ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DESIRES AND GOALS IN SOUTHERN IOWA

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Part A. Values and Goals as Forces in Action

Introduction

Fundamental interest in the welfare of the people in this area is basic to the analysis that has been undertaken in this series of seminars. Preceding discussions considered the people of the area with respect to their numbers, businesses, institutions, facilities and community life. This was done to determine the present organization and the established trends and to predict likely outcomes if the trends continue. In essence, previous seminar presentations have suggested already that one alternative for the area is to continue very much as at the present.

But what of the people themselves? Is that what they want? Do they consider the likely results of present trends acceptable, stimulating, challenging, sufficiently rewarding or amply satisfying? Or would the people prefer some alternative we might select arbitrarily such as incomes and opportunities comparable to those in northwest Iowa, the national average, or that obtaining to the nonagricultural sectors of our economy? Do these people within the area have a blueprint for future action already drafted? Will any of the alternatives that are suggested in the papers to follow provide the plan the people will consider optimum? To what extent shall we disregard the reaction of the people in the area?

The people constitute an intricate component of the present organization of an area and an important determinant of its future potential. Implementation of any plan depends primarily on the people who live there at that time. The change may be made at a rate and in a form (1) that will accommodate people who are in the area at the time it is initiated, or (2) that attracts inward movement of people from outside the area who understand and are attracted by the opportunities created, thereby diluting reaction of the former populace. In either case, however, the success of any area reorganization is conditioned

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by the people then present.

Uniqueness of the Human Resource

Up to this point in the analysis of southern Iowa, the human resource has been considered in very much the same way as the land resource. While the human resource helps to describe present organization and the limits on potential in the same way as the land resource, there are significant differences. The quantity of the human resource cannot be changed or transferred among locations and uses in the same way as capital or among uses in the way land can. In this respect the human resource presents rigidities and inflexibilities to organizational change. In another sense, however, the human resource possesses characteristics conducive to change, not common to the other resources. For the human resource is not simply an input ingredient incapable of self action such as capital and land, but one whose welfare and destiny is involved and influenced by its functioning.

It is because the human resource is itself capable of action that we must consider the action role of people in the organizational structure and resultant activity and productivity of an area. To do so we must consider the values, hopes, fears, aspirations and goals of the people.

We cannot and do not presume to have specific data on these characteristics for the people in this area, or indeed for any area. While such information is sorely needed for any action program, it has been sadly neglected in research. Neither should it be concluded that by considering these human characteristics for southern Iowa we are implying that they differ significantly or at all from those in other areas. We simply do not know. Therefore, lacking as we do, concrete evidence on this subject, we shall consider the conceptual framework first as it would apply to any area and then illustrate and elaborate by use of specific hypotheses or suggestions of reactions, goals and situations that we consider probable or pertinent to southern Iowa. The purpose of making specific suggestions is to focus attention on some of the problems that may be encountered in implementation of alternatives to be suggested in papers that follow.

The Area as it Relates to Human Activity

The physical surroundings of human existence constitute the physical environment in which a person lives. A person during his lifetime may experience various physical environments as he moves from place to place. Some individuals who live close to the border of the study area, or who have lived elsewhere for prolonged periods, or who travel frequently outside the area have a physical environment that differs somewhat from that of the study area. But for most of the people, the 10-county area represents the physical environment within which they live.
The physical environment in which one lives, on the one hand, defines the limits of his physical experiences and helps to facilitate or impede his actions. On the other hand, the individual has some effect on his environment and helps to determine its structure. In more specific terms, this means that the people in this area have helped to determine the physical components of their environment but are themselves regulated by that resultant environment's characteristics. They are not, in other words, at the complete mercy of their physical environment, but the control they have over it is limited.

There is, however, another facet of the human environment of equal or greater importance in determining human activity. It is the mental environment of the individual. The mental environment is a complex of all the experiences a person has had and is, in consequence, constantly in a stage of flux and expansion as new events are experienced.

In actuality, then, a human's action is in terms of his total environment both physical and mental. In the light of what he has experienced and in terms of his recall, values and judgment (which may or may not be in error), a person evaluates a given situation in terms of its physical characteristics as he believes they affect the outcome he desires. It should be noted that the desired outcome may or may not be physical in nature and that an individual acts in accordance with what he believes to be true whether it is really true or not.

In terms of our study this means that the actions of the people both now and in the future, will originate in mental processes determined and limited by past experiences and conditioned by their values and the physical environment as they, not us, evaluate it. So while the people in this area who have experienced crop failures, mine closures and low incomes evaluate the same general physical environment we are considering, their mental environment is sensitized by experiences of insufficient income, uncertainties and failures. This in part at least, explains the cautiousness of the people, their desire for stability, regularity and risk aversion. Implementation of any plans suggested will involve modification of the mental environment of the people as well as the physical environment, so that by knowledge and experience they will come to appreciate and value the potential outcomes of suggested changes.

Values and Goals as they Relate to the Individual, Group and Community

The values that a person has vary in number, kind and strength among situations and over time. Values are the final criteria for decision-making after alternative outcomes have been compared. Values are specific to the individual and although some community of values exists among people, there are outstanding individual differences.
The individual's values result from his experiences, particularly his contacts with other people and institutions. Initially the parents and other members of the family group are responsible for a person's values, but as contacts are made outside the home in schools, churches, and with other formal and informal groups, additions, subtractions and modifications of values occur.

Goals represent the outcomes for which people strive. Values provide the criteria for choice among expected outcomes as judged by the individual from his past experiences. Values are individualistic, but goals may be shared or may affect others. The application of values varies among situations, and values may or may not lead to a conflict of goals among individuals. For instance, an individual is usually more basically concerned with his own welfare, his own family members and close friends and associates than he is with institutions and the community at large.

It is to be expected then that the values of individuals in southern Iowa give rise to a pattern of goals more intimately related to individual and family welfare than to institutions and the local or 10-county area.

The series of pertinent goals and their priority (in terms of preference) for the individual, family, institution or community, changes as time passes for some goals are realized, some relinquished, some modified and some added in the light of experience. Because goals change and precede change, the trends already studied for southern Iowa cannot be relied upon to provide accurate information on the present or future goal pattern in the area.

Causes of Goal Conflicts

The goals to be found among individuals, family members and groups can be independent, complementary or competitive. It is the competitive goals that give rise to goal conflicts. Since goals relate somewhat differently to the individual than they do to other individuals, the family as a whole, institutions and community, they are frequently in conflict. Causal factors in goal conflicts are varied and numerous. Some are listed below.

1. Differences in values of those involved in making the appraisal of goals are often the cause of conflicts. Thus a father may regard expenditure of limited money in hogs as preferable to replacing the wiring in the house which his wife wants, or to providing money for football games which his son wants, or for a contribution to the church.

2. Lack of experience, understanding or communication can give rise to goal conflicts. Families that have not had running water do not give it as high a goal priority rating as those who have experienced its use. Husband-wife goals may differ simply because they are not aware of each other's de-
sires, or because of differences in background, one fails to understand the reasoning of the other.

3. Timing is another causal factor of goal conflicts. The planning horizon of a community, institution and that of an individual can be quite different. An individual may be unable to apprehend the situation over the long period of time in which a community or institution is interested. Or the individual may have no concern for outcomes beyond his own planning horizon.

4. Limited resources can also lead to goal conflicts where one faction in the conflict refuses or fails to recognize the variation in the resources he has in mind and those with which the other faction must function.

5. Uncertainties are still another source of goal conflicts for they affect individuals differently both in a physical and psychological sense, and have quite different effects on institutions and communities than they do on individuals.

Part B. Southern Iowa Goals

No attempt has been made to determine the desires and values in the area. The goals suggested cannot be assumed to be all-inclusive nor exact. They are what might be termed hypotheses of probable goals.

The trends that were examined for the area indicate to some extent the goals of the people. But results may be in opposition to goals. In any case, trends give an ex post facto indication of goals at best, since goals precede change often by considerable time. Furthermore, with change itself come changes in the dominance of goals and the goal pattern.

In later papers, alternatives to the projection of trends will be suggested. Of necessity, they will be in physical terms, thereby abstracting in large degree from the values and goals of the people. So consideration at this time even of probable values and goals of the area will help us to more accurately appraise each proposal in terms of its practicality.

Probable Goals, Goal Harmony and Goal Conflict for the Area

In attempting to hypothesize the goals of the people of southern Iowa we asked ourselves two basic questions: (1) What are the goals we would discover if we asked the people what their goals are? (2) What are the goals we would discover if we asked the people their reaction to being deprived of various physical, social and psychic conditions and situations? In so doing we endeavored to recognize that people are aware of some goals and think and
speak freely of them, but find it difficult to express others, are not consciously aware of them or take them for granted.

When suggestion is made of some probable goal conflicts and agreements within and among groups in southern Iowa, implications of these to the likely success of any suggested reorganization must be conditioned by recognition of the following: (1) that net results are more often the outcome of a combination of conflicting and harmonious forces than of all harmonious forces; (2) that net results are not the summation of fulfilled goals for results embody goal failure or abandonment as well as success.

Kinds of Goal Conflicts

There are certain specific goals in an area such as southern Iowa, that can be said to be common goals for the various age and business groups. The agreement comes, however, chiefly because of the level of generality with which the goals are expressed. That being the case, conflicts arise either, (1) in terms of the means for achieving a commonly accepted and acceptable general goal, or (2) among the general goals that are individually agreed upon.

An illustration of a common general goal but with conflicts among means is when the opportunity for the children of the area to become "well" educated is a commonly held goal but differences arise in terms of whether it should be accomplished by maintaining modern efficient institutions locally, by consolidation, or by sending the students entirely outside the area for both high school and college training. An illustration of conflicts among common goals is where a community agrees on the goals of lower taxes and more efficient and expanded educational facilities. The conflict comes if realization of the educational goal necessitates higher taxes.

A third kind of goal conflict arises among goals on which there is lack of agreement even when the goals are expressed in general terms. An example is where some group favors additional individual freedoms and others favor additional group participation with resultant restrictions on individual action.

We believe that only the first two kinds of goal conflicts exist in southern Iowa.

**General Common Goals of Southern Iowa**

1. A limited increase in consumer income after taxes. It is, of course, impossible to say how large an increase is generally desired, nor whether having achieved any indicated level the people might not aspire to still higher
incomes. Without any data to substantiate it, but in order to focus attention on this point, the following is suggested as a possible interpretation of this goal: consumer income per family after taxes equivalent in purchasing power to approximately that obtainable by a southern Iowa farm family with $2,500 annually at 1959 prices. For people living in towns the $2,500 would have to be increased sufficiently to absorb locational costs if it were to provide an equivalent standard of living.

2. **Security of purchasing power.** The people in this area want even more than an increase in purchasing power, perhaps, preservation of that which they obtain now. But they want both. What they don't want is a somewhat higher purchasing power that might on occasion go even lower than what they presently experience. Even slight fluctuations in purchasing power that is already at a low level causes relatively great distress. So they seek methods to reduce income uncertainty (sometimes the wrong ones) and aspire to be debt free, keep living costs within limits of budgetary safety and save something as a hedge for the future and retirement.

Indeed it may be safe to say that the first two goals--level of purchasing power and security of income flow--are so dominant that all other generally accepted goals are conditioned by them to a greater or lesser degree. The people are willing to make sacrifices, forego tempting opportunities, relinquish goals and adjust their expectations in conformance with conditions of income.

3. **Social acceptance.** These people want to be accepted by others in their community, to be a part of institutional groups and to provide the degree of leadership consistent with their abilities.

4. **Locational stability.** A general goal is for an organization of resources that will provide employment opportunities for all who desire to remain in the community. And most people, even the younger people, prefer to do so. The people seem to realize that at present many must leave due to lack of local opportunities, but the situation still represents an unrealized general goal or an unwanted fact.

5. **To participate in known activities.** The general goal in this respect seems to be to continue historical activities. Thus people avoid investments in places, enterprises or businesses with which they are unfamiliar. They prefer to till soil of low productivity to putting the same resources into vertical livestock expansion, corporation farming or tourist attractions, of which they know little. Here again this goal is conditioned by the economic situation in the area.

6. **Improvement of technical efficiency.** The people, in both town and country, accept improved technical efficiency as a goal. They want to reap the results of technical knowhow to improve the status of their income, the community and their relative competitive position.
7. Continuation or expansion of public, business and institutional facilities. The people of southern Iowa do not want to see present business, institutional or public facilities curtailed. In other words, they want to see the local stores, banks, restaurants and so on continue. They also want increased business activity for they believe this will improve the community. Similarly, they want schools and churches to service the community as at present. They want effective police and fire protection in the towns, a network of up-to-date well-maintained highways and reliable telephone and electrical service. In other words, the people do not want southern Iowa to become destitute nor a ghost community.

8. Assurance of some limited leisure time. There is a desire on the part of the people in the area to obtain and maintain some leisure time when they are not actively engaged in their income-yielding occupation. Thus jobs off the farm by family members, two-job situations and other occupational situations that reduce the amount of free time, that have come to be considered normal and minimum, are considered undesirable. Where necessity dictates action of this kind, it is regarded as an unattractive emergency situation that, it is hoped, will be temporary.

9. Freedom of management and action. Southern Iowa people desire the maximum amount of individual freedom to manage their own lives, their businesses and actions in general. They have demonstrated a willingness to forego income for this reason and the related one of locational stability. Any program or change that reduces independence of movement, decision or action is regarded as a costly price for what is considered doubtful progress.

10. Honesty and morality. This area respects and aspires to high levels of honesty and morality.

Goals that are Specific to Selected Groups

Goals are seldom considered that involve something that is not real to the people or are associated with knowledge or background with which they are unfamiliar. Short time goals such as getting a new car, redecorating the kitchen and so on are too numerous to discuss here. They are generally regarded by the people as means to larger and more important goals. Such items as health, vacations, and art appreciation seem to fall into the category of hopes as opposed to goals toward which effort is being expanded.

1/ There are two classes of people in the study area to whom the goals suggested do not wholly apply. They are the two communities near Centerville and Albia that go back to the coal mining era and the Irish who settled in the western half of Monroe county. Their numbers and goal differences are such that it is not expected that they distort the total goal pattern in the area significantly.
1. **Goals of farm people aged 25-55.** The general goal of financial and social security is dominant but takes a specific form with this group. By the time they reach retirement age they hope to have achieved full ownership of an operational farm, be free of debt and have a capital surplus. For some, recent availability of social security has replaced the capital surplus requirement. There is a desire to keep the children's spending pattern in line with the income expected. Many parents hope that at least one of the children will replace them on the farm. The goal of getting the children educated to a level that will enable them to compete in the outside world is very strong. What is meant by this will vary all the way from beauty operator to four or five years of college. For the farm business there is a desire for more land and to a lesser degree, increased efficiency and vertical expansion.

2. **Goals of young farm people aged 15-25.** In general the young people show considerable acceptance and agreement of goals with the group aged 25 to 55, but the goals are not as well established or strong, with the result that this group is less opposed to change. They desire to get married and establish homes. The goal of acceptance and respect is very strong with their own group and weak elsewhere. The fear of risk is present in this group but much less pronounced than in the older group. They do not have well-established goals relating to home, business or community.

3. **Goals of older farm people aged 55 plus.** Financial and social security goals have been determined or nearly so, and any alternative involving change is opposed. Goals involve a desire for less work, to be left alone or undisturbed. There is strong reluctance to consider or undertake new risks or investments.

4. **Goals of non-farm people.** Although by most definitions this whole area is classed as rural, the people in the towns, even the small ones, dislike to be classed as farm people. Their basic goals, however, are the same as those of farm people, the only difference being one of degree. Family living costs are somewhat higher in the towns, and these people desire an income sufficiently higher to absorb the higher costs.

**Conflict of Goals Held in Common in the Area**

The combined goals of increased levels of consumer income and that of an assured income flow of the same or higher purchasing power calls for rather fundamental and extensive organizational changes in the area. If such changes involve outmovement of population for employment, there is a conflict with the goal of locational stability. If the change involves consolidation of school or church services within the area or movement to locations outside the area, there is a conflict with the goal of continuation or expansion of present services and facilities. The same is true if the change involves a reduction in commercial enterprises such as hotels, stores or restaurants. If the change occasions introduction of methods new to the area such as contract farming,
corporation farms or intensive industrial activity, there may be conflict with
the following three goals: (1) participation in known activities; (2) freedom
of management and action; and (3) leisure time.

Conflict in Terms of Means for Attaining Goals

Reorganizational suggestions in papers that follow will involve significant
changes in one or more of the following or combinations of them: acreage,
livestock production, methods of getting control of resources and industrial
activity. The means for accomplishing the reorganization could be chiefly
in terms of the land resource, or livestock production or industrialization
or capitalization or some combination of them. Having specified means to
bring about a change, conflicts among means to goal attainment become ef­
fective.

1. Where a significant change in acreage is involved. The farm people
look upon this as undesirable as it means fewer neighbors, hurts their cus­
tomary trading centers and affects their institutions adversely. Even those
who acquire more land consider the change as helping themselves but prob­
ably to the detriment of the general welfare of the community. They do not
look upon this change and the results thus far as progress.

The town people dislike this form of change very much and hope for some
better alternative. Their promotional schemes are directed to change the
trend in this direction. Anyone who suggests the trend to be progress and
one that should be encouraged is unpopular.

The young people look upon it as a process of closing the door to opportuni­
ties for them as compared to other localities. It may be that they are even
losing sight of the possibility of some very good opportunities for a few.

2. Where a significant change in livestock is involved. The common prac­
tice is to have livestock only to the extent of utilizing feed produced on the
farm except for the purchase of consequent protein supplement needs. Very
few farmers analyze their businesses to determine the contribution of live­
stock to income (or that of crops either). To buy feed grains is considered
risky. Vertical expansion is not favored by most farmers, because, in
their opinion, it requires additional management ability, capital, labor and
risk, as compared to expansion of the business by increasing acreage. This
alternative will be accepted only by those families that are unable to buy or
rent additional land and even they in most cases prefer to use the alterna­
tive of off-farm labor. The goal of risk aversion will dominate most farmer
decisions.
Town people like this alternative as it would result in more people living on farms and increased business activity in town.

3. Where significant changes are made in the methods of getting control of resources. The general feeling in the area is against renting. People do not want to remain a renter. The goal of ownership is so strong that it often overshadows economic goals that could be attained sooner by continuing to rent. Landlords who have purchased land as investment in the area are not looked upon with favor. Corporation farming is considered an undesirable arrangement.

4. Where significant changes in industrial activity are involved. If this alternative is feasible and possible, it will be welcomed by most people in the area. A few of the older people who oppose all changes would be against industrial development.