

Foundations of Practice

*Community Development
Core Competencies for
Extension Professionals in
the North Central region*

Community
Power Structure



Janet Ayres



Janet Ayres

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- Senior Fellow at NCRCRD developing *The Foundations of Practice* program
- 30 year career at Purdue in Leadership & Community Development; served as program leader for 6 years
- Developed the *Indiana Natural Resources Leadership Development Program*
- Developed over a dozen state-wide leadership development programs
- Past involvement in over 20 regional projects including the *Take Charge* program
- Currently working with a new College of Agriculture undergraduate leadership certificate program.
- Teaches undergraduate leadership course titled, *Leadership in a Changing World*.
- Developed leadership development programs in Poland and Russia.

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Learning Objectives

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- Learn how to identify key people who influence community decisions in the community and why this is important to know.
- Understand key concepts of power, authority, leadership & social capital.
- Understand that community issues in today's reality call for a different type of power and leadership than in the past.
- Learn how community development processes address these issues.

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Discussion on Activity

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In your community...

- Who are the people who influence major community decisions?
- Why did you identify him/her?

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Traditional Characteristics of Key Influentials

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- Majority in 40-65 age range
- Above average income
- Above average education
- Business/professional occupations
- Long-term residents
- Do not reflect the diverse population
- Control key resources in community

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Contemporary Characteristics of Key Influentials

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Do the people you identified reflect these traditional characteristics?

How is your community different?

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Key Community Influentials Determine...

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- Which community issues are addressed, or not addressed.
- The outcomes of community decisions.
- Allocation of internal or external resources needed for community action.

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Support

Block



Importance of Understanding Community Power Dynamics

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In order to develop more inclusive, effective community programs, we need to know...

- Who has the *authority* to make community decisions.
- Who controls/influences *resources*.
- Who is not part of key decision making processes that *ought* to be there.
- How to build community power from both *within* and *outside* the community.

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Levels of Community Involvement

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Identifying Key Community Influentials

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Reputation

People with the reputation for influencing what happens in the community among knowledgeable people.

Positional

People in organizational positions with *authority* to make decisions.

Event Analysis

People who participate most actively in community events.

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Community Power Structures

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The community's power structure is the way in which those with community power relate to each other.

- Pyramid
- Factional
- Special Interest
- Coalition
- Amorphous

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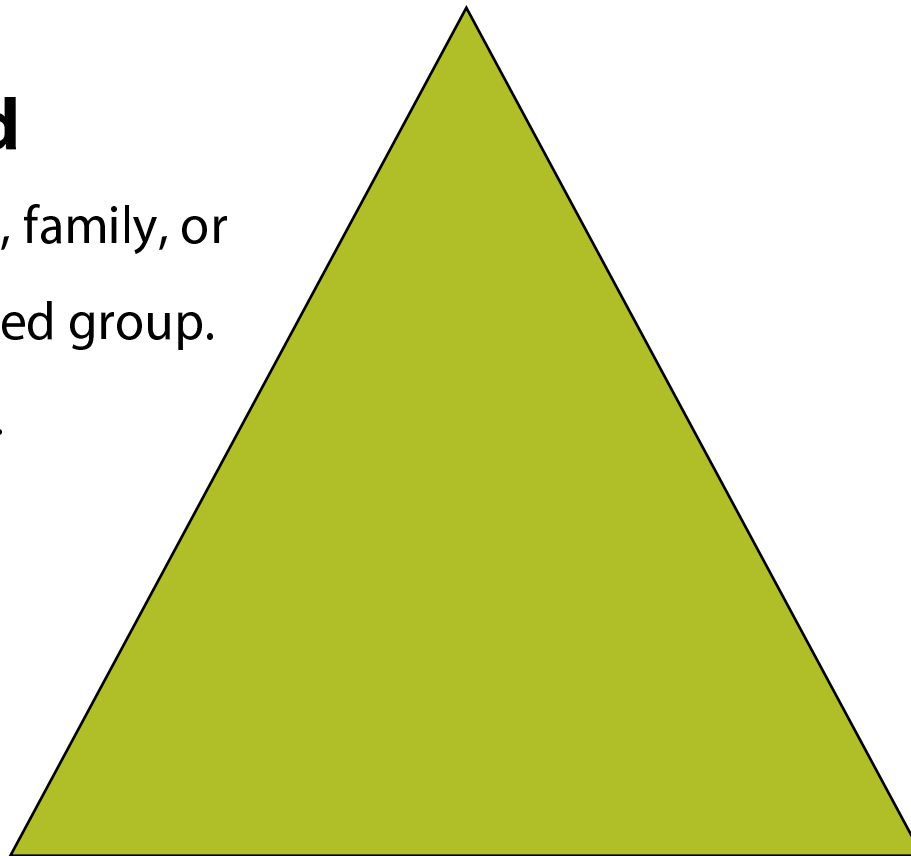
Types of Community Power Structures

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Pyramid

One person, family, or tightly knitted group.

A hierarchy.



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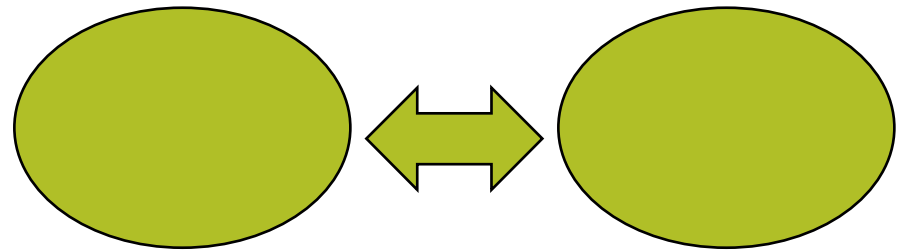
Types of Community Power Structures

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Factional

A community split by more than one group.

- Labor/Management
- Religious groups
- Political groups
- Others?



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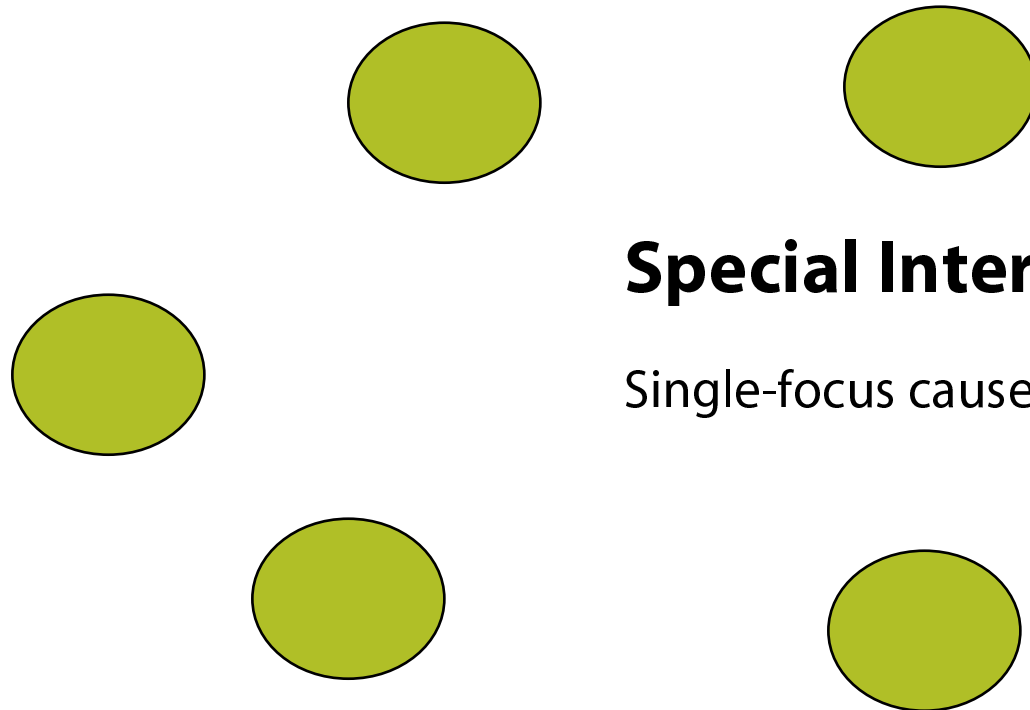


Types of Community Power Structures

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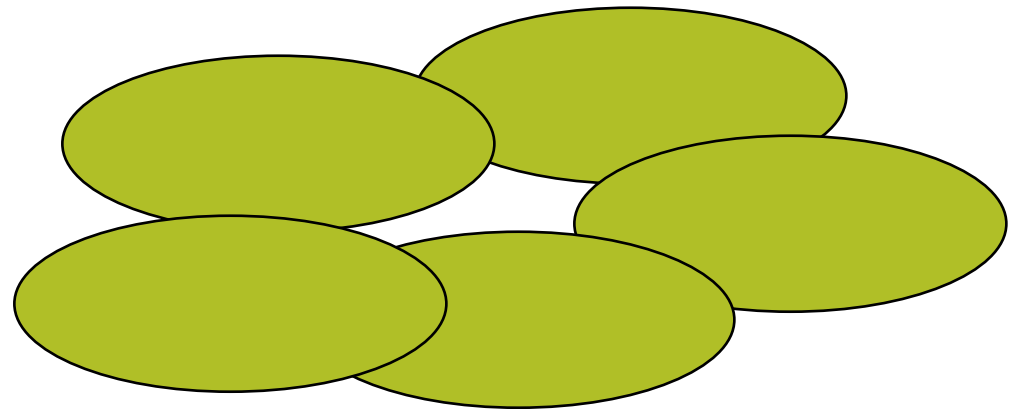


Types of Community Power Structures

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Coalition

Collaboration of
multiple groups



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Types of Community Power Structures

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Amorphous

Lack of clearly identified leadership

Often during a time of transition

External Power

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While a community has internal power, power is also derived from external sources.

Can you identify some external power sources?



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A Changing World

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How we think about *power* and *leadership* has changed over the last few decades. Technology, the Internet and the globalization of our world have affected our lives in many ways, including leadership.

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Traditional Leadership

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- Focus on individual or few people with power
- More emphasis on authority of individual/position
- More homogeneous population
- Change occurred over longer time periods
- Limited involvement by residents
- Information not shared/processes not open
- Decisions made by those in authority

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Community Issues Today

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- Rapid change
- Complex – no simple solutions, multi-party
- Controversial – many perspectives
- Cross multiple jurisdictions – “no one in charge”
- Different levels of power exercised
- Different levels of knowledge exercised
- Strongly held values
- Largely left unmanaged

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Contemporary Leadership

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- Focus on leadership as a process, rather than on individual
- Change & conflict are prevalent
- Vision is essential
- Influence others toward vision & action
- Inclusive of stakeholders, diverse people & cultures
- Transparent processes (information & decisions)
- Ability to create a path as it is walked (courage & ambiguity)
- Ability to work across jurisdictions/boundaries

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Contemporary Leadership

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“Leadership is the inspiration and mobilization of others to undertake collective action in the pursuit of the common good.”

-- John M. Bryson and Barbara C. Crosby

Leadership for the Common Good Fieldbook

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Authority*

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Related to the concept of power is *authority*.

Authority entails the rights, expectations, and responsibilities given to a person who occupies a *position*.

Examples: Mayor, county commissioner, editor of local newspaper. These individuals are frequently referred to as *community leaders*.

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Authority*

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Ronald Heifetz at Harvard says that those in positions of authority often find it difficult to be a leader because of the expectations that person and others have of the position and the resistance to change.

Authority is a *position*; leadership is a *process*.

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Power*

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A traditional definition of *power*:

The ability to control or influence the decisions and/or actions of others.

The concept of power *over others* has shifted to a perspective of *shared power with others*.

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Power*

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If power is defined as the ability to do, to act,
then what does it take?

Motivation + Resources = Power

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Power*

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What might **motivate** a person to get involved in the community?

- Be involved with others; socialize
- Do something important; make a difference
- Obligation/expected – the “right” thing to do
- Feels good to help others; learn something new
- Other reasons?

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Shifts in Key Concepts -- *Power*

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Community resources might include:

- Volunteers, knowledge, skills, talents, time, labor
- Money, grants, loans
- Networks with resources outside community
- Natural resources
- Physical resources
- Political connections
- Other resources?

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Building Community Power

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Fundamental to building community power, is the ability to motivate and engage more and diverse people with skills & knowledge to be able to participate effectively.

And, to connect people and organizations with the resources needed to accomplish their collective goals.

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Power Exists Within Many Entities

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- Individuals
- Families
- Groups
- Organizations
- Agencies/institutions
- Community – the network/relationships among these units is referred to as **social capital**

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Does a Community Have Power?

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A way to think about whether or not a community has power to act, is to assess the following:

- When a community faces a critically important issue, how is the issue resolved? What is the process? Who is involved? How is the decision made and by whom?
- Do people come together to discuss and debate community issues which affect them?
- Is there a sense of trust in the community?

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Extension's Role in Building Community Power

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How does Extension help communities build their power, their ability to take action?

What is Extension's role?

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Reflection Questions

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- How do we engage more people, and those not previously involved, in meaningful community work?
- How do we develop the capacity of people to be able to participate effectively?
- How do we address traditional mind sets & institutions?
- How do we develop more trusting relationships within the community?
- How do we negotiate **reciprocal** external relationships?

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Resources

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Krile, James F. 2006. *The Community Leadership Handbook*. St. Paul, MN: Fieldstone Alliance Publishing Center.

University of Minnesota Extension. *Leadership for the Common Good Fieldbook*. Available on-line at:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/DH8118.html>



Next Session

SLIDE **35**

Community Situational Analysis

October 16 and 17, 2007

1:30 to 3 p.m. CST



Anne Heinze Silvis

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The ability to analyze a particular issue or situation in a community from a historical, political, cultural and community context and determine Extension's role in the issue is an important competency of community development.

