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# A study if the characteristics associated with county extension women's advisory councils in urban counties

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Curran, S. G.  
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED  
WITH COUNTY EXTENSION WOMEN'S ADVISORY  
COUNCILS IN URBAN COUNTIES

Submitted by  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
of Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education

1963

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

#### I. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The Agricultural Extension Service was organized in the early years of the twentieth century to provide education directed toward helping people solve the daily problems encountered in agriculture, home economics, and related subjects. It is a cooperative undertaking which ties together in one agency local people, through their sponsoring group in the county; the state, through its college of agriculture; and the federal government, through a special unit in the Department of Agriculture. In Norfolk County, Massachusetts, the legally-constituted local sponsoring group is called The County Board of Trustees of the Norfolk County Agricultural High School and Extension Service. This Board is composed of three elected County Commissioners and four members appointed by the governor. Separate advisory councils, or committees, are maintained by the three departments within the Extension Service: 4-H club work, Agriculture, and Home Economics. These designated groups are responsible for helping direct the work of the County Extension Service. Four members from each council or committee are designated members of an over-all advisory committee to the board of trustees. The county extension agents rely on the cooperation and

guidance of their advisory councils in the development and operation of county programs. However, some agents of long tenure in urban counties have expressed concern about the nature and characteristics of existing councils. There are indications that present councils are not representatives of the total population, that all socio-economic and educational levels are not represented, and that contributions to such a council by other agencies would be highly desirable. Do county advisory committee members adequately represent the clientele now being served by Extension?

Since the creation of the Farm Bureau Home Making Department at Norfolk County Agricultural School in September of 1917, the home department has had a women's advisory council. The first council was established in November of 1917, and the four-member council was appointed by the Home Demonstration Agent in charge of the department. The records provide information that establishes these women as philanthropic and community spirited women.<sup>1</sup> The original council did not necessarily represent the interests of the farm women for whom the Bureau was originally organized, but was composed of women of influence within the community. At this time the population of the county was 201,907, as Figure 1

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<sup>1</sup>Norfolk County Agricultural School, Extension Service, "Annual Reports - Home Demonstration Agents" (1917, 1918, 1920).

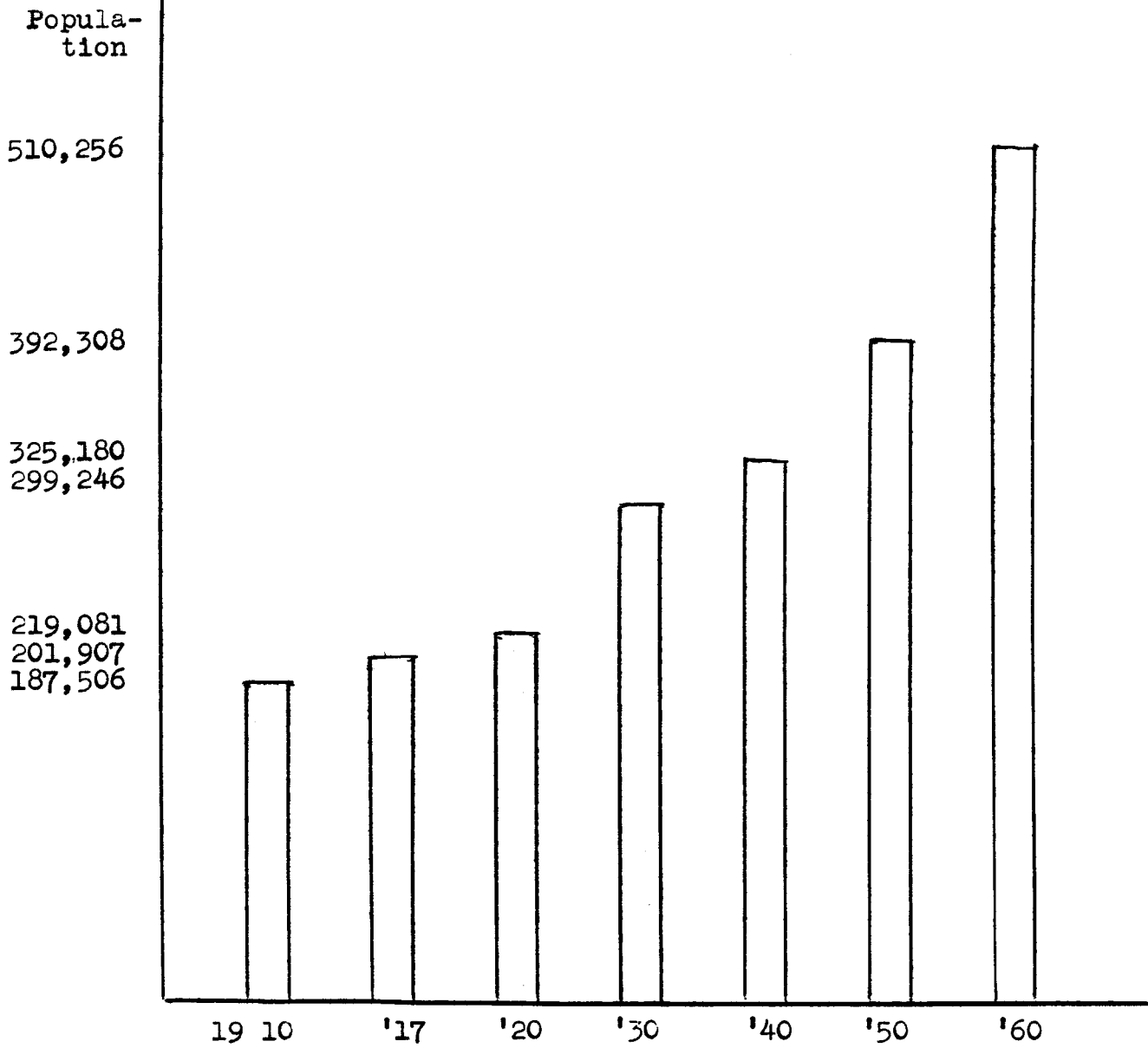


FIGURE 1

POPULATION INCREASE IN THE LAST  
 FIFTY YEARS IN NORFOLK COUNTY  
 (BASED ON DATA FROM  
 POPULATION OF MASSACHUSETTS  
 16TH EDITION)

shows, and composed of twenty-seven towns and one city, southwest of Boston. The council in the first year met monthly with the agent to advise on the course the department should follow in organizing the work of the Bureau in the county. By the fifth meeting, the constitution and by-laws had been formulated and accepted by the advisory council members.

By 1919 the council increased to seven members. The increased membership included three "subject-matter" chairmen, representing the areas of program emphasis at the time: clothing, food preservation, and household management. Two of the original four members concentrated on organization, and the other two served on the warm school lunch and child welfare programs that were being established in the county with other agencies. These women also were chosen to be on the council by the Home Demonstration Agent.

In 1920 the council was increased to nine members. The executive organization had been further developed by the appointment in each town of a woman town director, who assisted in selecting local projects adopted in the community. These town directors were responsible for securing local project leaders to be trained by the Home Demonstration Agent in the subject matter selected, as well as for teaching the subject to local groups.

During the next two years there was no increase in council membership, but a county advisory committee composed

of all town directors, project leaders, and advisory council women was established. This group met once a year to discuss accomplishments and plan for further work. In 1922 the Farm Bureau Homemaking Department became legally established as the Norfolk County Extension Service, Home Department.

By 1930 the increase in local program participation necessitated a larger organization in the local community.<sup>2</sup> During 1931-1933 town committees were established in twenty-four towns, composed of a town chairman, publicity agent, and secretary. This group served the town and not any specific group. With the enlargement of the local organization, the advisory council increased its membership to twelve in 1930.<sup>3</sup> The county was divided into districts, and each council member was assigned to represent either two or three towns. At this point in the evolution of the council, nominations for council membership were submitted by the town committees and agent for approval by the advisory committee.

In 1936 an "Officers and Leaders Handbook" was prepared and distributed to committee and council members.

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<sup>2</sup>Norfolk County Agricultural School, Extension Service, "Annual Reports - Home Demonstration Agents" (1930, 1931, 1932, 1933).

<sup>3</sup>Norfolk County Agricultural School, Extension Service, "Annual Report - Home Demonstration Agents" (1936).

Significant in the by-law changes at this time was the provision for a definite three year term of office and a rotating plan of membership. Criteria for membership on the advisory council specified that all new members must be active in town committee or project leader work.<sup>4</sup> By 1942 the districts had been dispensed with, and each town actively engaged in Extension work had a member of the advisory council.<sup>5</sup>

During the war years the advisory council membership remained constant, at twenty-four members. Since the war years the in-migration of people into the county has been tremendous. Yet the composition of the council has remained basically the same, as seen in Figure 2; and the criteria for council membership have not changed. Members of the council are cognizant of the change in clientele in the extension program and look for new approaches for obtaining adequate and reliable representation of those groups who participate in Extension education.

## II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the following questions:

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Norfolk County Agricultural School, Extension Service, "Annual Report - Home Demonstration Agents" (1943)

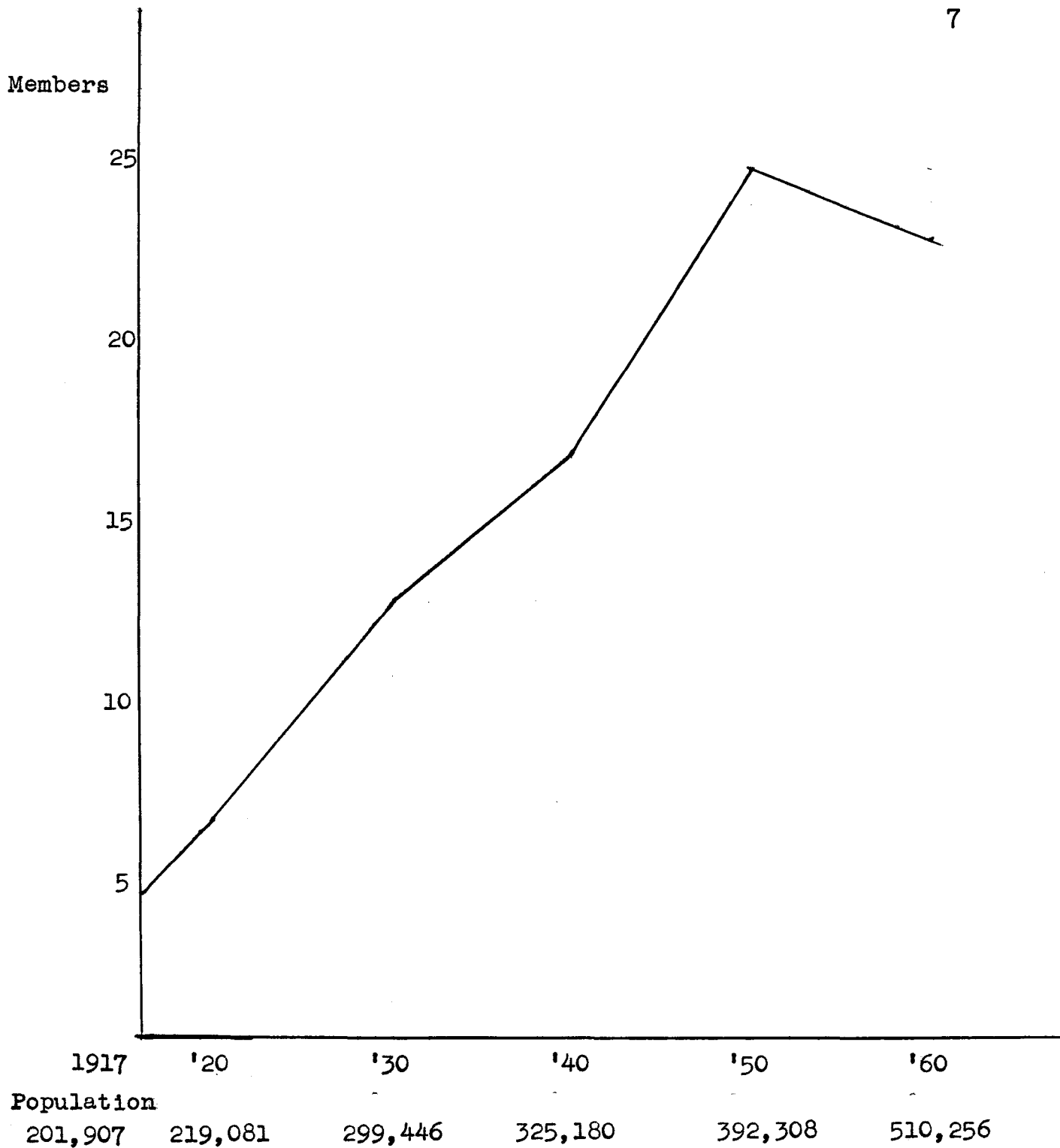


FIGURE 2

RELATIONSHIP OF ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP  
TO POPULATION OF NORFOLK COUNTY. (BASED  
ON DATA FROM NORFOLK COUNTY EXTENSION  
SERVICE ANNUAL REPORTS  
1917-1962)

1. What are the characteristics of an ideal or adequate council for providing policy and program leadership in an urban county, as defined by the contemporary literature and key leadership of the Cooperative Extension Service?
2. How does Norfolk County (X County) Women's Advisory Council match this model and what changes need to be made?

Traditionally, The Agricultural Extension Service, Home Economics division, has focused its attention on providing educational information to the rural-farm audience or homemaker. With the increasing in-migration of population from the cities to the county areas in the last twenty years, large metropolitan areas have developed in the counties. The need for educational information and adult courses in Extension Home Economic programs is the same among urban-suburban and country women. Many counties which were previously defined as agricultural counties have been re-defined as standard metropolitan areas. Twenty-two of the twenty-eight towns of Norfolk County are now designated as Metropolitan Boston.

Inherited from the past are executive boards or women's advisory councils whose members have been drawn from country women who have been actively engaged in Extension Home Economics education. One of the prime functions of these

councils had been to interpret to the Extension Service the needs of the women in their respective communities.

Because of burgeoning suburban populations in many counties bordering metropolitan cities, the adequacy of representation on a Women's Advisory Council of the Extension Service (which legally is designed for all women), needs to be examined. Little concerted effort has been made to determine the kind of representation that suburban communities can provide a county women's advisory council functioning without organized clubs. This study is intended to partially fill that void.

This study was limited in scope, seeking information applicable to the Norfolk County Council and to the other urban counties in the United States that, at the present time, function without organized homemaker groups. Previous research in this area of urban extension councils is limited.

### III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cooperative Extension Service. A system of institutional contacts and education activities of land grant colleges or Universities directed toward clientele outside the resident student body.

Advisory Council. An organized group of people assisting the Extension Service Home Department, which is administered by the Extension agent in Home Economics.

Extension Agent in Home Economics. A professional worker who is responsible for the organization, planning, and conducting of homemaking programs in a county. (In other States she may be known as a "Home Demonstration Agent")

Organized Homemakers Group. A specific group of lay women who meet together regularly to participate in the educational homemaking programs offered by the Extension Service.

County. The governmental unit in which the Extension Agent in Home Economics functions.

#### IV. METHODS OF RESEARCH

A case situation designated as X County, (but in reality Norfolk County), and a questionnaire pertaining to the case situation were mailed to eleven home demonstration agents in eleven different counties in three states. Represented in the study were five counties in New Jersey, five counties in Ohio, and one county in Massachusetts. Accompanying the case situation and questionnaire was a cover letter asking the respondent to react to the case situation in the light of the agent's experience and judgement.

The respondents were selected from the recommendations of the Federal Extension Office and the State Extension Home Economics Leader in the participating states. Criteria for the respondents were: (1) the home demonstration agent to be

actively engaged in the conduct of extension education in an urban county that does not have organized groups; and (2) the tenure of work of the agent to be of sufficient duration for understanding of urban extension organization. The counties selected for the study were counties with large metropolitan areas with an extension organization similar to Norfolk County. The criteria for the agents and the type of county reduced the number of available respondents. Currently the number of counties operating in this manner is limited in the Agricultural Extension Service.

The case situation was designed to describe the existing characteristics of Norfolk County, Massachusetts, and also to include empirical knowledge of the organizational patterns of the Norfolk County Extension Service.<sup>6</sup>

Through a content analysis of county advisory council handbooks and related literature, a questionnaire was formulated to explore the respondents' perception of an ideal advisory council for Norfolk County (X County), and other urban counties that function without organized homemaker groups.

Three Massachusetts Extension Agents in Home Economics were asked to pre-test the validity of the instrument, and

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<sup>6</sup>Massachusetts Department of Commerce, "Monograph for Norfolk County": Publication #30, March, 1961.

suggestions for changes were incorporated in the revision, as shown in the appendix.

The data were collected, tabulated, and analysed and were included in the statistical treatment and descriptive analysis of this report. A model or ideal advisory council for an urban county functioning without organized groups was constructed from the data, and a comparison of the Norfolk Council was made with the model.

#### V. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The remainder of this report includes a chapter on the review of selected literature that supports the problem in question. The review includes readings on group dynamics, board membership, social processes, and extension organization. A chapter is devoted to the statistical and descriptive analysis of the data collected from the instrument used for recording reactions to the case situation. The final chapter states the findings and implications of the study. Included in this chapter is a model of a theoretical or ideal advisory council constructed from the data. A comparison is made with the Norfolk Advisory Council, and conclusions drawn for the improvement of the Norfolk Advisory Council.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written in regard to the nature, functions, general organization, and operational patterns of executive boards, advisory councils, and committees; but only a brief summary of such closely related material will be given here.

#### I. LITERATURE ON BOARDS AND ADVISORY COUNCILS

##### The Nature of Boards and Councils

Advisory councils, executive boards and committees have grown up in various ways and in many situations, but they share a number of common characteristics. A board, or advisory council, is always related to some institution, service, or association. The over-all goal of the board must be the same as the goal of the agency.

Houle, in writing on the basic nature of the board, states:

"The board's relationships to its institution or association is one of both control and assistance. The board may have ultimate power or its authority may be sharply limited, but it always has some responsibility to make policies and see that they are carried out. The members of a board must also provide aid in futhering its work. For example, they may need to interpret the program to the community, they may need to raise money, and they may need to put their special talents or contacts to use. Unless a board accepts responsibility for both control and

assistance, its proper functioning is impaired."<sup>1</sup> 14

Houle further states: "that whether public or private, the board has a special duty to be sure that the program is understood and supported in whatever may be its own natural community."<sup>2</sup>

Matthews describes a council structure as follows: "a council usually consists of representatives of all major interests, organized on a permanent basis to work for a common purpose. Some councils are concerned only with determining needs to be met by appropriate agencies. Others carry out programs with the help of cooperating groups. Important contributions to the solution of broad area problems are being made by such organizations."<sup>3</sup>

Within the geographic area of a county there are many organizations and agencies that have similar goals.

Matthews, in writing on organizing for service, explains that:

"cooperative action can hardly be avoided by groups with active programs. Many projects cannot be undertaken with the personnel and financial resources of one organization alone. Others require the cooperation of a municipal body such as a board of health, board of education, or a park commissioner. Some involve activities that overlap or touch on areas that lie within the interest of other organizations."

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<sup>1</sup>Cyril O. Houle, The Effective Board (New York: Association Press, 1960), pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Mark S. Matthews, Guide to Community Action (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 100.

"Arrangements for planning, organizing and directing project; and the kind and degree of participation and responsibility by each organization vary widely as the projects themselves. The formation of an inter-group committee with an equal sharing of work and responsibility by all major community groups, represent the logical development of cooperation in broad service programs or in particular fields such as health, education and recreation."<sup>4</sup>

County home demonstration agents recognize the fact that effective extension work is more likely to be achieved when the extension program is geared to meet the needs of the people it serves. The Division of Extension Research and Training of the Federal office reports that: "The composition, function, and number of home demonstration councils or committees vary somewhat from State to State, and in some instances between counties within the same State. Some typical examples are:

1. County home demonstration council or committee of approximately 7-15 members representing either a geographical area or a number of home demonstration groups within a county. Such councils are generally composed of active members of a local home demonstration group. In some instances, however, council members may also include interested individuals and/or representatives of other women's organizations within the county.
2. Councils composed of one or more representatives of all organized home demonstration groups within the county. Frequently the elected officers from the larger council serve in an advisory capacity to the home demonstration agent.
3. Special county wide committees or councils that are responsible for assisting the agent in

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. pp. 98-99.

planning and carrying out certain areas, such as nutrition, health and safety, or housing.. In general, these special committees function as subcommittees of types 1 and 2 as listed above.

4. Another type of home demonstration council or committee is composed of the women members of a county wide Extension Service council or committee with or without additional members who are not on the overall committee. In general practice these councils operate within the frame work established by an official extension sponsoring group."<sup>5</sup>

The history of the Norfolk County Advisory Council indicates a combination of the aforementioned types of councils. The question now is: what kind of a council is best suited for an urban county that functions without organized home demonstration groups?

#### Characteristics of Effective Boards and Advisory Councils

The literature reveals there are some general characteristics that are attributed to executive boards, advisory councils and committees, but it also reveals there is no typical committee or board structure; the structure varies among agencies.

The Members. A study conducted in Pennsylvania with Extension executive committee members and agents listed the following characteristics as ideal pre-requisites of persons for the executive committee position:

1. A participant in the extension program.

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<sup>5</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Federal Extension Service, Analysis of County Extension Advisory Councils or Committees 1953-1956: ER&T-212 (8-57), pp. 3-4.

2. Well-informed in extension aims and problems.
3. Well-informed in local community affairs.
4. Organizationally minded, a person who will make contributions in executive committee meetings.<sup>6</sup>

Houle, in discussing the basic traits which all board members should possess, states the most desirable would be: "a commitment to the importance of the service or function with which the board is to be concerned; a respected position in the community; intelligence; courage; a capacity for growth; a capacity to influence favorable public opinion in important areas in the community; a willingness to serve; and an ability to work with others"<sup>7</sup>

Executive boards and advisory councils should establish criteria for board membership. Some factors to be considered, along with basic traits of an individual, would be: age, education, representation of important elements in the clientele (such as major religious, ethnic and economic groups), previous experience in board process, and special capacities needed on the board.

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<sup>6</sup>Bond L. Bible, Francena L. Nolan, The Role of the Extension Committee Member in the County Extension Organization in Pennsylvania, (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Bulletin 665, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Houle, op. cit., p. 23.

Length of Tenure. How long should a member stay on a board? As might be expected, practices vary widely. Length of tenure is a matter of policy decided by law, by an outside selecting authority, or by the board itself. Some boards have lifetime or indefinite tenure. Some boards have brief tenure. Both types of tenure have advantages and weaknesses. In length of service, the middle way is suggested by many authorities to be the best. Tenure must be long enough to provide continuity, but short enough to provide constant freshness of viewpoint.

Kerlinger believes that long tenure as a board member is a disservice to the organization or community. He states:

"Several arguments have been advanced to support the policy of lengthy board terms. One of these is that it takes a long time to learn the job. But, if willing to devote sufficient time to study and observation, a board member can be rather conversant with his policy-making role in about three or four months. Certainly he does not need to stay on a board three or more terms in order to become a knowledgeable board member."<sup>8</sup>

In a study of advisory committee members and county extension agents in four states in the country, Gwinn concludes that "committee members and agents are more satisfied with advisory committees that provide for an orderly rotation of membership as compared to those that make no provision for

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<sup>8</sup>Fred N. Kerlinger, "The Perennial Board of Education Member", School and Society, Vol. 89, Number 2197, (October 21, 1961), pp. 338-339.

perpetuation of committee membership."<sup>9</sup>

The advantages to the middle policy, between long and brief tenure, is that it provides beginning and termination points for membership. Having definite terms with a provision for overlapping gives the board assurance of continuity and change. Definite terms assure built-in motivation for those who want to stay on the board, and also provide a convenient way of eliminating uninterested or ineffective people from the board. Definite terms make it much easier to plan for a broad base of representation. Some occasional difficulties arise because of the human element, but authorities agree that most boards should have definite overlapping terms of membership.<sup>10</sup>

Functions. The principal concern of every board or advisory council must be to achieve the objectives of the program of the agency or institution it serves. The goals of a program cannot be reached if the board does not function properly. Extension advisory councils have many functions in common. In reporting on the relative importance of advisory council functions, Gwinn found that the following were ex-

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<sup>9</sup>Samuel M. Gwinn, The Role of County Advisory Committee in Program Projection, (A summary of a Ph.D. thesis in Cooperative Extension Administration prepared under the supervision of Professor Robert C. Clark, University of Wisconsin, June, 1958), p. 10.

<sup>10</sup>Houle, op. cit., pp. 86-97.

tremely important: (1) to identify problems that concern the county as a whole; (2) to assist with developing a sound county extension program based upon long-time goals and factual information; (3) to evaluate the county extension programs; (4) to assist with developing policies for long-time program planning; (5) to serve as a sounding board for ideas and programs; and (6) to publicize extension work in the county.<sup>11</sup>

Boards and advisory councils have many similar functions, but each board must determine the functions of board members and staff most consonant with the goals of the agency or association.

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<sup>11</sup>Gwinn, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data included in this chapter represent a 100 per cent return from the eleven respondents involved in the study. The criteria for participation in the study automatically limited the number of respondents. The data represent the perceptions of the respondents to X County Case situation as judged by their experience. The writer questions whether local problems may not have biased some respondents in their judgement of certain areas of the questionnaire. Reference will be made to the specific areas in the analysis.

#### I.. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Selection of Council Members. The methods of selection for advisory council members are varied. In examining recommendations for selection on an urban advisory council one finds an equal frequency of mention for selection, "by member of the council and by a membership committee." The combined percentage of these was 31 per cent in comparison with the high frequency of mention for selection, "by the agent and members," which was 46 per cent, as seen in Table I.

TABLE I  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP SELECTION  
ON X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

How selected	Frequency of Mention	Per cent
Agent and Members	6	46
By members of the Council	2	16
Membership Committees	2	16
By the Head Agent	0	0
Others	3	22
Total	13	100

Other selection methods included: (1) membership selection made from both the membership committee and cooperating agencies; and (2) membership selection made by Extension staff and two or three key members of existing council.

The data do not indicate a precise method of selection among the respondents. This correlates with the literature in the multiplicity of selection processes.

Size of Council. Relationships within a council are affected by number of members. A wide range of committee size was reported by the eleven respondents. The number ranged from a low of 11 to a high of 30 as an ideal number to work with effectively. The data indicate that 82 per cent of the respondents felt that a group of 21 to 30 would be an ideal number on an advisory council, as shown in Table II.

TABLE II

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IDEAL  
SIZE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Range	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
Frequency of Mention	1	1	4	5	11
Per cent	9	9	37	45	100

County extension advisory councils often need to be fairly large (25-30) in order to be representative of the county.

Other Agencies or Groups. The Extension service in a highly urban county usually cooperates with other county and state agencies, as well as other organized groups, co-sponsoring and executing programs. Two questions were asked relative to the advisability of other agencies or groups being represented on X Advisory Council. The first question required two types of responses. The first part required a "yes" or "no" answer to the question: "Would you have other agencies or groups represented on X council?" All of the respondents answered "yes." The second part, asking for free response, indicated the agencies or groups that should be on X Advisory Council. The responses are shown in Table III in appropriate categories. The agencies or groups mentioned four times or more comprise 59 per cent of the responses.

TABLE III  
OTHER AGENCIES OR GROUPS THAT SHOULD BE REPRESENTED  
ON X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Agencies or groups	Frequency of Mention	Per cent
Parent Teachers Associations	10	22
Federated Womans Clubs (Home Dept.)	8	17
Welfare Agencies	5	11
Church Groups	4	9
Educational Groups	3	7
Health Departments	3	7
Grange	3	7
League of Woman Voters	3	7
Farm Bureau	2	4
Miscellaneous	4	9
Total	45	100

It seems reasonable to conclude that X County Advisory Council should have other agencies or groups represented to supplement the lay membership.

A free-response type of question was asked concerning the possible contributions agencies or groups could make to X County Advisory Council. The 52 contributions were analysed and placed in appropriate categories, as shown in Table IV, according to frequency of mention. Eighty-three per cent of the contributions were mentioned five times or more.

TABLE IV

CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHER AGENCIES OR GROUPS  
TO X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Contributions	Frequency of Mention	Per Cent
Provide a cross section of population	8	16
Provide suggestions for program planning	7	13
Interpret extension to other groups	6	12
Interested in solving community problems	6	12
Help in recruiting leaders	6	12
Promote extension programs	5	9
Contribute needs of their groups	5	9
Provide "sounding board" for ideas	4	7
Act as resource people	2	4
Miscellaneous	3	6
Total	52	100

It seems reasonable to conclude there are many contributions which agencies or groups can provide X County Advisory Council. The order of importance was not established, but the high response signifies recommendation for council membership.

Recommended Age. The home demonstration agents reported that 78 per cent of X County Advisory Council should be composed of women under 50 years of age. The "60 and above" range was 4 per cent, as shown in Table V. According to the best estimates from the Massachusetts State Census (1955), 6 per cent of the female population of X County (Norfolk) was over sixty-five. With longevity of life increasing, impli-

cations for older group representation should be considered.

Recommended Education. Considerable variation in education was recommended for members on X County Advisory Council. Grades of school ranged from a low of 7 per cent representation of "eight grades of less," to a high of 37 per cent for members having "1-4 years of college." High School graduates and above comprised 79 per cent of the suggested educational level of X County council members, as shown in Table V. Estimates from the United States Census data state: the median number of school years completed for persons 25 years old and over is 12.2 in Norfolk County. Thus the advisory council members recommended for X County council were a select group with respect to educational attainment, and the clientele they represent, are better educated than yesterday.

Recommended Income Level. On the income range suggested for X County Advisory Council members, the data disclosed that 76 per cent of the group should be within the 3,000-9,999 dollar income range. The mean income of the group studied was 5,590 dollars per year. Representation of the lowest and highest income levels is quite comparable, as shown in Table V. Four respondents felt that distribution was not as important as the sensitivity of members to the problems of the people involved in the extension program. It seems reasonable to conclude that, if possible, all income

levels should be represented on X County Advisory Council. The distribution of incomes could be arranged deliberately or left to chance. The actual income of advisory council members in X County corresponds to recommendations with the majority in the middle income group.

TABLE V  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGE, EDUCATION, AND INCOME LEVEL  
FOR X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Characteristics	Advisory council members (N = 171)
<b>Age</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Under 30	15
30-39	31
40-49	32
50-59	18
60 or above	4
<b>Years of schooling</b>	
8 or less	7
High School graduate	35
1-4 years college	37
Above	21
<b>Income</b>	
Under \$3,000	13
3,000 - 4,999	40
5,000 - 9,999	36
10,000 or above	11

Religious Affiliation. X County serves a heterogeneous society. Home demonstration agents frequently provide educational programs for church groups. All religious groups participate in extension programs offered to the county women. The respondents were asked if they would consider religious affiliation in selecting council members for X County Advisory Council. In reply, 64 per cent said they would not consider religious affiliation in the selection of a member for X County council, while 36 per cent said they would take religious affiliation into consideration. Four respondents who answered negatively to the item qualified their responses by the following statements: (1) "representation, but not domination by any group"; (2) "not important, but representation from each segment would be"; (3) "not overtly, but representation good in right ratio"; (4) "all faiths represented, but not by any plan."

It seems reasonable to conclude that all religious groups that participate in the extension programs should be represented on X County Advisory Council.

Integrated Racial Council. The consideration of an integrated racial council for X County Advisory Council, as shown in Table VI, indicates that only 36 per cent would integrate the council at this time. The three respondents who replied, "not at the present time," also checked the answer, "could be a possibility in the future." This implies that about one-half of the respondents would consider an

integrated racial council at this time, and the other half, in the future.

TABLE VI

RESPONSES OF HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS TO QUESTION,  
"WOULD YOU CONSIDER AN INTEGRATED  
RACIAL COUNCIL FOR X COUNTY?"

	Frequency of Mention	Per cent
Not at present time	3	21
At this time	5	36
Could be a possibility in the future	6	43
Total	14	100

The writer questions the validity of the responses to this item. Was the item answered in the light of the case situation or of the local situation of the respondent?

Geographic Representation. A qualifying alternative question was asked of the eleven respondents regarding representation of every town on X County Advisory Council. The replies were almost evenly divided between those who favored representation from every town and those who did not think such representation necessary. Six respondents indicated that: (1) representation should be dependent more on interest and need rather than geographic location; (2) capable leadership is more important, and you take them

where you find them; and, (3) if the representatives are truly representative of a cross section, there is no need for geographic distribution. Five of the respondents indicated each town should be represented on the council. No definite conclusions can be made for geographic representation.

## II. FUNCTIONS OF ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

A structured question was asked regarding the functions of advisory council members as perceived by the respondents. The response involved ranking in degree of importance, fourteen functions of advisory council members as found in related Extension literature. The rank was indicated by number: (1) very important; (2) important; and (3) minor importance. The degree of importance was established by frequency of mention. The "very important" and "important" responses that totaled ten or eleven were considered "very important." The same responses that totaled seven through nine were considered "important," and the "very important" and "important" responses that totaled four were considered, "of minor importance." The data were analysed and categorized as shown in Table VII. The functions are presented, by group, in order of their degree of importance.

Very Important

- 1) Assist with determining needs and interests of people the committee represents.
- 2) Assist agents in gaining acceptance of Extension programs.
- 3) Interpret Extension programs to the public.
- 4) Assist with carrying out Extension programs.
- 5) Serve as a sounding board for ideas and programs.
- 6) Assist with special events of Home Department.
- 7) Assist with evaluating results of Extension programs.

Important

- 8) Determine program emphasis.
- 9) Assist with developing long-range Extension programs based on factual information and long-time goals.
- 10) Maintain council membership and organization.
- 11) Assist with annual plan of work.
- 12) Coordinate efforts and give directions, enthusiasm, recognition and advice to individuals, organizations, and groups carrying out the Extension program.

Minor Importance

- 13) Assist with obtaining financial support for Extension work.
- 14) Sponsor scholarships for Home Economics careers.

It seems reasonable to conclude that functions of advisory council members will vary in degree of importance, because of the legal status of the council and the administrative policy of the county.

TABLE VII

DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE HOME DEMONSTRATION  
AGENTS PERCEIVE IN THE FUNCTIONS OF  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

	Very Important	Important	Minor Importance
Assist with determining needs and interests of people the committee represents.	11		
Assist agents in gaining acceptance of Extension programs.	10	1	
Interpret Extension programs to public.	9	2	
Assist with carrying out Extension programs.	9	1	1
Serve as a "sounding board" for ideas and programs.	7	4	
Assist with special events of Home Department.	7	3	1
Assist with evaluating results of Extension programs.	6	5	
Assist with developing long-range Extension programs based upon factual information and long-time goals.	6	2	3
Determine program emphasis	4	5	2

TABLE VII (continued)

	Very Important	Important	Minor Importance
Coordinate efforts and give directions, enthusiasm, recognition and advice to individuals, organizations and groups carrying out the Extension program.	4	2	5
Assist with developing annual plan of work.	3	4	4
Maintain Council membership and organization.	2	6	3
Assist with obtaining financial support for Extension work.	2	2	6
Sponsor scholarships for Home Economics careers.	1	3	7

### III. LENGTH OF TENURE

For the establishment of ideal terms of appointment, the respondents were asked to indicate the term they felt was best for council membership: 63 per cent felt that a three year term was best and 36 per cent felt that a two year term was adequate. In ascertaining the number of terms a member should serve, 55 per cent recommended two terms and 45 per cent felt that one term was sufficient, as shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII  
 NUMBER OF CONSECUTIVE TERMS SUGGESTED  
 FOR X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Length of Tenure	Number	Per cent
One term	5	45
Two terms	6	55
Three terms	0	0
Indefinite	0	0
Total	11	100

All respondents were in favor of having provisions in the by-laws for definite overlapping terms (one-third elected each year). Special provisions are sometimes made for honorary members. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated they would not have a policy regarding honorary members.

It seems reasonable to conclude that respondents do not agree on length of tenure; but the establishment of a definite term of appointment and a limitation of the number of consecutive terms will help a council achieve proper practice so far as tenure is concerned.

#### IV. MEETINGS

Respondents could not agree on the number of X County Advisory Council meetings to be held per year. The data revealed a range of three to ten meetings per year. Forty-six per cent of the respondents thought the council should meet six times a year, as shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX  
NUMBER OF ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETINGS PER YEAR

Number of meetings per year	Frequency of Mention	Per cent
3	1	9
4	2	18
6	5	46
9	1	9
10	2	18
Total	11	100

Advisory councils meet regularly, but not often. Time is an important element in the conduct of councils meetings held so infrequently. The data revealed there was no uniformity in the number of hours a member should plan to give to a council meeting. Forty-six per cent thought four hours were adequate as shown in Table X.

TABLE X  
NUMBER OF HOURS MEMBERS SHOULD GIVE TO  
X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Number of hours	Frequency of mention	Per cent
2	3	27
3	3	27
4	5	46
Total	11	100

Seventy-four per cent of the respondents felt that the complete home department staff should attend the meetings.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the number of meetings held per year should be decided by the X County Advisory Council; that an average of three to four hours should be allotted to each council meetings; and that the complete home department staff should be in attendance at the council meeting.

#### V. SUGGESTIONS FOR X COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The respondents were asked: "what other advice would you have for X county council?" Quoted below are the replies.

[X county council should have strong sub-committees that can work in depth on Extension council activities.

Selection of new members should be done in the light of contributions they can make to councils.

The county council should realize that they are public relations agents for the Extension Service and as such should be sure that all members:

- (1) Understand and go along with State and County policies.
- (2) Have enough contacts with other organizations and the general public to be able to determine counties unmet needs so as to prevent duplicating what other organizations are already contributing to society.

All members should develop a good understanding of Extension and its purposes which will benefit them both as they determine directions of the program, and as they interpret Extension to the public.]

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY

An effective advisory council for an urban county functioning without organized homemaker groups is not achieved by accident, but by design. A constant appraisal is necessary to assure the council's success. With the conformation of counties changing so rapidly, it is imperative that a council meet the needs of a changing society.

### I. FINDINGS

The Table for "A Rating Scale For Urban Extension Advisory Councils Functioning Without Organized Homemaker Groups," was developed from the data of this study and from a review of related literature. The data were refined and reworded and appear under "adequate council" in Table XI, with a comparison of the Norfolk County Advisory Council. The writer rated the Norfolk County Advisory Council and noted in what way the council needs to be improved. The rating scale could be used by urban counties having similar organizational patterns.

TABLE XI

A RATING SCALE FOR URBAN EXTENSION ADVISORY  
COUNCILS FUNCTIONING WITHOUT ORGANIZED  
HOMEMAKER GROUPS

Characteristics	X County Advisory Council					
	Adequate Council	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
The size of the council should be large enough for adequate representation (20-30 numbers).		X				
The method of selection of council members should be determined by the council.		X				
The council should be composed of women active in Extension education.			X			
Other agencies or groups should be represented on the council.						X
All age groups should be included on the council, with the majority between 30-50 years of age.						X
The educational attainment of council members should be high school graduates or beyond.			X			
All income levels should be included on the council, with the majority representing the middle income group.			X			
The council should be racially integrated.						X
Major religious groups should be represented on the council.					X	

TABLE XI (continued)

Characteristics	Adequate Council		X County Advisory Council		
	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
The council should be made up of effective members, regardless of geographic distribution.		X			
The council should have established tenure of appointment.	X				
The council should limit the number of consecutive terms.					X
The council should have provisions for overlapping terms.	X				
Honorary membership should be at the descretion of the council.	X				
The council should have 4-6 meetings per year.	X				
The complete Home Economics staff should meet with the council.	X				
The principal functions of council members should be in the areas of:					
1. Public relations	X				
2. Program planning	X				
3. Communications				X	
4. Program projection				X	
5. Evaluation		X			
6. Council maintenance		X			

TABLE XI (continued)

Characteristics	X County Advisory Council				
	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
The members of the council should understand the objectives of the Extension Service and work toward those objectives by the activities undertaken.	X				
Each member should be involved and interested in the work of the Extension Service.			X		

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Though an "adequate council" for urban counties has been developed, it in no way assures the success of a group. It is a guide to the principles of good council practices. The determination of the council members and Extension staff to change will bring about desired improvement.

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the comparison of the Norfolk County Advisory Council with the model or "adequate council." The council needs:

1. To include other agencies and groups on the council.
2. To have some younger women on the council.
3. To racially integrate the council.

4. To limit the number of consecutive terms of appointment.
5. To improve the rating on communications and program projection.
6. To include members of major religious groups on the council.

S E L E C T E D   B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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A P P E N D I X

## CASE SITUATION

## X COUNTY

X County borders a large metropolitan city in the northeast. It is composed of twenty-seven towns and one city with a population of over one half million people. The land area is small and the density of population relatively high. It is principally a suburban living area with a minimum amount of industry. Land use for agriculture has been reduced to one hundred and seven farms that employ eight hundred and ten people. Transportation facilities within and out the county are adequate.

Eighty-five percent of the population are native born white, fourteen percent are foreign born white, and three-tenths percent are negro. The median income is \$3,364 with thirty-two percent having an income of \$4,500 and over.

The median number of school years completed in X County is 12.2 which is the highest in the state. Fifty-six percent of the population have completed high school or more while four percent have completed less than five grades. There are one hundred and fifty thousand women between the ages of twenty and sixty-four. A high percent of the town's schools systems have adult education evening programs for women and men.

As in all suburban areas in in-migration in the past ten years has been tremendous. There are new low-cost

housing developments near the large metropolitan city and within the one city in the county. The county is highly organized with youth and women's groups.

The Cooperative Extension Service of X County is located at a county school centrally located which provides facilities for an adult education center for Extension Home Economics. A second center is utilized in the one city at the public library.

X County does not have homemakers' clubs or groups, but makes available to all the women of the county an opportunity to participate in the programs that are offered. In twenty-two of the county towns, X County has what is known as a town committee, composed of three or four women who are active in Extension activities and are the immediate local contact for the Home Demonstration Agents.

The methods now used to reach and teach the clientele are: 1. leader training programs, 2. direct teaching of single or series meetings, 3. lecture-demonstrations to already existing organized groups throughout the county (PTA, Women's Clubs, etc.), 4. co-sponsoring and executing programs with other agencies in the county and metropolitan city, 5. cooperating with the two state mental hospitals in the county by teaching in the field of homemaking rehabilitation, 6. providing continuing programs for the low socio-economic mixed racial housing development in the city area working through the Settlement House, 7. regularly employing the use

of mass media (TV, radio and newspapers).

For the past five years the Home Department of X County has been extending the program to encompass segments of society that represent many attitudes and values.

The Women's Advisory Council (membership - 18), that is the liaison between the professional staff and the clientele of X County, contemplate their present role in helping to meet the needs of the larger society.



5. On X Council would you have representation from the following economic groups?

No.                                                                                      
 Under \$3,000      \$3,000-\$4,999      \$5,000-\$9,999      Above \$10,000

6. Would you consider age and education criteria for Council membership?

                      If yes--  
 yes                  no

A. Age (no.)                                                                 
                     20-30 yrs.      30-39 yrs.      40-49 yrs.  
                                               
    50-60 yrs.      over

B. Education (no.)                                            
    less than High School      High School Grad.  
                                               
    1-4 yrs. College      Beyond

7. Would you consider religious affiliation in selection?                        
    yes                  no

If yes-- No.                                                                                      
    Protestant      Catholic      Jewish      Others

8. Would you consider an intergrated racial group? Please check:

Not at present time                     

At the present time                     

Could be a possibility in future                     

Could not be a possibility in future                     

9. Should each town in X County have one or more representatives on the Council? Please check:                        
    yes      no

If no - please state why not.

## II. Advisory Council Functions

1. Would you rank in degree of importance (1, 2, 3,) the following as perceived by you to be the functions of Advisory Council members.

Please check: 1. very important, 2. important,  
3. of minor importance

	<u>Degree of Importance</u>
A. Assist with determining needs and interests of people the committee represents.	_____
B. Serve as a "sounding board" for ideas and programs.	_____
C. Determine program emphasis.	_____
D. Assist agents in gaining acceptance of Extension programs.	_____
E. Assist with developing long-range Extension programs based upon factual information and long-time goals.	_____
F. Maintain Council membership and organization.	_____
G. Assist with carrying out Extension programs.	_____
H. Sponsor scholarships for Home Economics careers.	_____
I. Assist with special events of Home Department.	_____
J. Coordinate efforts and give directions, enthusiasm, recognition and advice to individuals, organizations, and groups carrying out the Extension program.	_____
K. Assist with evaluating results of Extension programs.	_____
L. Assist with developing annual plan of work.	_____

Degree of  
Importance

M. Assist with obtaining financial support for Extension work. \_\_\_\_\_

N. Interpret Extension programs to public. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Term of Office

1. What do you consider would be the best term of membership on X Advisory Council?

Please check: 1 yr. 2 yrs. 3 yrs. more

2. How many terms do you think a member should serve?

Please check: 1 2 3 indefinite

3. Would you have in the by-laws provisions for definite over-lapping terms (1/3 elected each year?)

Please check: yes no

4. Would you have a policy whereby a member may serve a specific number of terms, be off the board one year and then re-elected to another term?

Please check: yes no

5. Would you have any policy regarding honorary members?

Please check: yes no

If yes, what would you suggest?

IV. Meetings

1. How often do you think X County Advisory Council should meet? Please check: \_\_\_\_\_ times a year
2. What do you consider the average number of hours a woman can give to a Council meeting?

\_\_\_\_\_ no. of hours

3. Would you suggest the Council meet with:

Please check: A. Head Agent \_\_\_\_\_

B. Complete Staff \_\_\_\_\_

- V. What other advice would you have for this county Council?