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Community Leadership in a Rural Trade-  
Centered Community and Comparison  
of Methods of Identifying Leaders

by

JAMES E. WATSON AND HERBERT F. LIONBERGER  
Department of Rural Sociology



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# Community Leadership in a Rural Trade-Centered Community and Comparison of Methods of Identifying Leaders

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JAMES E. WATSON AND HERBERT F. LIONBERGER  
Department of Rural Sociology

## INTRODUCTION

Leaders and their activities have been considered in much of the literature throughout the recorded history of mankind. Legend, fable, and myth have surrounded the persons who have personified and activated the goals of past generations. Men have seen not only their own destiny but the course of history changed and shaped by men of thought and action. In the present generation the destiny of the whole world rests in the hands of a few leaders.

With the concentration of people in urban centers, the increasing proliferation and interdependence of segments of society, the growth of bureaucracies, the development of better means of communication and transportation, greater insights into the nature and conditions of social change and the great emphasis on planned change, leadership structure, situation, and process have attracted the attention of change agents and social scientists. For the last, the problem is primarily one of interpretation and understanding. For the change agent, ever-present problems are to identify local leaders, and to involve them effectively in the directed change efforts. This study grew out of disagreements among social scientists concerning the nature of leadership structures in small communities, and the utility of methods of identifying community leaders.

### Problem and Purpose

The general purpose of this study was to:

- Examine the characteristics of community developmental leaders in a rural community, characterized by sustained efforts to implement social and economic changes.
- Study the leadership structure of the community.
- Compare the results obtained from the use of the decision participation, reputation, formal leadership, and newspaper mentions approaches to identifying community leaders.
- Make observations concerning the utility of the four methods used for identifying community leaders.

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\* Research assistant and professor in the Department of Rural Sociology, respectively.

The substantive (or adaptive) areas of leadership considered were farming affairs, education, community improvement, economic development, and resource redevelopment.<sup>1</sup> These areas were determined by examining newspaper and other accounts of developmental and special program efforts which had taken place in the community during the past eight years.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Identify community leaders by substantive area, i.e., those in education, community improvement, economic development, farming affairs, and resource redevelopment.
2. Ascertain the extent and nature of community leadership overlap in farm and nonfarm matters.
3. Ascertain the relative participation of farm and town leaders in local and county affairs.
4. Describe the leadership structure in the various substantive areas of community life.
5. Ascertain the amount of leadership overlap among substantive areas, i.e. the degree of monolithic or polythitic structural tendencies.
6. Ascertain the relative distribution of "one-area" (monomorphic) and "multi-area" (polymorphic) leaders within substantive areas of activity.
7. In regard to method, the specific objective was to determine the levels of agreement among the decisional, reputational, formal leadership, and newspaper mentions approaches in identifying community leaders in one community.
8. To assess implications of using each method which derive from this study.

Community leadership was viewed in this study as activation of prerogatives to define, explain, afford solutions, and make decisions about public affairs in one or more substantive areas of interest. While leaders have a greater influence than other residents in the direction of community affairs, it is not always a determining influence (38, pp. 23-26; 16, pp. 78-84; 28, pp. 71-97).

Leadership in public affairs, which was the major consideration, is somewhat in contrast to leadership in the adoption of farm practices, which are essentially private matters, or at least matters more directly affecting a limited segment of the population. In this case, influence is derived mainly from expertise. This type of leadership is viewed as activities and/or interactions which affect the feeling, thinking, or acting of others (35, p. 415; 46, p. 208; 31, p. 59).

### General Perspective

Problems of leadership may be viewed from many points in the social structure of a society. The one chosen here was that of a town-centered rural com-

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<sup>1</sup> Resource redevelopment refers to the activities involved in the local overall economic development program. These activities were directed toward redevelopment of misused and depleted resources.

munity viewed in the Sanderson sense where the village remains very much a farm service center irrespective of the veneer of local industry imposed on the local service-supply function (47, pp. 274-293). Although the functional relationship of agricultural service, industry, and residence in local rural society has changed greatly in recent decades, people in the rural areas seem still to think in terms of "my community," viewing it as a locality based entity. In Missouri this frequently has been reinforced by high school attendance areas structured around towns and urban centers. This began with the 1931 school law which permitted grade school graduates to attend high schools of their own choice. More recently, many of the resulting restructured interaction patterns were given legal sanction by formal reorganization of the attendance areas into school districts, often coinciding with existing trade areas surrounding towns and small cities (48, pp. 34-35). The fact that some functions and services still are primarily of local concern and action is basic to the consideration of community leadership or power structure and therefore is a precondition of central importance to this study.

A second structural consideration is the relationship of the local community to the urban and larger society. The proliferation of government and private agencies, the increasing dependence of farmers on services and supplies from outside the local community, and the intrusion of outside interests into local affairs all have contributed to the need for a leadership which can effectively participate in the decisions of extra-community origin and nature but which are, nevertheless, of crucial local concern. Since many of the matters bearing directly on the lives of townspeople are localized in the town center, high involvement of townspeople in a variety of policy and action decisions may be expected. On the other hand, a high proportion of public decisions, policies, and group activities affecting the lives of farm people either transpire in the county seat town or in organizations linked to the county seat. Thus, it was expected that leadership participation by farm people in county affairs would be greater than participation of townspeople living in other than county seat towns.

A third structural feature of local rural society pertinent to community leadership studies is the nature of relationships between town and country people in the trade area community itself. Aside from leadership in affairs essentially agricultural (29, pp. 327-338; 34, pp. 180-181; 57, pp. 116-197; 30, p. 12) and in those mainly of concern to townspeople, (45, 12, 24) there are matters of common concern in which joint policy formulations and action are appropriate (55, 6, 42, 18). Pertinent questions relative to this aspect of leadership structure are:

1. Who are the leaders in activities and matters of common concern?
2. Do both town and farm people participate in decisions about these matters?
3. Are the leaders influential in one, a few, or in many matters?

Indications are that the relative participation of farm and townspeople in community leadership activities in town-centered rural communities is a function of the size of the town. Thus, with an increase in size of the town, townspeople tend to replace farm people in community leadership (18, p. 51). Although no test of this hypothesis was intended or possible in this study, findings of relative participation of farm and townspeople in leadership activities suggest the likelihood of greater participation of town than farm people in most communities centered around towns of 1,500 population or over, which was the size category of the town center in the community studied.

### Theories of Community Leadership

A much debated question about community leadership relates to its monolithic-polyolithic nature, or more specifically, to the degree to which people are influential in more than one area of community interest. Elitists and pluralists hold opposing views on the subject, views which also specify different methods of detecting leaders.

Pluralists, represented by Dahl, Latham, Bently and Laski (though he held this view only temporarily) regard community leadership as a multiplicity of more or less autonomous concentrations of leaders, each group competing internally to influence issues, decisions, and actions in one area of community interest. They further view community power as being in an ever-changing state of realignment as issues change. Social groups are seen as mediating between the masses and more formally organized forms of power. Thus, group members through active participation in groups influence their leaders, and through them participate indirectly in, and influence, communal decisions. It is assumed that manifestations of leadership are to be found in the overt participation of people in communal decisions (16, 27, 26, 5). This suggests decisional involvement as the key to identifying leaders; a view which tends to discount the latent and potential power aspects of leadership and the possibility of non-participating power holders influencing decisions (45, pp. 8-63, 405-533, 33, pp. 344-385, 12, pp. 1-8, 85-86, 89-103).

Elitist theorists view society as a multiplicity of competing status groups, one or more of which attains a dominant position over the others. Leadership is assumed to rest on the power position and/or expertise of a small group of persons, who tend to dominate decisions in many substantive and institutional areas of communal life. Domination is seen as deriving from coercion and the exercise of subtle influence as well as through overt participation in communal decisions. Such leadership is seen as having both a social and historical dimension.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the potential for influencing communal decisions becomes generally

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<sup>2</sup> This "pessimistic" view of society has been stated and held mainly by European theorists. See Mosca (41), especially pp. 50-69, Pareto (43), Vol. III, paragraphs 2026-2059; Vol. IV, paragraphs 2233-2236, Michels (36), especially pp. 390-401, Bendix (4), pp. 265-271, 289-300, and Gerth and Mills (22), pp. 77-128, 180-195. For similar views by theorists in this country see Kariel (25), Loewenstein (33), and Mills (39), especially pp. 30-37.

known. The reputational approach to defining leaders draws upon this fund of knowledge by use of the characteristic reputational question, "If an issue involving a decision or change arose (in a given substantive area), who are the persons who would most influence the resolving of the matter?" (45, pp. 448-454; 24, pp. 255-263).

These two conflicting views of society pose a very difficult dilemma in identifying leadership and defining its structure. One way out of the dilemma might be to view each as polar ideal-types.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the ideal type of pluralist theory would specify a structure consisting of autonomous groupings of leaders, one or more in each substantive area vying among themselves to influence decisions, issues and actions, at the same time being quite devoid of influence in other areas (polyolithic structure). The elitist ideal type specifies a monolithic structure consisting of a small group of leaders (or a small number of competing leaders) who tend to dominate decisions across the spectrum of community life. Neither extreme would likely be found in reality. Thus, any community leadership structure would likely fall on a continuum marked by the two extremes.

Presthus suggests that . . . "There is an inverse association between the size of a community and the degree of overlap on decisions among its leaders," (45, pp. 95, 408). Thus, the smaller the population the more likely the leadership structure might be expected to approach the monolithic type while the larger the population the more likely it would approach the polyolithic type. The community studied here being small in comparison to those referred to by Presthus, a monolithic leadership structure might be expected, i.e., a condition where a few leaders are influential in many things.

### General Hypotheses

Although the study is mainly empirically analytical and descriptive, a number of general hypotheses derived mainly from leadership theory and implications growing out of the changing social structure of rural society provided one basis for presenting the research findings. These were that:

1. Leadership in community activities would draw more heavily from town than from the farm or open country population.
2. Town-country leadership overlap would occur in areas of greatest mutual concern, or in this case, public education and resource redevelopment (overall economic development).
3. Leadership involvement in county affairs would (a) be greater for farm-open country residents than for townspeople; (b) likewise, for farm people it would be greater in county than in local community activities.
4. (a) Leadership would tend to be polymorphic, i.e., persons who are leaders would be leaders in more than one interest area; that the structure would tend toward the monolithic type.

<sup>3</sup> See Drucker (16), pp. 61-70, 110-113 for an explanation of the use and meaning of ideal type.

## THE COMMUNITY

### Basis for Selection

The locus of this study was a south Missouri town-centered farm community referred to in this study as Ozark. It was originally selected as one site for a comprehensive study of the "diffusion of information" to represent an inclination to the sacred on a postulated sacred-secular continuum in so far as farm conditions in rural Missouri permitted (2). Prairie in fertile northwest Missouri was selected to represent a tendency to the secular. All bonafide farmers in the two communities were interviewed in 1956 in an effort to study the exercise of leadership and personal influence in the adoption of related agriculture innovations (31, pp. 57-66).

Whereas farm incomes in Ozark were below the state average and conditions were generally unfavorable to generalized commercial farming, the opposite was true in Prairie. Ozark was and had been faced with a shrinking supply of quality hardwood timber, once a chief source of local income, limited land resources capable of sustained farming in a highly competitive economy, a declining population, and incomes generally near the subsistence level on the debit side of the ledger and with scenic-recreational resources increasingly in demand and local resources suitable for local industrial development on the positive side. With a continuing inclination to adjust to changing conditions, many changes of a greater magnitude, and more complex nature had occurred in Ozark than in Prairie. Since the research focus was leadership structure and activity in implemented change, the situation in Ozark seemed better suited than in Prairie for a study of leadership process and structure, thus its selection as the study site. Whereas the focus of the earlier study was on the adoption of agricultural practices and the dissemination of information about innovations in farming, this one concentrated on leadership and the exercise of influence in changes of major concern to people in town and the entire community.

### The General Situation

Ozark is located in the central Ozark region of southern Missouri, referred to as Rural Social Area D by C. L. Gregory (23, also see Figure 1). It was inhabited by about 4,200 people about 1,800 of whom were living in town and 2,400 in the surrounding trade and service area in 1960 (52, pp. 17-23). Area-wise, the community covered approximately 225 square miles of hills and valleys with timber, pasture land, and row crops dispersed throughout.

*The people.* The people in the area were typically white, and culturally Protestants, Democrats, and "Hill South" whose Scotch-Irish and English ancestors migrated from the Appalachian Plateau region after the Civil War (23, pp. 28-36; 19, sec. 1 and 4). The median age of people in Hill County in 1960 was 32.6 years. The median age for the state was about one year less. The de-

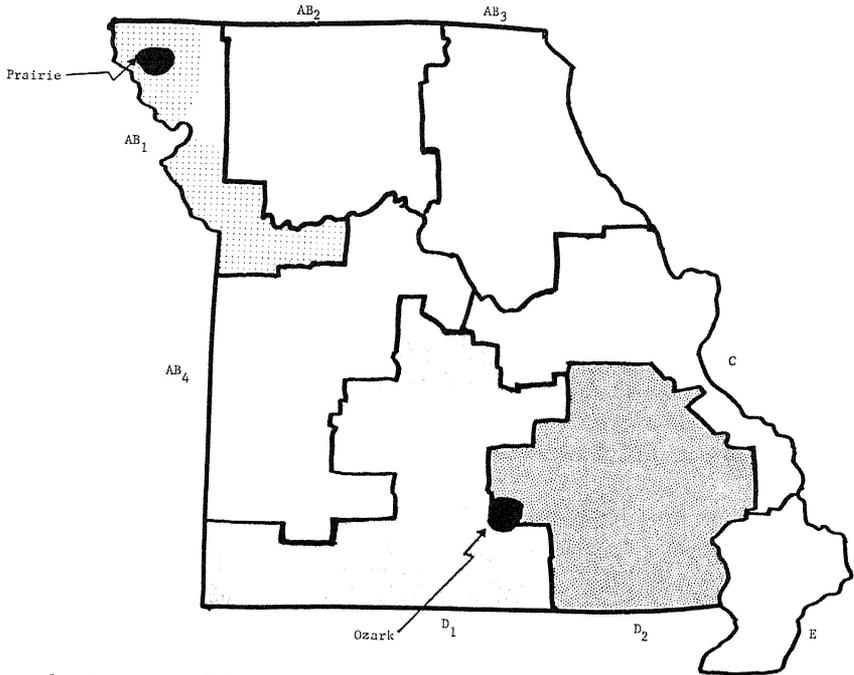


figure 1. Location of Ozark and Prairie with reference to rural social areas in Missouri

pendency ratio, i.e., the number of people over 65 years old and under 18 years of age compared to those between 18 years and 65 years, was much higher than the state dependency ratio, or 106.0 and 83.2, respectively (53, pp. 39, 45-46, 143).

The population of Hill County decreased from about 19,000 to approximately 18,000 during the past decade. The crude birth rate was slightly below the state average, being 19.8 and 22.6 per 1,000 persons, respectively. On the other hand, the death rate was slightly higher than the state rate of 11.2, being 12.7 per 1,000 (40, pp. 17, 81). The net population loss and the high dependency ratio were, in part, the product of the heavy out-migration of persons in the productive age group (51, p. 143).

*Transportation and communication.* Except for commercial airways the community was well served by major communication and transportation facilities. Two state and federal highways intersected within the community. A network of asphalt and gravel roads was available to meet subsidiary transportation needs. Fast rail service was provided by a trunk line of a major railroad which passed through the community. Although runway limitations excluded traffic by heavy planes, a public airport with lighted runways was available. Telephone and telegraph services were present in all but the most sparsely settled areas.

Local television translators gave the local population access to network telecasting. A radio broadcasting station was available in a nearby town.

*Natural resources.* The natural resources in Ozark for farming were limited. The native supply of hardwood forests has been mostly depleted. Much of the land was steep and rocky. The gravelly soil eroded easily and was incapable of holding much water, leaving the soil dry during much of the year. The potential of the land for agricultural production was so low that much of the land has been either planted to pine or allowed to become overgrown with scrub hardwood.

On the other hand, resources conducive to outdoor sports and tourism were available. The fish which abounded in the streams, rivers and lakes, and the game found locally, including deer, turkey, quail, rabbit, and squirrel, have attracted many sportsmen to the area. The natural beauty of the area was being advertised as a means of attracting tourists.

*Commerce and industry.* Several types of industrial and commercial activities were found in the community. The major agricultural enterprises were dairy production, grain farming, raising feeder cattle, and broiler production. Over 90 percent of the farm income was derived from the sale of livestock, dairy products and broilers (53, p. 165). Major industries included a factory, a meat processing plant, and a large creamery which processed and manufactured special foods from dairy products.

The town offered the normal assortment of commercial outlets and services typical of towns serving rural populations of 4,000 to 5,000 people. In addition, there were special commercial activities associated with farming and tourism. Except for farm machinery, nearly every type of farm productive need was available locally. Local outlets were available for the farm products raised in the community, thus essentially completing major local needs to support commercial agriculture. The specialized commercial activities associated with the tourist trade were motels, restaurants, and service stations; all mainly dependent on tourist dollars for support.

*Education.* Educational matters have received much attention in Ozark. The local high school has been accorded an AAA rating by the state and was accredited by the North Central Accrediting Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. An elementary school employed one of the most advanced educational plans in the United States from the early 1950's until it reverted to the traditional plan in the fall of 1963. As in most rural areas in Missouri, the school districts have been reorganized into one district in accord with state and local plans. The median educational level for adults in the community was 8.7 years compared to the state median of 9.6 (50, pp. 182-183).

*Income and land value.* Incomes and land values in Hill County give an indication of the local economic situation.<sup>4</sup> The median family income in Hill County (the county in which Ozark is located) was about \$2,950 in 1960. Over 50 percent of the families had incomes of less than \$3,000. The median family income for the state was \$5,127 with 27 percent of the families having less than \$3,000 (50, pp. 180-181).

The median net income of farm families was approximately \$2,750 compared to the state median of \$2,782. The value of farm products sold was only about \$2,420 compared to the state average of \$5,997 (50, pp. 207, 339). The difference between the profit from farm products sold and median family income came mainly from off-farm work. An indication is that 55 percent of the farmers had other income exceeding that derived from their farms (50, p. 165). Another indication of the farm situation is that the average value of land and buildings per farm was about \$8,000 in Hill County while the state average was \$21,706 (53, pp. 118, 127).

### Factors Affecting Leadership

Community leadership and activities are submerged in the social milieu of the community, its people, its relationship to the natural environment, and to its historical past. It was from this context that areas of directed change were abstracted for investigation. It is in the historical perspective of their interrelationship that they can best be understood.

The lumber industry upon which many early settlers depended for additional income peaked in the 1910-1920 decade and then declined steadily to a point where lumbering furnished only a small portion of the income in the community. As the timber was cleared, the land was used for agricultural purposes.

The number of farms reached a maximum between 1900 and 1910 and gradually declined until the late 1940's. The off-farm migration increased markedly during the late 1940's (54, p. 165). Low farm income was an important precipitating factor. The average value of farm products sold per farm in 1949 was barely over \$1,300 while the state average was \$3,129 (54, pp. 164, 172). Several factors apparently contributed to the conditions. Most farms were too small to support adequate mechanization. The fertility of the soil was low and the soil was subject to erosion. Porous soil allowed fast percolation of rainfall causing drouth conditions during parts of each year. Many were apparently unable to survive these conditions. Some left, some enlarged their holdings, and others took off-farm jobs to supplement meager farm incomes.

The crucial factors from a leadership standpoint were that (1) out-migration was rapid with the incidence very high among young adults, teenagers, and children, (2) farm incomes were very low, thus affecting the economy of the

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<sup>4</sup> "Hill" is a pseudonym previously employed by Rex Campbell and John Bennett to refer to the county within which Ozark is located. Cf. *Your Audience... What It's Like* (Columbia: Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 771 October, 1961). The Hill county data are employed as the best data available for assessing the general economic situation in the area.

whole community directly or indirectly, and (3) neighborhood organization was beginning to break down with an attendant tendency to community centralization.

At the same time, World War II and thereafter was marked by an awakening of the community to the need for better education. With the gradual breakdown of the neighborhood, the high value placed on education, and new school laws, pressures developed to reorganize the districts as a means for improving the amount and quality of education available to local youths. This was accompanied by pressures to improve the quality of instruction in the central school at Ozark to achieve an AAA rating by the state and accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Businessmen felt the strains of the economic developments in the rural community and were quick to realize that the rural farm population could not support their business activities at the desired level. This gave rise to two types of ameliorative action. First, effort was devoted to finding ways to increase farm income. Second, a concerted effort was directed to attracting industry by furnishing buildings and other conditions desired by industry.

Thus, leaders found that industrial corporation executives considered it necessary to have an airport, good streets, sufficient water and sewage disposal plants, and recreational facilities prior to placing a plant in Ozark town. These considerations were in addition to an adequate labor force and plant facilities. Therefore, such developments were promoted by the townspeople. Finally, mention should also be made of the innovative charismatic leadership and community pride which gave impetus to the developmental efforts.

Similarly, the lack of hospital facilities within the area and the distance to the nearest hospital was identified as a problem in need of solution both in Ozark and the county seat. The result was that a county tax was levied and funds were set aside for a county hospital. Leadership efforts were devoted to the matter of location which became a much discussed issue. Some leaders in Ozark wanted a hospital in the area while others demanded that the hospital be built near Ozark. Leaders in the county seat wanted it near there. It was finally located near the center of the county, a short distance from the county seat.

The agricultural and lumber industries had recently begun to receive organized assistance for redevelopment and adaptive purposes from federal, state, county, and local agencies. Realizing the potential economic contribution from these industries, and the existing situation, the redevelopment of forests on soil not conducive to agriculture became a high priority consideration. A related objective was to direct the agricultural industry toward pastures and hay and away from erosion producing agricultural practices. It was this milieu of change that provided the conditions under which the structures and processes of leadership were assessed in this study.

## METHOD OF STUDY

### Detecting Leadership Areas and Leaders

This study was initiated by examining back issues of the local community newspaper for the past nine years and by interviewing knowledgeable past and present residents of the community to determine various changes that had occurred, that were in process or were proposed involving the exercise of leadership at the community level. The examination revealed that most issues and change decisions had taken place in five substantive areas: education, community improvement, economic improvement, farming affairs, and resource redevelopment. These served as substantive bases for designating leaders which constituted the next methodological problem. For this the decisional, reputational, formal organizational leadership and newspaper mentions approaches were used (3, Cpt. II; 21, pp. 791-798)<sup>5</sup> In addition, findings from the decisional and reputational approaches were combined as a basis for describing the nature of community leadership and assessing the value of this approach for designating community leaders.

The five substantive areas included most of the cooperative efforts by members of the community to adapt to local conditions and to those of the larger society. Yet, activities in each area were directed to somewhat different ends. In education the general objective was to increase the quantity and quality of public education in the community. Community improvement was concerned with improvements in such public service facilities as parks, a swimming pool, tennis courts, roads, an airport, and a golf course. Economic development activities were directed to bringing commercial organizations, industrial firms, and processing plants into the local community. In farming affairs the objectives were to improve the position of agriculture locally with respect to production, purchasing, marketing and related services. Resource redevelopment (overall economic development) was concerned with redevelopment of natural resources and conservation and more effective use of them; e.g., getting land not suited to row crops shifted to grassland, to pine timber, or to park and lake areas.

The decisional approach, an adjunct of the pluralist theory, holds that community leaders are persons who actually participated in decisions made. Definition of leaders is thus an after-the-fact procedure (12, 45). Persons who had been influential in decisions involving community activities actually made were accordingly determined (in this case decisions occurring over an eight year period, 1956-63 inclusive). This procedure was completed in two stages; the first in which persons knowledgeable about community affairs named decision participants (probable leaders),<sup>6</sup> and the second in which the latter likewise named

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<sup>5</sup> These were chosen because of evidence of greater reliability and because they offered a greater potential for practical use than other approaches.

<sup>6</sup> The term "probable leaders" is used to describe persons identified as leaders by knowledgeable to avoid such conflicting usages as "key leaders," "top leaders" or "potential leaders," sometimes used to refer to these intermediaries.

decisional participants, the assumption being that persons regarded as participants by knowledgeable would be better judges of actual leadership involvement than the knowledgeable themselves. Thus, in the first step knowledgeable who included the mayor, the superintendent of schools, the banker, and the local newspaper editor among others, were asked to name the people who were most important in *starting* and/or *carrying out* each of the following changes in the community.<sup>7</sup>

- (1) Bringing in the shoe factory
- (2) Getting better roads in the area
- (3) Getting a meat processing plant
- (4) Expansion of the cooperative creamery
- (5) Improving the city water supply
- (6) Developing recreational facilities for the community, i.e., parks, driving range, tennis courts, ball fields, swimming pool.
- (7) Getting airport facilities
- (8) Obtaining a lagoon type sewage disposal system
- (9) Installation of television translators
- (10) Getting school district reorganization
- (11) Getting an upgraded elementary school system in operation
- (12) Getting an AAA rating for the school
- (13) Old Times Day
- (14) The Dairy Festival
- (15) The Broiler Festival
- (16) The Hill County Hospital issue

Use of this approach produced a list of 23 persons, 20 of whom participated in naming persons who were most important in getting action started or resolving issues related to the above activities. This provided a final list of 67 persons mentioned two or more times, which was the mention level imposed by inclusion in the leadership pool by the decisional method. Many who appeared as intermediaries in the defining process again reappeared in the list of community leaders. Scores were assigned to each person named on a percentage of total mentions basis. The resulting percentages became the decisional leadership score.

Decisional leadership in substantive areas was determined by classifying persons on the basis of the number of mentions in each of the five areas investigated: education, community improvement, economic development, farming affairs, and resource redevelopment. Examination of the mention distribution suggested logical inclusion of no more than 15 persons as leaders in any area.

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<sup>7</sup> Old Times Day, Dairy Festival, and Broiler Festival were eliminated from the leadership determination base because of their relative unimportance as community improvement issues, water and sewage disposal projects because of their distinct town centered concern and the Hill County Hospital issue mainly because of its extra-community nature.

Individual scores within areas were computed on the basis of individual mentions as a percent of total mentions received by the final list of leaders in the particular substantive area by each individual.

The reputational approach, to which the elitist school of thought ascribes, relies upon hypothetical situations as bases for defining community leaders, e.g., use of such questions as, "If some changes were desirable in the Ozark school system such as adding new courses, raising the level of instruction, adding new facilities, etc., who are the persons (a) within the school system and (b) outside of the school system who most likely would be able to carry this out?" (37, pp. 9-15; 13, pp. 440-446; 24, pp. 255-263; 45, pp. 448-454) In this study questions of this nature were aligned with each of the subject matter areas of leadership considered. These represented the real issues concerning which change decisions in the community had been made in the past decade. This procedure assumes that the recognized potential and likelihood of persons affecting community issues, activities, or developmental decisions are indicators of leadership and that knowledgeable local residents are able and willing to tell who they are.

As in the decisional approach, knowledgeable (in this case 18) were first detected and interviewed to determine additional knowledgeable and "probable leaders." These in turn were interviewed using the questions involving hypothetical leadership situations. Fifty-four persons received two or more mentions by "probable leaders" in each of one or more of the five substantive areas investigated and were included in the reputational leadership pool. The same procedure as used in the decisional approach was also used in arriving at total and substantive leadership scores. Although independent efforts at determining knowledgeable were made two weeks apart in using the decisional and reputational approaches, many of the same persons appeared on the knowledgeable lists. However, the fact that the reputational and decisional questions were administered at different points in time hopefully minimized any bias stemming from a possible tendency to repeat the same names in the interviews.

The use of the reputational approach in this study departed from the use made of it in many previous ones in that questions to determine leaders were stated in terms of specific issues and decisions rather than in terms of more general indicators of leadership, in the use made of the percent of total mentions as a means of ranking leaders within substantive areas, and in the absence of any *a priori* limitation as to the number of leaders to be included. Rather, the last was determined by examining leadership mention distributions for distinctive breaks in the mention patterns.

In addition, findings from the decisional and reputational approaches were combined as a basis for describing the nature of community leadership and assessing the utility of this approach for identifying the leaders. Since the approaches appeared to complement each other and were assumed to minimize

some of the limitations inherent in each, the combination was used.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it was assumed that active participants in past decisions about matters of community concern would be detected by the decisional approach and that leaders identified by the reputational approach would afford a comparable set of leaders and possibly detect latent "behind the scenes" leaders if such existed (45). The decisional-reputational approach was achieved simply by combining the percent of mentions received by leaders designated by each approach rather than by a simple count of mentions received in each case. This tended to avoid imbalances which otherwise would have been created by many mentions in one substantive area compared to few in another. Thus meaningful comparison of leaders and leadership designation across substantive areas was permitted.

The third approach used was the leadership in formal organizations approach which assumes that holding offices in formal social organizations is an indicator of community leadership (20, pp. 319-332; 56, pp. 50-59). The same premise holds whether formal organizations are seen as structures of power through which community affairs are dominated (elitism) or as the mechanisms through which the citizenry is represented by the leaders in community affairs (pluralism).

Individual leadership scores were assigned by the use of a modified Chapin Scale (8, p. 191) with presidents assigned a score of 3, vice-presidents a score of 2, and secretaries, treasurers, and board members a score of 1. Chairmen of governing boards or heads of other voluntary organizations were given a score of 2. Officers of special advisory and administrative boards were scored as other organization officers. They, with such groups as the Board of Education, Chamber of Commerce, Ozark Commission for Schools, and the University Extension Council, received a score of 1. An eight-year period was again used as the basis for these ratings.

Leaders were ranked according to their cumulative scores in all of the organizations and within each substantive area for the period. No arbitrary number of leaders was set. The distribution of scores provided clues to the number of leaders to be included. The assignment of scores by organizations were as follows:

#### Education

- Parent Teacher's Association
- Citizen's Commission for Public Schools
- Board of Education
- School Administration

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<sup>8</sup> Major criticisms of the reputational approach have been made by Dahl (10), pp. 201-215, (11), pp. 463-469, Raymond E. Wolfinger, (58), pp. 636-644, and Polsby (44), pp. 838-841, Wolfinger (59), pp. 841-847. For further critical treatment of the two approaches see D'Antonio and Erickson (14), pp. 362-375, D'Antonio and Ehrlich, Erickson (15), pp. 848-854, and Presthus (45), pp. 33-63, 109-127, 405-433.

**Community Improvement**

Kiwanis Club

Junior Chamber of Commerce

Ladies Chamber of Commerce

United Fund and other charitable and service organizations

**Economic Improvement**

Chamber of Commerce

Development Corporation

**Farming**

Leadership activities in local farm cooperatives including the local MFA Exchange and the Producer's Creamery, also in farm clubs and organizations like the Missouri Farmers Association.

**Resource Redevelopment<sup>9</sup>**

Economic Development Committee plus the collaborating

Chamber of Commerce

Development Corporation

MFA exchange

Producer's Creamery (cooperative)

The newspaper mentions method of identifying community leaders required what the name implies: a count of the number of times a person was named in the local newspapers; in this case on the front page of the local community newspaper as an officer, representative, or participant in an official program of a formal voluntary organization or community improvement activity (49, pp. 11-31; 37, pp. 9-15; 17, pp. 411-415). Scores (one point per mention per article) were computed for each person named in terms of the specified activities in each of the substantive areas under consideration. The alignment of activities by subject matter areas paralleled that in the previously mentioned classification but necessarily exceeded the list somewhat because of the extra-localistic activities in which persons were reported as being active.

**Comparison of Findings**

Comparison of the findings required that questions be answered regarding (1) involvement of people in leadership activities and overlap of leadership in the respective subject matter areas, and (2) the degree to which the same or different persons were designated as leaders by each of the methods both in terms of the aggregate and in terms of designation within substantive areas.

Leadership overlap between substantive areas and the level of duplication of leaders by the four methods used to identify them were obtained in the same

<sup>9</sup> The overlap of organizations between resource redevelopment and other areas reflected the diversity of activity in which they were engaged. Although this introduced a slight biasing element in the measure of leadership overlap by the formal organization approach, consideration of a few organizations under more than one classification realistically represented the leadership situation as it existed in the community.

way. To obtain overlap between substantive areas, the total number of persons named as influential in one and those named in two or more activity areas and the number of positions involved in this naming in each case were calculated.<sup>10</sup> The amount of leadership overlap between a single area and multiple area leaders was assessed as the relative proportion of "one area" versus "multiple area" leaders, the proportion of the total leadership positions accorded each and where appropriate the amount of mention overlap or concentration.

The level of duplication of leaders and leadership positions by different approaches within substantive areas was obtained in the same manner. The total number of leadership positions in a substantive area and the total number of positions in the substantive area filled by persons identified by each successive pair of approaches were accordingly calculated.

Some comparison was also made between community leaders defined in this study and farm practice adoption leaders in an earlier study (1956). In the last, farm operators in the community were asked to indicate most important influences in helping them to decide to adopt specific farm practices. Being named in this connection provided the operational basis for identifying the farm practice adoption leaders or influentials.

## FINDINGS

### Leaders and Their Characteristics

*Number.* A total of 59 persons was named by probable leaders (persons named by knowledgeable as leaders) as participants in community decisions (the decisional approach) which occurred between 1956 and 1963 inclusive. Forty-two of these persons were mentioned two or more times which was a minimum mentions level imposed for accepting persons for consideration as part of the leadership structure. The actual list of leaders retained for the final analysis was determined by examining score distributions for distinctive breaks in the percent of total mentions received by each individual in the distribution. Those having scores above distinctive breaks were retained as leaders. Using this method, 32 were retained as leaders. The decisional mentions received by them accounted for 94 percent of the total accorded by the probable leaders.

The reputational approach yielded a total of 72 persons mentioned 255 times by probable leaders (intervening respondents) in response to the questions about hypothetical leadership situations. Of these, 36 were mentioned two or more times, again the mention level at which persons were accepted as part of the leadership structure. The mentions received by the final list of 26 operationally defined reputational leaders constituted 75 percent (191) of the total mentions accorded.

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<sup>10</sup> Leadership position refers to designation of a person as a leader in a substantive activity area by the operational definition used. Thus, a person could "hold" none, one or many leadership positions depending on the number of times he was selected as a leader in the respective substantive areas.

Leadership activity scores in formal organizations in the five areas studied yielded some participation in a leadership capacity by 220 persons to whom a total aggregate score of 1291 was assigned. The cutting point in score for retention as a potential part of the leadership structure was a score of two which resulted in the retention of 176 persons. The cutting point in the score continuum suggested by the distribution resulted in the inclusion of 49 persons as leaders. These received 54 percent (691) of the total organizational participation score.

Examination of the mentions of persons in regard to community interest activities on the front page of the local newspaper yielded a list of 375 persons mentioned 2,146 times, 214 of whom received two or more mentions. As in the above method the distribution of mentions provided the clue to which leaders should be included in the final list. This resulted in 46 persons being retained as operationally defined leaders. They received 44 percent (940) of the mentions.

Finally, the combined decisional-reputational approach yielded a list of 78 persons named two or more times. Thirty-five persons, receiving about 82 percent (656) of the total mentions, were retained as operationally defined leaders by this approach.

*Characteristics.* These leaders (designated by the combined decisional-reputational approach) were better educated, more successful in business, and generally had lived in the community longer than those not so designated. They had completed about six more years of school than the community average. Most had completed high school and about 46 percent were college graduates. Three of the farm leaders were college graduates, and eight had completed high school. Thirteen of the town leaders had graduated from college, and five more had completed some schooling above the high school level. All but one were independent farmers, professionals, or occupied managerial positions in business, sales or finance. Only one of the professionals among those designated as leaders had lived in the community for less than one year and four for less than twelve years.

The greater majority were middle-aged. Nine of the 14 persons designated as leaders in more than one substantive area were between the ages of 45 and 55; also, ten of the 21 named as leaders in only one substantive area. Most of the remaining multi-area mentioned persons tended to be older than the mid-50's while most of the remaining single area leaders were less than 45 years of age. All were highly respected members of the community with extended records of public service and responsibility.

### The Structure of Leadership

Structural features of leadership considered in this study were those relating to town-farm and county-local divisions and the concentration of leadership within and across substantive areas. In general the number of leaders, the leadership positions held, and mentions received in total and within substantive areas were noted. The combined decisional-reputational approach was used to identify

leaders except for those in county affairs. In this case, the formal leadership approach appeared most appropriate and was used.

*Town-country.* The hypothesis (1) that leadership in community activities would draw more heavily from the town than from the farm or open country population was accorded strong support. Ozark town contributed 26 of the 35 leaders (74.3 percent) identified by the decisional-reputational approach. The other nine leaders (25.7 percent) were from farms.

A corollary hypothesis (2) that town-country leadership would be in those areas of greatest mutual concern, which was assumed to be education and resource redevelopment, gained only partial support. Eight farmers were leaders in farming affairs and five were leaders in one or more of the remaining substantive areas. One farmer was a leader in economic development. Of the four farm leaders who were leaders in other than farming affairs, one was a leader in education and community improvement, and the remaining three in resource redevelopment. Two townspeople, a businessman and a professional person were leaders in farming affairs.

*County-Community Leadership. Farm-town differences.* In accord with the general hypothesis, farmers were distinctly more involved in county leadership activities than townspeople. The formal leadership approach showed a participation rate by farmers two and one-half times that by townspeople. (See Table 1).

Ten of the fourteen community leaders involved in county affairs (71 percent) were farmers. Of these one was also a farm leader. Comparable to their proportion in numbers they also received 71 percent of the total leadership score in organizational matters related to county affairs. Of the four townspeople who were leaders in county affairs, three were business people and one was a professional person.

*County-community.* A corollary hypothesis was that farmers would participate more in county than local community affairs (outside of farming affairs). This was supported. Sixty-seven percent of the leadership participation by farm people was in county affairs; only 33 percent was in local affairs other than farming. Although ten farmers were leaders in county organizations and eight were local farm leaders, only five were leaders in any of the other four substantive areas.

*Substantive Areas.* The top three leaders in educational affairs were all school officials. These accounted for almost 59 percent of the total leadership mentions in education. The next four leaders were school board members—three townspeople and a farmer—who accounted for 26.6 percent. (See Table 2). The remaining four leaders, a retired professional, a school official, a teacher, and a businessman-school board member, received the remaining 14.5 percent of the mentions.

TABLE 1--LEADERS IN COUNTY AFFAIRS RANKED BY PERCENT  
OF TOTAL LEADERSHIP SCORE RECEIVED IN FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS

County Leaders from Ozark	Percent of Total Score* (N=157)
Total	100.0
Farmer A	11.5
Businessman K	11.5
Businessman M	10.2
Farmer O	8.9
Farmer L	8.3
Farmer J	7.6
Farmer H	7.0
Farmer I	7.0
Farmer R	5.7
Farmer C	5.1
Farmer G	5.1
Farmer F	4.5
Professional B	3.8
Businessman L	3.8

\*The score of each leader in each substantive area is the proportion his mentions are of the total mentions received by the leaders listed in the appropriate table. This method of scoring is employed in the following tables.

TABLE 2--EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN OZARK RANKED BY PERCENT  
OF MENTIONS RECEIVED

Educational Leaders	Percent of Mentions (N=92)
Total	100.0
Professional F	26.5
Professional H	16.2
Professional D	16.2
Businessman F	10.4
Businessman D	5.4
Professional E	5.4
Farmer P	5.4
Retired Professional L	3.7
Professional J	3.6
Professional B	3.6
Businessman B	3.6

TABLE 3--COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT LEADERS RANKED BY PERCENT OF MENTIONS RECEIVED

Community Improvement Leaders	Percent of Mentions (N=151)
Total	100.0
Businessman E	19.8
Retired Professional L	17.8
Professional G	9.7
Businessman J	8.3
Businessman O	7.2
Businessman F	7.2
Businessman A	6.8
Businessman B	6.6
Businessman P	5.6
Businessman C	4.1
Farmer P	4.1
Businessman G	2.8

In community improvement activities the two top leaders, a retired professional and a businessman, received 37.6 percent of the mentions. (See Table 3). The four leaders who followed in order of mentions were a professional and three businessmen. They received 32.4 percent of the mentions. The six remaining leaders (two main street merchants, three other businessmen, and a farmer) received 30 percent.

It may be seen from comparing Tables 3 and 4 that most of the leaders in community improvement were also leaders in economic development. Each had a practical interest in the economic well-being of the community. The three top leaders (a businessman and two main street merchants) received almost 50 percent of the mentions, the three leaders following in order, namely, two businessmen and the retired professional received an additional 37 percent of the mentions. The remaining six leaders (four businessmen, a farmer, and a professional) received only 13 percent of the total.

Eight of the ten leaders in farming affairs lived on farms. One of the other two was a professional and the other was an agribusinessman. (See Table 5).

TABLE 4--ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT LEADERS RANKED BY THE PERCENT OF MENTIONS RECEIVED

Economic Improvement Leaders	Percent of Mentions (N=118)
Total	100.0
Businessman E	18.6
Businessman O	16.4
Businessman A	14.8
Bussinessman F	13.4
Professional L	13.4
Businessman C	10.4
Businessman I	3.8
Professional C	3.8
Businessman H	1.6
Businessman N	1.6
Businessman G	1.1
Businessman B	1.1

TABLE 5--FARM LEADERS RANKED BY PERCENT OF MENTIONS RECEIVED

Farm Leaders	Percent of Mentions (N=89)
Total	100.0
Farmer-agribusiness employee B	20.6
Farmer P	18.1
Agribusinessman N	12.6
Farmer R	12.2
Professional A	6.3
Farmer E	6.3
Farmer Q	6.3
Farmer K	4.1
Farmer M	4.1
Farmer-agribusiness agent D	3.5

The four top ranked leaders, a farmer-agribusiness employee, two farmers, and the agribusinessman received 63.5 percent of the mentions, with the top two receiving 38.7 percent. The next two in order received 24.8 percent. Others in the farm leadership list were a professional, three full-time farmers, a semi-retired farmer, and a farmer-agribusiness agent.

Leaders from a number of substantive areas tended to also appear as high mentions leaders in resource redevelopment. Again, leadership mentions were highly concentrated with the four top ranked leaders getting 63.5 percent of the total (See Table 6). The two at the top (a businessman and the retired professional) received over 43 percent. Two holding intermediate score positions (a town professional and a farmer-agribusiness employee) got 20.4 percent. The other leaders were two main street merchants, three professionals, two political figures in the community, a full-time farmer, and a semi-retired farmer.

TABLE 6--RESOURCE REDEVELOPMENT LEADERS RANKED BY PERCENT OF MENTIONS RECEIVED

Redevelopment Leaders	Percent of Mentions (N=206)
Total	99.8
Businessman E	23.4
Retired Professional L	19.7
Professional G	11.4
Farmer-agribusiness employee B	9.0
Businessman O	4.9
Businessman A	4.3
Professional A	3.7
Professional K	3.7
Political figure B	3.7
Political figure A	3.7
Professional I	3.7
Businessman C	3.1
Farmer R	2.8
Farmer K	2.7

*Concentration of Leadership.* This section is devoted to two general considerations: (1) the extent to which leadership in different areas was concentrated in the same or different individuals, and (2) the nature and extent of the concentration of polymorphic leadership in individuals. The first is concerned with the question of whether persons were designated as leaders in only one substantive area (monomorphic) or whether they were leaders in more than one (polymorphic). A related question is the nature of the leadership structure. If a few people exercise leadership in many areas the structure is said to be monolithic; if the leadership in substantive areas is dispersed among different persons it is polyolithic. The second general consideration deals with the degree to which polymorphic leadership is concentrated in a few or many individuals and the nature of the leadership overlap in regard to substantive areas.

Number of polymorphic and monomorphic leaders simply refers to the number of persons designated as either type of leaders by use of the combined decisional-reputational method of operationally defining leaders. Position refers to the designation of a person as a leader within a given substantive area. Thus, a person might be designated as a leader in farming affairs and in education also, in which case he would occupy two leadership positions. Number of mentions simply refers to the number of mentions a person received as a leader by the combined decisional and reputational approaches.

**Monomorphic-polymorphic leadership.** It was hypothesized that leadership in Ozark would tend to be polymorphic. Three measures were used to test this and thus also to assess the nature of the leadership structure. These were:

1. The relative number of monomorphic and polymorphic leaders designated in the study.
2. The relative number of leadership positions held by monomorphic and polymorphic leaders in total and within substantive areas.
3. The proportion of the total leadership mentions received by the monomorphic and the polymorphic leaders and the proportion each received within each substantive area.

Monomorphic leaders outnumbered the polymorphic ones by a distinct margin, the numbers being 21 (60 percent) and 14 (40 percent), respectively. However, this tells only part of the story about monomorphic-polymorphic leadership tendencies. There are additional questions of who holds the most leadership positions and who gets most of the leadership mentions. Thus, there may be more monomorphic than polymorphic leaders but the latter may receive most of the leadership mentions and hold most of the positions. Looking first at positions held, this was the case. Thus, the greatly outnumbered polymorphic

leaders actually held 64 percent of the leadership positions (See Table 7) and got 74.7 percent of the total leadership mentions (See Table 8). Looking first at the positions held, it was further observed that the tendency for polymorphic leaders to hold most of the leadership positions was highly evident in economic improvement, resource redevelopment and community improvement where the percent of positions held were, respectively, 66.7, 71.4, and 91.7. The only monomorphic tendency was in education where 63.6 percent of the positions were held by these leaders. It is significant that this should occur in the only area in which professionals specific to the area occurred in the top leadership positions.

In like manner, within substantive areas, with the notable exception of education, polymorphic leaders got most of the leadership mentions (See Table 8). Concentration of mentions was highest in economic development (89 percent), community improvement (88.7 percent), and in resource development (85 percent). The distinctive reversal in education with only 22.8 percent of the mentions going to polymorphic leaders emphasizes a relative dissociation of leadership in education from other kinds of community leadership, quite in contrast to the other areas. Although half of the leaders in farming affairs were monomorphic, the polymorphic leaders received 61.8 percent of the mentions. Thus, despite the preponderance of monomorphic leaders, strong polymorphic tendencies were evident except in education.

Concentration of polymorphic leadership in individuals. The second general question posed was the extent to which polymorphic leadership was confined to a few or many individuals either within or across substantive areas. Two measures were used for this purpose:

- (1) The percent of total leadership mentions accorded to all polymorphic leadership in all of the subject-matter areas and
- (2) The percent of total mentions received by each polymorphic leader in total and within substantive areas

The procedure in regard to the first measure was to compare the percent of mentions that polymorphic leaders received in one substantive area and in each of the other substantive areas considered. Thus, from Table 9 it may be seen that leaders in community improvement who received 88.7 percent of the total leadership mentions in their own field; also received 89 percent in economic development and 69.5 in resource redevelopment. These, accordingly, represented the areas of greatest overlap. When economic development and resource redevelopment are successively taken as points of departure and results are compared to overlap viewed from the vantage point of community development, it is apparent that community improvement is the subject-matter area across which overlap most frequently occurred. Thus, leaders in economic development obtained only 72.3 percent of the mentions in community improvement and 55.4 percent in resource redevelopment. In like manner leaders in resource redevelopment received 68.2 percent of the mentions in community improvement and 73.6 in economic development.

TABLE 7--NUMBER AND PERCENT OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD BY MONOMORPHIC AND POLYMORPHIC LEADERS CLASSIFIED BY SUBSTANTIVE AREA AND FORM OF LEADERSHIP

Form of Leadership	Total Leadership Positions		Substantive Areas									
			Educational Affairs		Community Improvement		Economic Development		Farming Affairs		Resource Redevelopment	
	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent
Total	59	100.0	11	100.0	12	100.0	12	100.0	10	100.0	14	100.0
Monomorphic	21	35.6	7	63.6	1	8.3	4	33.3	5	50.0	4	28.6
Polymorphic	38	64.4	4	36.4	11	91.7	8	66.7	5	50.0	10	71.4

TABLE 8--PERCENT OF TOTAL MENTIONS RECEIVED BY MONOMORPHIC AND POLYMORPHIC LEADERS CLASSIFIED BY SUBSTANTIVE AREA AND KIND OF LEADERSHIP

(PERCENT)

Kind of Leadership	Total (N=656)	Substantive Areas				
		Educational Affairs (N=92)	Community Improvement (N=151)	Economic Development (N=181)	Farming Affairs (N=89)	Resource Redevelopment (N=200)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Monomorphic	25.3	77.2	11.3	11.0	38.2	15.0
Polymorphic	74.7	22.8	88.7	89.0	61.8	85.0

TABLE 9--POLYMORPHIC LEADERS CLASSIFIED BY PERCENT OF TOTAL LEADERSHIP MENTIONS RECEIVED IN OWN AND OTHER SUBSTANTIVE AREAS

Substantive Areas	Percent Received in Own Area	Percent Received in Each of the Other Substantive Areas				
		Educational Affairs	Community Improvement	Economic Development	Farming Affairs	Resource Redevelopment
Educational Affairs	22.8*	xx	35.7	27.9	18.1	19.7
Community Improvement	88.7*	22.8	xx	89.0	22.2	69.5
Economic Development	89.0*	15.2	72.3	xx	0.0	55.4
Farming Affairs	61.8*	5.4	6.9	0.0	xx	18.2
Resource Redevelopment	85.0*	3.7	68.2	73.6	43.2	xx

\*For proportion of mentions going to monomorphic leaders (adding to 100 percent) see Table 8.

The greatest inclination toward autonomy of leadership was in education and in farming affairs, particularly the latter. The leaders in education received most of their overlap mentions in community improvement (35.7 percent) and in economic development (27.9 percent). However, they received only 18.1 percent of the total mentions in farming and 19.7 percent in resource redevelopment. Leaders in farming received no mentions in economic development, 5.4 percent in educational affairs, and 6.9 percent in community improvement. The greatest tendency to overlap of farm leaders was in resource redevelopment where they received 18.2 percent of the mentions. Thus, with the exception of educational and farming affairs, where a tendency to autonomous leadership was in evidence, much overlap occurred. This indicated a tendency to a monolithic leadership structure.

The second set of measures was addressed to the degree of concentration of mentions of polymorphic leaders going to specific individuals both in the total and within each of the subject matter areas. In regard to the first it can be seen from Table 10 that 23.4 percent of the total 656 mentions received by polymorphic leaders went to two persons: Businessman E and Retired Professional L. The next five in the rank order received an additional 28 percent (188) while the seven lowest on the scale got another 17.7 percent (115). Finally, 490 of 656 mentions were concentrated in 14 polymorphic leaders.

Also, except for education, the rule was concentration of mentions in a relatively few polymorphic leaders within each substantive area. Thus, in community improvement Retired Professional L and Businessman E got 37.6 percent of the mentions going to polymorphic leaders. In farming affairs agribusiness Employee B and Farmer P got 38.7 percent of the mentions. In resource redevelopment three persons, Professionals L and G and Businessman E, got 54.5 percent of the mentions while five persons in economic development garnered 76.6 percent (See Table 10).

In education it has been noted that the great majority of mentions went to monomorphic leaders. However, one person (Businessman F) got almost half of the total mentions going to polymorphic leaders. Thus, except for education, leadership was highly concentrated in a relatively few persons within substantive areas just as it was in the total mentions. Again, substantive areas across which greatest overlap in polymorphic leadership occurred was in community improvement, economic development, and resource redevelopment. It would further appear that the great majority of this overlap in mentions was centered in no more than three or four persons.

### Comparison of Methods

This section is concerned with the extent to which the decisional, reputational, formal leadership, and newspaper mentions approaches yielded the same results in designating community leaders generally, and specifically within substantive areas; also with possible reasons for agreement and divergencies in the results obtained.

TABLE 10--POLYMORPHIC LEADERS CLASSIFIED BY THE PERCENT OF MENTIONS EACH RECEIVED  
IN EACH OF THE SUBSTANTIVE AREAS OF OVERLAP

(PERCENT)

Polymorphic Leaders	Total (N=656)	Substantive Areas of Leadership				
		Educational Affairs (N=21)	Community Improvement (N=134)	Economic Development (N=105)	Farming Affairs (N=55)	Resource Redevelopment (N=175)
Total	69.7*	23.1*	88.9*	89.2*	61.3*	85.1*
Businessman E	12.4	0.0	19.8	18.6	0.0	23.4
Retired Professional L	11.0	3.7	17.8	13.4	0.0	19.7
Businessman F	6.2	10.4	7.2	13.4	0.0	0.0
Farmer-Agribusiness B	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.6	9.0
Businessman O	5.7	0.0	7.2	16.4	0.0	4.9
Farmer P	5.6	5.4	4.1	0.0	18.1	0.0
Businessman A	5.2	0.0	6.8	14.8	0.0	4.3
Professional G	4.2	0.0	9.7	0.0	0.0	11.4
Businessman E	3.5	0.0	4.1	10.4	0.0	3.1
Farmer R	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.2	2.8
Businessman B	2.3	3.6	6.6	1.1	0.0	0.0
Professional A	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	3.7
Farmer K	1.9	0.0	2.8	0.0	4.1	2.7
Businessman G	0.8	0.0	2.8	1.1	0.0	0.0

\*The balance of the mentions in each case went to monomorphic leaders. The slight differences in this table and Tables 8 and 9 result from rounding of calculations.

*Extent of Duplication.* In the aggregate, duplication in leaders designated by the approaches was low. The highest was 53 percent between leaders identified by the newspaper mentions and formal leadership approaches (See Table 11). The next highest was 39.7 percent by the decisional and reputational approaches. For all others, duplications ranged from 26.5 to 31.1 percent.

As may be expected, the levels of duplication varied between substantive areas, and between approaches within substantive areas. In general, the duplication of leaders by different methods in education and farm affairs was low, ranging from 8.7 to 50 percent. In economic development they were generally high (See Table 12). The range in overlap by method pairs was 40 to 66.7 percent. This type of variation between substantive areas was typical for all of the method comparisons.

The second type of variation was between levels of duplication within substantive areas. It can be observed from Table 12 that there was great variation in the degree to which different approaches designated the same leaders. Two approaches which obtained the highest duplication in one substantive area was often very low in another. This type of inconsistent variation was characteristic of most method comparisons within subject matter areas.

TABLE 11--PERCENT DUPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY DESIGNATED APPROACHES ACROSS SUBSTANTIVE AREAS\*

(PERCENT)

Approaches (methods)	Decisional	Reputational	Formal Leadership	Newspaper Mentions
Decisional	X			
Reputational	39.7	X		
Formal Leadership	27.8	26.5	X	
Newspaper Mentions	31.1	30.0	53.0	X

\*The substantive areas were education, community improvement, economic improvement, farming affairs, and resource redevelopment.

TABLE 12--PERCENT DUPLICATION OF LEADERS ASCERTAINED BY DESIGNATED METHOD WITHIN SUBSTANTIVE AREA

	Decisional	Reputational	Formal Leadership	Newspaper Mentions
<b>Education</b>				
Decisional	x	16.7	21.1	13.3
Reputational		x	9.5	20.0
Formal Leadership			x	40.0
Newspaper Mentions				x
<b>Community Improvement</b>				
Decisional	x	53.8	24.0	26.7
Reputational		x	26.1	22.2
Formal Leadership			x	46.2
Newspaper Mentions				x
<b>Economic Development</b>				
Decisional	x	63.2	48.0	40.0
Reputational		x	66.7	57.1
Formal Leadership			x	64.3
Newspaper Mentions				x
<b>Farming Affairs</b>				
Decisional	x	25.0	8.7	8.7
Reputational		x	11.8	23.5
Formal Leadership			x	50.0
Newspaper Mentions				x
<b>Resource Redevelopment</b>				
Decisional	x	40.0	37.0	66.7
Reputational		x	18.2	27.3
Formal Leadership			x	64.3
Newspaper Mentions				x

*Factors Affecting the Duplication of Leaders.* Four facts stand out about the identification of leaders by the various methods used:

1. The duplication of leaders was low, being below 50 percent in 22 out of 30 cases, and below 68 percent in every case.
2. The levels of duplication varied with the approaches being compared.
3. Variations occurred in the levels of duplication from substantive area to substantive area.
4. The patterning of the levels of duplication varied within substantive areas.

The big question is why. The possible explanations offered are drawn from observations in the community, insights into the data during analysis, and in some degree from serendipitous findings.

First, in regard to the expectation of high duplication of leaders identified by the decisional and reputational approaches, this was not the case. Inquiry while in the community indicated that leaders identified by the decisional approach generally were those who had influenced important community decisions in years past. On the other hand, reputational leaders seemed to be those most influential in the community decisions in the very recent past. These were probably well known to the knowledgeable persons interviewed. Being regarded as persons most likely to influence future decisions, they most likely were named in response to reputational questions. In a rapidly changing society leadership also changes. Thus the rotation and replacement of leaders may well explain much of the difference in persons designated by the two methods.

A case in point was the leadership situation in public school matters. In the early 1950's a revolutionary system of education was introduced into the elementary school with the support of a majority of the Board of Education including leaders identified in this study by the decisional method. However, as local residents gradually became critical of the system, and disenchanted with it, leadership also changed. In the process, the principal and superintendent were asked to resign.

As the investigation proceeded it was learned that four persons mentioned as affecting the educational decisions had actually influenced decisions in educational matters but that only one of them was identified as a leader by the reputational approach. Two decisional leaders had been replaced specifically on the condition that their replacements would promote change back to the old system. Also, two of the leaders identified by the decisional approach were elderly persons who had withdrawn from active participation by the time the survey had been completed. They, too, had been replaced by others. Thus, it appears that the leaders defined by the decisional and reputational approaches well may have realistically reflected the leadership situation at two points in time. If so, the phenomenon measured was leadership change.

Similar phenomena seemed to be at work in farm affairs. The 1956 study of decisions to adopt new farm practices (31, pp. 57-66) in the same community detected 13 operationally defined decisional leaders or influentials. Of the thirteen originally designated, one had died by the time of the present study (1963), one had moved from the area, five had retired from farming, and one was in a state of semi-retirement. Five were still farming and thus were candidates for leadership designation by the reputational method. However, only one was actually defined by this method as a leader in farm affairs of community concern in 1963. Three of the remaining five leaders identified as leaders by the reputational approach in 1963 were farmers, one was a professional, and the other was manager of an agribusiness concern. Again, it appears that the replacement and

rotation (attrition) of leaders accounted for most of the disparity between the decisional and reputational approaches in farming as in educational matters. Although the possibility of methodological deficiencies in identifying the leaders cannot be ruled out, rotation and replacement of leaders seems the more tenable explanation. Also, the number of cases was small, increasing the possibility of erratic differences stemming from chance variation alone. The same circumstances prevailed in other substantive areas but to a lesser degree. In economic affairs all but two leaders identified by the decisional but not the reputational approach could be accounted for by leadership rotation resulting from death, retirement, or movement from the area.

If the decisional approach identified historical leaders at a fairly high level of reliability and the reputational approach contemporary leaders, a question of whom the formal leadership and newspaper mentions were identifying is raised. Evidence from a number of quarters came to bear on this matter: newspaper mentions of activities, offices held in organizations, comments by knowledgeable, infrequent mentions as leaders and observations by the researchers of activities in formal and informal groups. Indications were that persons identified by these approaches were young persons "on their way up" and others directly involved in administering and carrying out community development functions. However, they did not appear to greatly influence the decisions made. These persons often appeared to be the strong right arm of the "decisional" leaders who were rewarded for their services with offices in organizations and publicity in the local newspaper.

The variation in duplication levels within and between substantive areas can be explained by varying amounts of leadership change from one substantive area to another and variation in the adequacy of the criteria used in the newspaper mentions and formal leadership approaches from one substantive area to another. The former accounted for nearly all of the variation among substantive areas by the decisional and reputational approaches. While it can't be said with certainty, it appears that leadership change and variation in the adequacy of the criteria used in the newspaper mentions and formal leadership approaches accounted for about equal amounts of the variation in leaders designated. These same factors appear to account for variations in levels of duplication achieved by different methods within substantive areas.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The general purpose of this study was to determine the nature of community leadership and leadership structure in a town-centered community in rural Missouri and to compare four methods of determining who the leaders were, namely the decisional and reputational methods characteristically used by pluralistic and elitist schools of thought and by the less theoretical oriented formal organizational and newspaper mentions approach.

The selected community was located in a south Missouri region characterized by relatively poor agricultural land, heavy outmigration and disadvantaged conditions for commercial farming generally. One or more persons in most of the farm families in the community were working off farm, often in the village trade center to which a number of small industries had been attracted. A series of concerted efforts had been made by local leaders to attract industries, to improve local institutions, and to raise levels of living generally.

Examination of back issues of the local community newspaper for a period of eight years and interviews with past and present knowledgeable residents of the community provided the substantive areas in which decisions of community-wide concern had been made. These included education, community improvement, economic development, farming affairs, and resource redevelopment. They, in turn, provided the substantive areas for defining leadership by use of the four approaches considered. The specificity of definition in identifying leaders was in contrast to the more generalized method commonly used in the decisional and reputational approaches.

Definition of leaders by the decisional and reputational methods started with questions directed to a selected list of knowledgeable, 23 and 18, respectively. These were persons in a position to know how community decisions were made, by whom, and/or who would likely be most influential in them. They, in turn, were asked appropriate decisional involvement and reputational questions aligned with substantive areas to get a list of leaders in each. The series of questions used for the reputational and decisional approaches were administered at different points in time to minimize the biasing effect that one set of questions might have on the other. An operational requirement of two mentions per person was imposed for inclusion as a leader. Percent of total mentions received was taken as the operational basis for assessing relative leadership position of individuals. The decisional and reputational methods were combined on the assumption that this would provide a more valid basis for selecting leaders and for the monomorphic-polymorphic nature of leadership and thus of the attendant monolithic-polylythic nature of leadership structure than either method taken simply. A system of scoring persons on the basis of offices held and committee assignments in formal organizations over an eight-year period was used for defining leaders by the formal organizational approach while number of mentions in a leadership capacity in the local newspaper over a period of eight years was used for defining them in accord with the newspaper mentions approach. In each case leaders were classified into the pre-determined substantive areas for subsequent comparative purposes.

### About Leaders and Leadership

The decisional approach yielded a list of 32 leaders, the reputational 26; the combined decisional-reputational 35; the formal organizational 49; and the newspaper mentions 46. The comparatively large number of persons designated

by the last two methods suggest their less definitive nature in identifying community leaders; perhaps also the inclination to include persons active in community affairs who may or may not have been highly influential in the decisions made.

It appears from the evidence presented in this study that the reputational approach aligned with real substantive area issues and decisions identified contemporary community leaders with greater accuracy than the other approaches. The decisional approach seemed to define historical leaders with a high degree of reliability but there was a slight tendency to designate persons as leaders who performed functions such as giving legal and professional advice on the issues at hand but who exerted little influence on the actual decisions. The major portion of the differences in persons identified as leaders by these two approaches was accounted for by changes in leadership occurring over time.

The newspaper mentions and formal leadership methods provided the highest duplication of leaders of any of the methods used. However, the low levels of duplication of leaders by these and either the reputational or decisional approaches suggest that fewer than one-third of the actual community leaders were identified by either the newspaper mentions or leadership in organizations methods. Other persons identified by these methods but not by the decisional or reputational were lower level leaders and those highly involved in the community activities considered but were apparently below the decisional level. Although they received infrequent mentions in the decisional and reputational approaches, they were active members and officers in less prestigious organizations, they participated as active members of the more prestigious ones and were otherwise involved in community activities. It is only natural that activities of this type would find reflection in local newspapers because of their newsworthy nature. Thus, both the newspaper mentions and leadership in organizations approaches were plagued with the same limitations in identifying persons who were decisional level community leaders.

The variations in duplication by methods used from one substantive area to another is harder to explain but probably resulted from variations in the adequacy of the criteria used to identify leaders in the various areas, the varying rates of leadership change in these areas, or both. Variations in the levels of duplication by pairs of approaches within substantive areas was very erratic. On the one hand, this variation in levels of duplication between persons identified by the decisional and reputational approaches appears to identify differential rates of leadership change within the different substantive areas. (It appears that there is almost a 1-to-1 relationship between the proportion of different leaders identified and the amount of leadership change.) On the other hand, the remaining variations raise questions concerning the utility of the newspaper mentions and formal leadership methods for identifying top community leaders. The criteria used in this study appear to be completely inadequate.

## IMPLICATIONS

### For Substantive Research

In this community of approximately 4,200 people, 1,800 of whom lived in the town center, leadership was quite distinctly concentrated in the hands of people living in town. It has been proposed that in communities where the ratio of town to farm people is smaller than in Ozark the ratio of farm to town leaders may be greater. There is need for further research to determine whether bifurcation of leadership does occur with increase in size, and if so, the nature of the process and the point in size when this occurs; also the interest areas where town-county leadership is most persistent.

There is the additional question of where and in what kinds of things farm people provide leadership as the trade-center from which they obtain most of their supplies and services increases in size and as the necessity to relate to extra-farm influences and activities increases. Thus, a first pertinent question that needs to be answered is in what types of leadership activities do farmers become involved under varying town-farm circumstances including size of the town center.

Much more research is needed to objectively determine the overall structure of leadership in communities of varying size and complexity. For example, what happens to the leadership structure of a town center as it takes on business and service functions not related to or supportive of local agricultural enterprises? What are the activity areas in which leadership changes, what kind of leaders are involved, and in what activity areas do old leadership patterns persist?

Another aspect of the overall structure that needs further attention is the persistence and change in leadership alignments in various types of boundary maintenance and/or instrumental (ends directed) activities. Thus, further study is needed to ascertain the way in which leaders aggregate by issues, e.g., do leaders in community improvement, economic development, and farming join ranks to support local public education?

Also, more needs to be known about the existence of factions, their characteristics, and the way they operate in various types of leadership situations. For example two major factions and a minor one among leaders were observed in Ozark community. The top leaders were predominantly in one or the other of the major factions which disagreed more on means than on goals, but not greatly on either. The minor faction was a conservative group which was against most changes desired by both of the major factions. Divisions of this sort within the leadership need much more study and theoretical work devoted to them if leadership structures are to be more fully understood.

### For Research Methods

The lack of an entirely adequate criteria for assessing the utility of methods used posed difficulties in drawing conclusions about the relative merits of them. The low levels of duplication obtained strongly indicate a need for research to ascertain more definitely what each method is measuring and why.

The reputational approach has been severely criticized because only general hypothetical questions have been used to identify leaders and because no provision has usually been made to rank leaders on the basis of number of mentions. Thus, only general leaders have been identified without any indication of their position or standing in relation to other community leaders. This study identified leaders by aligning decisional and reputational questions with real community issues within substantive areas in which decisions were required in the recent past. The finding that, except where changes in leadership had occurred, the decisional and reputational methods produced similar findings suggests that in future research the discriminatory and definitive power of the reputational approach may be raised by aligning specific hypothetical questions with areas of recent community concern and possibly, with likely concerns of the near future.

During the course of the study it became apparent that the decisional and reputational approaches provided rather accurate findings about leadership activities at the different points in time even though the persons defined by each were often different. Further study indicated that the reason was leadership change. This suggests the possibility of studying changes in community leadership by the simultaneous use of the two methods without the necessity of a study-restudy extending over some years in time.

Another implication bears on the utility of combining leaders defined by the decisional and reputational approaches as the most adequate means of identifying community leaders. Since the decisional approach tended to identify historical decisional leaders, i.e., participants in past decisions, and the reputational approach contemporary ones, i.e., those expected to influence future decisions, a combination of the two approaches without due consideration of leadership change is likely to produce biased or unintended results. For example, in one case it was found that only three of the leaders participating in top decisions six months prior to the data-gathering period were still viewed as differentially affecting similar decisions at the time the data were gathered. The others had been replaced.

Leaders identified by the formal leadership approach were duplicated by the decisional or reputational approaches at little over the 25 percent level. Yet, indications were that most of the leaders ascertained by the decisional or reputational approach were active members in many of the organizations considered, often being chairmen of committees having objectives in substantive areas in which they were defined as leaders by the decisional and reputational methods. This implies that a division of labor within organizations must be considered

if the organizational approach is to be effectively used to identify leaders. It also raises questions about the conventional differential weighting for offices held and membership on committees (as in the Chapin type scales) for ascertaining community leaders.

The findings that leaders defined by either the reputational or decisional approach were members, chairmen of committees, and officers in some kinds of organizations and not in others within a substantive area suggests that it will be necessary in future research to select organizations very discriminately to insure inclusion of top ranking ones which are likely to include decisional level leaders in the substantive areas of concern on the one hand and to exclude lower level leaders on the other. By so doing the bias of including a high proportion of persons other than upper level community leaders can be lowered.

It was found that the newspaper mentions approach was heavily weighted with routine mentions of organizational activities. This tended to bias results in the direction of leaders in formal organizations. The implication is that the entries used for leader identification must be selected very discriminately to minimize this bias.

In general, variations in levels of duplication within and between substantive areas imply that the researcher should be aware of the possible effects of changes in the leadership on his analysis and findings, and carefully ascertain whether or not such changes have occurred; that there is a time dimension of leadership which apparently is differentiated by the decisional and reputational approaches with the decisional approach identifying past leaders and the reputational approach contemporary and anticipated future ones; and that the criteria used in each substantive area to identify leaders by the newspaper mentions and formal leadership approaches must be chosen very discriminately to identify the pertinent population, organizations, and activities, and exclude those that are not.

Perhaps the most general implication suggested by this study is that in research directed at identifying community leaders the methods must be logically aligned with the *realities* of community life and the *objectives* of the research.

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