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THE PERCEPTION OF POWER:  
A REVISED MODEL

Bruno Alexander Pelczarski





## Abstract

There are a number of approaches to the measurement of community power. One is the reputational method, which focuses upon its perception. It was originally developed during the 1950's by Floyd Hunter (1953) as an instrument that measures the reputation for global levels of power. This approach has been criticized for failing to address such perceptions as they apply to specific situations. In particular, it does not measure the power of actors and groups from different arenas and their abilities to influence policies and decisions based in those issues affecting the community. The author proposes a reputational model that focuses upon the perception of various aspects of community power. During the preliminary phase of this approach, social issues important to the people in the community are identified, as well as those arenas in which relative policies and decisions are made. The model also includes two complementary measures of community power as it is exercised by individuals and organizations within a global context. The first focuses upon the perception of power over policies and decisions originating with a number of different arenas and affecting the resolution of specific issues; the second measure, however, is not as clearly defined and disregards the importance of issues and arenas in depicting local distributions. In addition, the model includes a variety of indices designed to isolate certain aspects of power and focus upon its relationship to issues addressed within specific arenas. These indices are operationalized through questionnaires that serve to avoid the inherent assumption of a monolithic power structure characteristic of Hunter's traditional approach. The need for application and further testing is discussed.

THE PERCEPTION OF POWER:

A REVISED MODEL

by

BRUNO ALEXANDER PELCZARSKI

B. S., Georgia Southern College, 1985

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Master of Arts

Statesboro, Georgia

1993



THE PERCEPTION OF POWER:  
A REVISED MODEL

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This thesis is dedicated to all those students of community power who are struggling in their quest for understanding the concept and its role in social, political and economic processes.

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## CHAPTER 1

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

During much of the twentieth century, power, leadership and related phenomena have been important areas of inquiry by social scientists. In recent years, this interest has subsided and shifted towards other matters. The study of community power is grounded in two major theories that address different aspects of its nature, as well as the pattern of distribution and competition among social actors. Each is associated with unique approaches to the measurement of power and leadership at the local level. The first is the elite perspective (Collins, 1971, 1975, 1979; Dahrendorf, 1970; Hunter, 1953; Karim, 1987; Lenski, 1966; Ossowski, 1956, 1963; Santasombat, 1985), the view that community power is monopolized by local power elite who influence the formulation of virtually every important policy and decision. A majority of its advocates employ reputational measures in which community leaders are identified by informants.<sup>1</sup> Most of them tend to focus only upon global levels of power, failing to address its perception in regard to specific contexts and situations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The terms informants and judges refer to individuals presumed to be familiar with the pattern of decision making and the distribution of community power (Hunter, 1953).

<sup>2</sup>Although there are some exceptions. One (research) design that does in fact measure the reputation for community power within both global and specific contexts has been developed by Agger (1956).



Another theory is pluralism (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963, 1980; Wolfinger, 1960, 1974), which contends that community power is distributed among various social actors and groups who influence policies and decisions made in regard to isolated issues. Pluralists usually employ the decisional approach (also referred to as the issue or event analysis method) to locate them. Although most community power studies consist of either reputational or decisional measures, some have undertaken a comparative approach that assesses the relative validity of both.<sup>3</sup>

The reputational and decisional models are characterized by different advantages and disadvantages. As previously suggested, the traditional reputational method is designed to measure only the perception of global levels of community power, not within the context of specific issues. That is, it tends to focus upon perceived power distributions over a broad range of issues while disregarding its application to specific settings. This does not present a very realistic picture of local leadership and power as it is exercised in the community. In actuality, some actors may be more influential over some issues than others. One disadvantage of the decisional approach is its failure to recognize the community power of covert actors. It tends to equate power with formal leadership, a visible structure that has the legitimate authority and responsibility for making decisions affecting the community. Yet, local residents not belonging to this circle may, nonetheless, have a significant amount of impact, a factor not acknowledged by advocates of this method.

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<sup>3</sup>There are various studies of community power that include both reputational and decisional designs, but these are generally conducted by researchers who analyze and compare data from a number of case studies (Bonjean & Grimes, 1974). An example of a comparative approach consisting of reputational and decisional measures (as well as the verstehen method) is one conducted by Presthus (1964).

The purpose of this thesis is to refine the reputational approach and make it more applicable to research in community power. The first part critiques and summarizes competing theories and methods of measurement. From this foundation, the remaining portion presents a revised model that accounts for the reputation of community power within both global and specific contexts. Use of this model will provide a more accurate depiction of power as perceived by knowledgeable informants, as well as the general public. Through this approach, it will be possible to portray an actor's ability to influence decisions concerned with various issues affecting the community and made within specific arenas.

### Rationale

Because alternative approaches to the study of community power are grounded in different perspectives, it is very likely that conceptual biases will result in the disclosure of only certain types of configurations. Researchers employing the reputational and decisional methods tend to uncover monolithic and pluralistic structures, respectively. Discrepancies may be attributed to two factors: (a) alternative definitions of community power, and (b) emphases upon different aspects of this concept. The decisional method targets those actors who exercise power by generating decisions that affect the outcomes of specific issues. The reputational approach, on the other hand, does not include an objective measure, but rather focuses upon prestige and the reputation for community power (among informants). A high degree of visibility may not be indicative of one's actual power. Individuals entrusted with implementing decisions and policy often act in the interest of another party. In light of these differences, an analysis of various theoretical perspectives is an essential prerequisite to methodological development.

Each method also has certain assumptions. The reputational method assumes that social actors identified by knowledgeable are likely to exercise community power, and that they are local elite collectively constituting a monolithic structure. The decisional approach, on the other hand, assumes that such power is shared by a number of actors who exercise it by formulating policies and decisions based on isolated issues.

Among sociologists, the predominant perspective of community power is elitism, thus the predominant method of measurement is the reputational. They argue that power is difficult to measure through objective means, a justification for focusing upon its perception by a variety of informants, the format of the reputational approach. Although decision making is a manifestation of community power, the generation of formal decisions may be influenced by a wide range of actors, including those who are covert and tend to be difficult to locate. Community decision makers may not--publicly--acknowledge the role of local power elite in the decision making process, thus inhibiting access to these influentials.

In the reputational approach samples of informants tend to be relatively large, a factor that fosters a decrease in the probability of error associated with the incorrect identification of community leaders. Despite their validity, most reputational designs measure only general levels of power, even though many leaders are limited to making decisions based on a certain number of issues. For this reason, the revised model presented in this thesis is a modification of the reputational method, focusing upon social status and the reputation for community power within specific arenas of responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

### Definition of Terms

Prior to addressing the issue of community power, it is necessary to define the concept, as well as other terms that are used throughout this thesis. First, sociological definitions of different types of social units are presented. Next, the author presents a definition of community power proposed by Hunter (1953).

Sociological perspectives tend to emphasize the functional nature of communities (MacIver, 1931, 1937; Sanders, 1966; Warren, 1963). According to Warren (1963), the community is the functional component of society. It is considered to be a social system that intercedes between the individual and society (Sanders, 1966). In society, regular patterns of social interaction occur most frequently at the local level. On this basis, communities are regarded as microcosms of society at large. A society's form of government tends to be relatively similar to that of its constituent communities;<sup>5</sup> thus local level arenas offer more formal means of delineating the structure of power. Studies of

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<sup>4</sup>This variation of the reputational approach is--in part--attributed to Bonjean and Olson (1964) and D'Antonio and Erickson (1962), who focus upon the influence of community leaders and the perception of their power within a number of issue areas rather than over isolated issues. In their method, the power to influence policy and decision making associated with several issues is an index of a global level of community power, thus specific policies and decisions related to each are not seen as being very important. A leader influential within a variety of areas tends to possess power in the general sense. In terms of reputation, those perceived as influential within various areas are thus perceived as powerful and said to have reputations for community power.

<sup>5</sup>While this may generally be true, such is not always the case. In some societies different types of power structures are instituted at different levels of government. Some communities are characterized by patterns or "configurations" of power that are remarkably distinct from their parent societies. Thus it may be possible to find democratic communities in totalitarian (autocratic) societies and totalitarian communities in democratic societies. A historical analysis of the United States, a democratic society, reveals that a variety of power structures were at one time under the de facto control of local "bosses" or small cohesive groups of elite. During the 1960's, for example, Chicago was ruled by its dictator-mayor, Richard Daley.

community leadership may contribute to a greater understanding of distributions in larger and more complex social units, including society at large (Hunter, 1953, 1963). In the general sense, the term social unit is a very broad one and encompasses every level of social functioning. These include a wide variety of groups and organizations of any size, as well as the individual, the smallest identifiable unit. Employing sociological terminology, individuals are referred to as social actors in this thesis. Some of them have an exclusive monopoly of community power, thus it is appropriate to call such actors the "power elite."<sup>6</sup>

The prevailing body of literature offers various definitions of power that are based in either pluralist or elitist conceptualizations. There is no universal agreement on the defining characteristics of this concept (Wolfinger, 1960). Several attempts at clarifying the meaning of the term and delineating other factors associated with the phenomenon of power have been undertaken and are discussed in Chapter 2. The primary definition that is central to this thesis is as follows: Community power is the structure(s) through which social processes operate that permits some individuals to mobilize others for the purpose of affecting their actions towards themselves, or towards organic or inorganic matter (Hunter, 1953).

### Overview

Chapter 2 focuses upon community power theory, as well as a variety of supportive empirical studies. The reputational and decisional methods employed

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<sup>6</sup>This term was initially proposed and introduced into sociological literature by C. Wright Mills (1959), although he was more concerned with powerful and influential actors at the national level rather than those from local arenas. In addition, by focusing specifically upon American leadership during the 1950's, Mills concluded that the "power elite" consisted of leaders from the political, economic and military sectors. These actors may also be referred to as the "ruling" or "governing elite" (Pareto, 1935, 1987).

by contemporary researchers are examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 explores a wide range of criticisms and assumptions associated with each theory and method. In Chapter 5, a reputational model which includes a component designed to measure the perception of community power within specific settings is proposed. Its implications and prospect for future research are addressed in the sixth and final chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNITY POWER: STRUCTURE AND THEORY

Within sociological literature, various theories and methodological approaches to the measurement of community power have been proposed. This mandates an examination of alternative paradigms in order to develop a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Community power may be regarded as both an independent and a dependent variable. As a dependent variable, its distribution is associated with the community's social environment and situational factors (e.g., social change and social crises). This distribution is affected by the social requirements of the community, specific conditions and a variety of factors contributing to social change. Thus, local power structures are manifestations of community social environments. As an independent variable, community power affects access to various social resources at the local level, including economic resources. It is frequently employed by community actors, groups and classes to monopolize and control the distribution of goods. By doing this, they tend to reserve the bulk of the most valued resources for themselves and limit access to others.

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to community power. It is divided into two parts. The first focuses on the structural arrangement of community power and the perception of leadership at the local level. Relative theoretical foundations are pursued in the second. Within the first section of Part I, the author outlines different types of community power structures. The

second explores a typology proposed by Bonjean and Olson (1964) and Bonjean and Carter (1965) that focuses upon the reputation for leadership among "knowledgeables"--social actors familiar with the distribution of community power--and/or in the community at large. The third section addresses social stratification as a factor contributing to the perception of community power. This entails an analysis of reputations among various ethnic and racial strata. Part II presents a discussion of elitism and pluralism, two alternative perspectives employed by contemporary social scientists.

## Part I: The Structure of Community Power

### Types of Community Power Structures

Before exploring the different types of configurations that may be found in the community, it is necessary for researchers to agree in respect to the features and defining characteristics they have in common. According to Warren (1977), a power structure is a "network of actors" who have an unlimited "access to" social resources and sanctions. Although some sanctions are regarded as positive and serve as rewards for socially promoted behavior that is within the boundaries of a society's norms, others are negative and punishment for its violation.<sup>1</sup> By controlling their distribution, local power elite tend to have an impact upon the

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<sup>1</sup> These are general or generic definitions advocated by the author and serve the purpose of this thesis. Other sources, however, offer more specific definitions that are applicable only to certain contexts. According to Warren (1977), a positive sanction is a "reward" to an actor for "changing" his or her "position on a particular issue," supporting another independently of personal perspective. On the other hand he views negative sanctions as "potential punishments" for refusing to "change" such positions.



behavior of individuals and groups, as well as the pattern of social action and interaction (Warren, 1977). Social interaction among a diverse collection of actors is referred to as social organization. These actors include individuals and groups, which consist of both informal ones and a number of formal organizations at the local level. According to Walton (1971), there is a relationship between a community's social organization and the type of structure that governs it. This organization may be a factor in the distribution of power, or vice versa. Specific decisions generated by this structure may be consequences of social organization. Simply, local power structures are systems of decision making that are influenced by social organization and may ultimately affect the lives of people in the community. Social organization (specifically, the interactive relationships among individuals and organizations) is also a manifestation of community power structure, directly leading to the decision making process which has an impact upon the community at large (Form & Sauer, 1960).

There are two general approaches to the analysis of power structures: (a) the chotomic (categorical) approach, and (b) the continual approach. The chotomic approach is employed only for conceptual purposes and is a way of portraying ideal types. It describes the nature and major characteristics of different configurations in significantly distinct terms, acknowledging discriminative or discrete forms of community power. Through the chotomic approach, specific types of leadership are examined in relative isolation from all others. In society, actual distributions of power are likely to appear along a "continuum," with graduated differences among local structures. Being aware of this, theorists and researchers who focus their attention in such a direction are said to use a continual approach. This approach is grounded in an evolutionary model

consisting of a series of structures, with one type succeeding another (Nix & Dudley, 1966; Nix, Shoemaker & Singh, 1967; Platt, 1969).

The prevailing body of literature (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960, 1968; Walton, 1966, 1968, 1971) offers similar typologies of community power structures (see Figure 1). There are four ideal types: (a) the pyramidal (focused, convergent, monolithic or unitary), (b) the factional (divergent, polyolithic or "clique-based truncated pyramid"), (c) the coalitional ("caucus rule"), and (d) the amorphous (disorganized). Each of these is found in different communities. Some are governed by pyramidal structures in which power is monopolized by a single individual or group who dictates virtually every important policy and decision. In these structures, such decisions are implemented by a number of subordinate actors. This type of configuration is generally not responsive to the needs and demands of the public, including racial and gender strata. Nor is it concerned with serving the best interests of the community. Social participation in the process of decision making is not encouraged by local leaders. They are not likely to solicit input from residents. That is, these elite will probably not submit their decisions to "referenda," formal measures of legitimation by the people. The pyramidal power structure is characteristic of homogenous communities and those lacking economic diversity.

Other communities have factional structures. Such configurations consist of various groups (e.g., interest groups) and/or individuals who compete for community power. In some cases, these factions focus their attention on a limited number of issues and exercise power within specific arenas of policy and decision making. In others, however, they do address the same issues and thus use their power to influence relevant policies and decisions.

Walton	Rossi	Nix	Barth
pyramidal	pyramidal/ convergent	unitary/ focused	Type I/ pyramidal
factional	polylith/ divergent	bifactional/ "split" multifactional	Type II/ "clique- based truncated pyramid"
coalitional	"caucus rule"		
amorphous	amorphous	amorphous	Type III/ disorganized
<p>Figure 1. Comparative typologies of community power structure by Barth (1962), Nix (1969), Rossi (1960) and Walton (1966, 1971).</p>			

There are two types of factional power structures: bifactional and multifactional. One that is bifactional consists of two competitive factions, each trying to control the distribution of a community's resources. In a multifactional system, on the other hand, there are more than two factions who vie for such control. Both types of configuration have in common the following factors: (a) in some situations, power is exercised within specific domains concerned with different social issues; (b) in others, power is employed to influence the general direction of policy and decision making and the status of every issue.

In communities with coalitional structures, power is distributed among various individuals and/or groups who tend to cooperate with one another in the development of community policy. The leadership of a number of influential groups and organizations may merge to form a network or coalition, which frequently solidifies, crystallizes and enhances the power of each. In this structure, decisions are reached through a consensus of leaders. Many of these

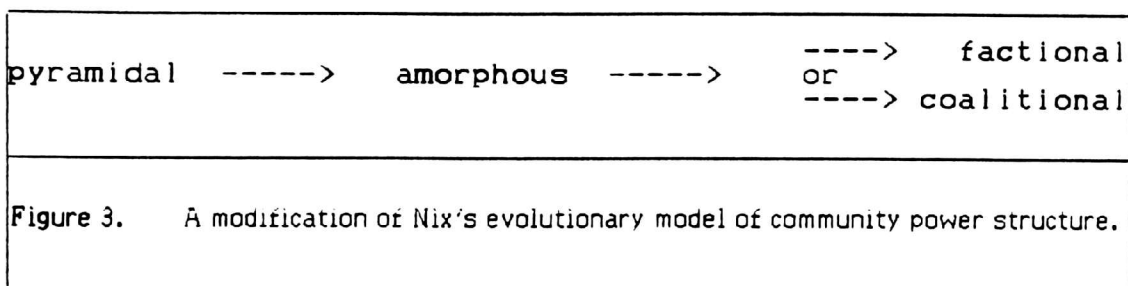
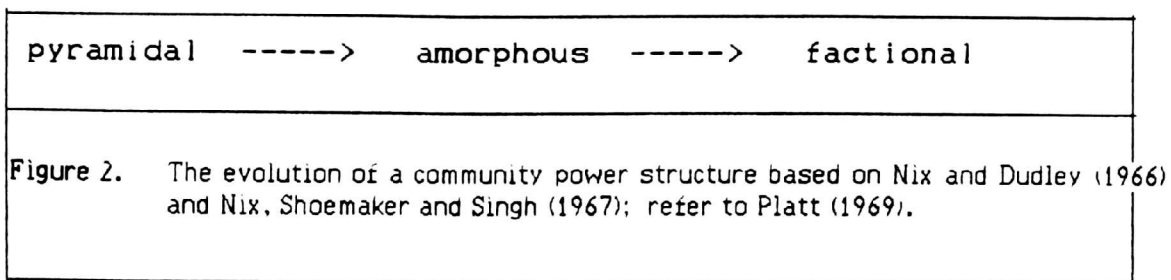
actors tend to focus upon the preservation of common interests (e.g., community power), thus cooperate with one another to ensure that a monopoly does not occur. To do this, they may combine social resources (e.g., economic or financial resources), mobilizing them to promote the ideals shared by virtually every member of the coalition.

The amorphous power structure is an ideal type which may not exist in reality. It is very likely that researchers who depict such configurations do so only because they have failed to locate other forms of leadership. They tend to be characterized by informal organization. In communities with amorphous structures, there is no clear and identifiable pattern of policy and decision making. Power tends to be diffuse, and the process of shaping policies and decisions is an informal one. Generally, this structure may be found in heterogeneous communities with economic diversity. In contemporary society, the economic systems of different communities are interrelated; often they form a single structure that serves as a network of economic resources (e.g., in metropolitan areas). Within this network, groups and actors exchange resources amongst themselves. As a result, each constituent community is affected. Its economic structure, namely its infrastructure, influences and is influenced by economic relationships with other communities. This factor is generally attributed to urbanization and industrialization brought about due to the efforts of social actors from both the private and public sectors. The "absentee ownership" of local business and industry may affect a community's infrastructure, which, in turn, may affect the composition of its power structure.

### An Evolutionary Approach to Community Power

In the beginning of this chapter it was noted that the chotomic approach is only a method for categorizing ideal types of power structures. The fact that there are graduated differences among a wide range of configurations is justification for the employment of the continual approach. As previously suggested, this approach is grounded in an evolutionary model consisting of a series of structures with one type succeeding another. According to Nix and Dudley (1966) and Nix, Shoemaker and Singh (1967), the community power structure evolves from the pyramidal to the amorphous to the factional (Platt, 1969). This model is presented in Figure 2. Although Nix (1969) does not identify coalitional structures, his model may be adapted to include them. As portrayed in Figure 3, community power structure may thus evolve from the pyramidal to the amorphous to either the factional or coalitional.

The structural evolution of power may be related to changes in social values, perspective and ideology. Platt (1969) implies that the pattern and distribution of community power is connected with the prevalent perspective and values of local residents. A change in this perspective and value system may affect the composition of a community's structure, as well as the extent of participation by its residents. Platt attributes changes in social values to "external" factors that may have an impact upon local ideology and perspectives. These factors include community social and administrative programs sponsored by higher levels of government, specifically regional and national governments. Collectively, different levels of government constitute the public sector. "External" factors may also include a variety of social and administrative programs originating with the private (business and industrial) sector. Relatively large industries and businesses frequently establish branches in the community and contribute to



economic development and pluralism. This tends to result in a relatively equal distribution of power which is shared by various actors. Economic development is associated with pluralism, a feature of both factional (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971) and coalitional structures (Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971). As previously discussed, the factional structure is characterized by the competition for community power by any number of interest groups. The coalitional power structure (Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971), on the other hand, is a coalition or network of individuals and/or groups that cooperate in the development of local policies and decisions.

Another factor that affects social perspectives and fosters the development of pluralism is the interactive pattern of residents from different communities. They are likely to interact with one another on either a direct or indirect basis. Indirect social interaction occurs via the printed and electronic media. By definition, the media constitute a system through which information, including information concerning alternative perspectives, is transferred among a wide

range of actors. Interaction among residents from neighboring communities may contribute to the development of pluralism in each. Some "pluralistic structures" emphasize the relative importance of their participation in the decision making process.

Two studies of Oglethorpe County, Georgia (Nix, Shoemaker and Singh, 1967; Platt, 1969) note a change in the composition of the community's power structure. The earlier study reveals the presence of an amorphous structure (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971) characterized by informal organization. In this configuration, power is both diffuse and tends to be exercised more or less on an informal basis.

Platt suggests that Oglethorpe had previously been governed by a pyramidal structure (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971) consisting of "informal cliques" and local "bosses" with total control over community affairs. Oglethorpe's power elite tend to be members of these "cliques," monopolize community power, and formulate virtually every major policy and decisions in the community. According to Nix, Shoemaker and Singh (1967), Oglethorpe's amorphous structure retains some of the characteristics of pyramidal power structures, including community government by "informal cliques." The retention of pyramidal features may be attributed to a "localite" perspective embraced by the community's population, which focuses upon social interests and processes occurring in the community (Merton, 1949, 1957).

A replication of the study suggests that Oglethorpe's amorphous power structure has become more "pluralistic." That is, it has evolved into a "pluralistic structure," with community power distributed among a variety of actors (Platt, 1969). This power may be exercised informally by Oglethorpe's residents, who may thus participate in community decision making to some extent.

Oglethorpe's "pluralistic power structure" may be either factional or coalitional. While factional structures (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971) are characterized by the competition for community power, those that are coalitional (Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971) consist of networks of individuals and/or groups that cooperate in its exercise, specifically through their involvement in the decision making process.

Platt attributes the development of pluralism in Oglethorpe to situational factors or changes occurring within the community's social environment. These changes reflect transitions in the predominant perspective, ideology and system of values. According to Platt, various "external" factors have produced changes in the views and values of a majority of Oglethorpe's population, thus encouraging the redistribution of power. He suggests that the public has adopted a "cosmopolitan" perspective, which focuses upon social processes generally occurring outside the community, though with a potential impact upon community affairs (Merton, 1949, 1957) that includes the development of a "pluralistic structure."

Some factors affecting Oglethorpe, its inhabitants and their views have been community social and administrative programs initiated at higher levels of government. Such programs may also be sponsored by a variety of business and industrial organizations from the private sector. Relatively large businesses from urban communities, including Athens, may have established branches in Oglethorpe, facilitating economic development and pluralism. In addition, certain other changes in the local economy may have enhanced the redistribution of power even further.

Another important factor that apparently had an impact upon the people of Oglethorpe was the extent of their interaction with those from other communities



found within the Atlanta-Athens metropolitan area. At the time of the Platt study, a significant number of them commuted to Athens on a regular basis. The residents of both communities interact and exchange resources within the economic market located in the business district of Athens. They are consumers and consume a variety of commodities acquired within this market. Platt notes that many of Oglethorpe's residents are employed in Athens and thus receive capital in exchange for services. These actors also generate capital for various business and industrial organizations, which may promote economic development within the Atlanta-Athens metropolitan area, including Oglethorpe.

Platt further suggests that the media may have contributed to the redistribution of community power, thus the development of pluralism. As noted earlier, the media constitute a system of communication through which information (including information concerning alternative social perspectives) is transmitted. Within metropolitan areas, the media transmit information throughout a network of communities, fostering structural changes in each, including Oglethorpe.

A change in the composition of the community power structure of Richmond, Georgia is also evident in two consecutive studies conducted by Nix and Dudley (1966) and Platt (1969). The earlier study reveals the development of a relatively equal distribution of power among a variety of actors. In a replication of the Nix and Dudley study, Platt notes the presence of a functional "pluralistic power structure" in Richmond, thus characterized by power sharing in relatively equal proportions. This structure may be either factional or coalitional.

### Community Leadership

Community power is a manifestation of leadership at the local level. In the community, leaders tend to undertake different approaches to its exercise. Various typologies of leadership are presented in the literature. A typology central to this thesis is proposed by Bonjean (1963, 1964), Bonjean & Olson (1964), Bonjean and Grimes (1974), and Bonjean and Carter (1965). They differentiate leaders by social class, social status, the reputation for community power, and the levels of power they actually wield.<sup>2</sup> Bonjean (1964) employs "two measures of social class," occupational position and property ownership; and "three measures of" social "status," educational level,<sup>3</sup> formal leadership roles and "length of residence in the community." Occupational position and ownership are associated with income and may be regarded as variables of economic status. A leader has a reputation for community power if identified by "knowledgeables" ("judges") and/or the community at large. Within the context of power studies, a "knowledgeable" is defined as one who is familiar with the structure and distribution of power. Bonjean and others distinguish among three types of leaders, those who are visible, concealed and symbolic.<sup>4</sup> The visible leader possesses community power and frequently occupies a position in the community's

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<sup>2</sup>This model is based on Weber's typology of social stratification (Bonjean & Grimes, 1974; Gerth & Mills, 1946).

<sup>3</sup>Although Bonjean employs education as a "measure of" social "status," it was not a major factor in his comparative study of Burlington, Winston-Salem, Charlotte and High Point, North Carolina. No significant difference was found among leaders' educational levels (Bonjean, 1964).

<sup>4</sup>Some religious leaders and community activists, such as civil rights leaders, may be classified as symbolic leaders, although Bonjean and others do not raise this issue.

formal structure. This power is recognized in the community at large, including a sample of actors familiar with the pattern of local leadership. Although concealed leaders also wield power, they have such reputations only among "knowledgeables." The symbolic leader, on the other hand, does not have community power. Yet he is perceived as being powerful by the general public.

Most visible and symbolic leaders belong to the upper stratum and have higher social statuses than those who are concealed. According to Bonjean (1963), some concealed leaders may be members of the upper class or possess a relatively high social status, but never both. He notes that visible and symbolic leaders tend to be "major property owners" and occupy key positions with large business organizations<sup>5</sup> at the local level. This suggests that they are from upper income brackets and possess relatively high economic statuses.<sup>6</sup> On status variables, these leaders tend to have resided in the community for many years. Both have also occupied formal positions in power structures at the local and state levels (Bonjean, 1964).

#### The Empowerment of Groups Traditionally Excluded from Community Decision Making

##### Ethnicity: Power Along Racial and Ethnic lines

Racial and gender strata tend to vary in the amount(s) of community power they wield. In addition, their reputations for leadership fluctuate along a

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<sup>5</sup>From Bonjean's perspective, a large business is operationally defined as one that employs a minimum of 100 people.

<sup>6</sup>Although this is not always the case. Some religious leaders (e.g., Protestant ministers) may possess reputations for power in the community at large and are thus symbolic leaders, but yet lack the wealth of local actors with higher socioeconomic statuses (R. Branch, personal communication, 1993).

continuum, as do the perceptions they themselves have of local power distributions. Social actors are perceived differently when identified by a number of racial or ethnic groups. They are more likely to have reputations for community power among members of their own strata. A leader's reputation may be associated with his or her ethnic extraction. In the community, individuals tend to respect and identify with leaders who share their heritage. On this basis, they perceive these actors as being powerful and influential, likely naming them during reputational studies and on social surveys. Settles (1984) has compared the identification of local leaders by the White, Hispanic and African-American populations of Adams-Morgan, a community of Washington, D.C. The sample consisted of eighteen subjects, six of which were Caucasian, Hispanic and African-American, respectively. Caucasians identified leaders and individuals from the community at large, specifically those who actually did wield power. In addition, they named local organizations which were influential from their perspectives.

The Settles study also notes that African-Americans tend to identify other African-Americans as community leaders. They socially interact and identify with leaders from African-American descent more often than with others. Therefore, they may expect them to protect their interests in the community. Hispanics were found to identify Hispanic leaders. They interact and may identify with such actors, also expecting them to protect their interests. Both Hispanics and African-Americans tend to interact and socially identify with neighborhood leaders, thus are likely to name those they believe will protect neighborhood interests.

## Part II: Theories of Community Power

### Stratification-Elite Theory

Having explored the different types of leadership, power structures and supportive empirical data, it is necessary to pursue their theoretical foundations. This section focuses on alternative orientations and paradigms of community power. Elite theories developed within the discipline of sociology are examined first. These include two primary theories--functional-elite theory and conflict-elite theory. A third elite theory (Lenski, 1966) which "synthesizes" the functional and conflict perspectives is also presented.

According to elite theorists, community power is distributed in unequal proportions. Local structures are seen as being centralized, pyramidal and monolithic. The task of developing virtually every major policy and decision is under the auspices of either a clique or one or more powerful actors. In general, power tends to be the domain of the upper social and economic classes. Communities may use revenue to maintain the leisure and living standard of the elite. For example, local resources may be allocated for social functions and activities primarily associated with the upper stratum. Community leaders are frequently granted preferential access to financial resources for personal living expenses, as well as for lodging, travel and transportation to various activities in other communities under the presumption that this is advantageous to the community. Access may be obtained through either direct or indirect means (e.g., the reimbursement of previously satisfied expenses), but the beneficiary is the community's power elite, not its general population. These influentials tend to have relatively unlimited access to resources and the structure of power, ensuring that their programs and goals are placed in motion. The extent and

domain of government may increase with greater spending (Williams, 1977). Although different communities are characterized by different "configurations of power," decisions are frequently shaped by covert actors who are not members of the official structure.

#### A Functional Theory of Community Power<sup>7</sup>

Within elite theory, there is no universal agreement concerning the nature of inequities in the distribution of community power. There are two primary schools of thought that serve to illustrate the elite in different respects. The first is functionalism, which emphasizes the adaptive aspects of inequality in communities and society as a whole. According to elite theorists in general, the distribution of social resources--including the resource of community power--in contemporary society is controlled by the power elite. These actors allocate resources for the maintenance of the upper stratum, a practice that has become legitimated through the perceived social responsibility of this class. According to functional-elite theory, members of the upper class fulfill vital functions, performing social roles requiring expert knowledge in various arenas, including the administration of community government. This legitimates greater access to community resources by local power elite.

According to the functional-elite perspective, order and stability persist when the community is stratified and strata vary in their abilities to obtain social resources, including community power. The formation of strata is

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<sup>7</sup>This discussion focuses upon local level arenas. For general applications and emphases of functional theory refer to Clelland (1986), Davis (1948), Davis and Moore (1945), Matras (1984) and Nanda (1980, 1987).

instrumental to the preservation of social order in the community. Integration is accomplished through a collective consensus of values and ideals. Complex societies, as well as their constituent communities, are affected by a variety of environmental factors. Key positions in local power structures are generally occupied by qualified personnel. In capitalist society, such structures tend to be legitimated within the private sector. Elites from industry and business may serve in an advisory capacity. They possess the expertise that is frequently solicited by community leaders. A system of incentive serving to reward them for their expert advice and knowledge is often instituted. This may consist of a wide range of measures--such as financial appropriation and political appointment--which are often employed to influence policy and decision making by formal leadership structures.

Functional theory is supported by a number of empirical studies found in the literature on community power.

Case studies. Investigating the reputation for community power in Atlanta<sup>8</sup> during the early 1950's, Hunter (1953) concluded that the local structure was pyramid shaped. Hunter's depiction of Atlanta's power structure is a landmark case study that established precedent for subsequent studies grounded in functional theory.<sup>9</sup> As suggested earlier, pyramidal structures are characterized by a monopoly of power which is exercised by a single individual or group who

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<sup>8</sup>In his study, Hunter does not refer to Atlanta by name, but rather identifies the community by pseudonym (Regional City), a standard practice during the 1950's.

<sup>9</sup>Some of these are cross-cultural studies from the field of political anthropology. Both political sociologists and political anthropologists have documented a wide range of configurations.

dominates and formulates every major policy and decision in the community (Barth, 1962; Nix, 1969; Rossi, 1960; Walton, 1966, 1971). In Atlanta, as in many other communities, formal decision makers tend to be influenced--either directly or indirectly--by economic actors from the private sector. This sector controls a variety of resources which are frequently employed to secure, maintain and increase its level of power. According to Hunter, community power structures consist of three components, the "upper limits power" structure, the "lower limits power" structure, and the under-structure. Major policies and decisions are made by members of the "upper limits" structure, who are the power elite. Hunter observed that Atlanta's elite consisted primarily of upper-class businessmen who influenced and controlled the development of local policies and decisions. They generally did not occupy formal positions of leadership, although some had been members of various organizations which may have provided them with social connections that translated into political and economic power. On the most part, Atlanta's business sector functioned to preserve the collective interests of its actors. Local power elite were cohesive, a characteristic that generally indicates a sense of class consciousness.

At the time of the study, there were a number of informal cliques<sup>10</sup> operating within the business sector of Atlanta. By definition, a clique functions to secure the interests of its members. Cliques frequently form alliances with other cliques and cooperate to secure common interests. In Atlanta, key clique actors were associated with principal businesses and community organizations. One's

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<sup>10</sup>In Community Power Structure, Hunter used the terms clique and crowd interchangeably. The reason for employing the latter word was that it had been part of the vocabulary of his respondents.



power may be limited only to certain situations, thus deference to this actor is expressed only in these contexts, not in others. Formal leaders may receive financial support for a wide range of community projects. It is argued that they tend to be primarily responsive to the demands of the upper stratum (Trownstine & Christensen, 1982).

Atlanta's under-structure consisted of visible actors who occupied positions in local agencies and bureaus. Most of the personnel were professionals, experts and specialists. They tended to possess relatively high social status and prestige, although their power levels were relatively low. In addition, these actors were members of various types of organizations located in the community. Visible leaders were frequently responsible for implementing policies and decisions originating with the power elite.

#### Community Power and Conflict Theory<sup>11</sup>

Conflict theory focuses upon the development of social conflict, an attribute of social inequality, including unequal power allocations at the local level. From this perspective, communities are characterized by social stratification and the unbalanced distribution of community power and other resources. Social strata include social classes which compete for these resources in order to further class interests. Because the community has a limited number of resources, access tends to be relatively exclusive. Their distribution is at the disposal of the power elite, members of the upper stratum who mobilize them primarily to

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<sup>11</sup>This discussion focuses upon local level arenas. For general applications and emphases of conflict theory refer to Collins (1971, 1975, 1979), Dahrendorf (1958, 1959, 1961, 1967), Kloss (1986), Matras (1984), Nanda (1980, 1987), Turner (1991) and Wanner (1986).

preserve class interests. Further, access to local leadership structures is controlled exclusively by the ruling class for the ruling class. It retains community power for its members and limits access by the non-ruling class. The power elite monopolize, employ and exercise power to subjugate and control social action and behavior by the underclasses, collectively referring to all those actors who lack vital resources.

The social resources of the ruling class are the social interests of the ruling class, as well as the interests of the non-ruling class. There is a disparity between social interests and access to social resources. The fact that the number of available resources is limited tends to be a contributing factor in the development of interclass conflict. The elite tend to undertake measures to preserve and increase their levels of power, as well as to pursue various other interests. According to conflict theorists, the underclass does not acknowledge the monopoly of community power by the ruling class as legitimate and therefore strives to reform the prevalent distribution practices, securing access to social resources for themselves. To do this, they frequently employ extreme tactics and other forms of power not considered legitimate by the upper stratum.

Social conflict is associated with repression and exploitation through a variety of tactics and the exercise of power. Both conflict and power are functions of social order. In the community, as in the larger society, order is maintained through various institutions, including the political and economic institutions. These institutions serve to control the behavior of social actors and maintain the group in power (Kerbo, 1991). Social conflict and community power are related through a system of positive feedback. Each variable affects the other: An increase in community power by a social class increases class conflict; an increase in class conflict may increase the community power of a

social class. The greater the disparity, the greater the conflict; the greater the conflict, the greater the inequality of power at the local level.

Within conflict theory, there are two general orientations, paradigms or schools of thought: Critical-conflict theory and uncritical-conflict theory. These alternatives vary in several respects. Each has a different interpretation concerning the nature of social conflict and the unilateral distribution of community power, as well as the prospect for social equality. According to uncritical-conflict theorists, social conflict and power monopolies are "inevitable." Individuals are perceived as "selfish" by "nature." Social conflict and competition may result in a change in the configuration of community power, but this is only a transfer from one elite group to another. Within this paradigm, there are a variety of theories (Kerbo, 1991). The following is a discussion of Dahrendorf's dialectical conflict theory.

Dahrendorf's dialectical theory of social conflict. Dahrendorf (1958, 1959, 1961, 1967) attributes social conflict, power inequities and the competition for social power to the development of "imperatively coordinated associations" (ICA's). These associations are organizational systems in which the power of some actors (the power elite) is legitimated, thus employed to dominate and control the behavior of others. According to Turner's (1991) interpretation of Dahrendorf, the community itself may be regarded as an "imperatively coordinated association."<sup>12</sup> At the local level there are a variety of organizations "characterized by power relationships" that are also "imperatively coordinated associations." Social conflict and the competition for community power tend to

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<sup>12</sup>For a discussion refer to Turner (1991).

occur on a perpetual basis. According to conflict theorists, there are two general classes of social roles: superiors and subordinates. A superior may be an organizational leader, as well as a community leader. While this actor possesses community power and generates local policies and decisions, subordinates are the executors of these policies and decisions.

Superiors and subordinates are characterized by different social interests. Superior interests focus upon the preservation of the prevalent distribution of community power, and those of subordinates are directed towards its "redistribution." If the perception of such disparity becomes apparent, the result is a development of two alliances, factions or "conflict groups" which compete for community power. A "resolution" of this conflict can only occur through the "redistribution" of power in the community, an "imperatively coordinated association." When this happens, social actors may exchange roles: Former subordinates gain power, which is legitimated through formal mechanisms (e.g., local elections), and former superiors are subjugated to an inferior status. Thus former subordinates become superiors, local power elite, while former superiors constitute a new underclass of subordinates. In addition, a transformation of social interests also occurs within the "imperatively coordinated association," with each group assuming those interests formerly espoused by the other. If the perception of a disparity in interests again becomes apparent, then a reformation of alliances, factions or "conflict groups" tends to occur, evoking another period of conflict and competition for community power, as well as its "redistribution" (Turner, 1991).

According to critical-conflict theorists, social change and equality can occur in society, as well as its constituent communities. Their view is that an "equitable"

distribution of community power is possible. Individuals may be regarded as being "either selfish or unselfish," but they tend to be "altruistic" and "cooperative" in most cases.<sup>13</sup> Social institutions are perceived as maladaptive and exploitive components of society, as well as the community. Within critical-conflict theory, there are a number of variations (Kerbo, 1991). The following is a discussion of Marx's political and economic theory of social conflict.

Marx's political-economic theory of social conflict. Marx (1932) and Marx and Engels (1930, 1932, 1963) attribute social stratification, conflict and power inequities to the social structure of society. This structure consists of three components: (a) an infrastructure, (b) a structure, and (c) a superstructure.<sup>14</sup> According to Marxists, the infrastructure of a society affects its structure, which in turn affects its superstructure (Lefebvre, 1966, 1969; Persico, 1990). The infrastructure consists of the "forces of production," such as technology, expertise, equipment (e.g., machinery), material resources and methods of production (Appelbaum, 1988). These forces are employed to produce social resources, including economic resources.

The infrastructure has an affect on the "relations of production," the political, economic and structural relationship between the ruling and working classes (Lefebvre, 1966, 1969). Marx and Engels refer to the ruling class as the bourgeois and the working class as the proletariat. In capitalist society, the ruling class consists of bourgeoisie or capitalists who control the distribution of

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<sup>13</sup>Environmental "factors" play a role in the development of altruism in individuals (Kerbo, 1991).

<sup>14</sup>Lefebvre (1966, 1969) employs the term substructure in lieu of infrastructure.

social resources (Engels, 1930, 1963). These actors monopolize community power, including political and economic power, which is employed to limit access to such resources, reserving the profits from production for only themselves.

The power of the ruling class is sanctioned and legitimated by the superstructure (Lenin, 1932), a system of social institutions and social ideology (Lefebvre, 1966, 1969). Social institutions include the political (Lenin, 1932) and economic institutions, as well as the institution of religion. They promote the social, political and economic ideology of the ruling class. This ideology focuses upon the preservation of class interests. Specifically, it legitimates the monopoly of social resources and community power by capitalists, as well as the subordination of the working class (Appelbaum, 1988).

According to Marx, the economic condition of a society has an affect on power distributions. Economic instability is a manifestation of social conflict and serves as the basis for the redistribution of power. Marx predicts that social, political and economic equality will take place in every society. Such a system is referred to as a communist state. However, this depends largely upon the organized efforts of the masses: The proletariat. There are several stages through which equality is achieved. First, the proletariat engage in armed conflict with the bourgeoisie. They employ revolutionary methods and tactics to overthrows the ruling class by force (Engels, 1930, 1963; Ryazanoff, 1930, 1963). After this has been accomplished, society passes through a transitional period. Marx refers to this phase as "the dictatorship of the proletariat." During transition, the proletariat monopolize power and take total control of the political and economic system. These actors exchange roles with the bourgeoisie: The proletariat become the rulers, and the bourgeois becomes a subordinate class. Social conflict and economic instability may occur during transition. The

bourgeoisie may attempt to regain their power through counterrevolution. However, this period can end only when all opposition has been suppressed (Ryazanoff, 1930, 1963), class conflicts have been resolved and the economy has stabilized.

The final stage is the establishment of a communist state characterized by social, political and economic equality. Social classes are eliminated. Every actor has equal access to social resources, including political and economic resources. In order to guarantee these ideals, a new superstructure must be put in place. Its institutions must enforce a social, political and economic ideology associated with total equality. Communist social ideology legitimates the collective ownership of social resources, including community power.<sup>15</sup>

#### Holistic and Eclectic Approaches to Community Power Theory

Functionalism and conflict theory are contradictory perspectives on community power and the power elite. Each may explain different aspects of this concept and be applicable to different community environments, as well as periods of social change characterized by transitions of power among different elite groups. A more general, inclusive and holistic theory that addresses both social conflict and stability, the environmental relationship between these variables and situational variation (e.g., social change, social crises) is required. Some contemporary theorists seek to resolve this theoretical discrepancy by incorporating elements of each approach.

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<sup>15</sup>For further discussion or additional information about Marx's theory see also McClellan (1977), Nanda (1980, 1987) and Wolff (1984).

Two related concepts employed to describe the association between power structures and social environments are social (cultural) and situational relativity. The term social relativity<sup>16</sup> refers to the relationship of a community's configuration to its environment. These structures are (social) adaptations to specific types of environments. They are generally flexible and suited to the needs of the community. Thus power monopolies are also adaptable to some environments, but maladaptive to others. In the community, as in the larger society, social environments tend to change through the occurrence of unexpected events (e.g., social and economic crises, etc.). The relationship between changing environments and patterns of leadership is referred to as situational relativity. Although some structures appear to be rigid on the surface, a systemic and structural breakdown that will eventually lead to a transition in power tends to occur with the passage of time. Social stability may be assured in communities characterized by power monopolies, but these monopolies have been known to foster instability during periods of crisis, conflict and unrest.<sup>17</sup>

Lenski (1966) and Matras (1984) document various approaches that incorporate or assimilate elements of functional and conflict theories of inequality, including inequities in the distribution of power. The following is a discussion of Lenski's

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<sup>16</sup>This concept was developed and pioneered by anthropologists. For further discussion about social or cultural relativity refer to Koch (1986) and Nanda (1980, 1987).

<sup>17</sup>The pattern of exercising power is different in stable and unstable environments, thus distinct terms are used to describe the process in each. Although there are a number of typologies, one focuses specifically on the issue of environmental stability. It differentiates between two types of social power, episodic and perpetual. One who exercises perpetual power does so on a regular basis, as long the social environment remains relatively stable. If changes occur, however, certain situational factors may make it possible for otherwise powerless actors to sway episodic power.



theory of social and economic distribution.

Social distribution. Lenski (1966) proposes a theory of social inequality that "synthesizes" certain aspects of the functional and conflict perspectives, focusing specifically upon the means of production. According to Lenski, a society's mode of production is a manifestation of its economic structure, the dominant form of technology employed in the production of social resources. He suggests that the term technology must be distinguished from other aspects of economics. Anthropologists document four primary modes of production, each representing a different level of complexity in terms of economic and technological development. These are hunting and gathering, horticulture (extensive agriculture), agrarian (intensive agriculture) and industry. Each mode is associated with a different system of economic distribution. The extent of social inequality varies among societies with distinct modes of production and distribution (V. R. Persico, personal communication, 1990). Lenski's basic model of inequality in allocating resources is as follows: A society's technology affects its economic organization, which affects its political organization, which, in turn, affects the pattern of distributing resources (e.g., economic and material resources). In addition, he notes that a number of other variables, including social ideology, environmental factors and leadership characteristics, may also have an impact upon social, political and economic organization, as well as the level of inequality. According to Lenski, ideology and the attributes of leaders tend to be particularly important in more complex societies.

In society, the extent of inequality is related to the volume of available resources. According to Lenski, there are two "laws of distribution." The first is associated with functionalism and characteristic of the hunting and gathering mode of production. The second is based on the conflict perspective and

applicable to all subsequent modes. The first law states that social actors are dependent upon others for "survival" and achieving a wide variety of personal objectives, and thus "share" resources (e.g., "products of labor") to ensure reciprocation and societal preservation. Although they generally compete for such resources, these actors may cooperate to promote the achievement of common interests. Lenski suggests that this is necessary not only for "survival," but also to attain a number of personal and social "goals." In hunting and gathering societies, the least complex mode of production, resources are "distributed" to individuals according to their "needs." In addition, the process of making decisions is a relatively informal one based on a general "consensus" of societal members.

The second law focuses upon the employment of power in the distributing (a significant "portion" of) a society's resource "surplus." Lenski identifies three variables associated with the process of social distribution in complex societies: power, privilege and prestige. A complex society is characterized by a "surplus" of economic resources. The "possession or control" of this "surplus" is referred to as privilege. In complex societies, the "distribution of privilege" is affected by the "distribution of" social "power." Individuals frequently employ power to gain access to and monopolize economic resources, as well as to "control" the distribution of a "surplus," an indication of privilege. Lenski's theory also acknowledges that some actors may possess altruistic tendencies when distributing these resources, but the role of social power is much more intense than altruism. In society, both power and privilege have an impact upon the distribution of prestige. Thus an individual's power and privilege tend to affect his level of prestige. There is a positive "feedback" relationship between social power and prestige. Power is regarded as a dependent variable as well as an

independent variable. Thus while social power facilitates one's prestige via privilege, prestige is a mechanism by which his or her level of power may be enhanced even further.

As a society progresses to a higher level of complexity, a "surplus" of social resources is generated. This promotes conflict and competition for access to these resources. Lenski identifies two phases of social conflict. During the first, physical force, coercion and militant tactics are employed to overthrow societal leaders and the prevalent system of distribution. During the second stage of conflict, after all "opposition" has been "eliminated," the victors undertake measures to legitimate their power. This involves the establishment of social institutions and social ideology. One may secure power by assuming a (formal) position of leadership, commanding an ability to influence a wide range of decisions and/or through claims to land or other property. The victors also reorganize and restructure the social system and pattern of resource distribution, with a preponderance of these resources retained for themselves. In this system, a relatively low number of actors are able to acquire power, which is frequently employed to monopolize access to social resources. Thus resources are disproportionately "distributed" to individuals according to their levels of power, with those wielding the most--the power elite--securing the greatest number. While subordinate actors may gain access to valuable resources, this tends to occur only as a "reward" for serving and promoting the interests of the elite.

Lenski further notes that the highest rate of social inequality occurs in agrarian societies. Such extreme inequities may decrease with transformation into an industrial mode of production. Although social inequality in industrial

societies is apparently lower than in agrarian societies, it is relatively high nonetheless.

### Pluralism

Pluralist theory is based upon the democratic ideal of political equality. According to this perspective, community power is decentralized and shared by a wide variety of actors. It is distributed among various agencies, bureaus, organizations and interest groups with "veto power" preventing total domination by any party. Local leadership constitutes a polyarchy, a structure that stresses plurality in responsibility, accountability, policy development and decision making. Members of a democratic society collectively endorse a "democratic creed" or civil constitution and legitimate the power of key actors at different levels of government. This creed acknowledges social participation and endorses equal access to community power structures. Dissent is tolerated by powerholders. Differences are resolved through compromise and competition. This is exemplified by the ideal American community. Pluralist theory is associated with the disciplines of political science (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963, 1980; Wolfinger, 1960) and economics (Schumpeter, 1942, 1962).

### Process Theory

The foundation of pluralism is process theory. This perspective focuses upon the dynamics of collective power in democratic society. By definition, democracy is regarded as an institutionalized system through which opponents compete for support by citizens. Competition is perceived as an essential feature of community government, and thus necessary if it is to operate effectively. To ensure that this system runs smoothly, a bureaucracy must be established, along

with a series of rules and formal guidelines that define the standards of acceptable and proper political behavior (a "code of ethics"). Social participation tends to occur through indirect channels. Most actors do not possess the skills required for efficient government, so leadership is provided by the power elite. Ideally, the power of these elites is legitimated by the community at large, but individuals, cliques or factions may influence their policies and decisions. Common interests are served through compromise and arbitration, which frequently involves the courts and legislatures at different levels of government. Local actors represent constituents on community power structures, and these may consist of citizens at large, specific populations (e.g., racial, gender, religious, ethnic and/or special interest groups), geographic divisions of the community (e.g., wards, precincts), or the power elite.<sup>18</sup>

The structure of power tends to evolve over time. According to Dahl (1961), community power is transitional. No single individual or group is capable of retaining it on a permanent basis. While some leaders are elected, others are appointed. A small number of them may command more power than others, but only for a certain period of time.

From the pluralist perspective, power is a potential feature of society. Dahl refers to potential power as "slack power," which may or may not be exercised. Generally it is not, however. All citizens possess potential resources that may be employed to obtain power in the community. According to Dahl, political resources are "noncumulative," meaning that they are controlled by a number of actors. No individual is capable of monopolizing them; so a monopoly of

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<sup>18</sup>For a complete discussion of process theory refer to Schumpeter (1942, 1962).

community power does not occur.

There are two types of elite with "slack power," namely social notables and economic notables. In the community, economic notables exercise control over a network of business and financial organizations. They are primarily members of the upper socioeconomic classes, some of whom may be bankers, stockbrokers or employed in other occupations dealing with fiscal matters. By contrast, social notables are individuals with high social standing (social status) and thus highly regarded in the community. A small number of social and economic notables may sway a certain amount of power, yet most do not.

Pluralists distinguish between two strata of community participation: the "political stratum" and the "apolitical stratum." The defining factor that serves to differentiate one from the other is extent of political interest. Within the "political stratum," the individual actor is generally referred to as homo politicus, or "political man." One from the "apolitical stratum" is known as homo civicus, or "civic man" (Ricci, 1971).

The "political stratum" is concerned with political activity. It is heterogeneous, consisting of a small number of political actors. Homo politicus is politically active and may be a visible leader within the public sector. Some of these actors occupy positions in community power structures, as well as in political parties, political action committees (PAC's) and a wide range of special interest groups. They are characterized by diversity in political interests. Community power is exercised within specific social settings and issue areas. The power of a political actor may be challenged and is often conceded when opponents are successful. Most do not have access to major economic resources. Neither do they possess very high levels of social status.

The "apolitical stratum," on the other hand, is concerned with civic affairs, referring to all events and activities that are considered nonpolitical by pluralist standards. This stratum includes the majority of a community's populations. Homo civicus generally confines his (or her) activities to the private sector and is an active participant in the family, church, school and nonpolitical associations located in the community. Because they may perceive a lack of control over political matters, most civic actors are disinterested in politics. The power elite tend to be unresponsive to their needs. Homo civicus is frequently reluctant to mobilize resources for the purpose of increasing his community power. Collectively, they may be able to force change and influence leadership structures when the need arises. Interaction between the "political" and "apolitical strata" may occur, although this tends to be contingent upon situational factors. On the whole, however, the political impact of homo civicus is far less than that of homo politicus.

#### Summary

In this chapter, alternative theories of community power have been addressed, focusing primarily upon elitism and pluralism. Two perspectives on elite theory--functionalism and conflict theory--were introduced, as well as a holistic approach incorporating elements of both. In addition, typologies of community power and leadership structures have been explored, including a discussion of different types of leaders identified through the reputational method. Finally, an examination of community leaders and their reputations for power among various ethnic and racial strata was presented.

### CHAPTER 3

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND COMMUNITY POWER

Alternative theories, perspectives and orientations of community power are associated with alternative measurement techniques. The method employed is frequently a product of one's paradigm, thus designed to identify specific types or leaders, influentials and power structures (Freeman, Fararo, Bloomberg & Sunshine, 1963). Over the years, different theories and methods have emerged to dominate research in community power. Prior to the 1950's the identification of leaders was primarily conducted through the positional approach (Mills, 1959). Since that time, a variety of methods--including the reputational (Hunter, 1953, 1963) and decisional (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963, 1980) approaches--have been employed by social and political researchers. While the positional and reputational methods are generally associated with the functional-elite perspective of community power, the decisional approach is grounded in pluralist theory. Each of these methods is discussed in the following sections. Their advantages and disadvantages are addressed in Chapter 4.

##### Positional Approach

One means of measuring community power is the positional approach pioneered by C. Wright Mills (1959). As suggested above, this method is related to the functional-elite perspective. It focuses upon leaders who are highly visible and occupy formal positions of authority. One's position in the community may be a



composite of a variety of roles, specific functions associated with this position. He (or she) may perform various roles, especially formal ones, collectively constituting his (or her) social position (Matras, 1984). This position, including each role, may enhance his or her capacity to influence a wide range of policies and decisions. Local leaders are characterized by different roles and positions, and thus vary in their abilities to sway and exercise power.

Through the positional approach, the formal leader may be identified according to the number of roles he (or she) occupies, as well as the social status associated with each. The social status or a social role is its social value, which defines a leader's position in the community. In this method, incumbent leaders are catalogued and listed by social function. Each function is assigned a score that corresponds to its social status and value, and thus serves as a measure of the level of community decision making (White, 1950). Because local leaders may perform a variety of functions, the scores (i.e., social values) of all functions associated with each particular leader are added to obtain a composite score, or composite value. The leader with the highest score is regarded as the most influential over major decisions affecting the community.

#### Reputational Approach

The positional method, though connected with the functional-elite perspective of community power, fails to address the influence of private actors upon decisions made by formal leaders. In the community, the economic elite frequently manipulate formal officeholders through covert means. Hunter (1953, 1963) proposes the reputational approach to the study of community power, also grounded in functional-elite theory. Reputational designs focus upon information provided by a sample of "knowledgeables," informants familiar with the structure

and distribution of power, thereby facilitating the identification of covert actors.<sup>1</sup> Influentials identified through this method have reputations for community power among "knowledgeables." It consists of the following basic steps:

1. A list of informants, consisting of individuals presumed to be familiar with the distribution of power in the community, is constructed.
2. Each informant, or "knowledgeable," identifies individuals he or she believes to be the most influential. They may be asked to place these leaders, or potential leaders, in rank order.
3. Potential power holders identified the most frequently, or those receiving a certain minimum number of nominations, are said to have reputations for power.

Each step consists of specific procedures. The first step, the construction of a list of "knowledgeables," is accomplished by consulting a variety of sources, including individuals and documented material (e.g., journals, newspapers, government documents and legal records). They may be identified by soliciting the aid of officials from local organizations and referring to organizational transcripts. Specifically, some members of chambers of commerce and business (e.g., merchant's associations) and political organizations, as well as university personnel, may be instrumental in locating them. The media may also have information that could prove to be helpful. Within the media, powerful individuals who control the flow of such information may be able to arrange

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<sup>1</sup>Although Hunter relies solely on knowledgeable informants, some variations of his method include respondents from the community at large. One example is the "extended reputational approach" developed by Bonjean (1963, 1964), Bonjean and Carter (1965) and Bonjean and Olson (1964). For a discussion of their method see Chapter 4, pp. 60-61.

meetings between the researcher and others who might agree to serve as informants.

These "knowledgeables" tend to socialize with formal decision makers, thus are likely to have access to at least some information concerning local actors who influence their policies and decisions. Because of this, they are regarded as reliable informants. "Knowledgeables" may include political leaders from the public sector, such as members of the city council and county commission, as well as various social service agencies. Some may be from the private sector, like civic leaders with relatively high social statuses. The economic leader who has a relatively high economic status and access to a wide range of financial resources (e.g., proprietors, managers of local businesses, major landowners, etc.) may also serve as an informant. Both sectors may include organizational leaders, for example, educational leaders, university educators and administrators, as well as agents of the media.

By definition, "knowledgeables" have access to different types of information and are familiar with power distributions relating to specific arenas. They are selected and classified on this basis. In the reputational method, a list of "knowledgeables" is constructed for a varied number of arenas. This approach tends to be effective when a relatively large number of arenas and issue areas (Hasab-Elnaby, 1988), as well as "knowledgeables," is selected. There may be several power structures that address different types of issues, or a single structure generating community policy and decisions corresponding to every major issue. Moreover, an actor may be influential in various areas, thus wield a relatively high level of power. In a study of community power in Atlanta, Hunter (1953) focused on actors who were influential in the civic, political and economic

(business) sectors, as well as those characterized by relatively high social statuses.

Having constructed a list of "knowledgeables" for each arena, its size is reduced to facilitate the identification of influentials. In determining which "knowledgeables" are to be listed, the researcher must be selective. He (or she) may randomly select from the initial list, but generally it is presented to the first individuals listed, who are instructed to name a specific number of actors believed to be influential within the arena.

After a reduced list is constructed, it may then be presented to another group, a panel of "judges" who select among the individuals identified earlier. According to Hunter, these "knowledgeables" must have resided in the community for a number of years so that they are much more likely to be informed than the general public. They identify individuals and local organizations that are influential within each arena, ranking them according to their perceived levels of influence. In the Hunter study, "judges" selected the ten "most influential" individuals "from each," as well as organizations who had such power at a more general level (see Appendix A).

During the final phase of the study, the lists are combined into a single catalog which is presented to each individual listed. These actors are informants who identify influentials with reputations for community power. In addition, they respond to a "schedule of questions" concerning their relationships with others appearing on the list, a method of determining their knowledge of the distribution of power.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>During any phase of this approach, informants may identify individuals not included on the original list but who are influential from their perspectives (Hunter, 1953).

Hunter's method is a general approach to the measurement of community power that may be modified according to specific research designs, as well as the demands of the researcher. An application of the reputational approach may vary from study to study, from researcher to researcher. Variation in design may or may not produce conflicting results.

#### Issue, Event Analysis or Decisional Approach

Although the reputational method addresses power demonstrated within a variety of arenas during its initial phases, it targets only those influentials with reputations for general levels of influence. An alternative to the measurement of community power, the decisional approach (also referred to as the issue or event analysis method) focuses upon community policy and decision making pertaining to specific issues (Bloomberg & Sunshine, 1963; Dahl, 1961). It was previously noted that while the reputational approach is associated with the functional-elite perspective, pluralist theory serves as the basis for the decisional method. To measure power as defined by this approach, the researcher must select among issues and alternative decisions affecting the community. Because social issues are characterized by different levels of importance to the community and among communities, his or her (research) design must focus on those perceived as significant to its residents. In order to determine which issues and decisions are important, Polsby (1963, 1980) suggests that the following questions need to be addressed.

1. How many people are affected?
2. How many different types of resources are distributed?
3. At what rate are these resources distributed?

4. What are the social consequences of the distribution of available resources? What changes occur as a result of their distribution?

In the decisional approach, social issues are classified into (various) typologies (Barth & Johnson, 1959). The following general types of issues are proposed: (a) special or general case, (b) local or cosmopolitan emphasis, (c) relative impact upon the community, (d) relative impact upon leaders and decision makers, and (e) alternative courses of action and inaction. Another typology is more specific and differentiates among these types: (a) government action, (b) economic, (c) cultural, (d) medical, (e) business, and (f) intergroup relations. Each has a different impact upon community policy and decision making. Economic issues include taxation, the generation of revenue. At the community level, social welfare issues are frequently components of economic and/or medical issues. Those affecting local businesses also include economic issues, as well as others concerned with organizational planning, personnel mobility (e.g., promotion), etc. In capitalist society, business organizations function primarily in the private sector but may have social connections with actors and agencies from the public sector (Banfield & Wilson, 1963). The community may be heterogeneous and contain a wide variety of groups--including ethnic, racial, gender, and religious groups--who are affected by social issues differently. They tend to be relatively interactive at the community level but frequently compete for resources, a contributing factor in the development of social conflict.

The decisional approach focuses upon a limited number of issues, as well as the decision making process associated with each. Individuals identified through this method generate decisions related to specific issues. The basic procedure, as developed by pluralists (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1959, 1963, 1980), consists of the following steps.

1. Select specific issue areas.
2. For each area, construct a list of community leaders ("leadership pool") responsible for generating decisions.
3. For each area, employ the following procedures to identify those decisions that are important to community leader(s) responsible for making them: interview community leaders; attend community meetings (e.g., city council, board of commissioners, local organizations, committees, etc.); examine community documents and records, including organizational transcripts, minutes of "organizational meetings," and journal "accounts."<sup>3</sup>
4. Analyze decisions through information provided by community leaders.
5. For each area, identify those leaders who are the most influential and have the greatest impact upon decision making. A leader's level of influence is measured by his (or her) exercise of community power within a particular area. The influential community leader tends to exercise a high rate of power, influencing the decision making process in a direction that concludes in his (or her) preferential decision.

#### Summary

In this chapter, alternative approaches to the measurement of community power, specifically the positional, decisional and reputational methods, have been addressed. It was noted that the positional and reputational methods are associated with the functional-elite perspective, but that the foundation of the decisional approach is pluralist theory, espoused predominantly by political scientists.

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<sup>3</sup>This procedure is briefly described and outlined by Bonjean and Grimes (1974).

## CHAPTER 4

### A CRITIQUE OF THEORIES AND METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY OF COMMUNITY POWER

Alternative theories and methods are characterized by certain advantages and disadvantages. As briefly noted in Chapter 1, there are a number of specific assumptions inherent to each. This is due to the fact that community power is an abstract concept which is not only difficult to measure, but define as well. The decisional and reputational approaches to its measurement are grounded in competing theories, paradigms and perspectives and thus focus upon different aspects. Despite certain disadvantages, the reputational method tends to be a valid index of the perception of community power if the following condition exists: Informants are truly knowledgeable, cooperative and willing to disclose the identities of the power elite and other covert actors without hesitation for fear of retribution. The employment of reputational measures in contemporary studies, with minor modifications to correct deficiencies in the original model, is defended in this chapter.

#### Criticism of Community Power Theories

Functional-elite theory. The functional perspective of community power has a number of critical assumptions. First, advocates of this theory assume that disproportionate power distributions are socially adaptive, promote social stability and order and are essential for effective government at the local level.



This argument is related to claims by the power elite that they alone possess the expertise and knowledge required for community administration. The perception of one's expertise tends to be associated with his or her level of education. Individuals from the upper socioeconomic stratum, including the power elite, are typically more educated than those from the lower classes. Yet, education is not a satisfactory measure of expertise. According to Collins (1979), education serves as a basis for one's "claim" to certain "occupational positions," not his or her actual abilities (Matras, 1984, p. 211). In addition, it is a mechanism of indoctrinating actors into social roles and behavior patterns characteristic of their classes (Collins, 1971, p. 1010; Matras, 1984, p. 211). The power elite are also more wealthy than others, a factor which enables them to pursue advanced academic "credentials," formal documentation of their educational level and a presumption of expertise. Because most members of the lower class live in poverty and lack sufficient resources, they are not able to obtain such "credentials" (Matras, 1984).<sup>1</sup> On these bases, reference to the expertise of the power elite reflects its perception by these actors, not actual abilities. Their argument that community government and administration should be the domain of the upper socioeconomic stratum appears to lack validity.

Although access to advanced education contributes to skill development in community administration and related arenas, other factors (e.g., personality, situational, inherent and environmental factors, etc.) are also important. Racial, national and family origin, as well as gender, have been employed as criteria for

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<sup>1</sup>Although, in many contemporary societies, there are a variety of programs designed to facilitate access to higher education by the lower classes. Yet, such programs are merely methods of legitimating the status quo and the role of education in the development of leaders with expert knowledge in community government and its administration.

community government in the past. In many contemporary societies, including democratic and socialist societies, such factors are still being employed, but this generally occurs indirectly through covert means. The perception of an actor's qualification for political office at the local level may be enhanced through his or her social connections with the power elite, members of the same social class. A social connection is a network of individuals and groups who share information concerning resources (e.g., community power) and their accessibility, an inherent consequence of intraclass--or class-based--interaction. Regular patterns of interaction tend to occur primarily within social classes.<sup>2</sup> By interacting with members of his or her class, the upper class actor develops important connections, becoming part of a network that enhances his or her ability to gain access to a broad range of resources, including community power.

According to another assumption of the functional perspective, the power of the elite--including the manner in which it is exercised--is legitimate. Although, in democratic society, many of these powerholders tend to interpret lower class values and ideals as supportive of their power, actors from the lower classes generally do not accept and/or consider such a monopoly as legitimate. This assumption may be due to the relatively low rate of participation and visibility in the public arena (e.g., through the electoral system) by members of these strata. Yet, on many an occasion they have undertaken measures that encourage the redistribution of power at every level of government.

Functionalists further assume that the distribution of social resources,

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<sup>2</sup>With some exceptions, such as social actors from the business and professional arenas who interact with community members from various strata.

sanctions and rewards in unequal proportions is legitimate. They note that the most valuable resources are distributed to the power elite because these actors have a greater (social) responsibility than others, perform vital roles in community government and presumably possess expert knowledge in its administration. In this context, greater access to a wide range of resources is regarded as just compensation.<sup>3</sup>

Conflict-elite theory. Conflict theory also has certain inherent assumptions. Advocates of this perspective assume that social conflict is a product of inequality, including inequities in the distribution of community power. Occasionally, however, groups engaging in conflict and competing for power occupy similar status positions. Although each may perpetuate the ideal of social equality, conflict groups seldom indicate a willingness to share community power. They only share a desire to secure and monopolize it for their own members, thereby excluding all opponents and actors belonging to others.

Conflict theorists further assume that inequality is an indicator of repression and exploitation. Yet, social inequality tends to occur naturally, frequently without human intervention. The limitation of resources, including the resource of community power, prevents their distribution in equal proportions. In contemporary society, every community has some form and degree of inequality.

The two general approaches to conflict theory, the critical- and uncritical perspectives, are also characterized by certain assumptions. Critical-conflict theorists assume that social stratification contributes to instability, conflict,

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<sup>3</sup>This discussion and criticism focuses upon local level arenas. For global applications and emphases of functional theory refer to Clelland (1986), Davis (1948), Davis and Moore (1945), Matras (1984) and Nanda (1980, 1987).

disorder and unrest in the community. This perspective stresses the importance of interclass competition for resources--including community power--in furthering class interests but fails to address other relevant factors. The ruling class may monopolize power for the benefit of the community. These actors, for example, may employ or mobilize it to gain political leverage at higher levels of government and obtain the resources (e.g., economic resources) needed for community development.

Critical-conflict theorists also assume that an equitable distribution of (community) power is "possible" and may occur in the future (Kerbo, 1991). It sees individuals as being generally "altruistic" and "cooperative." In reality, however, they often act to promote their own interests. Cooperation may be merely a device for achieving a variety of personal goals that can not be attained by any other means. Even if there is a redistribution of community power, it is frequently monopolized by a new group of elites.

Another assumption of critical-conflict theory is that social institutions, including the political and economic institutions, are maladaptive and exploitive (Kerbo, 1991). In the community, as in the larger society, institutions serve to maintain social order and continuity. They frequently promote the interests and ideology of the ruling elite, but it is these actors who do the exploiting, not the institutions themselves.

According to uncritical-conflict theorists, social conflict is a permanent feature of society (Kerbo, 1991), as well as its constituent communities. Yet conflicts may be reduced, limited and minimized through a variety of methods. Competing groups may reach a compromise by negotiating the terms of their interests. Such an approach is frequently--though not always--effective if negotiation is mediated by an impartial third party (e.g., a professional

arbitrator). In addition, social conflict may subside due to natural occurrences resulting from confrontation between opposing forces. A community's economic structure may be destabilized because of their exploits. In an effort to win the conflict, for example, both sides may employ local and organizational (economic) resources to the extent that they are virtually exhausted and depleted. Those that remain may be inadequate to sustain further conflict and competition.

Uncritical-conflict theorists further assume that social actors are not capable of cooperating in the development of an egalitarian structure (Kerbo, 1991). Yet occasionally they do cooperate, although only to a limited extent. Specifically, interclass cooperation may occur within certain arenas. Members of lower socioeconomic strata are perceived as lacking access to a variety of resources but frequently do obtain access through indirect means. In contemporary socialist and democratic societies, there are a number of social programs through which these resources are made relatively accessible. At the community level, for example, citizen participation programs are often developed to foster the empowerment of the powerless through incentive and motivation. Although the power elite may control the administration of such programs, as well as the allocation of community power to a diverse network of groups, actors and strata, this does not necessarily produce contempt and alienation. Social conflict may be minor and relatively predictable. In addition, a variety of resources, including those of an economic nature, may be provided by philanthropists (Marx & Engels, 1930, 1963). Even though there may be various personal, self-serving and/or class-based motives for such programs, they tend to contribute to the inhibition of social conflict in at least some cases.<sup>4</sup>

Holistic-elite theories. Theoretical approaches that incorporate functionalism and the conflict perspective of community power may be regarded as

improvements (Lenski, 1966; Ossowski, 1956, 1963), but they are also characterized by certain problems. The synthesis of two conflicting views frequently results in the precedence of one at the expense of the other. According to Dahrendorf (1959), functional and conflict theories address different "problems," "complementary" approaches and descriptions of power, yet not compatible components of a single theory (Heller, 1987). Each may explain social processes in different communities. The functional perspective tends to be applicable to communities in which order and stability prevail. Conflict theory, on the other hand, is more appropriate for those dominated by disorder and unrest. Thus, a holistic approach to community power focuses predominantly upon either functional aspects or conflict aspects.

Pluralist theory. Elite theories are not the only ones subjected to criticism for their assumptions. Pluralists (Dahl, 1961) assume that community power is decentralized in the United States. According to this view, power is shared and distributed among various actors, organizations, bureaus, agencies and interest groups with "veto" power that inhibits unilateral domination and the development of power monopolies. It is further assumed that such monopolies do not occur on a permanent basis and decisions are made by a number of actors who address specific issues. Yet, some actors tend to influence the formulation of policies and decisions associated with a wide range of issues. In addition, they may occupy social positions for relatively long periods of time. Pluralist theory

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<sup>4</sup>This discussion and criticism focuses upon local level arenas. For global applications and emphases of conflict theory refer to Collins (1971, 1975, 1979), Dahrendorf (1958, 1959, 1961, 1967), Kerbo (1991), Kloss (1986), Matras (1984), Nanda (1980, 1987), Turner (1991) and Wanner (1986).

focuses upon formal leadership and visible decision making structures, but fails to address the impact of covert actors--local elite or influentials wielding a preponderance of power and influence in the community.

According to another assumption of the pluralist perspective, social and political participation, diversity and toleration for dissension are encourage in American communities. Nonparticipation by individuals (homo civicus) is therefore perceived as a personal choice. While such ideals are publicly advocated, numerous events attest to the employment of a wide range of measures designed to control the extent of participation, an indication of intolerance. Prior to and during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, for example, Southern political leaders pursued measures that bar African-Americans from access to various social structures, including local arenas of leadership. In other parts of the United States, attempts at discouraging equal access to resources by racial and gender strata have been undertaken as well. African-Americans, Hispanics, the handicapped, unmarried couples, unmarried women with children, etc., are frequently denied residence within certain sectors of the community. This may occur on either a direct or an indirect basis, such as the institution of high fees or rates which preclude accessibility to actors lacking sufficient economic resources.

Pluralist theory also assumes that every actor commands possession of some resource(s) that may be converted to community power. By applying this argument only to certain contexts, pluralists focus upon the potential aspects of power, not the reality in which merely a few are capable of influencing the most important policies and decisions affecting the community. They contend that all individuals have potential power, though most choose not to exercise it. Their rationale is as follows: All actors have the capacity to influence policies and decisions made

by formal leaders, even if they are unsuccessful or select not to do so for any variety of reasons. Realistically, however, many of those who attempt to exercise community power are frequently prevented from doing so. In capitalist democracies, such as the United States, a number resources, including personal and organizational financial assets, are often employed to influence policy and decision making. Most actors do not possess extensive access to these resources; thus their abilities to influence local leadership are likely limited.

Another assumption of pluralism is that a majority of the social and economic notables in the community tend to be uninfluential in policy and decision making, suggesting that they do not wield significantly high levels of power. Most pluralists do not associate economic resources with community power. They do not regard access to such resources as a significant factor in its allocation. Yet, at the local level there may be various classes of economic notables with variable levels of power. Those that command the greatest number of resources may also be the most influential over a broad range of policies and decisions, and thus wield the highest level(s) power. Such notables may employ their resources to influence not only policies and decisions made by formal leadership structures, but other events in the community as well.

Pluralists further assume that most political leaders do not have access to major economic resources. Yet, many of these leaders frequently receive financial support from economic notables to secure and/or preserve their interests, a practice designed to guarantee the attainment of common objectives. Campaigns for political office tend to be financed as well.

Finally, the pluralist perspective assumes that community power in the United States is exercised by social actors through legitimate means. At least some of



them, however, tend to employ illegitimate means (e.g., physical force, coercion, etc.) to achieve their ends, as narrowly-defined as they may be.<sup>5</sup>

#### Criticism of Community Power Measurement Techniques

Each method employed in the measurement of community power also has its advantages and disadvantages. The positional approach, for example, is limited to studies focusing on leadership based in social institutions (Freeman, Fararo, Bloomberg & Sunshine, 1971; Hasab-Elnaby, 1988). Researchers using this method assume that major policies and decisions are generated by actors who are highly visible in the community and occupy formal positions of power (Bonjean & Olson, 1964, 1971). Another criticism of the positional approach is that it is difficult to compare results from different studies because there is little or no intercommunity standard or consensus concerning the application of titles to similar positions. Different titles may be employed to describe corresponding positions in any number of organizations (White, 1950), including local governments and their administrative branches (e.g., bureaus, agencies and departments). The participation approach focuses primarily on social participation by a variety of actors and organizations in the community, but may also be used to identify institutional leadership (Freeman, Fararo, Bloomberg & Sunshine, 1971; Hasab-Elnaby, 1988).

The two major methods of measurement are employed by researchers with very

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<sup>5</sup>These criticisms focus upon local level arenas. For global analyses and criticisms refer to Connolly (1969).

different views of community power.<sup>6</sup> Each perspective focuses upon the weaknesses of the other, therefore methodological weaknesses are addressed as well. Even though the reputational researcher distinguishes between community power and its perception, one's reputation may imply that he or she has the ability to exercise it (D'Antonio, Ehrlich & Erickson, 1961; Wolfinger, 1960, 1962). Political scientists (Dahl, 1958; Polsby, 1963; Wolfinger, 1960), predominantly espousing the pluralist perspective, the view that power is distributed among various groups and factions, argue that the reputational approach assumes the existence of a covert structure consisting of local elite who monopolize power and dominate every major policy and decision. Some political sociologists (Clark, 1968; Walton, 1970) also note the inherent assumption of convergent or monolithic structures within reputational designs. Critics emphasize the fact that social actors use different approaches when exercising power: While some exercise it on a perpetual basis, others refrain from its exercise. Because reputational measures are not concerned with the procedures involved in developing local policies and decisions, pluralists contend that they do not explicate political processes related to power.

Although the reputational researcher may distinguish among different levels of community power, leadership and decision making, including both vertical and horizontal levels, his (or her) approach focuses primarily upon the power elite. Pluralists argue that power is actually distributed among a variety of actors who exercise it within specific domains, each responsible for generating decisions

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<sup>6</sup>The reputational and decisional approaches are used by functional-elite theorists and pluralists, respectively. For a discussion of these perspectives refer to pp. 23-26 and 37-40; and for a critique see pp. 49-52 and 55-58.

associated with different issues, a factor not addressed during (the major phase of) the reputational method (Polsby, 1963; Wolfinger, 1960). Apparently, some sources imply that the use of this approach tends to dislodge institutional leadership (Freeman, Fararo, Bloomberg & Sunshine, 1971; Hasab-Elnaby, 1988), not the implementors and executors of their policies.

Another criticism of the reputational approach is that informants may not be familiar with the distribution of power in the community and the political process involved in the development of policies and decisions (Wolfinger, 1960). In some reputational studies, informants are from the private sector and obtained through random sampling. Those who are knowledgeable may be overlooked and not included. Most individuals are not acquainted with the structure of power and its role in the decision making process (Wolfinger, 1960). According to Wolfinger (1960), this is also true when informants are from the public sector and themselves wield such responsibility. They may espouse different perspectives and definitions of power, thus inaccurately identify individuals as leaders (Bonjean, 1964; Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Wolfinger, 1960).<sup>7</sup> In addition, research designs may vary among reputationalists, a factor which tends to produce conflicting results. During the analysis of data, there is no apparent standard that serves to illustrate the distribution of power in the community. Specifically, reputational studies set different limits defining the number of identifications required for individuals to be classified as community leaders (Bonjean & Olson, 1964, 1971; Clark, 1968; Hasab-Elnaby, 1988).

Bonjean (1963, 1964), Bonjean and Carter (1965) and Bonjean and Olson (1964)

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<sup>7</sup>Including those presumed to be experts in local power distributions.

suggest that a comparison of the perceptions of "knowledgeables" with those of the general population is a better method of identifying local leadership. They have developed an "extended reputational approach" in which the perceptions of these two groups of informants are compared. According to Bonjean and others, each group identifies different types of leaders. All informants identify visible leaders, but only "knowledgeables" identify those who are concealed and wield most of the power in the community. As informants, "knowledgeables" tend to be much more credible than others; thus their perceptions of community power and leadership are said to reflect actual distributions.

The decisional approach is also characterized by certain disadvantages. First, it is primarily designed to locate formal officeholders, not community actors who influence their decisions. Researchers using this method assume that major decisions in the community are made by political leaders with high visibility. They fail to reveal the identities of influentials who regularly have an impact upon local decision making but whose best interests are served by remaining anonymous, namely the power elite (Presthus, 1964). These elite may control access to crucial information, including a wide range of records, documents and transcripts. With their interests protected by formal leaders, access to the power elite tends to be difficult. Community decision makers may not trust researchers or their motives and thus may not cooperate (Bonjean & Olson, 1964, 1971).

Another criticism is that the number and types of issues addressed by the decisional researcher may be inadequate. Different "criteria" are employed in their selection, an indication that the decisional approach lacks a uniform and acceptable standard. Those that are important to the researcher may not be important to local officials and/or the community at large (Bonjean & Olson, 1964;

Bonjean & Grimes, 1974). Reputationalists also argue that the time factor limits the decisional researcher in the study of community power (Bonjean & Grimes, 1974). The acquisition of information through document analysis and--formal and informal--community meetings requires a relatively long period of time. The researcher may not be able to attend every scheduled meeting of local committees, task groups and organizations. To protect common interests, influential groups and powerful actors (the power elite) may pursue "closed" meetings (Bonjean & Olson, 1964, 1971; L. A. Platt, personal communication, 1989).

Although decisional and reputational researchers note the methodological deficiencies inherent to each other's design, they endure common problems. For example, both address different facets of community power, with the decisional and reputational approaches focusing upon visible leadership and covert actors who are perceived as being powerful and influential, respectively.

#### In Defense of Hunter and the Reputational Approach

By its very nature, the measurement of community power and its exercise generates certain methodological problems. The validity of a researcher's technique may be low, in which case his or her conclusions are questionable and thus not likely to be very accurate. Although the decisional approach consists of objective measures designed to locate visible leaders who exercise power, it does not uncover the power elite, covert actors who tend to have an impact upon the direction of their policies and decisions. In the community, formal decision makers may be influenced by a variety of private actors with an interest in controlling political behavior. The decisional researcher attends formal meetings and interviews these leaders, but decisions may actually have been made through

informal consultation with private citizens. Thus a formal meeting may be merely a confirmation or ratification of decisions made elsewhere. The power elite may provide incentives (e.g., monetary rewards) to visible leaders that serve to secure their power over them and achieve certain ends. In return, their identities are protected by these leaders. Decisional techniques are not designed to disclose such influentials, only those who are highly visible in the community (L. A. Platt, personal communication, 1989).

Such problems with validity are not found in the reputational method because the focus is upon the perception of power rather than power per se, its exercise or the actual levels demonstrated by community actors (e.g., the power elite). The reputational researcher depicts these actors according to their social statuses among--and identified by--local "knowledgeables" and/or in the community at large. To ascertain an informant's knowledge of the configuration of power in the community, he (or she) is asked about his (or her) relationship with each candidate listed on the schedule (Hunter, 1953). As voluntary participants in community power studies, they are likely to provide relatively accurate information concerning their personal perceptions of community leaders. For this reason the reputational approach is regarded as a valid index of such perceptions. In addition, the implementation of this method is relatively simple when compared with the decisional approach. It requires less time and expense to conduct. Further, reputational designs are easy to replicate, facilitating comparison among various communities with similar socio-political, environmental and economic conditions, demography and populations. Within these contexts, the continuous use of this approach in contemporary studies of community power is justified (L. A. Platt, personal communication, 1989).

### Summary

This chapter has addressed criticisms and assumptions associated with alternative theories and methodological approaches to the measurement of community power. The relationship between social perspectives and methodologies was briefly examined. It was noted that the positional and reputational approaches are products of the functional-elite paradigm, and that the decisional method has been developed primarily by political scientists espousing pluralism. In this chapter, the continuous use of the reputational approach in the study of community power was also defended. This conclusion is largely derived from its emphasis upon the perceptions of knowledgeable informants rather than objective observations that fail to explain the impact of private citizens. It was argued that community power is an abstract concept which is difficult to measure, thus the formulation of decisions is not an adequate criterion of measurement, but its perception by local experts familiar with the pattern of influence may lead to the disclosure of the identities of--at least some--covert actors.

## CHAPTER 5

### A REVISED REPUTATIONAL MODEL OF COMMUNITY POWER

Although sociologists have demonstrated that the reputational approach to the measurement of community power is characterized by a relatively high level of validity, Hunter's (1953) method does not identify actors and organizations who influence policies and decisions made within specific settings. In this chapter, a reputational model that includes such a measure is proposed. It is also designed to locate social units with reputations for community power within a defined set or arenas,<sup>1</sup> collectively constituting the power elite. As noted in Chapter 1, the term social unit is applied to any level of social functioning. It was emphasized that these include a wide variety of groups, organizations and individuals, referred to as social actors for the purpose of this thesis. Because they tend to exercise community power through a number of different arenas and organizations, the model pursues this course. For research purposes, a defined set may include every arena and social issue, a majority, series, cluster or conglomerate of issues, or be based on some other standard of significance. The issue and arena sets must be relatively large, however.<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, the term social arena is used in lieu of social institution. These include the five primary

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<sup>1</sup>This is based--in part--on Bonjean and Olson (1964) and D'Antonio and Erickson (1962).

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion see Hasab-Elnaby (1988).



institutions identified by sociologists and anthropologists, the political, the economic (subsistence), religion, education and the family (kinship), as well as a variety of others (e.g., social control, law, medicine, etc.).

The model focuses upon a diverse number of variables. It is designed to locate both social actors and organizations believed to be powerful forces in the community. While some units may have such reputations within a global context, those or others may be limited to only certain situations. This distinction between global and specific reputations is important and must be considered when assessing the distribution of community power and leadership. In the community, a small number of actors and organizations may wield power not only at the global level, but in a variety of different settings. Collectively, these constitute the power elite. By employing the current approach, the researcher will be able to depict social units with either or both types of reputations. Specifically, the application of this model is designed to uncover the following: (a) social actors with global reputations, (b) organizations with global reputations, (c) social actors with reputations within specific arenas, (d) organizations with reputations within specific arenas, (e) social actors with reputations within a defined set of arenas, and (f) organizations with reputations within a defined set of arenas. The current model incorporates some techniques characteristic of the decisional approach. Although reputational procedures are relatively accurate indices of the perception of community power (L. A. Platt, personal communication, 1989), a rationale for including decisional techniques is discussed below. The remainder of this chapter establishes the foundation of the proposed model.

### Rationale for Incorporating Elements from the Decisional Approach

Because ideological, conceptual and methodological differences yield different data and power distributions, some researchers employ a more inclusive and holistic approach to the measurement of community power. The deficiencies inherent to reputational and decisional designs may be corrected by incorporating (certain) aspects of each, facilitating the development of a hybrid approach. Even though some researchers may claim to have mastered a complete synthesis of these methods, the probability that they merely borrowed a few elements from each is much more likely. Thus, the reputational and decisional approaches may include common elements. Occasionally, the researcher employing either one also uses procedures associated with the other. The reputational method, for example, like the decisional approach, focuses upon specific arenas of leadership during its initial stages, although, unlike the decisional approach, it does not consider the importance of social issues. Informants name and rank actors according to their prestige and status within various sectors. The decisional researcher may also borrow some elements from the reputational approach. Personal interviews, for example, may be conducted to locate and identify actors who tend to influence formal leaders. In addition, participants in these studies may supply a list of major issues affecting the community, along with alternative decisions related to each (Bonjean & Olson, 1964, 1971).

Even when there is a complete synthesis, the researcher's design is likely to be divided into two parts: one reputational, and the other decisional. During the reputational portion of this method, community leaders are identified by a number of informants. The decisional component, on the other hand, requires the direct observation of political processes related to decision making and different issues that are addressed in the community. This may be conducted through a variety of

techniques, such as document analysis, attendance at formal meetings, etc.<sup>3</sup> In many cases, both methods are applied to the same community. Data are compared to see which leaders found by the researcher are also identified by informants. The (construct) validity of such a design tends to be relatively high if similar data are produced through the employment of both reputational and decisional techniques, resulting in the disclosure of the same leaders and type of configuration.

#### The Model

Although the merger of two different methodologies may generate more data and remediate criticisms directed at both, in practice this may merely be a means of establishing the precedence of one at the expense of the other. Thus a true synthesis is not possible. As implied in the preceding section, researchers claiming to synthesize the reputational and decisional methods tend to focus upon one more than the other. Because it has previously been argued that power per se is difficult to measure through objective means, and that its perception is a relatively valid indicator of one important facet (L. A. Platt, personal communication, 1989), this chapter centers primarily on the reputational. However, in order to provide a correction of its shortcomings, the proposed model incorporates aspects of both methods. Specifically, it includes not only a global or general measure of community power, but a variety of others that focus upon policy and decision making related to specific arenas. Yet the reputational

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<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of the reputational and decisional approaches see Chapter 3, pp. 42-48. See also Dahl (1961), Hunter (1953, 1963), Polsby (1959, 1963, 1980) and Bonjean and Grimes (1974).

component of the model is the dominant force. In addition, a distinction is also made between the power swayed by social actors and local organizations. Thus there are separate measures for both individuals and organizations demonstrating variable levels of global power, as well as within specific policy arenas.

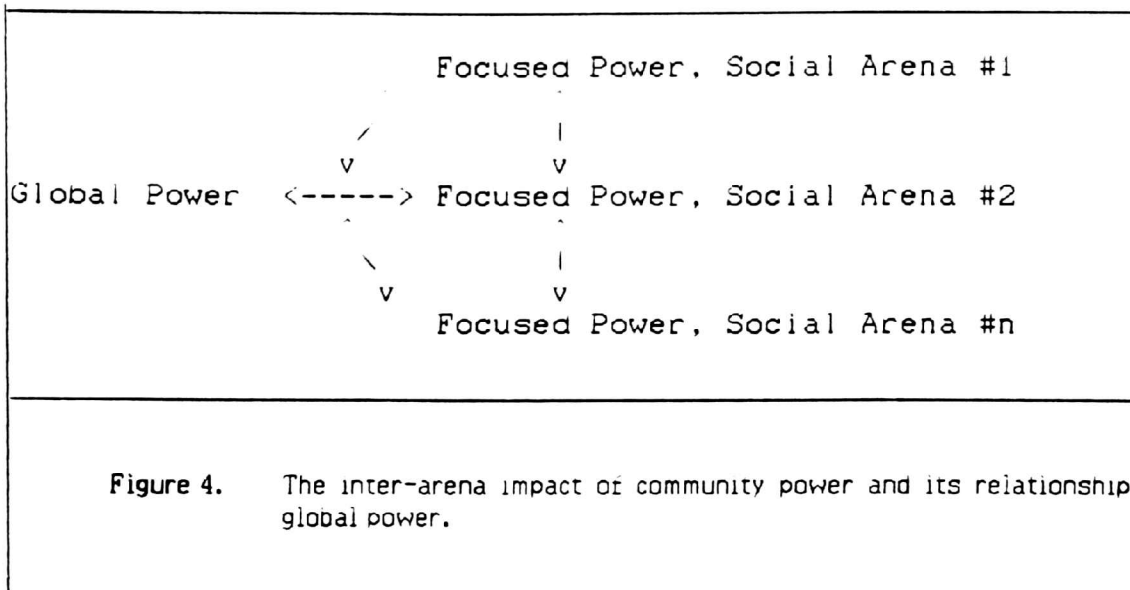
The model consists of three phases. The first is a preliminary stage during which important or influential arenas of decision making are identified and targeted for investigation. The power of a social unit tends to be associated with its influence over issues within a particular arena, some regarded as being more important to the community than others. Important arenas are those in which powerful actors and organizations are found. In different communities, each tends to exhibit varying degrees of importance. Thus one arena may be very important in some communities, moderately important in others, and yet not at all in still others. During the second phase, social units are identified according to their power and influence within both global and specific contexts. The global level of community power is measured independently of its exercise in different settings. That is, the process of identification is an independent operation in which global power is assessed without any consideration of its impact upon social issues. This model is also adapted to include a variety of arena-based measures that serve to locate influential units who tend to matters related to each issue. Any particular unit may be powerful within a number of different arenas. Yet, the relationship between its effects in one and that in another is not addressed during this stage. Neither is it designed to measure the impact of one's arena-based power upon his (or her) global power, or vice versa. The third phase, however, does pursue such a course. Basically, it focuses upon the relationship between global levels of community power and its exercise within

specific settings. A unit with global power may be able to influence policy and decision making in a variety of arenas. One who has arena-based power may also be influential at the global level. In addition, some units may affect the outcomes of several issue areas (see Figure 4). Those with global reputations for community power, as well as within a defined set of arenas, are the power elite.

Phase I. The first stage of this model consists of several steps. The basic procedure is as follows:

1. A list of informants, consisting of local actors familiar with the pattern and distribution of community power, is constructed.
2. Select issues that are important to the community at large (its general population), as well as constituent populations such as ethnic, racial, religious, occupational, gender, etc., groups.
3. Next, informants identify the policy arena that is associated with each issue. They name those which are the most important and influential in the community. In addition, they are instructed to place them in rank order of importance.
4. The tabulation of data. Every arena is assigned a numerical score based on the frequency of identifications (by informants), a reflection of its importance as perceived in the community.
5. Social arenas identified the most frequently, or those receiving a certain minimum number of nominations, are said to be influential and powerful.

Each step consists of specific procedures. The first step, the construction of a list of informants, is accomplished by consulting a wide variety of sources, including documented material (e.g., journals, newspapers, government documents and legal records) and knowledgeable members of the community. They may be



identified through the aid of officials from local organizations and by referring to organizational transcripts, minutes of organizational meetings, etc. Specifically, some members of chambers of commerce and business (e.g., merchant associations) and political organizations, as well as university personnel, may be instrumental in locating them. The media may also be an important source of information.

In the community, reliable informants are likely to interact with formal decision makers, and may thus have access to information concerning local actors who tend to influence their policies and decisions. Some may be political leaders within the public sectors, such as members of the city council and county commission, as well as any number of social service agencies. Other informants may be from the private sector, like civic leaders with relatively high social statuses, and economic leaders who have relatively high economic statuses and access to a broad range of financial resources (e.g., bankers, proprietors, managers of local businesses, major land-owners, etc.). Both sectors may include organizational leaders, university educators, administrators and other

educational leaders, as well as agents of the media. To ensure that the sample of informants is a cross section of the community's population, it is necessary to include members of different ethnic, racial, religious, occupational and gender groups. In addition, the sample must be representative of a wide range of political orientations, as well as socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>

Next, social issues are selected and classified into typologies. These are placed into two general classes or categories: (a) primary issues, and (b) secondary issues. One that is primary is concerned with either political or economic matters. In any given group or organization, the pattern of behavior revolves around political and economic relationships. Political and economic issues thereby affect all others which are secondary. These include business, educational, cultural, religious, security (e.g., social control), legal, medical, welfare, and internal relation(s) issues. Each is associated with a particular arena in which policies and decisions are made. The procedures involved in the making of such policies and decisions largely depend on the type of issue addressed, the way it is perceived by local residents who are affected by the outcome, and special circumstances that demand either a delayed or immediate resolution. Issues of an economic nature include taxation, the generation of revenue. At the community level, social welfare issues are frequently components of economic, medical and/or health-related issues. Those affecting local businesses also include economic issues, as well as others concerned with organizational planning and personnel mobility (e.g., promotion), etc. In capitalist society, business organizations function within the private sector but may have (social) connections with a network of actors and agencies from the public sector

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<sup>4</sup>This stage is based--in part--on Hunter (1953).

(Banfield & Wilson, 1963). This frequently enables them to obtain economic resources (e.g., subsidies) from various levels of government. However, they may become financially dependent as a result. On many an occasion, their benefactors will--either directly or indirectly--demand the return of a favor. Elected leaders, for example, tend to solicit support from local businesses during campaigns for political office. By virtue of their dependence, businessmen are likely to become committed to the goals and causes of certain government officials. Examples of legal issues are civil rights and affirmative action issues. The community may contain an assortment of social groups, including ethnic, racial, religious, occupational and gender groups, each of which may wield a different level of influence in regard to some issue. They tend to be relatively interactive at the community level but frequently compete for resources, a factor which may produce conflict.

Because it is not always possible for any researcher to approach the study of community power from a perspective intent on encompassing every existing issue, he (or she) must be selective. They must be chosen according to their importance to the people in the community. Although this design focuses primarily upon relatively important issues, it may also incorporate those of little or considerably less significance. Such an issue (or event), especially if it has not received much attention in the media, is referred to as a "nonissue" by many social and political analysts.<sup>5</sup> The significance of any issue is relative to the significance of all others. To a wide variety of local actors and groups, some are very important and thus become the targets of their interests. That is, they are selective and likely to direct their energies towards a limited few. When

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<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of "nonissues" refer to Polsby (1980).



addressing a number of issues, they tend to conceive of them in terms of priority. Among different groups and actors, some are more important than others. The most significant ones, those that serve the interests of a cross-section of the community, its general population and constituent groups, must therefore be selected for investigation. In order to promote this process, however, the pool of issues must be relatively large (Masab Elnaby, 1990).

The process of issue selection is facilitated by consulting a wide variety of sources, including social actors and documented material (e.g., journals, newspapers, government documents and legal records). As informants, such actors identify those issues they perceived to be the most important to people in the community. They are instructed to place them in rank order of importance. Officials from local organizations and organizational transcripts are instrumental in identifying issues that are important to the community at large, as well as specific populations such as ethnic, racial, religious, occupational, gender, etc. groups. In particular, business (e.g., merchant associations), political and civic organizations, university personnel and members of chambers of commerce may be helpful. Another source of information is the media, including the printed (e.g., local newspapers) and electronic (e.g., radio, television) media. Finally, the researcher may conduct survey(s) to identify issues that are important to the community and its constituent populations.

During the next phase of the study, informants specify those arenas in which policies and decisions are made relative to the issues selected above. In the community, there are a variety of such arenas, including the political, the economic (business), the educational, the religious, the legal, the medical and the law enforcement (social control) arenas. Each tends to have a different impact upon the community in general, as well as its constituent populations (e.g.,

ethnic, racial, religious, occupational and gender groups). Informants indicate which arena(s) they believe are the most influential and are instructed to place them in rank order of importance. Those identified by the greatest number are accepted as being perceptually significant to the decision making process in the community (see Appendix B).

Phase II. After policy arenas have been identified, the remainder of the model focuses upon the identification of social units with reputations for community power. This consists of the following steps:

1. The list of informants is divided into several smaller listings, one consisting of those familiar with the general distribution of power (general informants), and a variety of others focusing upon policy arenas that address specific issues (special informants). In order to ensure that the values of nominations are comparable across arenas, the same number of informants must be used for each.

2. Construct a catalog of every social unit known to have been prominent and influential in community affairs during a specified period of time (e.g., the preceding five years).

3. Each informant, or "knowledgeable," indicates which units he or she believes are the most influential in the community; further, they are instructed to place them in rank order; while general informants identify units perceived to be the most influential over a broad range of issues, special informants name those perceived to be the most influential over decisions made in regard to specific ones.

4. The tabulation of data. Data provided by general and special informants are calculated independently. Every unit is assigned several numerical scores based on the number of identifications (by informants), a reflection of its

reputation for community power; one score is a measure of influence within a global context, and all others apply to specific arenas.

5. Social units identified the most frequently by general informants, or those receiving a certain minimum number of nominations, are said to possess global reputations for power. Focusing upon specific arenas, units identified the most frequently by special informants, or those receiving a certain minimum number of nominations, are said to have reputations for community power within that arena.

These steps also consist of specific procedures, which are outlined in the following discussion. First, the list of informants is divided into several smaller listings. One is composed of general informants, those who possess a broad range of knowledge concerning local leadership and its activities in different spheres of government. Every other list contains the names of special informants who are familiar with decisions related to specific issues and formulated within a particular arena. There may be a number of power structures in the community that address various issue areas (Agger & Ostrom, 1956; Polsby, 1980), or a single structure generating policies and decisions associated with each (Bonjean & Olson, 1964). In addition, a small minority of actors may be influential in several areas, thus wield a relatively high level of power.

The next phase of this approach, the development of a catalog of social units, consists of two steps. First, a list of every prominent and/or influential unit is constructed, regardless of size. This is referred to as the primary catalog, which is further divided into two constituent listings containing the names of individuals and organizations, respectively. This stage of the model is accomplished by consulting the sources noted in Phase 1.

The identification of influential units also involves two steps. First, informants name individuals who, from their perspectives, are the most powerful

in the community. Further, they are instructed to place these leaders, or potential leaders, in rank order. While general informants specify which actors they believe are the most persuasive over a broad range of issues, special informants name those with the greatest influence over decisions related to specific ones. Next, informants identify prominent and influential organizations; they are instructed to place them in rank order as well. General informants indicate which organizations are influential in regard to different issues affecting the community; special informants, on the other hand, name only those who wield most of the power over decisions made in regard to specific ones (see Appendices C and D for interview schedules).

The data provided by the sample of informants are classified into several categories, depending upon the number of issues involved in the study. They are as follows: (a) social actors with global reputations for community power, (b) organizations with global reputations for community power, (c) social actors with reputations for community power within arena #1, (d) social actors with reputations for community power within arena #2+, (e) organizations with reputations for community power within arena #1, (f) organizations with reputations for community power within arena #2+, etc. Within each category, social units are assigned numerical scores based on the number of identifications, a reflection of their perceived levels of power and influence. The unit with the highest score, thus identified by a relatively large number of informants, has a reputation for community power within that category.

Phase III. After social units with global reputations for community power have been identified, as well as every unit with focused reputations, the data are analyzed to locate those who have the potential capacity to influence policy and decision making within a defined set of issue areas. As noted in the beginning of

this chapter, this may include every arena and social issue, a majority, series, cluster or conglomerate of issues, or be based on some other standard of significance. In the community, as in the larger society, a decision affecting the outcome of a particular issue may also have an impact upon a variety of others. Because they are generally the domain of social units responsible for policies and decisions made within specific settings, a relationship between and among different sectors is also said to occur. Thus the community is governed by an "interlocking network" of arenas (H. M. Kaplan, personal communication, 1993). Clearly, units from different sectors tend to interact with one another. Political groups, actors and organizations, for example, more or less interact with those operating primarily in the economic sphere, and vice versa. When addressing different issues, the researcher must be aware of such relationships. The exact nature and pattern of these relations tends to be relatively unpredictable, however.

By Focusing on a defined set of issue areas and arenas, the model compensates for its isolated view in Phase 2. Within any given set, a unit may wield a different level of influence over each arena. Its reputation may be higher in some than in others, which affects the overall power to influence decision making within the set as a whole. This is measured by comparing the arena-based nominations from the second phase of this approach. A unit's reputation is higher in arenas for which it (or he/she) has received the greatest number of nominations. Collectively, all those with reputations for community power within both global and specific contexts, when the perceived level of influence is within a significant number of arenas, constitute the power elite. This is expressed in conceptual terms by the following schema:

$$\frac{RI_1 + RI_2 + RI_n}{NI} = RI_{\bar{x}}$$

$$\frac{RI_{\bar{x}} + RG}{2} = RP$$

- RI = Reputation for community power within a specific social arena and issue area
- RI<sub>1</sub> = Reputation for community power within social arena #1
- RI<sub>2</sub> = Reputation for community power within social arena #2
- RI<sub>n</sub> = Reputation for community power within a specific arena when the research design focuses upon more than two
- RI <sub>$\bar{x}$</sub>  = The mean reputation for community power within a cluster or conglomerate of issue areas
- NI = The total number of issue areas constituting a research design
- RG = The global reputation for community power
- RP = The total reputation for community power based on the calculation of a global reputation plus mean reputations within a cluster of social arenas

#### Prospect for the Model in the Study of Community Power

By applying the proposed model to the study of community power, the researcher will be able to depict distributions in a way that other approaches have failed to do. Neither the decisional nor (traditional) reputational<sup>6</sup> methods adequately address and attend to the task of policy and decision making as it occurs within specific arenas. Neither recognizes the need to isolate them for research purposes. Although decisional studies may discuss the roles of social actors from a variety of arenas, they do so only within the context of social

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<sup>6</sup>As developed by Hunter (1953, 1963). See Chapter 3, pp. 42-46, for a discussion of his approach, and Chapter 4, pp. 59-63, for a critique.

issues. This approach does acknowledge, however, though indirectly, that actors from several sectors may influence the formulation of policies and decisions related to a particular issue, implying that they are socially interactive. Yet, it is not concerned with the mutual impact they have on each other. Some actors may be relatively charismatic and/or articulate, a factor which makes it possible for them to foster a change in the perspectives and opinions of their associates. In many communities, leaders address series of interrelated issues. One may have a great deal of power over certain issues and very little over another, while the opposite may be true for a colleague. Some tend to sway more influence among formal decision makers than others and thus are much more likely to affect the policies and decisions they make. Another group of actors, though generally constituting a small minority, may be influential over a broad spectrum of policy and decision making. The model presented in this chapter is designed to locate such actors and organizations with varying degrees of power and influence. It examines relatively large sets of issue areas, which is neither a requirement nor feature of the decisional approach. Most decisional researchers investigate only a small sample of issues, thus provide an incomplete picture of community leadership. In addition, the proposed model focuses upon social arenas in which such issues are addressed, as well as the identification of leaders who develop policies and decisions within them. Although these actors and groups tend to socialize with one another, suggesting that some may have an impact upon a variety of arenas, it is likely that they wield different amounts of power and influence in each.

Another reason this model serves the interests of students of community power is that the author has addressed and remedied the problems of other approaches which have been brought to light by a number of critics. Researchers

employing different methods tend to assume that the community is governed by a specific type of structure. As discussed in Chapter 4, the decisional and (traditional) reputational approaches have been criticized for being skewed and uncovering either pluralist or monolithic configurations, respectively. This may be due to any variety of problems associated with, and generating from, research design. For example, interview schedules frequently consist of questions that may lead informants to respond in a particular direction. The manner in which a question is phrased is important if the measure is to be valid. To some informants, certain items may be perceived as potentially offensive. This is illustrated by one example found in a schedule employed by Thometz (1963) in her study of leadership in Dallas. The first question is preceded by the following declaration: "Some people say there is a 'crowd' of men here in the city of Dallas that pretty well makes the important decisions about the community."<sup>7</sup> This statement assumes that the researcher has already concluded that there is a monolithic structure, an unequal distribution of power and little or no participation by local residents. Some informants may find this assumption offensive. Rapport between informant and researcher is often jeopardized when this occurs. He (or she) may even become suspicious of the researcher, especially his (or her) motives. These actors may suspect that the purpose of the study and interviews is something other than that stated. For example, they may come to believe that the researcher's inquiry into local affairs is part of a covert investigation by either a higher level of government or some other agency with

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<sup>7</sup>See Thometz, C. E. (1963). Phase I: Community leadership study schedule I. Appendix B: Schedules used for collecting and tabulating data. The decision-makers: The power structure of Dallas (p. 115). Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press.



self-serving interests in the community. In the mind of the informant, such suspicions are frequently justified and confirmed through his or her contact with others who have been interviewed. Informants may react in any number of ways. Some may refuse to respond to objectionable questions and/or terminate the interview. Others may deliberately supply false, misleading and erroneous data and identify leaders who actually wield little or no power. In the current model, steps have been undertaken to amend the reputational method and offset, remediate or compensate for these problems. The schedules in Appendices C and D include components that address government not only by the elite, but also by networks of groups, actors and organizations who share power in relatively equal proportions. Questions are phrased in a way that eliminates assumptions associated with other approaches and allows the disclosure of either type of structure.

#### Summary

This chapter has focused upon a reputational approach to the study of community power that differentiates between global and arena-based perceptions, as well as the reputation for power within a defined set of arenas. Through this model, a variety of policy and decision making bodies may be identified. In addition, social units with both global and limited reputations are targeted. Within each category, individuals and organizations are measured separately. Some techniques employed by political scientists and decisional researchers are incorporated into this approach, a corrective measure that remediates--in part--their criticisms.

## CHAPTER 6

### IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

This thesis has focused upon the development of an approach to the measurement of community power that covers a broad spectrum of criteria employed by researchers with different orientations. As suggested in Chapter 1 and throughout this thesis, their perspectives are manifest within alternative definitions of power. From the discussion in the preceding chapter it is apparent that the model's foundation is the reputational method, although with some modification. Basically, it has been refined to make it more applicable to a wide range of units or analyses. A description of the model is as follows. First, it measures the perception of community power within a global context. At this level, local leaders tend to interact with actors from a variety of arenas. Because of this, they may directly or indirectly address different types of issues. The model takes this into consideration. That is, it includes a component that focuses on one's capacity to influence policy and decision making within different arenas, thereby affecting the outcomes of a wide range of issues. Although both approaches are used separately, they are also combined to provide a third instrument by which global reputations are measured, a composite of the first two. Finally, the model assesses the perception of power over a limited number of issues that are resolved by actors from specific arenas.

Although the author has repeatedly emphasized that the proposed model is grounded in the reputational approach, its main purpose is to minimize bias when measuring community power. With this in mind, the assumptions associated with different theories and methods<sup>1</sup> are avoided. Unlike the decisional and

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 4 for a critique and discussion of these assumptions.

(traditional) reputational approaches, the model is not limited to specific types of leadership and power structure. It shows preference towards neither elite nor pluralist distributions, but rather permits the disclosure of either type found in the community. The primary tool of this method is a series of questions that do not draw on such assumptions. They are phrased in an inoffensive way so that responses will serve as more valid indicators of the perception of community power once methodological problems have been corrected through rigorous testing (see Appendices B thru D).<sup>2</sup> The interview schedules are designed to facilitate and maintain rapport throughout the process. They acknowledge various possibilities, including formal and visible leadership, the monopoly of power by cliques, organizations and independent actors, and the roles of local residents and task forces in the decision making process. In addition, the schedules are multifaceted and may be used to identify social units with community power confined to specific contexts, as well as those who have relatively unlimited power.

This variation of the reputational approach is easy to implement and replicate. It is a general method that may be applied to any community. However, because different communities are characterized by different social, political, economic and demographic conditions, certain modifications may be necessary in its design. Communities tend to change over time as well. For example, there may be increases or decreases in their socioeconomic statuses. A community's economic status is associated with its level of industrialization and the distribution of wealth among local residents. Its economic structure is largely affected by industrial development and the influx of merchants and businesses.

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<sup>2</sup>For tests of validity and reliability refer to pp. 96-97.

In many communities, relatively large businesses and industries provide employment, procure materials and technical equipment from local merchants, and may also pay taxes and "user fees" for a variety of services.<sup>3</sup> The people hired by these companies are paid wages that are exchanged for goods and services and used to satisfy revenue. These factors contribute to the community's budget and foster economic development, which, in turn, may--directly or indirectly--facilitate structural changes in local leadership. Such grounds must be important considerations during the selection of informants.

The structure of power may also change as a consequence of social mobility. There are two types of mobility, vertical and horizontal. Horizontal mobility refers to the transfer or movement between organizations or an organization's components at relatively the same level of skill and power. In the community, government employees may transfer from one bureau or department to another. Vertical mobility, on the other hand, occurs when there is either an increase or decrease in an actor's social status, prestige or rank within a particular organization or one of its components. In the community, as in society, social status is a manifestation of social class. A change in social status is thus accompanied by a change in social class. An important byproduct of vertical mobility is the transition to another stage of community power. Sociologists also apply this concept to the transfer or movement between organizations or an organization's components at a different level of skill and/or power (W. J.

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<sup>3</sup>This is relative to situational factors, however. Material and equipment are frequently requisitioned from central or regional distribution facilities controlled or leased by the company in another community. This is especially true when local merchants are not able to meet the needs and demands of the organization and the specifications it has outlined. There may also be lower tax rates and service fees or exemptions to attract prospective businesses and industries to the community.

Strickland, personal communication, 1993). This is exemplified by the community decision maker who moves to a higher ranking position in another local department. If an employee had the power to make certain decisions in his or her former department (arena-based power), he or she may not have such power in his or her current department. When there is a high rate of mobility in the community, the structure of power tends to change. The reputational researcher must take this into consideration during the selection of informants.

In addition, any change in the composition of a community's population needs to serve as a basis for selecting them. This is because the constituents of class, ethnic, gender and religious groups may increase or decrease in number due to a variety of factors, including immigration, emmigration and birth and death rates. When there is a significant change in the ratio of social actors identifying with a particular class, it is said that the community has undergone a transition in its class structure. Related to this, the number of different occupations, professions and educational levels which are represented may also experience some transformation. Finally, the distribution of ethnic groups and religious affiliations found in the community, as well as male to female ratio, are also subject to change.

Another important factor that must be considered is the influence of actors and organizations from different sectors. For the purpose of this thesis, a sector is defined as a network or group of relatively interactive neighborhoods or businesses. Some of these divisions may be more developed than others. Community residential patterns tend to be based on wealth and characterized by economic segregation, as well as ethnic or racial segregation. Wealthy actors are segregated from those who are poor, and both are segregated from those with moderate incomes. In many communities, residents also tend to live in sectors

which house others with similar or common social, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, educational, etc. backgrounds and ties. This may be prescribed by law (de jure) or result from natural circumstances (de facto). People tend to identify with others who have similar backgrounds and, thus, are likely to live in areas they inhabit, even if there are no restrictive residential laws. It must also be emphasized that the distribution of males and females may change in each sector of the community, just like it does in society and the community at large.

When measuring community power, the researcher must be aware of these population concentrations and changes in their compositions. His (or her) design needs to be constructed with a particular community in mind. Every pool of informants must be representative of a cross section of the community. As noted in this section, all social classes, ethnic, religious, professional and occupational groups, people with similar educational backgrounds, males, females, etc. should be represented in the study of community power. It was further stressed that the inclusion of residents from each sector is essential. These categories are interactive variables. For example, a person may be a highly educated Hispanic female residing in a middle class Roman Catholic neighborhood. The researcher must take great care in the construction of a design to ensure that the sample of informants accurately represents the social structure of the community. For each category, the rate of representation must equal that of actual distribution. The method proposed in this thesis is flexible enough to permit adaptation to any number of factors affecting different communities at a particular point in time, as well as the same community during distinct time frames.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

In order to understand the proposed model more thoroughly, the reader must be aware of its strengths and weaknesses. One major strength is that it targets specific issues and arenas of policy and decision making. That is, the model enables the researcher to identify those issues which are important to a significant number of actors in the community. A related strength is that there is no limit on the number of social issues selected for study. This is an improvement over the decisional approach, in which "only a" small sample serves as the focus.<sup>4</sup> Further, important and influential policy arenas are described or delineated through the application of this model.

Another strength is that community leaders with reputations for power within specific settings are identified, as well as those who are influential in a more general sense. In addition, two complementary approaches to the measurement of global power are undertaken. This is an adaptation to two distinct definitions: The first focuses upon the relationship between power and different arenas in which it is exercised, and the second ignores this association. Both measures are combined to give a more complete picture of the distribution of global power in the community.

The current model also has a few weaknesses. The most important of these is its inadequacy in targeting illegitimate sources of power.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly true when actors operating outside of the law are powerful on the one hand, yet reared on the other. They may be so influential in the community that their

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<sup>4</sup>Decisional researchers justify this practice on the basis of "expense" (Polsby, 1963, 1980). For a discussion of social issues and a critique of the selection process see Chapter 3, pp. 46-48, and Chapter 4, pp. 59-62.

identities are protected by formal policy and decision makers, and thus constitute a covert structure of power. In fact, it is entirely possible that their identities are concealed from even formal leaders. Informants are frequently reluctant to provide information that is embarrassing and may serve to incriminate certain powerful parties. The author must emphasize that this results not only from fear, but a sense of loyalty, obligation and commitment to elites who protect at least some of their interests. In the community, a number of them may receive certain sanctions or rewards in exchange for their undivided loyalty. These actors may be given preferential treatment in job market, for example. Although survey data is ideally (though, not always, in reality) held in confidence, the fact that they believe their responses will be used in such a way is enough reason for refusing to cooperate with the interviewer. Because people who exercise power illegitimately have been known to use coercive measures in the past to further their interests, it is understandable that many an informant has a fear of reprisal for cooperating with research into the community's power network.

Illegitimate actors may or may not acknowledge claims on the monopoly of power, but the fact remains that many of these individuals either generate or influence the formulation of the most important policies and decisions in the community. However, it is very unlikely that each wields the same amount of power. Some may be more influential than others. A comparison of such actors

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<sup>5</sup>Although this method is not equipped to locate actors who exercise power through illegitimate means, primarily due to those reasons cited in the text, it is highly questionable whether any model can. Some researchers may claim that they have developed such an approach, but generally it is not possible to include every credible informant who is not only familiar with the structure of power, but willing to suffer the wrath of the power elite. A violation of their trust, confidence and code of secrecy may result in severe consequences.



may reveal differences in their abilities to exercise power. A few may be capable of influencing the development policies and decisions on a formal basis, while others resort to informal persuasion. In addition, they may use either a direct or indirect approach when confronting visible leaders. For the purpose of appearing legitimate, an illegitimate actor may undertake any number of steps. For example, he (or she) may attempt to enhance his (or her) reputation in the community. To do this, the aid of allies and prominent leaders is frequently solicited. This is a process referred to as self-legitimacy.

Illegitimate actors are from both the private and public sectors. Public officials who use illegitimate forms of power are those who go beyond the boundaries of their respective offices, which may or may not be defined in the community's code of political and administrative behavior. Examples of publicans who exercise power illegitimately include mayors and police chiefs from some communities who have total control of local government and rule it along dictatorial lines. There are a variety of cases of such power monopolies occurring even in presumably democratic societies. One instance that comes to mind is Chicago's former mayor, Richard Daley. Another is Daryl Gates, the ex-Police Chief of Los Angeles who has been implicated in human rights violations by civil rights organizations and the mass media. While he has publically denied such allegations and improprieties associated with his office, his total, unchallenged and unquestionable control over the arena of law enforcement has been extensively documented in the press during the past few years. Apparently, his arena-based power provided him with virtual autonomy in his department and an exclusive responsibility for the development and execution of policies and decisions applying to the administration of police matters.

Various public and private organizations, including a number of special interests groups, also tend to employ illegitimate forms of community power. In the United States, militant and extremist political organizations such as the American Nazi Party, Arien Nation and the Imperial Knights of the Ku Klux Klan frequently resort to physical force and tactics when there is a perceived threat to the status quo, the prevalent way of life, or to a variety of other organizational interests. This is also the case for family-based organizations with both legitimate and illegitimate business interests in the United States and Sicily. Collectively referred to as Cosa Nostra (or the Mafia), these families have invested their resources into various businesses at the local, national and international levels. Legitimate business interests are those which operate within the boundaries of the law and include investments in the economic market and trade organizations. Illegitimate interests, on the other hand, are associated with criminal activity, thus in violation of a society's laws and/or social standards. In the United States, these include drug trafficking, prostitution, etc., areas of Cosa Nostra's business activities. Another interest is gambling, which may be classified as either legitimate or illegitimate, depending upon the state or community in which it occurs and adherence to formally established guidelines. In recent years, the legitimacy of certain business interests of Cosa Nostra has become questionable. This is because its families rely on illegitimate means--physical force, coercion and intimidation--to protect them.

Even those organizations that are legitimately recognized frequently employ less than legitimate means in their practices. During political campaigns, for example, some formal parties tend to conduct surveys and polls under the pretense of scientific research. Pollsters may or may not identify themselves, but many deliberately fail to cite their organizations of affiliation. Either they

do not identify them, or otherwise falsely claim to represent a certain public opinion organization that may or may not exist. Thus, the identity of the political party interested in the data gathered by pollsters is withheld in many cases. The reason for this may be associated with a fear of non-compliance or non-response to questions focusing upon personal opinions concerning social issues, as well as the approval rating of political figures and candidates. Some people may refuse to participate in surveys if they believe the data will be used for self-serving purposes by a particular party. Nevertheless, the tactic of withholding one's identity and/or party of affiliation must be questioned on ethical grounds.

Some religious organizations, as well as a variety of non-religious organizations with religious foundations (e.g., pro-life groups such as Operation Rescue), also employ illegitimate means to further their interests. There are many examples of such groups offered by both the popular and professional press. In contemporary literature, the most famous case revolves around a network of religious groups that has attempted to criminalize abortion in the United States during the 1980's and early 1990's.<sup>6</sup> While some of their efforts have been legitimate and channelled through sanctioned behavior, such as public demonstrations, legal suits in state courts and legislatures, etc., others have not. This has occurred primarily because they have been largely unsuccessful in changing current laws.<sup>7</sup> These groups have frequently resorted to extreme

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<sup>6</sup>Groups that focus on the abortion issue and pursue its criminalization collectively refer to themselves as pro-life groups. They are also called anti-choice groups by their opponents who favor legalized abortions and the rights of the mother to opt for the termination of her pregnancy.

<sup>7</sup>Religious groups, however, have had minor and temporary success in restricting abortion and its funding in some locations.

violent measures, including the bombing or vandalism of abortion clinics, the harassment of patients, nurses, physicians and other medical personnel, etc. They tend to justify such actions on ideological grounds. Specifically, they argue that the medical procedure of abortion is itself a violent act. From their perspective, their use of violence is legitimate in that it is a defense against other forms of violence, in this case, medical abortion. Despite such rationale, most Americans tend to view militant behavior as illegitimate and counterproductive.

Another weakness of the model is that it is not equipped to distinguish between the power elite and lower and mid-level personnel who implement their policies and decisions. For the purpose of this thesis, lower and mid-level personnel are referred to as implementors or executors. Many of these actors are themselves responsible for policy and decision making, but this generally occurs within the boundaries established by elites. The model also fails to measure perceptual differences among specific populations in the community, including social classes, religious groups and ethnic and gender strata. A fourth weakness is that there are no prescribed standards and uniform criteria by which comparisons among different communities are possible. Without such standards, longitudinal studies concerned with the measurement of changes in the distribution of power also tend to be difficult. Finally, the model has yet to be tested for reliability. Once tested, it will be considered reliable if findings and results may be duplicated by different researchers focusing upon the same community, as long as political, economic and socio-demographic conditions remain the same. Ways of compensating for this problem are discussed in the following section.

### Implications for Research

#### Testing the Model for Validity and Reliability

As suggested above, the model needs to be tested before it is applied to the field. One way of testing the instrument is through a pilot study focusing upon a community smaller in size and population than the one selected for investigation. Hunter (1953) pursued this course in his inquiry into Atlanta's power structure. His methodology was tested in Savannah, a much smaller city when compared to the metropolis of Atlanta.

There are mainly two reasons why it is necessary to test the model. First, this will ensure the consistency of procedures involved in the administration of the instrument. It will enable the researcher to monitor his or her staff of interviewers more closely and make sure that each follows prescribed technical guidelines. Because Hunter (1953) tested his method in Savannah, he was subsequently able to make appropriate changes in its design before subjecting it to Atlanta. For example, in Savannah there were no specific procedures requiring consistency among "interviewers" who conducted the survey. Hunter notes that in some situations the questionnaires were completed by the informants themselves, but in others by the "interviewers" who solicited their verbal responses. Another problem he pointed out was the length of his survey. These problems were corrected prior to the Atlanta study.

The second reason for testing the model is that the researcher will be able to identify and correct any problems associated with methodological reliability and validity. The important factor is that every informant in the pool understands the questions asked by the interviewer. They must be phrased clearly and relatively simple.

To be considered a valid instrument, it must be determined that the model measures what it purports to measure. Several types of validity are documented by social researchers. The type concerned with in this thesis is face (Phillips, 1976; Selltíz, Wrightsman & Cook, 1976), content (Kerlinger, 1964) or logical (Goode & Hatt, 1952) validity. Face validity is based on the assumption that the instrument measures what it is designed to measure. In the measurement of community power, the reputation for leadership and arena and issue-based perceptions, it is said to have content validity if it appears to measure informants' personal beliefs accurately and adequately. To have face validity, the interview schedule must also contain a relatively large number of questions.<sup>8</sup> The model proposed in this thesis has such validity.

There are a variety of techniques through which the reliability of an instrument may be tested. One way is the "test/retest" method. Following this procedure, the questionnaire is presented more than once to the same group of informants (Siegel & Hodge, 1968). Bailey (1987), however, notes that there are certain problems inherent to the "test/retest" approach. For example, it is not equipped to determine if similar responses during each administration actually result from the instrument's reliability, or the absence of any perceptual change on the part of informants. Neither does this method ascertain beyond a reasonable doubt that different replies point to its unreliability. It is entirely possible that a participant has changed his or her opinion(s) and perspective(s) between sessions. According to Bailey, a test of reliability can only be effective when it is capable of measuring such changes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>This discussion is based on Bailey (1987) and Selltíz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976).

<sup>9</sup>This discussion is based on Bailey (1987).

Another way of testing reliability is the "multiple" (Goode & Hatt, 1952) or "alternate-forms" (Sellitz, Wrightsman & Cook, 1976) method. This involves the "construction" of two different versions of the same instrument. Each consists of the same questions, with the difference being primarily one of language structure. That is, every question on one version corresponds to that on the other, but is phrased somewhat differently. Both versions of the instrument are "administered" to the same informants during a single session.<sup>9</sup> If an informant responds in a similar direction to the same item on both, then his or her comprehension of that item is taken for granted for research purposes. If a significant number of them<sup>10</sup> understand the question, then it is considered to be reliable. When computing the scores of an entire schedule, instrument reliability is high if a satisfactory number comprehend each item.

A related means of determining reliability is the "split-half method." This involves the development of two questions, both phrased a little differently, for each item listed on the questionnaire schedules.<sup>9</sup> If the informant gives similar responses to both questions, then it is assumed that he or she understands what is being asked. If a satisfactory number of them offer similar responses, then it may be said that the item is a reliable measure. When computing the scores of the entire schedule, instrument reliability is high if a significant number is found to comprehend each.<sup>10</sup>

The model also needs to prescribe certain standards and uniform criteria by which comparisons among different communities are made possible. Samples of informants must be representative of the community's populations, including its

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<sup>10</sup>The term significance has certain research implications. One or more statistical tests may be required to determine if the number of respondents is significant.

general population and a wide range of social groups and strata. In each, the number (by percentage) needs to be high enough to ensure adequate representation of a cross-section of local power perceptions. It is especially important to involve members of different social classes, religious groups and ethnic and gender strata. In addition, people from different occupations and educational backgrounds must be taken into consideration.

### Future Applications

Although the primary purpose of this approach is to enable the researcher to locate--both covert and visible--leaders, social issues important to the community, its sectors and specific populations are also identified. After identifying these issues, this information may be provided to community leaders for the following reasons: (a) to heighten their consciousness and knowledge of the needs, concerns and interests of the people living in the community, and (b) to encourage them to take this knowledge and use it towards the development and implementation of social programs and projects.

By applying this method to a particular community, the researcher may also be able to enhance the knowledge of citizens so that they will become more familiar with local leadership. That is, it is a tool for teaching them the identities of leaders and the role each plays in the administration of community government. This is especially important for democratic societies in which participation is ideally encouraged and the responsibility for making decisions is distributed among a wide range of officials that are either elected by the people, or appointed by those who have been. If local actors are to have an impact upon policies, decisions and a variety of other events affecting their lives, they need to know their leaders. Only then can any number of social problems arising in the



community or one of its sectors be resolved. Even if they do not wield and exercise power themselves, by being familiar with the leadership structure many residents (though not all) tend to have a potential capacity for influencing the direction of local policies and decisions. At the very least, they may be able to persuade others who are more influential within this circle. In any given community or society, the most effective actors are those who have learned to manipulate political processes and hold public officials accountable for their actions, policies and decisions.<sup>11</sup> It is inevitable, however, that a small minority of them become experts in the art of politics. Some are so skilled in developing their strategies, tactics and maneuvers that they are able to dictate the terms of the most vital or important policies and decisions. These are the power elite.

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<sup>11</sup> This argument focuses upon the ideal democratic system, not the reality of power as it is used by a minority of actors to command resources in the community. In the modern world, many societies claiming to have democratic political structures are also controlled by capitalistic economic structures which stress the importance of competition for resources. Due to the fact that it takes capital to gain access to other resources, and because most actors do not possess such wealth, it is highly unlikely that they will compete successfully. The few who do control a majority of a community's assets, however, are frequently able to convert them into power. These actors, collectively referred to as the power elite, tend to use their capital as leverage in the political arena, thus increasing their weights and influence among formal leaders responsible for a wide variety of policies and decisions.

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## APPENDIX A

### Hunter's "Instructions" to "Judges"

"Place in rank order, one through ten, ten persons from each list of personnel—who in your opinion are the most influential persons in the field designated—influential from the point of view of ability to lead others."

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From Hunter, F. (1953). Appendix: Methods of study. Community power structure: A study of decision makers (p. 265). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

## APPENDIX B

### Schedule of Questions for Identifying Social Issues and Arenas of Policy and Decision Making

#### Part I: Social Issues

1. In your opinion, which issues would you say are the most important to the people of [community name]?
2. Among these issues, are there any particular ones that are more important than others? That is, do residents talk about them more often than they do about others?
3. Would you name them?
4. From your perspective, rank these issues according to their importance to [community name]'s residents?
5. Of these, which would you say is the most important?
6. In [community name], are there any groups of people such as ethnic, racial, occupational, religious and women's groups who are more concerned about some issues than others?
7. Name these groups and issues.
8. Are there any issues that are more important to [community name]'s leaders than to its population?
9. Would you name them?
10. From your perspective, rank them according to their importance to [community name]'s leaders?

11. Concerning these issues, which would you say is the most important to local leaders?

#### Part II: Policy Arenas

1. In most communities, there are a variety of sectors in which people interact and policies and decisions are made. For example, there are political, educational, legal, medical, religious, business or economic and law enforcement sectors. Would you say that, in [community name], some are more important, powerful and influential than others? That is, do some sectors persuade formal leaders to give priority to their concerns, issues and interests?
2. Would you name them?
3. From your perspective, rank these sectors according to their importance and abilities to influence [community name] leaders.
4. Comparing [community name]'s sectors, which would you say is the most important to, and influential or persuasive with, formal leaders?

## APPENDIX C

### Schedule of Questions to General Informants

#### Part I

Do you think that there is a group of people in [community name] that monopolizes power, or do you think that policies and decisions are made by many people?

#### Part II

Interviewer instructions. If respondent believes that policies and decisions are influenced by many people, proceed to Schedule A. If respondent believes that community power is monopolized by a group of people, proceed to Schedule B.

#### SCHEDULE A

1. Are these people primarily formal leaders or concerned citizens?
2. In [community name], are most formal leaders elected or appointed?
3. Is local leadership responsive to the demands of residents?
4. Do [community's name] leaders frequently encourage participation in the decision making process by residents? For example, do they contact citizens for input, conduct polls or surveys, submit tentative decisions to local referenda for legitimation and public approval? If so, do these leaders employ the data acquired through polls, surveys and referenda as a basis for forming community policy and achieving decisions acceptable to

the general public?

5. Does [community's name] political organization include task forces consisting of residents from the community? If so, to what extent do formal leaders use their proposals in community planning and development? Do they provide them with resources to help them in community planning and development and to attain their goals?
6. Are some task forces more influential than others? For example, do formal leaders act upon proposals submitted by some more than others?
7. Which task force(s) would you say is/are more influential?
8. Within this/these task force(s), are there some individuals that are more influential than others?
9. Would you name them?

#### SCHEDULE B

Would you call this group a clique who controls the community, an organization or group of organizations with substantial power, or a group of individuals acting independently of organizational ties?

Interviewer instructions. If respondent believes that community power is monopolized by a clique or group of individuals operating independently of organizational ties, proceed to Section 1 of this schedule. If respondent believes that power is monopolized by one or more formal organizations, proceed to Section 2.

## Section 1

1. Would you name the individuals who you believe wield most of the power in [community name]?
2. Would you say that they are cohesive as a group and form a clique that influences every policy and decision made by formal leaders?
3. From your perspective, rank them according to their levels of power.
4. In your opinion, which individual would you say is the most influential in [community name]?
5. Would you say that these individuals influence every major policy and decision made by formal leaders, or that at least some tend to influence primarily the formulation of certain types of policies and decisions? That is, do they have more influence over some policies and decisions than others?
6. Name these individuals and the policies and decisions which each influences.
7. Are any of them members of local organizations?
8. Would you name them and the organization(s) each belongs to?
9. Do you believe that they are influential and powerful because of the organization(s) they belong to? That is, do they use these organization(s) to promote their personal aims and influence community leaders? Are organizational resources readily available to them for this purpose?
10. Would you then say that there are at least some organizations in [community name] through which individuals act and crystalize their power?

## Section 2

1. Would you name this/these organization(s)?

2. From your perspective, rank [community's name] organizations according to the power each has in the community?
3. Of all the organizations in [community name], which would you say is the most influential?
4. Would you say that this/these organization(s) influence(s) every major policy and decision made by formal leaders, or does it/do they tend to influence primarily the formulation of certain types of policies and decisions? That is, does it/do they have more influence over some policies and decisions than others?
5. Name these policies and decisions and the organization(s) that influence(s) each.
6. Within this/each organization, which individual(s) would you say is/are the most influential?
7. Would you name them?
8. Would you say that they employ their status within prestigious organizations to enhance and crystalize their own power in [community name]?
9. Finally, would you say that their power results from membership in organizations, or that these organization(s) are influential and have power in [community name] because some of their members are powerful and influential?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This question is based on alternative theories of individual and organizational power. For a discussion, see Appleton, L. M. (1983). Corporate and personal action in community decision-making (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1982). Dissertation Abstracts International, 43, 3710A.

The questions in this schedule are--in part--based on those developed by Thometz, C. E. (1963). Appendix B: Schedules used for collecting and tabulating data. The decision-makers: The power structure of Dallas (pp.113-117). Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press.



## APPENDIX D

### Schedule of Questions to Special Informants

#### Part I

Do you think that there is a group of people who makes, develops and/or influences most of the [arena name] policies and decisions in [community name], or do you think that these policies and decisions are influenced by many people?

#### Part II

Interviewer instructions. If respondent believes that [arena name] policies and decisions are influenced by many people, proceed to Schedule A. If respondent believes that there is a specific group of people who influences a majority of these policies and decisions, proceed to Schedule B.

#### SCHEDULE A

1. Are these people primarily formal leaders or concerned citizens?
2. In [community name], are most formal leaders who address the [issue name] issue elected or appointed?
3. In reference to the [issue name] issue, do these leaders respond to the demands and interests of residents?
4. Do they frequently encourage participation in [arena name] decision making by residents? For example, do they contact citizens for input, conduct polls or surveys, submit tentative decisions to local referenda for legitimization

and public approval? If so, do they employ the data acquired through these polls, surveys and referenda as a basis for forming [arena name] policy and achieving decisions acceptable to the general public?

5. Does [community's name] political organization include a task force that consists of residents from the community and addresses [arena name] issues? If so, to what extent do formal leaders use its proposals in [arena name] planning and development? Do they provide this task force with local resources to help them in [arena name] planning and development and to attain their goals?
6. Within the [arena/issue name] task force, are there some individuals that are more influential than others?
7. Would you name them?

#### SCHEDULE B

Would you call this group a clique who controls local [arena/issue name] policy and decision making, an organization or group of organizations with substantial influence and power over the [issue name] issue, or a group of individuals acting independently of organizational ties?

Interviewer instructions. If respondent believes that local [arena name] policies and decisions are made by a clique or group of individuals operating independently of organizational ties, proceed to Section 1 of this schedule. If respondent believes that these policies and decisions are influenced by one or more formal organizations, proceed to Section 2.

## Section 1

1. Would you name those individuals who you believe are the most influential over [arena name] policies and decisions made in [community name]?
2. Taken together, would you say that they are a clique? That is, are they a cohesive group with [arena/issue name] interests and so use their power to influence [arena name] policies and decisions that protect, promote and further these interests?
3. From your perspective, rank these individuals according to their abilities to influence [arena name] policies and decisions.
4. In your opinion, which individual would you say is the most influential in determining [issue name] policy in [community name]?
5. Are any of these individuals members of local organizations that address [issue name] issues?
6. Would you name these individuals along with the organization(s) each belongs to?
7. Do you believe that they are influential over [arena name] policies and decisions because of the organization(s) they belong to? That is, do they use local organization(s) to promote [arena/issue name] interests and secure power to influence [issue name] policies and decisions made by formal leaders? Are organizational resources readily available for this purpose?
8. Would you then say that there are at least some organizations through which individuals crystalize their power over [arena name] policies and decisions in [community name]?

## Section 2

1. Would you name this/these organization(s)?
2. From your perspective, rank [community's name] organizations according to their abilities to influence [arena name] policies and decisions in [community name]?
3. Of all the organizations in [community name], which would you say is the most influential over [arena name] policies and decisions?
4. In each organization, which individual(s) would you say is/are the most influential over local [arena name] policies and decisions?
5. Would you name them?
6. Would you say that they employ their status in prestigious organizations to influence [arena name] policies and decisions in [community name]?
7. Finally, would you say that they are influential over [arena name] policies and decisions in [community name] because of the organization(s) they belong to, or that this/these organization(s) is/are able to influence [arena name] policies and decisions because some of its/their members are powerful and influential?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This question is partially based on alternative theories of individual and organizational power. For a discussion, see Appleton, L. M. (1983). Corporate and personal action in community decision-making (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1982). Dissertation Abstracts International, 43, 3710A.

The questions in this schedule are--in part--based on those developed by Thometz, C. E. (1963). Appendix B: Schedules used for collecting and tabulating data. The decision-makers: The power structure of Dallas (pp.113-117). Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press.

APPENDIX E  
Typology of Power

<u>Personal Power</u>	<u>Social Power</u>
<u>Features</u>	
focuses upon the self	associated with the social environment
instinctive/impulsive	rationale/logic
low inhibition	high inhibition
(restraint) level*	(restraint) level*

Typologies of Social Power

<u>By Social Institution</u>	<u>By Social Unit</u>
Political Power	Individual Power
Economic Power	Collective Power
	Organizational Power
<u>By Spatial-Temporal Factors</u>	
Perpetual Power	
Episodic Power	

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\*Based--in part--on McClelland, D. C. (1975). Power: The inner experience. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc.

## APPENDIX F

### Glossary

actual group-a social unit consisting of diverse interactive individuals socially identifying with the group.

actual power-the explicit exercise of power which frequently becomes manifest through the formulation of social policies and decisions.

association-a social group consisting of individuals with common characteristics.

bureaucracy-an organizational system characterized by functional specialization ("division of labor"), with the "responsibility" for different functions distributed among diverse organizational components (divisions; bureaus; organs).<sup>1</sup>

citizen-a social actor who is enfranchised to participate in the political and economic affairs of state and has an invested interest in its operations.

civics-the interactive relationship between the political and economic affairs of state.

civil power-social power manifest through an interactive relationship between political power and economic power.

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<sup>1</sup>Based--in part--on Frank, A. W., Lachmann, R., Smith, D. W., Swenson, J. V., Wanner, R., & Wells, A. (1986). The encyclopedic dictionary of sociology (3rd ed.). Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.; Robertson, I. (1986). Bureaucracy. In A. W. Frank, R. Lachmann, D. W. Smith, J. V. Swenson, R. Wanner, & A. Wells (Eds.), The encyclopedic dictionary of sociology (pp. 30-31). Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.; and Weber, M. (1986). In A. W. Frank, R. Lachmann, D. W. Smith, J. V. Swenson, R. Wanner, & A. Wells (Eds.), The encyclopedic dictionary of sociology (p. 30). Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

coalition-a network (union) consisting of diverse interactive social units.

including individuals and social groups.

collective power-a form of social power exercised by social actors as members of a social group.

corporation-an organizational system consisting of components--including individual members and organs (divisions)--that socially identify with the organization as a cohesive social unit.

corporatism-the cohesive (or solidaristic) social identification with an organizational structure.

crowd-an aggregate of individuals united by chance in a particular space and at a particular time.<sup>2</sup>

economic institution-a social institution that legitimates economic power and the prevalent mode of accessing and distributing social resources, including economic resources.

economic power-the capacity to control social resources, including economic resources.

education-the communication of social knowledge and information within society, including traditions, customs, norms of social interaction, and behavior patterns.

educational institution-a mechanism of socialization, enculturation, cultural continuity, social equilibrium and social control.

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<sup>2</sup>According to LeBon (1897, 1987), a crowd is an aggregate of individuals who are stimulated towards collective action through the convergence or combination of instincts that produces a collective consciousness, referred to as the "mental unity of the crowd." Apparently, LeBon's definition includes actual groups, as well as mobs and other potential groups. Refer to LeBon, G. (1897). The crowd. London: T. Fisher Unwin; LeBon, G. (1987). In R. H. Turner & L. M. Killian. Collective behavior (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.; and Turner, R. H., & Killian, L. M. (1987). Collective behavior (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

educational power-the capacity to control (the distribution of) cultural knowledge and information within society.

episodic power-a form of social power associated with situational factors, changes occurring within the social environment.

federal power-the relatively equal distribution of social power among diverse power structures at differential organizational levels.

federal power structure-the governing body of a federation consisting of diverse power structures--including a central organizational power structure and relatively autonomous divisional power structures--with differential responsibility for policy and decision making.

federalism-a social relationship in which social power is shared among diverse power structures at differential organizational levels.

federation-an organization consisting of diverse social groups that are united for specific purposes, but independent for other purposes.

horizontal (organizational) power structure-the total system of organizational control consisting of organizational leaders from organizational components or divisions (organs).<sup>3</sup>

individual power-a form of social power exercised by a single social actor.

informal group-an actual group that is relatively unstructured and generally not controlled by a formal power structure.

involuntary association-an association consisting of individuals with common ascribed characteristics (eg, ethnicity; race; nationality; common ancestry; common heritage, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup>Refer to Hall, R. H. (1972). Organizations: Structure and process. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.; Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). The social psychology of organizations. New York: Wiley.; and Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). The social psychology of organizations. New York: Wiley.



legal institution-a component of the political institution that is established, formally documented and manifest through a society's constitution.

legal power-a form of political power legitimated within a society's constitution, a legal document that legitimates the form of government, the distribution of political power, as well as the fundamental liberties of diverse social actors.<sup>4</sup>

medical institution-a social institution that legitimates medical power and controls access to medical resources.

medical power-the capacity to control health-related issues and access to medical resources within society.

military institution-a mechanism of social control employed within society.

military power-the capacity to employ coercive measures for: 1. social control; or 2. to attain some desired goal.

mob-an aggregate of individuals characterized by episodic power and stimulated towards social action by situational (changes occurring within the social environment) and/or affective factors.<sup>2</sup>

mob power-a form of episodic power and social action performed by mobs, aggregates of individuals stimulated towards action by situational and/or affective factors.

municipality-a relatively autonomous, self-governing and incorporated community.

municipal power structure-the governing body of a municipality.

organization-an actual group that is formally structured and characterized by

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<sup>4</sup>Refer to Ferguson, J. H., & McHenry, D. E. (1967). The American system of government (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.; Lineberry, R. L. (1980). Government in America: People, politics, and policy. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company.; Prewitt, K., & Verba, S. (1977). An introduction to American government (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers; and Prewitt, K., & Verba, S. (1980). Principles of American government (3rd ed.). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.

division into diverse smaller components, social units referred to as organs.

organizational power-a form of collective power exercised by members of an organization.

perpetual power-a form of social power characterized by regular patterns and stability within the social environment, thus may be exercised on a regular and continuous basis.

personal power-power that originates within the self and is characterized by a relatively low level of restraint (inhibition).<sup>5</sup>

political institution-the primary social institution that legitimates, is associated with, and effects social action and social power.

political power-a primary form of social power employed to attain, maintain, secure, preserve, protect and enhance diverse social interests.

potential group-a social unit consisting of "potential" social relationships, although members are characterized by "low" rates of: 1. social identification; and 2. social "interaction."

potential power-an implicit capacity to "influence" and affect social behavior, as well as social policy and decision making.

religion-a structure of social identification within society.

religious institution-a social institution that: 1. legitimates the social power of the power elite in some societies; and 2. legitimates the religious power of the "religious elite," influential religious actors.

religious power-1. the capacity to legitimate a society's social ideology, norms and patterns of social behavior (eg, rituals), and the distribution of social resources; or 2. the capacity to influence policy and decision making within a

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<sup>5</sup>Based--in part--on McClelland, D. C. (1975). Power: The inner experience. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc.

social unit (eg, religious groups, society and the community).

social group-a social unit consisting of potential social relationships.

social institution-legitimizes the distribution of social power within society.

social power-power generating from the social environment--including diverse factors or variables associated with social interaction--which is characterized by a relatively high level of restraint (inhibition).<sup>5</sup>

social religion-a structure of social identification with a society's predominant social (eg, secular) ideology.

social unit-any level of social functioning, including individuals and social groups.

special interest group-an actual group characterized by specific social interests, specific social motives and specific social goals.<sup>6</sup>

state-the social structure through which social institutions and social units--including individuals and social groups--interact.

theistic religion-a structure of social identification with a social group through theological ideologies, ideologies associated with the supernatural phenomena, including spiritual concepts (eg, a deity) and events inexplicable by rational means, thus empirically immeasurable.

vertical (organizational) power structure-the governing body and general control center of the organization-at-large.

voluntary association-an association consisting of individuals that socially interact on the basis of common social characteristics (eg, social interests, social goals, etc.).

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<sup>6</sup>Refer to Zeigler, L. H., Jennings, M. K., & Peak, G. W. (1974). Governing American schools: Political interaction in local school districts. North Scituate: Duxbury Press.