Study of community power structure and school board membership

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The University of Montana
A STUDY OF COMMUNITY POWER
STRUCTURE AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Montana public schools, as well as the public schools of this nation, are influenced to a great degree by the power structure or the decision makers in the community. This relationship exists to a greater extent than most people realize or, at least, will admit. The school administrator is in a position which allows him to see the pressures of special interest groups take form and action. Every time the administrator or the school board makes a decision, the pressure of this power structure plays a role. These pressures are felt by the school administrator whether they are actively exerted or only potentially present.

As a school administrator one should be cognizant of the fact that power has always existed and probably always will. Power and pressure are some of the inevitable facts of life. The crux of the problem lies in the "taming" of this power. It cannot be tamed unless we know what it is, and how to handle it so that, on the one hand it delivers maximum efficiency, but, on the other hand, does the least damage.


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The responsibilities of the school administrator in community relations are not met entirely by joining the Lions Club and "slapping backs." They are not even met entirely by a well-conceived plan of reporting school news and policy for the local papers, or even by involving citizens in formulating school policy and program. They can be met only by the administrator's realizing that no important trend in his community is unimportant to education, to his institution; by his knowing the community better than the politician does and knowing how to use this knowledge.

The naive administrator of schools either is overwhelmed by these pressures or is blissfully ignorant of their existence. The alert school administrator not only will recognize the existency of pressures, but will analyze them and devise plans to block pressure detrimental to the best interests of the school and the pupils.

A wise school administrator will be prepared and qualified to study his community, or he may find himself an unwitting victim of circumstances. Although the school administrator may possess the potential skill in human or community relations, he will have difficulties if he is

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unable to identify and analyze the problem and the forces which are operating.

Recently, the urgency of the question of administrative functions has become so important that a series of nationwide studies under the title of Cooperative Program in Educational Administration are being financed by the Kellogg Foundation. Interestingly enough, studies of community power structures are an integral part of these studies.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM**

By merely reading the daily paper, we can follow the maneuvering of the wielders of power in international, political, and business circles. Although not quite as evident, the power groups maneuvering within a community can also be "read." The power phenomenon of a community has implications for every school administrator, teacher, and member of the community. The administrator is frequently subjected to the conflicting demands and pressures of rival power groups. He must be ready to "roll with the punch" or take a stand on his principles or the policy of the

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It is significant to note that dominant power factions seek to utilize the educational institution in order to further their particular objectives. Demands are made not only for the use of physical facilities and the right to final evaluation of personnel but also the inclusion or exclusion of curricular materials, the banning of specified books, and even the adoption of specific instructional methods.

As Dr. Harold Webb has commented,

If administrators of public schools are to be the dynamic persons for whom their office provides the potential, one of the abilities the successful administrator of schools must possess is the skill to recognize the persons in the community who have the power to effect the establishment of policy.

Equally important would be a knowledge of what influence, if any, these people of power have on determining the membership of the school board and through this control of membership indirectly influence the decisions made by the board.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, the writer attempted to devise and use a technique or procedure

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5 Ibid., p. 59.
6 Webb, op. cit., p. 3.
to identify the power structure members or decision makers in a small community. Secondly, the writer attempted to determine what effect the power structure members had on school board membership. The purpose of this paper does not include an attempt to report the findings of this study as a thorough, conclusive approach, but presents a technique an administrator might follow in surveying the power structure of his community.

ASSUMPTIONS

A study, such as the writer has suggested by the title, makes the assumption that an instrument could be constructed for gathering the information needed. It was further assumed that the information gathered in this study would be valuable enough, to those who may survey this research, to justify such a research project. The validity of this study proved to be dependent to some degree upon the availability of related materials.

DELIMITATIONS

The scope of this study was limited to one small community. The name given to this community was Community X. An attempt was made to keep all outside environmental factors from influencing the responses in this research.
LIMITATIONS

Limiting factors of this study were recognized in the following:

1. Some people tended to have some reservations when discussing their peer group in the community.

2. There was no assurance that the individual respondents would reply the same way if questioned later with the same questions.

3. The limitation of time available for the study was a limiting factor. The writer was not then a member of the community long enough to observe the power structure during a period of stress or controversy.

4. This study was also limited because a complete sociological analysis of the community was not available. Such an analysis would have given a broader understanding of the sociological make up of the community.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Power structure or group. The term "power structure" refers to the total number of persons in a given community who possesses considerable influence in deciding important issues. The members of this group may operate as individuals or as a group with interrelationships which make the effectiveness of the group even more potent.

Power structure member. "Power structure member" or "a member of the power structure" refers to a person who has been identified as a decision maker or who possesses considerable influence in deciding important community matters.

Community. A group living in one locality under a
common culture and having a geographical focus for their major interests and activities.

School board. The popularly elected school district agency created by the state on which the statutes of the state or commonwealth place the responsibility for conducting the local public school system.

Interview. The term "interview" refers to the more informal means of obtaining information from selected persons. The interviewer has in mind definite information which he wishes to obtain from the interviewee, but the conversation with the interviewee is more natural than in the case of the interview schedule.

Power. The term "power" is not used in this paper in the sense that it is something undesirable. Rather, "power is a word that will be used to describe the acts of men going about the business of moving other men to act in relation to themselves or in relation to organic or inorganic things."

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

While reviewing the literature related to community power structure, the writer noted that most of the research has been within the last decade. In fact, much of the research is still in its formative stage.

The related literature now available was used by the writer as a guide or as implications to the approach and purpose of the research project being considered. Some of the techniques found in the review of related literature proved to be very helpful in gathering information and interpreting the results.

Pioneer! Floyd Hunter might be referred to as a pioneer in the field of research in respect to power structure and the power phenomena. Although many had been aware of the existence of this phenomena, Hunter was the first to scientifically approach the subject. Hunter's study was built around four postulates (self evident truths) and three hypothesis. The postulates as set forth by Hunter are:

1. Power involves relationships between individuals and groups both controlled and controlling.

Corollary 1. Because power involves such relationships it can be described structurally.

2. Power is structured socially in the United States into a dual relationship between governmental and economic authorities on national, state, and local levels.
Corollary 1. Both types of authorities may have functional, social, and institutional power units subsidiary to them.

3. Power is a relatively constant factor in social relationship with policies as variables.

Corollary 1. Wealth, social status, and prestige are factors in the "power constant."

2. Variations in the strength between power units, or a shift in policy within one of these units affects the whole power structure.

4. Power of the individual must be structured into associational, clique, or institutional patterns to be effective.

Corollary 1. Representative democracy offers the greatest possibility of assuring the individual a voice in policy determination.

From these postulates came three hypotheses:

1. Power is exercised as a necessary function in social relationship.

2. The exercise of power is limited and directed by the formulation and extension of social policy within a framework of socially sanctioned authority.

3. In a given power unit (organization) a smaller number of individuals will be found formulating and extending policy than those exercising power.

Corollary 1. All policy makers are "men of power."

2. All "men of power" are not, per se, policy makers.¹

**Other Notable Contributions.** Since this initial study, a number of studies have been carried on under the sponsorship of the Cooperative Program in Educational ¹

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¹ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7. Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Administration of the Kellogg Foundation. Goldhammer's study of power structure evident in the dealings of the board of education and the superintendent of schools is one prime example. It was from Goldhammer's study that the writer of this study came up with a topic to pursue which was timely and of interest. Harold V. Webb's study, also a CPEA grant, has added a great deal of information on how the community power structure is related to school administration. In the Foreword of Webb's study R. I. Hammond, Director of the Division of Graduate Study in Education, University of Wyoming, has this to say:

The results of his (Webb's) research merit careful analysis to discern those aspects of educational administration which should be included in future courses and offerings designed for pre-service and in-service school administrators. Furthermore, the results should be studied thoroughly for indications of additional studies that need to be made in this important area of public school management and operation.†

The job of the chief school officer in any community is twofold. It deals with the school and what goes on within its walls. It also deals with the community which supports the school and entrusts its children to it. The

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3 Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

Community is made up not merely of people as people, but also of a complex pattern of social units, agencies, organizations, institutions, and informal groups with different backgrounds, with varying and often conflicting objectives and values, and with ideas about education that most of the citizens acquired in their youth. Each of these social units indicates interests, drives, or pressures of some group or stratum of population. Too many times school administrators are aware of what goes on within the four walls of the schoolhouse, but fail to recognize the need for a survey and study of the community which is the foundation of the schools being administered.

The school administrator is a participant in the community power structure (sometimes a victim). He should become a keen observer of the techniques for the exercise of power and he should engage in discreet questioning to identify power figures important to him. Who is the most powerful friend I can get to support my application? or Whose voice will carry the most weight in this decision?

The definition of power structure itself suggests that these individuals (decision makers) exist and operate in a systematic, coordinated relationship to one another and to the rest of the community, over which power is then

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Brunner, op. cit., p. 299.
Max Weber says, "In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action." R. M. McIver tells us, "By social power we mean the capacity to command the service or compliance of others." C. W. Mills says, "by the powerful we mean, of course, those who are able to realize their will even if others resist it." In our communities when we hear such euphemistic terms as, "leadership," and "authority," we are hearing terms which merely denote various aspects of power. Those who have "influence," "social control," etc., when influencing decisions, firmly believe that their decisions are for the best good of the community.

Keith Goldhammer, in his study, was able to reveal the power structure's impact upon school board membership.

6 Bullock, op. cit., p. 60.
7 Ibid., p. 60.
8 Ibid., p. 60.
9 Ibid., p. 60.
discovered that during periods of time when stable school-community relationships existed, school boards were self-perpetuating and at election time only board recommended candidates appeared. But during periods of stress, considerable concern was shown over board membership. Candidates who were elected during this period of stress were either proposed, part of, or acceptable to the power structure. Goldhammer found that the degree to which the board was a self-perpetuating entity was a variable of:

1. Acceptability of the candidates to the dominant power structure.

2. General apathy of the general public to school board politics.

3. Strength of the power structure to confront challenges of its supremacy.

It was a part of the myth of being a board member of this community to let it be known that one didn't want to be on the board, but since "someone" had "drafted" him, he was willing to assume this responsibility. Few, if any, admitted that they had much of an "ax to grind." One didn't "run" for the office, but there may have been a campaign put on by his friends and supporters who were looking for the individual to accomplish certain specific things. Although each member may have been hand picked, in every case they denied this and emphatically stated that they were beholden to no group.

A further examination of this community revealed that, for the most part, board members represented men of
stance in the community. As a rule they had resided in the community for years and enjoyed relative economic security. These men either lived by or accepted the values and moral codes of the community. Further study showed that they represented only narrow segments of the community and actually had limited contacts within the community.

An Inference. The fact remains, whether we as educators like it or not, or whether the society being studied is in a democratic or autocratic framework, that various groups and various segments of that society have leaders who influence opinion. In fact, it is axiomatic that if leaders play a dominant role in influencing their followers on matters of opinion, these same leaders, in turn, may prove to be a basis for a plausible sampling of the opinions of their followers.

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CHAPTER III

APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH

The development of the approach or the procedures that were followed in pursuing this research are outlined in this chapter. An analysis of the community was made by the author from a survey made of the community over a period of two years.

A questionnaire was devised for the purpose of identifying the power structure members. This questionnaire was given to selected informants and the parents of elementary school children. From the tabulation of these two sets of questionnaires, the power structure members were ranked and the top seven on each list were identified as the power structure. These two rankings were then compared statistically to determine if there was a relationship between the first and second ranking.

The power structure members and all members of the board of trustees, past and present members, were given a questionnaire designed for comparing the common characteristics of each group. A sociogram was constructed from the questionnaires of the top seven identified as members of the power structure. Reciprocation of choice among this group was illustrated by this sociogram. A questionnaire was also devised for members of the board of trustees to

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certain the reason(s) these men has for accepting school board responsibilities.

A survey was made of all school board records that were available to the writer. Important findings of this survey are pointed out in this chapter.

The results of the data gathered by the procedure outlined in this chapter were presented in Chapter IV in tables for further clarification.

Collection Of Data

Survey of Community X. Essential to one's understanding more fully the power structure of any community, is a brief description of the community involved in the study. A survey of Community X included the following:

1. The population according to the 1960 census and compared with the 1950 census.

2. How the community has grown.

3. What the nature of the population change has been and the influence of business and industry on this change.

4. How the community has been organized.

5. What educational values and issues have been prominent in the community.

6. The relation of community education to other governmental services.¹

With this brief survey of the community, it should be easier to understand the relationship of the power structure with the type and size of the community.

Identification of the Power Structure. After some searching for an instrument to use for the identification of the power structure, the writer decided to use Floyd model's method of identification with some modifications. The method involves:

1. Identification of figures reputed to constitute the local power structure through nominations obtained from "juries" or panels of presumably "knowledgeable" informants. Because the writer has been in this community for several years, the nominations were made by the writer without involving the participation of the nominating jury. The writer used as an index for his nominations the following guides: (1) nominee's activity in community functions, (2) nominee's apparent alertness to the needs of the school, and (3) nominee's inter-action socially with other community members. Item two and three in this index were determined by the writer from the personal interaction of the writer over a period of six years with those chosen to be selected informants.

2. A questionnaire was sent to the figures reputed to constitute the power structure as identified by the guidelines listed above. Each individual so
identified was asked to answer two questions:

A. Suppose a major project was before the community, such as building a new school, one that required decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group—regardless of whether you know them or not:

B. In most communities certain persons are said to be influential "behind the scenes" and to have a lot to say about programs that are planned, projects and issues that come up around town. What persons in this community are influential in this way?

Those asked to complete this questionnaire were contacted personally by the writer at which time the study briefly explained. The questionnaire was given to each person contacted and they were asked to complete the same and return to the writer by the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. This allowed the individual time to do some reflective thinking before completing the questionnaire. Of the nineteen questionnaires handed out, all were returned, and the results were carefully tabulated. The names of individuals listed were ranked according to the number of times the respondents listed each particular individual.

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Bullock, op. cit., p. 61.
who were ranked number one through number seven were arbitrarily chosen to constitute the power structure.

In an attempt to see if the others of the populace would identify the same leaders, the same questionnaire was mailed, with a short explanatory letter, to all the families who had children going to the community's elementary school. Sixty-six questionnaires were mailed out and fifty-four were returned. The results of this poll were tabulated. The individuals nominated by this group were ranked according to the number of times they were mentioned. Here again the top seven were arbitrarily chosen to constitute the power structure.

The results of these two sets of questionnaires, were then compared and the rank difference correlation of coefficients calculated.

Behavior habits and interactional characteristics of the Power Structure. The next step was a study of selected behavior habits and interactional characteristics of the "identified" power structure. A questionnaire was designed for this purpose. The seven identified power structure members were asked to list their occupation, what service organizations or clubs, community improvement committees or groups, and/or church or church group they belonged to at this time. They were also asked where their close friends lived (within or outside the community) and what their favorite pastimes were. From this information, common
behavior and interactional characteristics were ascertained.

Survey of board members. All board members, those serving presently and those who had served in the past, were asked to complete the above questionnaire. Available school records made it possible to list all board members of the past back to 1940. Some of this group had been identified as power structure members. These board members, present members and past members still living in the community, were all asked to complete a questionnaire in an attempt to find out further information. This information being: (1) who asked them to run for the board, (2) for what reason they were asked to run, (3) if they, as a trustee, were beholden to any individual or group, and (4) if they felt any honor or prestige went with being a board member in Community X.

School board minutes and records were carefully surveyed to find the names of people who had served on the school board. From the completed list, it was discovered that a few of the identified power structure members had been school board members in the past. Also, many past board members had moved from the community and this added further limitation to a complete study of board members. Seven past board members were found to be still living in the community.

An important discovery was made in surveying the trustees' nomination petitions of the past seven years. In
the state of Montana second and third class school district trustees are nominated by five eligible voters signing a nomination petition. A valid nomination petition authorizes the affixing of the nominated persons' name on the official ballot for the election of school board trustees. Generally, if there is one vacancy on the board, only one person is nominated. This means that the person nominated will almost automatically be elected to board of trustees as their name will be the only printed name on the ballot. There is no known case of a write-in candidate getting enough votes to win an election in this community.

The significant finding concerning these petitions was that the names of the top three members of the power structure were found on every nomination petition on file from the past seven years without exception. These members of the power structure have been very influential in determining who would serve on the board of trustees.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of the research are reported in this chapter. Community X is analyzed from the point of view of population trends and change, organizations of the community, educational values and issues, and the relationship of education to other governmental services of the community. In the reporting of the results of the research, the power structure is identified, ranked, compared, and studied. School board and power structure members are compared as to common characteristics and interactions. Further study of the board of trustees ascertains some of the reasons the trustees gave for serving on the board. From these comparisons and analysis, trends and observations are noted.

Community Analysis

Community X is a small, peaceful community. With its smattering of evergreen trees and mountain vegetation mingled with small, conservative homes, one would find many scenes just as if they were set for the artist's brush. Forming the southern boundary of the community is the wave swept shoreline of a large fresh water lake. This beautiful lake has influenced and always will influence the activity of the inhabitants of this area. Industry and recreation are both by-products of this lake.

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A large portion of the employment in this area is seasonal and residents often work less than nine months out of the year. The other months they live on their savings, unemployment compensation, and credit. It is interesting to note that a large portion of those who reside in this community work outside of the community. Presently, there aren't enough jobs available for those who reside in the community to keep all residents gainfully employed.

Homes in the community range from a two hundred dollar shack to the thirty thousand dollar model home. Many of the homes in the older section of the area are of the "company" style, typical of the stereotype company town. As a rule the residents are slowly improving upon their property as their means will allow.

The business district consists of a bank, a mercantile, two service stations, a bar, two boat factories, and a seasonal cafe. Most of the residents trade in a nearby community of ten thousand.

Within the community there are three churches, a service organization, a volunteer fire department, a saddle club, a garden club, a home demonstration club, several ladies auxiliary organizations, and a few informal groups. Boating, fishing, skiing, skating, swimming, baseball, and horseback riding make up the major recreational activities of the local residents. The population seems to find plenty to do during their leisure hours. A great deal of community
activity evolves around the local school or use of the school plant.

**Population trend.** According to the 1960 census, Community X's population is 1002. Considering the 1950 census of 900, there has been an eleven per cent increase in population.

The change in population has had some effect on the local elementary school. There has been about an eight per cent increase in enrollment between 1950 and 1960. The school district classification has been changed from a third class district to second class status due to the increase in population. Growth of population to any degree in the foreseeable future, appears unlikely.

**Nature of population change.** Due to the lack of employment available, a considerable portion of the population has been in constant flux. Over the last ten years the population has become more and more mobile. Along with this mobility come many transient families who have large families of five or more children. Frequently members of this group are unemployed. This community is divided into two distinct groups; the "long" time residents and those

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who might be termed as mobile residents. Somewhat unique is the effect this seems to have on the local school. Each grade seems to have a scholastic split of the good and the poor students with but very few near the average. A closer check reveals that mobility as a rule seems to handicap the progress of the children involved.

The mobile portion of the population display very few signs that show that they have much interest in the school. About the only time they show up at school is when their children are in some kind of trouble or for the annual school Christmas and Spring programs. When one comes in contact with this group they seem very interested in the welfare of their own children, and yet they very seldom visit school to find out how their children are doing. Undoubtedly, the school is failing to open a channel of communication which would make it easy for this group to visit the school and feel at ease.

The long time residents will be found busily engaged in community groups, and they will be found serving as Parent Teacher Association officers, serving on PTA committees, and acting as room mothers. When support is needed for a worthy project, this group will constitute the larger majority of those who give support.

Interaction within this group is at a high level, but seldom will one see interaction to any degree between this group and the more mobile population. It is not that this
group is not friendly and cordial with the mobile population, but they seldom develop strong friendship and interests along the same lines. This conclusion can be supported by the writer from the visits made to the various community organizations and functions.

An important observation comes from a survey of the poll lists of annual trustee elections. Almost without an exception, the only names found on the poll lists are the names of the long time residents. Even when one has a school election on matters of extreme interest with a large portion of the eligible voters voting, seldom do you find the name of a mobile citizen on the poll lists.

Organization of the community. No community government, such as mayor, city council, etc., exists within this community. Community X, although it could meet the requirements, has never incorporated legally for the purpose of handling community improvement projects. The community is organized around several organizations which serve different functions within the community. E.g. the volunteer fire department serves a certain function whereas the local Lion's Club serves quite a different function.

Noteworthy is the fact that members of the local power structure are found in almost every organization in the community. In several instances power structure members belong to two or more community organizations. The power structure seems to be quite influential in the organizations,
especially when decisions are made by the organization that effect the community as a whole. One classic example that the writer observed personally will help to illustrate this point.

One of the most active and noted members of the service club passed away suddenly. The president of the club was a close friend of the family and immediately offered the sympathy and help of the entire club. The wife of the deceased asked that all contributions in memory of her husband be given to the service club. Immediately the president responded and informed the wife of the deceased that a memorial in behalf of her husband would be erected from the monies collected.

Within the club there developed a definite rift as to what should be done with the money donated on behalf of this deceased member. The president in his visits with the deceased's wife more or less promised a roadside memorial in her husband's behalf, and early in the conflict the president was able to persuade the club toward this idea. However, two members of this club, also identified members of the power structure, were not happy with the idea. They felt that a memorial was fine, but that the money would be better spent on a memorial to youth activities as youth activities are the major objective of the club. They suggested a memorial baseball field in memory of all deceased club members. This idea did not satisfy the
president and a struggle for underlying power began.

Two months later the board of directors of the club met at the home of one of the members of the power structure. The power structure had developed a great deal of interest and support for a memorial baseball field. The evening of the meeting one member of the power structure personally called several directors for an early meeting at his home. The plan of action was developed. When the president arrived, the plan was presented by a member of the power structure. The president immediately agreed to the idea with a note of praise. Most of the directors present were surprised at this sudden, unexplainable change of attitude on the part of the president. However, the writer feels that the president was entirely aware of the source of power being exerted and readily concurred rather than make an issue of the matter.

Although this community is not formally organized, it is the contention of the writer that the community is held together by the controlling influence of the power structure.

Educational values and issues. On the morning of the sixteenth of January, 1952, the community awoke to find themselves without a school. During the night of the fifteenth, their school had burned to the ground leaving nothing but burning embers where a school once stood. In three days all the school children of the community were
temporarily housed in local buildings and by the fall of 1953 a new school building was completed large enough to house all the enrollment. Today, the community has a very adequate elementary school which is the envy of many of the rural communities in the area.

Probably the best thing that ever happened to this community, in respect to education, was the burning of the old school. Today, ten years later, there still remains a high level of concern over education. There seems to be no doubt that this concern stems partly from that day in January of 1952. Evidence of the interest today is found in the community's interest in the school and the year after year vote of confidence on special levies. The community wants the best possible education for its youth.

All graduates of the local elementary school attend high school at the county high school located ten miles north at the county seat. There presently seems to be considerable discontent with this large high school. This discontent has brought about a great deal of interest in the possibility of joining the high school building district of a small high school located the same number of miles to the east. It is not likely that such a move will ever become an actuality, but every avenue of possibility is now being investigated.

Relationship of education to other governmental services. Community X has only one tax supported govern-

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mental service other than the school within its boundaries. This service is the local volunteer fire department. Relationships between the school and this group have been very good. Each cooperates with the other in every way possible. Equipment and use of equipment between these two governmental services is the main source of cooperation.

As mentioned earlier, the power structure is found in every important organization in the community. The volunteer fire department is no exception. In fact, most of the seven men identified as the power structure belong to this organization in the community. All of the five belonging to the group hold important positions such as Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Secretary-Treasurer, and members of Board of Directors. Here one sees active control by the power structure.

Although there is no member of the power structure presently serving on the Board of Trustees, five out of the five members on the board were nominated by the top three ranking members of the power structure. This fact leads one to surmise that these members of the power structure are concerned with who serves on the board. This fact also coincides with the observation made by Goldhammer in his study of school board members. Goldhammer found that if members of the power structure didn't serve on the school board itself, those who did serve on the board were
acceptable to the power structure.

Identification of Power Structure

When all the questionnaires were returned and tabulated, the power structure members were ranked according to the number of times respondents mentioned their names. After this tabulation the top ranking seven were arbitrarily chosen as the power structure of the community to be studied further.

Selected informants. Of the nineteen questionnaires given out to the selected informants, one hundred per cent were returned to the researcher. This per cent is very important because of the small number actually sent out and the number arbitrarily chosen to represent the power structure.

TABLE I

Ranking Of Influential Persons In Community X By Selected Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential Persons According to Rank</th>
<th>Number of Times Person was Mentioned by Selected Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dobbs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Morris</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roberts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Banner</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rolls</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vandeberg</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Blake</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I illustrates the results of the tabulation and ranking. Fictitious names were used in the table to protect the individuals so ranked from unnecessary personal discussion. Note that the members are ranked according to the total number of nominations given by respondents.

**TABLE II**

Ranking of Influential Persons in Community X by Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential Persons According to Rank</th>
<th>Number of Times Person was Mentioned by Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Morris</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Roberts</td>
<td>22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dobbs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rolls</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vandeberg</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Banner</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Blake</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The members with the same number of nominations were given rank according to the number of years they had resided in the community.

School parents. Table II is used for the purpose of illustrating the rank of influential persons as nominated by the parents of the school children in the community. Sixty-six families were questioned by this group of questionnaires. Fifty-four questionnaires were returned for a return of eighty-two per cent. This group was much more hesitant.
about answering the questionnaires than were the selected informants. In fact two follow-up requests were necessary in order to get the return of fifty-four questionnaires. In twelve cases they had no comment to make. Table II shows the results of this group's nominations.

TABLE III

Comparison of Ranks
and Correlation of Rank-Differences

\[ p = 1 - \frac{6 \times \sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential Person</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dobbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Morris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roberts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Banner</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rolls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vandeberg</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Blake</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p = 1 - \frac{6 \times 12}{7 \times 48} = .79 \]

Correlation of responses. Table III shows the rank comparison of the power structure as nominated by the

---


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selected informants compared with the nominations of the parents of school children. In this table the selected informants' ranking were listed under the variable X and the parents under the variable Y. This table also shows the solution of the rank-difference correlation of coefficient for these two rankings.

In order for the computed correlation coefficient of .79 to be a meaningful statistic, one should put the statistic through a test of significance and other clarifications.

Correlation coefficients may be tested at several levels of significance, however, this statistic will be tested only at the five per cent and one per cent levels of significance. The five per cent and one per cent levels of significance are the ones more commonly used and are considered adequate for most purposes. The smaller the sample the larger the correlation coefficient must be in order to be significant.

Considering the smallness of the sampling in this problem, seven, one should surely test the statistics of this small group against the null hypothesis. Considering the null hypothesis, the significance of the obtained correlation coefficient may be tested against the hypothesis that the true correlation is in fact zero. If the computed correlation coefficient is large enough to invalidate or cast serious doubt upon this null hypothesis, we accept the
correlation coefficient as indicating the presence of at least some degree of correlation. Using Table 25 in Garrett's book, we may say, when N (number in sampling) is 7 and df (degrees of freedom) is N-2, the correlation coefficient must be 0.754 to be significant at the .05 level and 0.874 to be significant at .01 level. The computed correlation coefficient of 0.79 in our problem is therefore significant at the .05 level but not so at the .01 level. One may say that the computed 0.79 correlation coefficient is indicative of a real correlation. The probability exists that there will be some agreement as to whom both groups, selected informants and parents of the local elementary school children, will identify as wielders of power and influence.

Interpersonal relationships of the top ranking seven. Sociometric techniques are one way of studying interpersonal relationships. The ongoing life of a community presents community inhabitants with many opportunities for making judgment of peers. An observer gets some sociometric information from his observations of the way members of the community handle situations and become involved in community planning. However, a carefully worded question or questionnaire completed by community members, will give an observer more concrete and broader information on the interpersonal

Ibid., p. 201.
relationships of a group being studied. The writer realizes that complex interplay of feeling and emotion is not readily measured and the plotted results of sociometric questions are merely overt indications of interaction.

In this world or within a community people are choosing others for one thing or the other all the time. All that the sociometric question aims to do is to provide an opportunity for such choices in such a way that the informant will be free to indicate his real preferences.

Figure I was constructed to give a vivid depiction or a more graphic picture of the relationships of the top ranking seven. A sociogram, such as Figure I, helps the visual-minded find satisfaction and insight which comes from seeing group relationships pictorially. The reciprocal choices especially stand out much more clearly in the sociogram than in mere tabulation.

One can draw several interesting observations from Figure I, page 37. Of the seven possible nominations, number one (Dobbs) and number two (Morris) both were nominated five out of a possible six choices from within the group of the top ranking seven. Number three (Roberts) received four nominations of the possible six. Morris even identified himself as being a good contributor to community projects. Self identification is unusual. People tend to be rather reserved in identifying themselves as influential or important.
Figure I also vividly illustrates the reciprocal choices of this group. Dobbs and Morris reciprocated in selecting one another. Within this group there are six other cases of reciprocation. One might conclude that this group recognizes the influence and power of one another.

FIGURE 1

Choices Made Within the Group of Seven Persons Designated as Most Influential by Community X's Selected Informants

KEY

* Nominated himself.

1. Dobbs
2. Morris
3. Roberts
4. Banner
5. Rolls
6. Vandeberg
7. Blake

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Common characteristics and interactions. The members of the power structure, so identified and compared, were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to measure common characteristics and interactions of the group. Also, the present board members and all community members who in the past served on the school board, were asked to complete this questionnaire. The questions asked were as follows:

1. How long have you resided in this community?
2. Do you own property in this community?
3. How many children do you have?
4. Do you belong to any service organization, club, or church group in this community? If so, which ones?
5. Are most of your close friends within or outside the community?
6. What are your favorite pastimes and/or hobbies?
7. Have you ever suggested that someone run for the school board? Did he or she gain membership on the board?

Board members both past and present were asked to also complete the following questionnaire:

1. When you were asked to run for the school board, was the request from friends, the immediate neighborhood, a club or service organization, or by a church group?
2. Did this group ask you to run because they had an "axe to grind" and they felt you would support them, or did they simply "draft" you because you were willing to take the responsibility?
3. Are/were you beholden to any group or person in this community in relation to your board duties?
4. Do you feel there is any honor or prestige in being a school board member in this community?

Table IV found on page 39 presents a summary of the common characteristics of the power structure and Table V found on page 40 presents a summary of the responses of the board members both present and past. A key was used for convenience in recording replies. Note the key in the righthand corner.
### TABLE IV
Comparison of Common Characteristics of Power Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dobbs</th>
<th>Morris</th>
<th>Roberts</th>
<th>Banner</th>
<th>Rolls</th>
<th>Vandeberg</th>
<th>Blake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you resided in this community? (years)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you own property in this community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many children do you have?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you belong to any service organizations, club, or church group in this community?</td>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so which ones?</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>VFD</td>
<td>VFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are most of your close friends within or outside of this community?</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are your favorite pastimes and/or hobbies?</td>
<td>All Hunting</td>
<td>All Sports</td>
<td>All Sports</td>
<td>All Fishing</td>
<td>All Sports</td>
<td>Within Boating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you ever suggested that someone run for the school board?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did he or she gain membership?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Past board members.

**KEY**
- WA = Wildlife Association
- VFD = Vol. Fire Dept.
- LCL = Lion's Club
- LC = Lutheran Church
- CC = Catholic Church
- MC = Methodist Church
### TABLE V
Comparison of Common Characteristics of Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rabbi</th>
<th>Smith</th>
<th>Nour</th>
<th>Fill</th>
<th>Nelson</th>
<th>Hurry</th>
<th>Moore</th>
<th>Vorn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you resided in this community? (years)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you own property in this community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many children do you have?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you belong to any service organizations, club, or church group in this community?</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so which ones?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are most of your close friends within or outside of this community?</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are your favorite pastimes and/or hobbies?</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>All Fish</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>All Fish</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>All Fish</td>
<td>All Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you ever suggested that someone run for the school board?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did he or she gain membership?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Present board members.

KEY =
- LC = Lutheran Church
- CC = Catholic Church
- MC = Methodist Church
- WA = Wildlife Association Church
- VFD = Vol. Fire Dept.
- LCL = Lion's Club
From Table IV we discover several common characteristics of the members of the power structure. The first common characteristic is relatively long residence within the community. Average residence for the group is well over thirty-two years. Each individual owns property within the community and pays taxes thereon. All but one of the group have children who have in the past attended or are presently attending the community's elementary school. There is no organization or group to which all seven members belong. However, the Lion's Club and Volunteer Fire Department attract most of them. Dobbs, Morris, and Roberts all belong to both of these clubs. These men are one, two, three in the rank of the power structure. Bonds of friendship are found mostly within the boundaries of the community. These men seem to be sports inclined and enjoy many sports as a pastime and hobby. The interest of the power structure in the community and school affairs is found in their answers to question seven. The top six power structure members all suggested that someone run for the school board and five out of the six realized the fulfillment of their suggestion. It is the opinion of the writer that the replies given to question seven show power and control being very discretely put into use by the power structure.

Table V summarizes the board members' common characteristics. Although the average residence for this group is thirty years, three of the eight have less than ten years
residence. The current board members all have short term residence. Board membership in this case may be the result of the acceptance of these men by the power structure members. Here, as in the case of the power structure, we find that each member owns property. There is no known case of a board member in this community who didn't own property within the community. All of this group had children who had either gone to the local elementary school or are now in the school. There didn't seem to be any common community organization for this group. In two out of eight cases, there was no membership in community organizations. Friendships with this group came mostly from within the boundaries of the community. Sports again attracted most of this group's pastime and hobbies. These men have seldom suggested someone for the board of trustees. The exception to the rule are the three men presently serving on the Board; they felt they had suggested and had seen a particular person elected to the board. Perhaps their replies are an indication of their drive for acceptance by the power structure or a position of power and prestige of their own.

Table VI, page 43, gives a graphic picture of the characteristics most common to power structure members and school board members.

Looking at and analyzing the board member's and power structure's common characteristics, significant familiarities
were discovered in ownership of property, length of residence, and friendships. Because property tax is the supporter of many governmental services, there is no doubt that ownership of property is a prerequisite to membership on the power structure and of activity on the board. Property also is a basic indication of one kind of wealth. Wealth and power often go hand in hand.

**TABLE VI**

Comparison of Power Structure Members and School Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Power Structure</th>
<th>Board Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Average length of residence</td>
<td>32+ years</td>
<td>30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent of property ownership</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Predominant friendships</td>
<td>Within Community</td>
<td>Within Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in class structure, length of residence is important. It seems an easier task for long time residents to pull strings of power in the community.

Because power is the ability of man to persuade other men to action, close friendship seems quite significant. Interaction of friends gives one many opportunities to understand community problems and "suggest" solutions to problems at hand. Friendships usually develop from one or more of the following: length of residence, ownership of...
property, children, activities, and interests.

**School board member's reaction.** Often a question arises, "Why do individuals run for the school board?" Table VII found on page 45, points out some of the reasons as perceived by Community X's board members.

These men all replied that their call to run for school board membership came either from friends or the immediate neighborhood. Several commented that their friends asked them to run because their friends felt they were "capable of handling the job." It is a noteworthy sidelight to note again that the identified power structure nominated most of the board members. This was revealed by a survey of the nomination ballots of the board members. Evidently, board members in this community are identified by the power structure as their "friends."

From the replies of the board members, it was discovered that most of these men said that they perceived their board term as a civic responsibility. Each reply marked the reason for the acceptance to run and serve in the board of trustees, as hinging on a willingness to take the responsibility. None of the responses indicated that the position of board member was accepted with the idea of "grinding an axe." The responses to this questionnaire are not as significant as the writer had planned. Rather than identifying the motive of the board members in running for the position, the motives of those who asked them to
### TABLE VII
A Comparison of Replies of Present And Past Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Morris Banner</th>
<th>Robbi Smith</th>
<th>Nort</th>
<th>Fill</th>
<th>Nelson</th>
<th>Hurtz</th>
<th>Moore</th>
<th>Vorn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Who asked you to run for the School Board?</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reason they asked you to run?</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>WTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are/were you beholden to any group as a board member?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there any honor or prestige in being on the board in this community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Present board members.

**KEY**
- F = Friends
- IN = Immediate Neighborhood
- WTR = Willing To Take Responsibility
run were identified.

Although it is possible that each individual serving on the board of trustees was "hand picked" by a member or members of the power structure, in every case the members of the board stated that they were beholden to no group or person. Maybe this stems from the fact that the board has had power structure members serving on the board, or perhaps no actual power is being exerted. Maybe the reason power is not being exerted is that board members and the power structure think and act alike within certain limits. The only open conflict of concepts between the board and the power structure known to the writer came with a difference of opinion on purchase policy.

The board, none of whom are identified members of the power structure, discussed the probability that several major items could be purchased out of town more economically. Dobbs and Morris, upon hearing about this, both let the board know that they felt local business should have precedence on school district purchase because these businesses paid taxes within the district. In fact, Morris called the writer and made the statement that "trouble" came each time precedence of purchase went to outside business. He also informed the writer that business within the community was "essential" to good community relations. This little episode lead to the formulation of written board policy pertaining to and giving local business
precedence on purchase within certain limitations.

Generally speaking, board members look upon their position as having a degree of prestige attached. Perhaps this prestige makes the position of board member a desirable one.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In the introductory chapter of this study, the purpose of this study was given as twofold. First, the writer was attempting to devise and use a technique or procedure to identify the power structure members or decision makers in a small community. Secondly, the writer attempted to determine what effect the power structure members had on school board membership.

At the completion of a study such as this, the question arises as to whether or not the desired purposes of the research have been adequately achieved.

Also, several questions arose as the result of this research. What should a school administrator know about a community? What are some guidelines one might use for identifying the power structure in a small community? What are some of the implications of a community study such as this? For example, does the administrator become subservient to the power structure when elements of it are known to him? Or is he then in the position to become a manipulator? Or is he then in the position to provide constructive leadership?

Summary

The technique developed by the writer for the
identification of the power structure members proved to be significant as a device for identifying the power structure members in a small community. However, if the writer were to carry on a similar study in another community, three basic changes would be made in the procedure used for identifying and studying the members of the power structure.

The first change would be the involving of more individuals in the initial identification of influential people. When just one person makes the original identification, the identifications made are from only one point of view.

The second change would come in the second group used for the purpose of nominating influential community members. An attempt would be made to obtain a better cross section of community members to poll with the second set of questionnaires.

The last on influential members of the community. Change would be in the emphasis the writer would place on the power structure members' occupation. Undoubtedly, this study does not give proper importance to the occupations of the men identified as power structure members. Sociological studies have proven that occupation is the most important criteria for social class placement. The writer now believes that this may also be true of the power structure members in a community.

Do the power structure members control school board
membership? From the discovery made when surveying the nomination petitions of the past seven years, they do. The nomination petitions all contained the signatures of the top three power structure members.

Also, in answer to the questions, "Have you ever suggested that someone run for the school board? and Did he or she gain membership?", five of the seven power structure members answered both of these questions positively.

With these two findings to substantiate the theory that board membership is controlled by members of the power structure, the second purpose of this study is complete.

Implications

Implications of a study of this nature are partly realized in the following questions:

What should a school administrator know about a community? There seems to be no one answer to such a question as this. Surely an administrator wants to know everything possible about the community within which he works and lives. The more an administrator knows about his community the greater will be the probability of his success. An ignorance or an unawareness of the overt and underlying forces of the social unit, the community, can lead to the downfall of a potentially good school administrator.

The writer is convinced that the identification of the power structure of a community and a basic understanding
of how the power structure functions is quite essential to
a school administrator. Although the power structure may
not actively exert power, the potential to do so is always
present. If this power does exist one should know how to
cope with it and provide good constructive leadership.

Very basic to this problem of power and school
administration is the possibility that the philosophies of
what is good for education and what is not good for education
may be different in the eyes of the power structure than
they are in the eyes of a school administrator. Sometimes
this conflict may be resolved, but many times school
administrators find themselves "forced" into resignation
because of this basic difference in philosophy.

The writer does not feel that an administrator should
necessarily conform his ideals and philosophies to those of
the power structure. However, one's awareness of power
should make it a simpler task to operate within the bound-
aries of the community. It should be easier to sell new
ideas and change when one knows and understands the source
of community power.

Guidelines for identifying the power structure in a
small community. It would be very presumptuous and prob-
an impossibility to offer a magical formula for positive
identification of the power structure. Nevertheless, some
clues may prove enlightening in one's attempt at such an
identification.

In a small community look for activity of community
members in influential organizations and groups within the community. Listen to the active individual's peers and see if they use such phrases as: "He's a leader, he really gets things done, he's very influential!" These and many other phrases are indications of power and influence.

After isolating an individual or individuals with this casual observation, look for "depth." By depth the writer means length of residence of the individual in the community and the amount of community activity the person had been part of through the years. This can be done simply without arousing suspicion. Everyone seems to feel at ease when discussing the number of years they have lived in the community, and their activity during those years. Everyday conversation will bring many of these answers into the knowledge of a careful observer. Also included in ones "depth" observations should be some knowledge of the individual's financial status. Ownership of property and other overt signs of wealth are usually easily identified in a small community. The writer discovered in this study that the identified power structure members were the well-to-do-in the community. These men of power all owned some property and were employed in the better jobs in the community.

If the individual or individuals fit the criteria of activity and "depth" within the community, one might assume that some or all of these individuals are part of the power...
structure. Observance of the future interactions of this group in community affairs will be very enlightening and highly interesting. One will see power in operation as this group operates within the community.

Implications of a sociological study of a small community. First and uppermost, never divulge too much of your observations or your intentions to any members of the community when doing research such as an analysis of the community. Discretion is essential in research of this nature.

Some people tend to be quite reserved when discussing others in the community. Yet, others seem to be bubbling over with a desire to discuss individuals. The writer of this paper found that those who had little or no interaction within the community also had little or no awareness of influential peers. This group was small in number and in almost every case came from the more mobile population. As pointed out earlier in this research, the mobile population had very little interaction in the community. It appears that both time and alertness are vital in the identification of power and influence.

The question may arise, "Does the administrator become subservient to the power structure when elements of it are known to him?" In the case of the administrator who has a weak personality or character, it is very likely that a knowledge of the elements of the power structure may cause
such an individual to become subservient. However, such an individual would probably become subservient to the people of power and influence without such a knowledge.

Although there is the possibility of subservience, an alert, well educated administrator will probably be able to perform his duties well without becoming subservient to the power structure. This alert and well educated administrator may become a manipulator of the power structure, but better yet, he may provide good constructive leadership. It is the firm conviction of the writer that the ultimate goal is the administrator knowing the power structure and understanding their power, and his providing constructive leadership. If the administrator merely tries to manipulate the power structure, he is either assuming too much power himself or placing himself in a very dangerous position. Democratic leadership or subtle manipulation on the part of the administrator will definitely bring about more desirable objectives. These attained objectives would certainly be more representative of the desires of the group at large.

**School board membership and the power structure.** Because Board members either are acceptable to the power structure or occupy positions of power themselves, strength is added to the contention that the school administrator should identify and understand how the power structure operates. In providing leadership to the board of education, the administrator should remember that he is working with
men who have similar philosophies and ideals to those of the power structure. If the administrator has his hand on the pulse of the board and his ear to the ground, he can fairly well determine the limits within which he can effectively operate.

Inferences

Research of this nature by a school administrator has the writer's highest recommendations. These people who "set the tone" in the community and who exercise crucial influence in the development of public opinion should be known by the leader of the school.

Because this group, the power structure, form a bridge between the various groups within the community, the power structure's attitudes and opinions are probably reflective of the attitudes and opinions of the majority of the members of the community. A sampling of the power structure's attitudes and opinions will probably result in a list of attitudes and opinions similar to those other members of the community hold.

With this assumption in mind, the writer of this paper feels that continued research into the various aspects of the community power structure is in order. Specifically, a deeper understanding of the "conscience", the "tone" of the community should become known if the feelings of the power structure members are known. If a school leader is aware of many areas of public opinion pertaining to the
operation of the school, such knowledge would be helpful in operating a successful school program.

Research as to the opinions and attitudes of the power structure concerning the following would be worthy of the effort:

1. Teaching as a profession.
3. The role of the school in the community.
5. Curriculum revision.
6. School building programs.

There are many other topics that might be added to this list, but this group will serve as an example of the possibilities.

For research to substantiate the foregoing assumptions, one could sample the opinions of the power structure members and also sample a cross section of members of the community by a well constructed questionnaire. The replies from each group could be compared and correlated making it possible for one to judge whether or not similarity of opinion exists. If one were to find a significant positive correlation after several comparisons, one might assume that it is highly probable that the power structure members' opinion is per se community opinion.

The things still unknown about the concept of power structure are left only to the imagination and creativity of man. The examination of all the facets of life and man's interaction with man is a field of research ready for "harvest."
BIBLIOGRAPHY
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Dear Parents and Guardians of Somers School Pupils:

You as parents and guardians of Somers Public School pupils have been chosen to participate in a study of the Somers community. A word of explanation as to the questionnaire you are asked to complete.

This questionnaire has been developed for making an educational study of this community. A study of this nature will be only as valid as the cooperation one receives from you folks here in the community. It would be appreciated if you would complete this questionnaire as soon as possible and mail the questionnaire in the enclosed addressed envelope. The information gathered from this questionnaire will be used in complete confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Keith L. Allred
Principal
Somers Public School

P. S. Your prompt return of the questionnaire will facilitate this study immensely and will certainly be appreciated.
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions carefully. All information on this questionnaire will be kept confidential as to source and names mentioned.

1. Suppose a major project were before this community, such as building a new school, one that required decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which people in this community would you choose to make up this group—regardless of whether you know them personally?

2. In most communities certain persons are said to be influential "behind the scenes" and to have a lot to say about programs that are planned, projects, and issues that come up around town. What persons in this community are influential in this way?
Dear Friend,

You have been chosen to participate in a study of the Somers community. A word of explanation as to the questionnaire you are asked to complete.

This questionnaire has been developed for making an educational study of this community. A study of this nature will be only as valid as the cooperation one receives from you folks here in the community. The information gathered from this questionnaire will be used in complete confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Keith L. Allred
Principal
Somers Public Sch. 1

P. S. Your prompt return of this questionnaire will facilitate this study immensely and will certainly be appreciated.
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions carefully. All information on this questionnaire will be kept confidential as to the source.

1. How long have you resided in this community? _____

2. Do you own property in this community? _____

3. How many children do you have? _____

4. Do you belong to any service organizations, clubs, or church group in this community? _____
   If so, which ones? ________________
   ________________
   ________________

5. Are most of your close friends within or outside this community? ________________

6. What are your favorite pastimes and/or hobbies? ________________
   ________________
   ________________

7. Have you ever suggested that someone run for the school board? _____
   Did he or she gain membership? _____
Dear Friend,

As a present or past school board member in this community, you have been chosen to participate in a study of the Somers community. A word of explanation as to the questionnaire you are asked to complete.

This questionnaire has been developed for making an educational study of this community. A study of this nature will be only as valid as the cooperation one receives from you folks. The information gathered from this questionnaire will be used in complete confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Keith L. Allred
Principal
Somers Public School

P.S. Your prompt return of this questionnaire will facilitate this study immensely and will certainly be appreciated.

Somers, Montana
December, 1961
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions carefully. All information on this questionnaire will be kept confidential as to the source.

1. When you were asked to run for the school board, was the request from friends, the immediate neighborhood, a club or service organization, or by a church group?

2. Did this group ask you to run because they had an "axe to grind" and they felt you would support them, or did they simply "draft" you because you were willing to take the responsibility?

3. Are or were you beholden to any group or person in this community in relation to your board duties?

4. Do you feel there is any honor or prestige in being a school board member in this community?