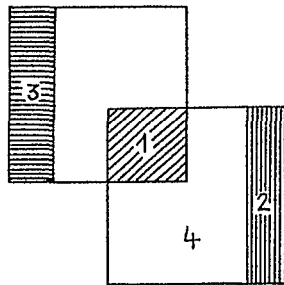


A. VAN DEN BAN: THE INFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT GROUPS ON THE GOALS OF THE OFFICIAL EXTENSION SERVICE. 1)





You see that I have changed the title of my paper somewhat, because I think that we get a more interesting discussion by taking a broader viewpoint.

We have often assumed that the agricultural extension service should try to serve the interest of the farmers, but I think that this is not very realistic. A government will only invest money in an extension service, if this is in the interest of this government. Our government is quite clear that the agricultural extension service is one of the tools of their agricultural policy. None of you will claim that this policy is always in the interest of all farmers. Does this create problems? Figure 1 might help us to clarify this problem:

Goals of Ministry



Goals of farmers

-  Area where the goals of the Ministry and the goals of the farmers are in agreement with each other
-  Area which is in agreement with the goals of one party, but not in disagreement with the goals of the other party
-  Area which is in agreement with the goals of the Ministry, but in disagreement with the goals of the farmers
-  Area which is in agreement with the goals of the farmers, but in disagreement with the goals of the Ministry

Both the Ministry of Agriculture and the farmers have their goals. These goals are partly in agreement with each other, partly in disagreement and partly are the goals of one party irrelevant to the other party. Let me first give somewhat simplified examples of each situation and discuss their implications for the goals of the extension service. Later I will remove some of these simplifications.

1. A clear example of the agreement of these goals is the income of the farmers. One of the goals of agricultural policy is to give our farmers a fairly good income and that is something most farmers like to have. If more knowledge and understanding of agricultural research findings can increase the income of the farmers, agricultural extension can be a tool which helps the farmers achieve their goals and at the same time a tool of our agricultural policy. The agricultural extension officers try to influence the behavior of the farmers, but the only power they have to do so is the confidence of the farmers that they are able and willing to serve the interest of the farmers. Working in this situation can enhance this power.

2. A quite different situation is that some farmers try to increase their income by using pesticides and hormones in a way which increases their income, but might have a bad effect on the health of the consumers. Our Ministry of Agriculture is also responsible for the provision of healthy food to our consumers, so it is their goal to prevent that the farmers behave in this way even if it is in agreement with their income goal. Some people expect that the extension service will teach the farmers not to use these pesticides and these hormones. That is the wrong tool to reach this goal of our food policy, because the extension officers would lose the confidence of their farmers, also with regard to other problems. We need an organization separate from the extension service to prevent this misbehavior of our farmers.

The information service from the Ministry of Agriculture will prepare a press release to explain, why there are regulations on the use of hormones and pesticides. Should the extension officer discuss this with the farmers? In my opinion they should, because it is in the interest of our farmers that they realize that

1) I thank P.J.P. Zuurbier for his suggestions to improve this paper.

they live in a society where many people are concerned on the consequences chemicals might have for their health. I realize, however, that this will decrease the confidence some farmers have in their extension officer, because they do not belong any longer 'to our side'.

3. In a developing country a goal of the Ministry of Agriculture might be to increase the production of export crops in order to earn foreign exchange, whereas it is more profitable for the farmers to grow food crops. The extension service can not help the Ministry to reach this goal as long as the price policy has not changed first. A task of the extension officer would be to tell this to the policy makers.

4. Our Ministry of Agriculture does not see it as his task to influence the way farmers are educating their children, whereas this is an important problem for many farmers. An extension officer, who is willing to discuss these problems with his farmers, does more than he can be expected to do. In this way he might gain so much confidence from the farmers, that they might also be willing to listen to problems this officer considers important, but the farmers not. I think of a kind of exchange; if you help me, I help you.

#### LESS SIMPLIFICATIONS

I said that I simplified the situation. One simplification is that I have talked about "the goals" of the farmers, but all of us have different goals of which we are only partly aware and which may be in conflict with each other. A short time goal of a farmer to remain in farming might be in conflict with a long time goal to receive a fair income. By helping us to clarify what our goals really are and to balance the different goals we have an extension officer might help us to realize that we no longer should strive towards a goal of which we first thought that it should be important. Some of the conflicts between agricultural policy makers and farmers might be caused by the fact that these policy makers have a broader and a more long range view than some farmers have. Also among our students I think that some of them are aiming goals of which they do not like the consequences which can be predicted with a fair degree of certainty. Surely it are not only the farmers who have difficulties to decide which goals are most important for them. The politicians have some similar difficulties, partly because of the power struggle which is inherent to politics, partly because their voters have sometimes an emotionally loaded and/or short-sighted view of agricultural problems, and partly because these politicians have to give attention to so many different problems that they cannot think seriously about any one of them.

It is also quite usual that the extension officers believe that the farmers have a wrong view of their goals. A 75 years ago it was reported that Dutch farmers did not believe that fertilizers could be of any value to them, because they did not look at all like dung. Therefore they did not have as a goal to learn how they could learn to use fertilizers efficiently. Now they are convinced that this view of their grandfathers was wrong.

It is also possible that the farmers are more intelligent than the extension officers, perhaps because the extension officers have as specialists a one sided view on what a farmer should do, perhaps because the extension officers confuse the general interest and the personal interest.

This is an important area of possible conflicts between farmers and extension officers, but also an area in which the farmers in the end can be quite grateful that the extension officers have helped them to change their mind.

Another simplification is that I talked about "the farmers", but there are different groups of farmers, who have different goals and these goals might be in conflict with each other. For instance if an extension officer helps one farmer to grow from 30 to 60 dairy cows two other farmers with 15 dairy cows might have to stop farming. If these two farmers are in Baden-Württemberg this is no problem for our extension officers, but it becomes different if they are in his own area. One way of reasoning is that an increase in labour productivity is unavoidable. If these two farmers do not leave agriculture now, they will have to do that anyway within a few years. By enlarging the other farm now the future of agricultural production is better secured. The assumption is that it is not possible to influence the direction of economic development or in any case not the task of the extension service to try to do so. Is this assumption correct? An assumption of many of our students is that what is desirable should and could also be possible. I am convinced that this assumption is not correct, but how can I explain that to the students?

Another aspect of this problem is that the farmers organizations are a powerful pressure group in our country and in many European countries. Research has shown clearly that in these farmers organizations as a rule the farmers with a larger holding and a modern enterprise play the most active role. Therefore in the discussions on the direction of agricultural development the voice of the smaller farmers is not heard very well. Should it be the role of the agricultural extension service to promote that their interests are also taken into account?

According to many experts the present agricultural policy in the European

Common Market is favouring the big, modern and well to do farmers over the small, traditional and poorer farmers. Should the agricultural extension service help to prepare for a change in this policy by drawing the attention of the public to these consequences?

Also it is incorrect to talk about the goals of "the government" or "the Ministry of Agriculture". These institutions consist of many different groups, who have their own goals, which are partly in agreement with each other and partly in conflict. This is quite clear in our Ministry of Agriculture, where the Forest Service has quite different goals regarding the future in our landscape as the Division of Animal Husbandry. The Division of Animal Husbandry is interested in an efficient production and in good relationships with the farmers and the farmers organizations, partly because of many personal ties. In the Forest Service the ecological point of view has a lot of influence. Both organizations try to influence the goals of the extension service, but until now the Division of Animal is most effective.

In this respect the power structure might change in the future. In our country the farmers organizations used to have strong ties with the Christian Democratic parties. Their influence there is decreasing because of the decreasing proportion of farmers in the labour force. The socialist party and a new liberal party have not many ties with the farmers organizations, but are strongly supported and influenced by the ecological and environmental movement. The Christian Democrats are always a part of our government, but they have few young members and therefore their power might decrease in the future. The Minister of Agriculture is one of their members, a farmer's son who raised in power through the Roman Catholic farmers organization. Recently the liberals have been increasing in power. If a future Minister of Agriculture would come from this party or from the socialist party this would probably be a man without ties with the farmers organizations.

#### EXTENSION OFFICERS

I have not yet been talking about the extension officers, but it is clear that they have also influence on the goals of the extension service.

An extension organization cannot achieve its goals without extension officers. Therefore they try to select officers, which are capable and motivated to achieve these goals. These people have their own goals, which they cannot achieve without working for an organization. Therefore they will select an organization to work for which enables them to reach as much as possible of their goals. Suppose that at the moment they start to work for an extension organization the goals of this organization and the goals of the extension officers would match each other perfectly. This is an improbable, but not an impossible situation. Even in that case there might come difficulties, because the goals of the extension organization will have to change in order to adjust to changing circumstances and also the goals of the extension officers will change, but probably not in the same direction.

This means that the extension officers will try to adjust the goals of extension organization in such a way that they are better able to achieve their own goals. This can be done in two ways. In the first place extension officers have a lot of influence on the formulation of the goals of the extension service. In the second place there is often a considerable gap between the official goals and the work the extension officers in the field are actually doing. In an extension service one has to give the staff a lot of freedom, otherwise these people will not do a good job. In addition the information of the leaders of the service of what their officers are really doing is limited and might be distorted by what extension officers tell and do not tell to their superiors.

We have no systematic observations about the changes in the goals of extension officers, but in my impression that especially among the young university graduates there is a number who have quite different goals as the older extension officers. Many of the older extension officers would have liked to become a farmer themselves, but they could not because a brother got the farm. They now try to influence the management of other farms in such a way that modern production techniques are used to increase productivity per man, per man and per animal. They have been looking for the advantages of modern techniques neglecting to some extent the disadvantages of these techniques. A number of the younger ones are going to other extreme and focus their attention to the disadvantages of these techniques. They do not like to promote the enlargement of the scale of farming which is forcing farmers to leave agriculture, but they try to keep the employment in agriculture as high as possible. Therefore they are more interested to help the smaller farmers, who do not ask for help from the extension service and therefore have been neglected so far. In their opinion the agricultural policy should try to stop the price cost squeeze by restricting production. Some of the older extension officers see these ideas as an attack of the work they are living for.

The farmers do not work fixed hours and the older extension officers were also available to their farmers at any time of day or night. Among the younger there are who think that it is normal to work 40 hours a week. Therefore some of them have a secret telephone number in order to prevent being disturbed at home. This change to a more bureaucratic attitude, also implies a more systematic

planning of their work. Not just answering on the questions farmers ask, but a systematic analysis of the agricultural problems and planning extension programs on the basis of this analysis.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS

In organization theory one has focussed in the past the attention on separate organizations, but now one is beginning to realize that an organization can achieve its goals alone. There are other organizations in their environment which influence the possibilities to reach these goals. Therefore organizational networks are developing in which different organizations cooperate to achieve certain goals. We see this quite clearly with extension organizations. The leaders often spend most of their time in these networks in meetings with farmers organizations, with other divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture, with local government, with other government agencies involved in rural development, with private business, etc.

In these organizational networks there are inherent tensions. Each organization realizes that they cannot achieve their goals without the help of other organizations and therefore they have to cooperate. We try to influence the other organizations to change their behavior in such a way that we can achieve our goals better. At the same time we try to resist the influence exerted on us by other organizations in order to keep our own identity and to be not distracted from working at our goals.

In this way there are many organizations working on agricultural and rural development which influence the goals of agricultural extension service. This kind of influence has not yet been studied carefully.

In these organizational networks other organizations try to influence the goals of the agricultural extension service. In the management of the extension service a strategy is needed to influence this process, otherwise the extension service might get new tasks e.g. with regard to management education, environmental problems, regional planning or reaching small farmers without more staff and without conscious decisions how the time can be found to fulfill these new tasks. In this strategy decisions have to be made with whom to cooperate in an organizational network, how to cooperate, when to cooperate with regard to which problems. In such a network it is possible only to inform each other what everyone is doing or to strive for a complete merger. There are also many possibilities in between, such as housing in the same building and the joint use of certain facilities, decisions with regard to the division of labour, or the joint execution of certain projects, whereas the organization remain independent with regard to the rest of their task.

The management of the agricultural extension service will try to make decisions with regard to the cooperation in these networks which are in agreement with the interest of their organization and with their view of the interests of the farmers, but they will have to realize that other organizations are only willing to cooperate in such a network if this is at the same time in the interest of their organization. In theory they can also be forced to cooperate, but this will not often result in a fruitful cooperation.

Other extension organizations are not only influencing the goals of the official agricultural extension service by cooperating in network organization, but also by providing an independent extension program in which farmers are interested. In the Netherlands this is mainly done by agribusiness such as the feed companies. Also the private extension organizations seem to be growing. The official extension organization can and does react in two ways. First if these services are provided to the farmers free of cost to the taxpayers who do not have to provide them any longer. Second apparently there is a need among the farmers in this kind of extension work. We do not trust that agribusiness provides a good programme, because of their commercial interest. There we will include these activities in our extension programme.

#### SUMMARY

- (1) Agricultural extension is one of the tools of agricultural policy.
- (2) The goals of the farmers and of the Ministry of Agriculture do overlap partly, are partly in conflict with each other and are partly irrelevant to the other party.
- (3) The official extension service can be effective in the area where these goals overlap and to some extent in the area which is relevant for only one of the parties.
- (4) Goals of the Ministry of Agriculture which are in conflict with the goals of the farmers should be achieved by other policy tools as extension education.
- (5) The official extension service cannot work at goals of the farmers which

- are in conflict with the goals of agricultural policy.
- (6) Farmers have a number of goals which can be in conflict with each other. The extension service can help the farmers to solve these conflicts and to choose goals which can be realized.
  - (7) Different groups of farmers have different goals, which might be in conflict with each other. Should the extension service help the weaker groups among the farmers to realize their goals?
  - (8) Within the government different groups and divisions have different goals with regard to agricultural development. The official extension service tries to cooperate with those groups which have goals which are most in agreement with the goals of the farmers (organizations).
  - (9) Extension officers have also their own goals with regard to agricultural development and their contribution to this development. Many young university graduates have quite different goals as the older extension officers have. This might create conflicts in the extension service.
  - (10) In order to achieve their goals the official agricultural extension service has to cooperate in organizational networks with many other organizations. In this cooperation the other organizations are influencing the goals of the agricultural extension service.
  - (11) This requires that the management of the agricultural extension service develops a strategy for network development.

#### G. CESARINI: ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EXTENSION SERVICES.

The typology of the organization and management of Extension Services are functionally related to the socio-economic structural situation of the country or area served.

In practice it is possible to identify the following general types of area:

Country with:

1. Demographic conditions
  - 1.1 High population density
  - 1.2 High rural population density
  - 1.5 Rural population gathered in villages
  - 1.2 Low population density
  - 1.4 Low rural population density
  - 1.6 Scattered rural population
2. Physical conditions
  - 2.1 Wide territorial dimensions
  - 2.3 Flat environment
  - 2.2 Limited territorial dimensions
  - 2.4 Hills, mountains or islands
3. Structural conditions
  - 3.1 Viable units and uniform cropping pattern
  - 3.3 Non-viable units and uniform cropping pattern
  - 3.2 Non-viable units and uniform cropping pattern
  - 3.4 Non-viable units and non uniform cropping pattern

In these conditions it is possible to identify 3 cases which need different extension organization and approach:

Case	Organization	Method
Case A High or low demographic density with low rural population density in wide or limited territories, but flat areas, with uniform cropping pattern and viable units	Centralized highly specialized	Information
Case B High or low demographic density with low rural population density, uniform cropping pattern in non viable units, or in viable units in varied cropping pattern and/or in hills, mountains or islands	Specialized	Training and information
Case C High or low demographic density with high or low rural population density with non viable units, various traditional cropping pattern in hills or mountains or islands	Decentralized Comprehensive	Promotion