm information with communicators in Ozark and legitimators in Prairie occupying an intermediate position in this regard.

**Distinctive Characteristics of the Functionary Types**

This section is devoted to the characteristics which distinguish farmers on the basis of number of functionary mentions accorded and which tended to distinguish one functionary type from another. Only characteristics which were significantly associated with more than one functionary type mention and which were assumed to have a functional relationship to the various functionary roles were considered. The classes of items and the rationale for their inclusion were as follows:
1. **Personal accessibility**—a requirement for the acquisition of information on an interpersonal basis,
2. **Social cosmopolitanism**—which is related to the means of obtaining ideas and support for action taken from outside of the immediate locality,
3. **Technological competence**—which is highly relative to the quality of message content disseminated through the interpersonal patterns of communication,
4. **Socio-economic status**—which may either enhance communication and the exercise of influence or restrict same as social distances between the potential influencer and influenced increase,
5. **Farm secularism**—defined as an orientation to farming as a goal achieve-
ment kind of operation which in turn is assumed to influence selection of farm information sources, farm management decisions and innovative inclinations generally,

6. **Information source position**—which relates to how intermediaries in the individual decision making adoption process are articulated with information sources from outside the community and the receptivity of intermediaries to new ideas and information about farming.

**Communicators**—Observation of Table III clearly shows that in both communities the most distinctive feature about communicators was their accessibility to others. This is indicated by the high relationship of mentions as a communi-
Figure 25. Median Percent of Farm Operators Obtaining Farm Information From Almanac by Functionary Mentions in Prairie and Ozark

Legitimators—For legitimators in Prairie, high information receptivity and technological competence were prime considerations. This was followed by a series of characteristics indicating scope of contact and esteem others held for them, such as secular social participation and prestige (See Table III), and strategic location in the lines of communication from adult classes and farm meetings to the farmer (See Table IV).
### TABLE IV

CLOSENESS OF ASSOCIATION (v) BETWEEN THE USE OF FARM INFORMATION SOURCES AND MENTIONS AS FUNCTIONARIES AND FUNCTIONARY OVERLAPS

PRAIRIE AND OZARK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Sources of Farm Information</th>
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<th>Legitimator</th>
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<td>Ozark</td>
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<td>.185++</td>
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<td>.086</td>
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<td>.225**</td>
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<td>.140</td>
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<td>.186+</td>
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<td>.034</td>
<td>.102</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Level of Significance**

* = .001  ** = .01  += .02  ++ = .05
In Ozark, factors most closely associated with choice of farmers as legitimators were ordered somewhat differently. Mentions as most valued source of information rated first with technological competence a very close second. Prestige rated third in closeness of association, followed by scope of contact and accessibility considerations such as extra-localistic social participation, mentions as persons most frequently talked to. The use of daily newspapers and farm meetings as sources of information characterized this functionary. It was also apparent that legitimation choices in Ozark were not highly associated with use of direct sources of farm information. However, the high association of legitimation mentions with participation in extra-localistic social groups was indicative of a relatively broad social orientation of legitimators in Ozark as compared to those who named them for this purpose.

Innovators—Innovators in Prairie were distinguished by high prestige, secondly by gross farm income, and thirdly, by the acquisition of farm information from such direct sources as the University, college bulletins, and adult classes taught by the local vocational agriculture department (See Tables III & IV). Technological competence, receptivity to new farm practices, and mentions as a most valued source of farm information were also distinguishing characteristics of innovators in Prairie of at least fourth order in importance.

In Ozark, technological competence as a farmer was most closely associated as a factor in the choice of innovators (See Table III). Prestige, mentions as a most valued source of farm information and extra-localistic social participation followed in close succession. Other highly associated factors were receptivity to new ideas in farming and gross farm income. Use of farm meetings, college bulletins and the University as sources of farm information were also highly associated to innovator referent choices as in Prairie (See Table IV).

In conclusion, it should be observed that "V" contingency co-efficients provide only a gross measure of association of attributes with functionary choices which could easily minimize the importance of a few key individuals as functionaries in the individual adoption process. Perhaps these differences were somewhat more sharply drawn in the graphic representations of the previous section.

MULTIPLE FUNCTIONARIES

Extent and Nature of Functional Overlap

Whether innovators are sought as sources of farm information is a much discussed question, also whether and the extent to which innovators are influential in the decisions of others to adopt new farm practices. Additional types of functional overlap are communicator-legitimator and a three way overlap of the three functions. When multiple functions are performed by single individuals what is the nature of the functionary overlap and which pure functionary type do they most closely resemble? These are questions which will be treated in this section.
Three types of measures were used to indicate the extent and nature of the functional overlap which occurred:

1. the proportion of people involved in the various overlap situations,
2. "V" co-efficients of association between number of mentions of each type with each of the other,
3. median mentions of one type of functionary mention compared with the number of mentions for each of the others.

In terms of number of persons involved, communicator-legitimator overlap was greatest with 31 percent of the farm operators in Prairie and 20 percent in Ozark involved. Overlap was defined as receipt of at least one mention for each of the functions considered in the overlap. Next most overlap occurred for innovator-communicator mentions which again were higher in Prairie than in Ozark, 27 and 17 percent of the farm operators, respectively, being involved. (See Table V). The relationship of each of the overlap mentions in each of the communities were statistically significant at the .001 confidence level.

The smallest overlap was innovator with legitimator, 16 percent in Prairie and 10 percent in Ozark. A significant feature of this overlap was that in all but one instance in each of the communities this overlap was also accompanied by either a communicator-legitimator overlap or an innovator-communicator overlap. The percentages of farmers involved were 16 in Prairie and 10 in Ozark. Thus, innovator-legitimator overlap in the absence of communicator-legitimator and/or innovator-communicator overlaps was almost non-existent. Perhaps the overlap between legitimators and innovators tended to be a function of their common performance of the communication function.

A further gross measure of the extent of the various types of functional overlap is reflected in the V co-efficient associations between various types of functionary mentions as revealed in Table V.

A somewhat more definitive look at the nature of the overlap situation by categories of one type of mention compared to that of another is provided by median mentions for each functionary type by the times mentioned as an innovator referent. Thus, in both communities, the median mentions as a communicator increased sharply with innovator referent mentions, particularly for the high mention group. Medians in Prairie were 1.8, 3.7 and 6.5, respectively, for those receiving no, one-two, and three and over mentions as an innovator. In Ozark, comparable median mentions were 1.5, 3.9, and 7.5, respectively. (See Figure 26). Variation in mentions as a legitimator associated with the innovator referent function was only moderate in both Prairie and Ozark. In the former, the median in legitimation mentions increased from .6 for those not mentioned as an innovator referent to 1.6 for those mentioned 3 or more times (See Figure 27).

Again in regard to the legitimator-communicator overlap, median communicator mentions in Prairie increased from 1.8 for those not mentioned as a
<table>
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<th>Amount of Overlap</th>
<th>Innovator-Communicator</th>
<th>Innovator-Legitimator</th>
<th>Legitimator-Communicator</th>
<th>Innovator-Legitimator</th>
<th>Innovator-Legitimator</th>
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<td>Ozark (N=238)</td>
<td>Prairie (N=219)</td>
<td>Ozark (N=238)</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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<td>Three and Over</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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Figure 26. Median Communicator Mentions of Farm Operators by Mentions as an Innovator in Prairie and Ozark

Figure 27. Median Legitimator Mentions of Farm Operators by Mentions as an Innovator in Prairie and Ozark

Figure 28. Median Communicator Mentions of Farm Operators by Mentions as a Legitimator in Prairie and Ozark
legitimator to 5.7 for those mentioned 3 or more times. The median for the intervening group was 3.3. In Ozark, persons not mentioned as a legitimator, those named 1 to 2 times and those mentioned 3 or more times were named a median 1.5, 3.6, and 4.5 times respectively as communicators. (See Figure 28).

**Comparative Characteristics of the Multiple Functionaries**

**Innovator-communicator**—Farm operators who performed the joint innovator-communicator function in Prairie, constituting 27 percent of the total were distinguished first of all by high socio-economic status as indicated by very high Vs for gross farm income, prestige, level of living, size of farm and secondly by acquisition of farm information through television, active means, including adult farm classes, direct from the University and county extension agents. In closeness of association of these attributes to mentions as a multiple functionary they were more like innovator referents than communicators in regard to all of these characteristics except for prestige. In terms of mentions as most valued sources of farm information and as a person most frequently talked to about matters related to farming they were also more like innovators than communicators.

In Ozark, the innovator-communicator multiple functionaries were most distinguished by improved farm practice rating as the factor most closely associated with choice as a multiple functionary. Next in closeness of association was extra-localistic social participation followed by neighborhood residence, secular social participation, administrative participation, prestige, receptivity to new ideas about farming and mentions as a most valued source all rating about equal in importance in terms of closeness of association to choice. Also as in Prairie, innovator-communicators were characterized by acquisition of farm information from direct sources and active efforts to obtain new ideas about farming.

As in Prairie, they were more like innovators than communicators in the use of improved farm practices, extra-localistic participation, secular and administrative participation, acquisition of farm information by direct and active means, mentions as persons most frequently talked to about matters related to farming and as social associates. In neighborhood residence, prestige, mentions as a most valued source of farm information, and in the use of adult classes as sources of information they either had intermediate positions between communicators and innovators in terms of closeness of association or were much the same as the communicator.

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34 Level of living score referred to the sum total of credits assigned to each operator for possession or nonpossession of such items as running water, television set, automobile, heating system in the house, etc. This classification is very similar to the one used by Sewell in his farm family socio-economic scale. For a more detailed description of the version used see: Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109.

35 Administrative participation score was computed by adding the social participation scores for each farm operator who was a member of or served on various boards of directors or advisory committees, e.g., Board of Directors of the local MFA Exchange and Producers’ Creamery, extension council, ASC and/or related committeeman, school board, etc. For the definition of social participation score, see pages 19 and 20 of this bulletin.
Communicator-legitimator—In general, closeness of association of attributes with this type of multiple functionary choice was less than for innovators or for innovator-communicators. In Prairie, administrative participation, prestige, gross farm income and acquisition of farm information from television, adult classes rated in close succession. Percent of improved farm practices adopted, receptivity to new ideas about farming, mentions as a social associate and as a most valued source of farm information, followed in close order.

The communicator-legitimator overlaps in Prairie were more like communicators than legitimators in administrative participation, mentions as most valued source of information and in the use of television and vocational agriculture teachers as sources of farm information. In prestige, improved farm practice rating, information receptivity, and mentions as an associate, they were much the same as legitimators. The use of adult classes as sources of information and gross farm income occupies an intermediate position between communicators and legitimators.

In Ozark, neighborhood residence, mentions as a most valued source of farm information was highest by a slight margin. Quite as in Prairie, gross farm income, improved farm practice rating, extra-localistic social participation, prestige, administrative participation, and mentions as persons most frequently talked to followed in very close succession. Distinctive differences in closeness of association showed that the communicators in gross farm income, extra-localistic and administrative participation, prestige, mentions as persons most frequently talked to. Neighborhood residence, mentions as most valued source of farm information and improved farm practice rating, occupied an intermediate position. In regard to the use of daily newspapers, farm meetings and the University as sources of information, they were more like legitimators than communicators.

Innovator-communicator-legitimator—In Prairie, choice of triple functionaries was distinguished primarily by high socio-economic status, technological competence as a farmer, confidence in their judgement in matters related to farming and the use of television, adult classes, county extension agents, and vocational agriculture teachers as sources of farm information. In terms of choice characteristics, they were more like innovators in improved farm practice rating and mentions as most valued sources of farm information than the other two functionary types.

In accessibility characteristics (mentions as social associates and as persons most frequently mentioned as farm information sources) they were much more like innovators and legitimators than like communicators, the latter being distinctly different from this point of view. They were also like innovators and legitimators than communicators in using adult classes, county extension agents, and vocational agriculture teachers as farm information sources.

In Ozark, the choice of triple functionaries was most distinguished by administrative and extra-localistic social participation, high technological competence as a farmer. In contrast to Prairie, extra-localistic social participation in Ozark was a factor significantly related to triple functionary choice. In other factors
closely related to choice, and which might be rated as roughly second in impor-
tance were prestige, mentions as a most valued source of farm information, gross
farm income, receptivity to new ideas about farming, participation in secular
social groups, and using farm meetings, college bulletins, county extension
agents, as sources of farm information.

In administrative and extra-localistic social participation, adoption of farm
practices, participation in secular social groups, and use of relatively direct sources
of farm information, the triple functionaries in Ozark were more like innovators
than communicators or legitimators. In other characteristics associated with choice,
such as prestige, mentions as most valued source, information receptivity, they
were more like communicators or legitimators.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine:

1. the extent to which innovation, communication and legitimation func-
tions were performed by the same or different individuals in the decisions
of farm operators to adopt new farm practices,
2. the comparative characteristics of these functionaries,
3. the significance of the characteristics for the performance of the respec-
tive functions in the individual adoption process.

Functionaries were operationally defined in terms of mentions as first or
additional sources of farm information in decisions of farm operators to adopt
specific new farm practices (communicator), mentions as most influential in final
decisions to adopt new farm practices (legitimator) and persons named as first
to adopt the new farm practices in the community (innovator). Questions were
directed to 457 farmers in a Northwest and a South Missouri community, re-
ferred to in this study as Prairie and Ozark, respectively. A total of 1077 de-
cisions to adopt new farm practices of varying complexity were involved.

Despite a likely inclination to repeat the names of persons for several pur-
poses once named for one, the inclination to name different individuals for each
type of referent was sufficient to support a differentiation of function hypothesis
thus the designation of persons as innovators, communicators and legitimators.

Performance of the innovation and legitimation functions was confined to
less than 22 percent of the farm operators in Ozark and ½ or less in Prairie. Performance of the communication function (provision of first or additional in-
formation about farm practices) was much more diffuse with ¾ of the farmers
in Ozark and 80 percent in Prairie being named at least once for this purpose.

Designation of farm operators on a single functionary basis was not to deny
some degree of combination of these functions in the person of single individu-
als not reflected in the operational definitions used. Overlap of mentions could
occur by a single farmer naming a referent for more than one purpose or by dif-
ferent farmers naming a given individual for different purposes. The latter seems
to have been most frequent. Overlap was defined as at least one mention of each of the designated functionary types involved in the overlap under consideration. Of the four possible overlap situations, communicator-legitimator overlap was greatest with 31 percent farm operators in Prairie and 20 percent in Ozark so designated. The smallest was innovator with legitimator involving 16 percent of the farm operators in Prairie and 10 percent in Ozark. In all instances except one in each community, this type of overlap was accompanied by mention as a communicator, thus, suggesting the innovator-legitimator overlap may have been a function of the common performance of the communication function.

Communicators

In both communities, the most distinctive feature about communicators was their accessibility to other farmers. This was indicated by the high relationship of communicator mentions with social associational mentions and as persons most frequently talked to about matters related to farming. In both communities, choice as an associate and as a most frequently consulted farm information referent was far more closely associated with communicator mentions in Ozark than in Prairie. At the same time, clique membership was not significantly associated with any other type of functionary mention.

Also quite typical of the social associational orientation, communicators tended to make more use of adult classes and farm meetings as sources of farm information than other functionary types. This was in contrast to the greater use of direct sources of farm information by innovators. Even so, communicators made greater use of such direct sources of information as the county extension agent and vocational agriculture teachers, than those not so named. This condition was somewhat more characteristic of the communicators in Prairie than in Ozark.

In general, characteristics associated with the communicator functionary type were in the same direction as for legitimators and innovators but generally less marked.

Legitimators

High information receptivity and technological competence as a farmer were most associated with mentions as a legitimator in Prairie. They had distinctively higher gross incomes from farms only slightly larger than the community average. This demonstrated their ability to derive high returns from relatively limited land resources. This was a highly distinguishing characteristic.

Further distinctive characteristics of legitimators in Prairie were high participation in secular-social groups and a noted inclination to acquire farm information from such group related sources as adult classes and farm meetings. This inclination was even more evident than acquisition of farm information from such direct sources as the county extension agent, even though this also was a characteristic trait. Thus, they were generally well situated in the communicative structure to serve as intermediaries in the dissemination of farm information.

The same attributes characterized legitimators in Ozark but with variations in relative importance. Being named as a most valued source of farm informa-
tion was most closely associated with legitimator mentions but not so closely as with mentions as an innovator. This evaluation of innovators over legitimators occurred in spite of the fact that legitimators were defined as most influential in final decisions to adopt specific new farm practices.

Technological competence as a farmer and prestige were accorded second and third order importance. Other highly associated factors were extra-localistic participation and high gross farm income. While being similar to legitimators in Prairie in obtaining farm information from meetings, they showed a somewhat greater inclination to get farm information directly from the University and from college bulletins than in Prairie; also from daily newspapers. Although not to the degree as communicators, a distinct inclination to increased mentions as “most frequently talked to about farming” occurred as legitimator mentions increased in both communities, particularly in Ozark.

**Innovators**

Innovators in Prairie were distinguished first by high prestige, second by gross farm income, and third by acquisition of farm information from such direct sources as the University, college bulletins and adult classes taught by local vocational agriculture teachers.

Thus, innovator referents were among the most highly respected farmers in the community and had far more resources with which to experiment than the average farmer or than the other functionary types. Also they were well situated to communicate scientific farm information from direct sources to other farmers.

With level of living, percent of improved farm practices adopted, receptivity to new farm information and ideas, and mentions as most valued sources of farm information followed in close succession as distinguishing characteristics, innovators were fulfilling the image of being quick to adopt new farm practices and were at the same time highly regarded as sources of farm information. Being named as a most valued source of farm information and high prestige were more associated with innovator mentions than with any other functionary type. This was true in both communities. Thus, they were closely integrated into the informal social structure of the respective communities, even though in regard to the latter, less so than communicators. They were highly accessible to others and certainly not marginal insofar as integration into the social structure is concerned.

Innovator mentions in Ozark were very highly associated with technological competence, prestige, and mentions as most valued source of farm information in close rank order. They tended also to be chosen in terms of their high extra-localistic participation which was not the case with innovators in Prairie, and in terms of their use of farm meetings, daily newspapers, college bulletins, and the University scientists as sources of farm information.

**Distinctive Characteristics of Multiple Functionaries**

In the sections which follow, characteristics of each of the multiple functionary types are listed in descending order of closeness of association with an
indication of which single functionary type they resemble most in each instance. The same is also done for information sources used.

**INNOVATOR—COMMUNICATOR**

Most like innovators  Most like communicators

*In Prairie*
Characteristics: (Arrows indicate direction of variations)

- High farm income
- High prestige
- High level of living
- Large farms
- Most frequently talked to about farming

Information Sources:
- Television
- Adult class
- University
- County Extension Agent
- Vocational Agriculture Teachers
- College bulletins

*In Ozark*
Characteristics:
- Technological competence
- Extra-localistic participation
- Neighborhood residence
- Secular social participation
- Administrative participation
- Prestige

Information Sources:
- Farm meetings
- College bulletins
- Adult classes
- County Extension Agent
- University
COMMUNICATOR—LEGITIMATOR

Most like communicators  Most like legitimators

In Prairie

Characteristics: (Arrows indicate direction of variations)

← Administrative participation
         Prestige  →

←− Gross farm income  ←−
         Technological competence  →
         Mentions as associates  →
         Information receptivity  →

← Most valued source

Information Sources:

← Television
←− Adult class  ←−
← Vocational Agriculture Teacher

In Ozark

Characteristics:

←− Neighborhood residence  ←−
←− Most valued source  ←−
         Gross farm income  →

←− Technological competence  ←−
         Extra-localistic participation  →
         Prestige  →
         Administration participation  →

Information Sources:

        Daily newspapers  →
         Farm Meetings  →
         University  →

INNOVATOR—COMMUNICATOR—LEGITIMATOR

Most like innovators  Most like legitimators

In Prairie

Characteristics: (Arrows indicate direction of variations)

←− Prestige  ←−

← Most valued source
Technological competence
-- Gross farm income
   Information receptivity

Information Sources:
-- Television
   Adult classes
← County Extension Agent
   Vocational Agriculture
   Teachers

\textit{In Ozark}

Characteristics:
← Administrative participation
← Extra-localistic participation
← Technological competence
   Prestige
   Most valued source
-- Gross farm income

Information Sources:
← Farm meetings
← College bulletins
← County Extension Agent
   Daily newspapers

\textit{Conclusions}

\textit{About functionaries—}

1. A differentiation of function performed by various persons in the decision of other farmers to adopt new farm practices was evident with innovator (local practice introduction) communicator and legitimator functions being identified for study and comparison.

2. There was a relatively high concentration of the performance of the innovation and legitimation functions in a relatively few people and a much greater dispersion in the performance of the communication function.

3. Distinct differences in characteristics among functionary types appeared even though most existed in degree only. For communicators, social accessibility was paramount; for legitimators, demonstrated ability to make effective use of resources ranked first and for innovators, broad social orientation, use of direct sources of farm information, high prestige, and high value placed on them as farm information sources were important.

4. All functionaries were much better equipped than the average to serve as effective intermediaries in the processes intervening between original
sources of scientific farm information and farm operators who used it in decisions to accept innovations in farming. This was indicated by their more frequent use of authentic sources of information, greater technological competence, high prestige, and the greater accessibility for consultation on a person to person basis.

5. Of all functionary types, innovators conformed most to what may be regarded as a "rational" model of decision making and farming as a business rather than as a way of life.

6. Single functionary mentions was the rule for innovators and legitimators.

7. The most common multiple functionary was the communicator-legitimator combination with the innovator-legitimator combination being least common and almost non-existent in the absence of the third or communication function.

About community differences.

1. The concentration of each of the functionary mentions was greater in Ozark than in Prairie with differences being in the range of 10 percent for each functionary type. This indicated a higher degree of selectivity of choices in Ozark than in Prairie.

2. The amount of functionary overlap was greater in Prairie than in Ozark which was again in the range of 10 percent for the innovator-communicator and legitimator-communicator overlap. Thus, a greater selectivity in the choice of functionaries in Ozark than in Prairie was again indicated.

3. Designation of innovators in Ozark was more in terms of characteristics central to the performance of the innovator referent function than in Prairie. This was indicated by more emphasis on technological competence as a farmer, information receptivity, extra-localistic social participation, secular social participation, high value placed on persons as farm information sources in Ozark than in Prairie.

4. There was a greater selectivity of legitimators in Ozark than in Prairie in terms of being named as highly valued sources of farm information, high gross farm income, high prestige and high technological competence. They also were somewhat more likely to be named as social associates and as persons most frequently talked to about matters related to farming.

From a farm information source use standpoint, legitimators in Ozark were distinguished by differences in use of the daily newspaper while in Prairie, acquisition of farm information through adult classes and farm meetings differentiated most highly between low and high mention legitimators.