



# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL **1** Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

Session Four

## Community Power Structure



# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE

IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## LEVEL 1 Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics



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- Coordinator, Extension PRIDE Program; work with organization, planning, evaluation, and recognition of volunteer community improvement groups across the state.
- Extension Liaison, KSU Center for Engagement and Community Development; work to link campus research and outreach activities to community needs.
- Kansas Environmental Leadership Program; statewide leadership development program integrating knowledge of natural resources with public leadership skills.
- Community Coaching Academy, Public Issues Forums Facilitation, and Extension Community Development professional development



## Learning Objectives

### Participants will understand:

- Ways to identify the power structure of a community.
- Key concepts of community power, authority, and Leadership
- How power concepts have changed, yet many people and institutions have not.
- Why community issues in today's reality call for different types of power and leadership structure.



*Credit:* Session is adapted from the 2006 NCRCD Foundations of Practice Materials developed by Dr. Janet Ayres, Purdue University, Indiana.



## Discussion Activity

In your community...

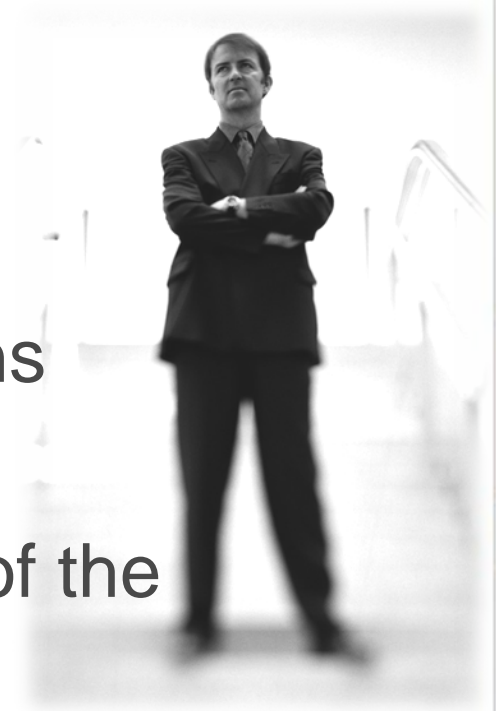
- **Who** are the people or organizations who influence major community decisions?
- **Why** did you identify these people or organizations?
- **What** gives them power?





## Historical Characteristics of “Influentials”

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





## Types of Community Power (Competing Theories)

### 1. Pluralism

- The way democracies work. No dominant source of power. Capacity for gaining power is widely distributed and held between competing interests.
- Individually focused, with individuals making choices and exercising power through purchasing, voting, etc.
- Often measured by event analysis technique.



# Types of Community Power Structures

## Pluralistic

- Individual influence
- Occasional collaborative grouping





## Types of Community Power (Competing Theories)

### 2. Elitism

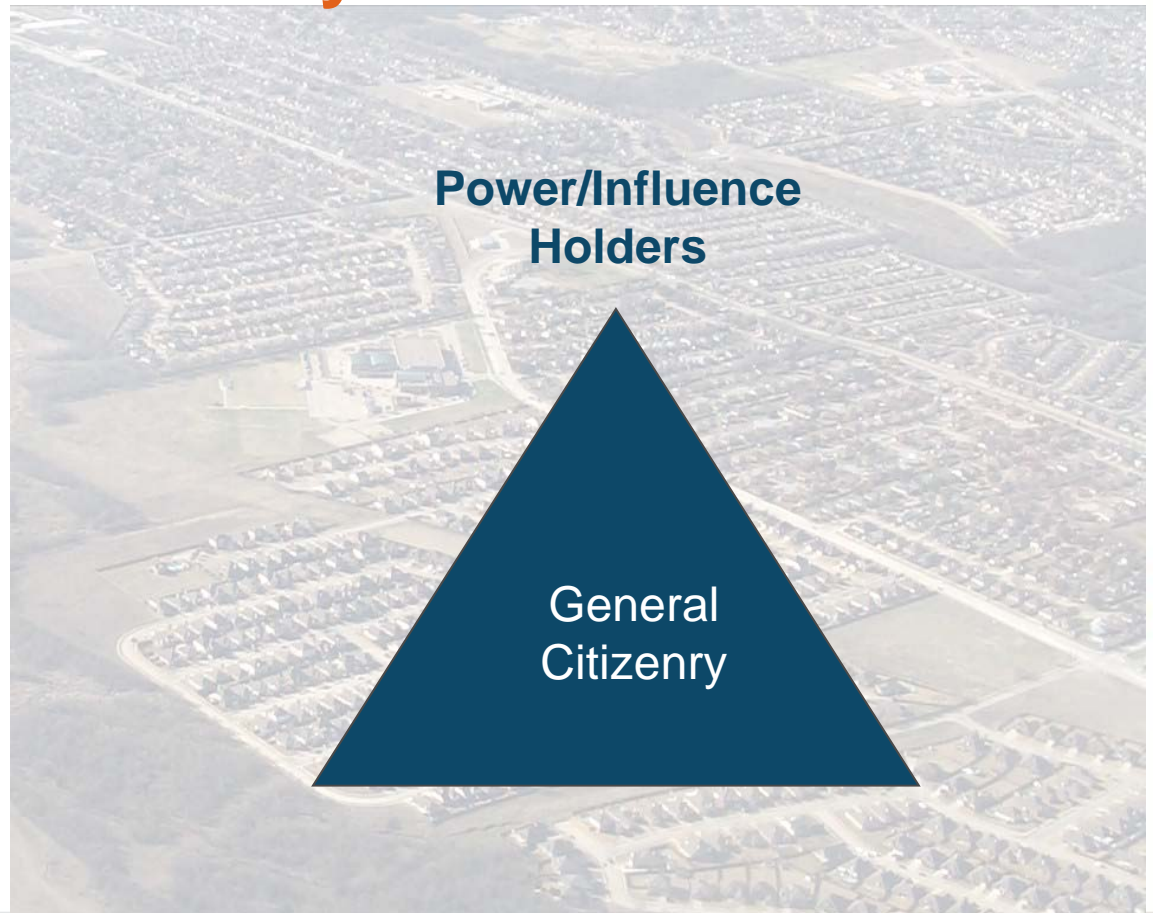
- A small group of individuals control the power, resources, and agenda of the public.
- This hierarchical structure has few at the top making decisions and rules for the rest.
- “Kings and King-makers”.
- Often based on wealth and privilege.
- Often researched by “Reputational Technique”



## Types of Community Power Structures

### Elitist

- One person, family, or
- Tightly knitted group.
- A Hierarchy





## Types of Community Power (Competing Theories)

### 3. Class-based Theory of Power

- Those that control the economy, control the political agenda.
- Who is in charge is not as important as that they are facilitating profit-making.
- Similar to elitism, but shared within a social class.



## Types of Community Power Structures

### Class-based

Social class determines who holds power





## Types of Community Power (Competing Theories)

### 4. The Growth Machine

- Variation of class-based that is a coalition of groups that perceive economic gain from community growth.
- Tends to include a combination of interests developers, construction companies, providers of home insurance, real estate agents, owners of commercial or rental properties, banks, or business development.



## Types of Community Power Structures

### Growth Machine

- Special Interest
- Single-focus Cause





## Importance of Understanding Community Power Dynamics

- Know who has the **authority** to make community decisions
- Know who controls/influences **resources**
- Know who is not part of the decision making process that should be.
- Know how to build community **power** from both within and outside of the community.
- Enable us to develop more inclusive, effective community **programs**.





## Community Power Actors Determine...

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





## Identifying Community Power Actors

### Reputation:

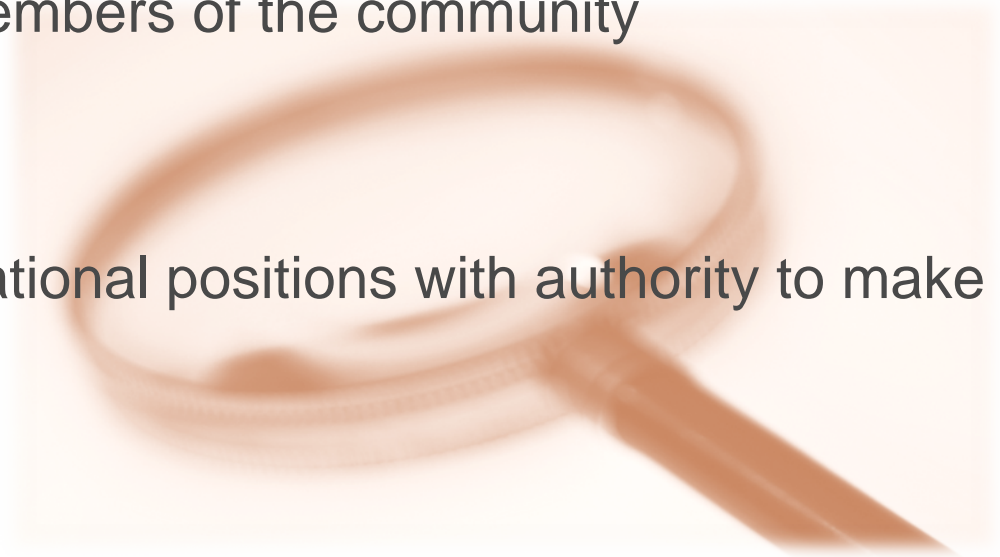
Those with the reputation for community power among knowledgeable members of the community

### Positional:

People in organizational positions with authority to make decisions.

### Event Analysis:

People who participate most actively in community events.

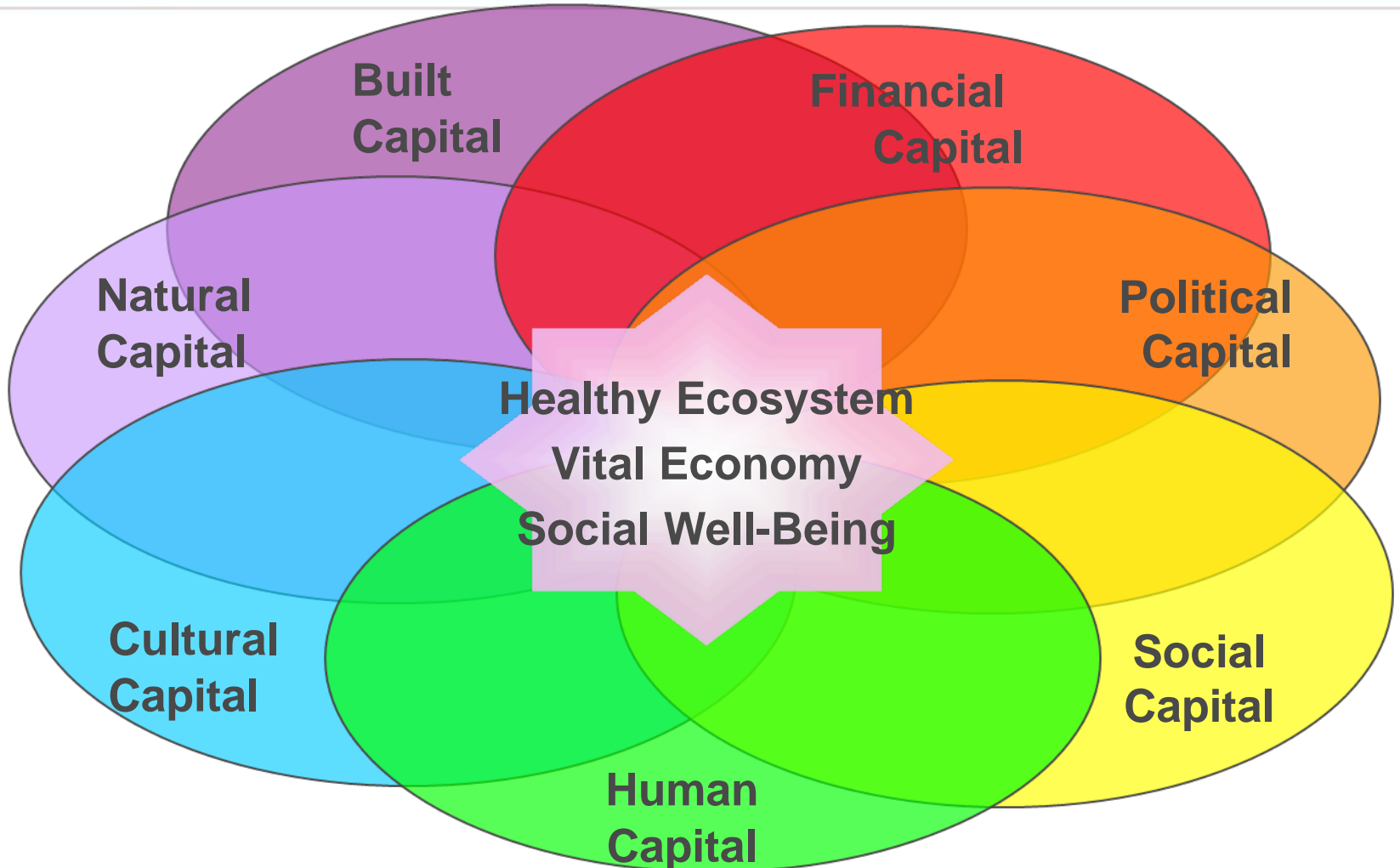




# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE

IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

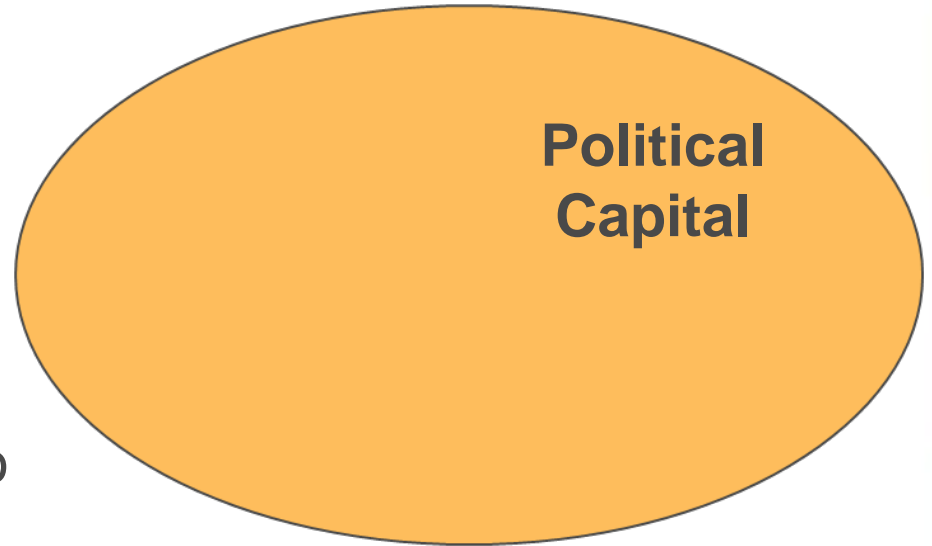
## LEVEL 1 Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics





## Political Capital

- **Consists of** organization, connections, voice and power of individuals in community.
- **Is the ability of** a group to influence the distribution of resources within a social unit, including helping set the agenda of what resources are available .



*Flora & Flora, (2008) Rural  
Communities, Legacy + Change*



## What Does This Mean for Communities?

- Why would a community want “shared” power?
- How would a community go about creating shared power if it wanted to?





## The Choice & Consequences of Power

Handout

	No Choice	Choice
Negative Consequences	Ritualized Agency	Incomplete Agency
Positive Consequences	Abandoned Agency	Authentic Agency

Agency = the capacity for local action and resiliency.

Source: Brennan, M.A., & Israel, G.D. (2008). The Power of Community. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 39 (1): 91.



## What Are Current Community Expectations Regarding Power?



*In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, what are the assumptions or expectations community members hold in relation to exercising community power?*



## Moving from Community Development “for” to “by”

Handout

Figure 1.2 Timeline of Development Approaches						Progression of community involvement
1950s→	1960s→	1970s/80s→	1990s→	2000→	2005→	
Centralized						Consultation ↓
De-Centralized						
	Sectoral Technology Led/ "Green Revolution" Irrigation development					
		Special Area / Target Group Area Development Program & Integrated Rural Development Program NGOs and private sector	Community-Based Development  Social Funds			Participation  ↓
				Community-Driven Development (CDD)	Local & Community-Driven Development (LCDD)	Empowerment

From: Binswanger-Mkhize, H.P., Regt, J.P., & Spector, S. (2009) *Scaling Up Local & Community Driven Development (LCDD) A Real World Guide to Its Theory and Practice* Online document accessed August 6, 2009 at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1237844546330/5949218-1237844567860/Scaling\\_Up\\_LCDD\\_Book\\_rfilesize.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1237844546330/5949218-1237844567860/Scaling_Up_LCDD_Book_rfilesize.pdf)



## How Can a Community Build Power?



- **Civic involvement** in identifying important issues
- **Citizen voice** in public prioritization and decision-making
- **Developing structures or systems** that allow for shared power and decision-making.
- **Shared Leadership** – Leadership Development programming



## Resources

Binswanger-Mkhize, H.P., Regt, J.P., & Spector, S. (2009) *Scaling Up Local & Community Driven Development (LCDD) A Real World Guide to Its Theory and Practice* Online document accessed August 6, 2009 at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1237844546330/5949218-1237844567860/Scaling\\_Up\\_LCDD\\_Book\\_rfillesize.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1237844546330/5949218-1237844567860/Scaling_Up_LCDD_Book_rfillesize.pdf)

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# Looking Ahead: Session Five

## Community Situational Analysis

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