COMMUNITY INFLUENCE IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

A COMMENT REGARDING POWER

by

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ABSTRACT

Community Influence in Humboldt County: A Comment Regarding Power

By Mark Daniel Blackhurst

This thesis examines relationships between social demographic variables and power relationships which affected community power in Humboldt County California during the fall of 2006. The research question asks what factors are necessary to sustain a viable democracy, and explores what a select group of Humboldt County knowledgeable believe about politics of influence, economic development, the county’s strengths and challenges, and the overall future of Humboldt County.

These interviews form a triangulation with sociological power theory, and economic and cultural variables to inform a discussion of community influence. The thesis was designed for both academics and community members who have an interest in decision processes, and who desire to inspire and create understandings of community empowerment.

The methodology implemented utilized the reputational method. Both a qualitative and quantitative focus was used to understand influence variables. A list of Humboldt County’s most influential individuals and organizations was created from this data, and concerns about Humboldt’s future and strengths and weaknesses were examined. The findings of this study indicate that Humboldt’s community power
structure underwent low to moderate changes between 2000 and 2006, and portray
Humboldt as relatively pluralistic.

Future studies would benefit from a larger interview sample, greater variation of
informants, and a network analysis component. Replications could utilize this study,
Bearbower’s 2000 thesis, and Jerry Krause’s 1990 study on the Humboldt County power
structure for comparison.
Dedication

To My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As far as understanding the power structure of Humboldt County, I began this project as a novice. Many have given me valuable advice along the way. To them I owe so much, especially to the teachers who have watched me progress as an academic and a person during my tenure here at Humboldt State.

I would like in particular to thank Mary Virnoche and Judith Little for sharing their wealth of knowledge and always being there when I needed to pop in, and Betsy Watson for chairing my committee, seeing me through the hard times, and encouraging me through my struggle.

I would also like to thank many of the students and former students in the program who read my drafts, listened to my ranting, and everyone who made me laugh at our circumstance when I was disheartened. Thank you, my friend and former TA Mike Levy, Don Chia, Vance Edwards, and Jerome Bearbower, and everyone else who helped me along the way.

The more time that elapses, the more I understand just how fortunate I am to have such loving, supportive parents. I would not be here without them.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Throughout the course of time humans have attempted to understand the forces that shape social events. This has helped advantage them within social interaction, group cohesion and in their survival. Their explanations have taken the form of folklore, religion and other grand meta-narratives to form an overarching architecture with which to understand everyday experiences. Such ideas are weaved into the tapestry of every day life and continue to be used to answer inquiries about power relationships and outcomes. In addition, there are those who seek to answer these questions through guided studies within the social sciences. Some of these scholars have offered explanations and understandings of community power distributions based on political position, economic affluence, networking, structuralism as well as other forms of cultural clout (Dahl 1961; Domhoff 1983; Domhoff 2002; Hunter 1953; Mills 1956).

For decades researchers have written in support of the belief that some individuals and groups hold a vast disproportionate ability to both thwart and encourage substantive change within communities, control resources and ultimately shape circumstances to the benefit of a few. There is a consensus concerning variations in the influence of individuals, but the debate over just how pervasive and pronounced such variations are is controversial (Domhoff 1983; Dahl 1961). Explanations about individual communities vary from relatively pluralistic to near draconian power differentials.
This thesis explores the community power structure of Humboldt County. The study focuses on individuals and organizations with substantial influence. Ultimately, the findings of the research will be used along with social, demographic and economic figures to explain diversity in Humboldt County’s power structure.

The methods used for this study are fairly simple and straightforward. The reputational method of studying community power is the definitive vehicle of discussion in this thesis (Hunter 1953; Bearbower 2000). More extensive details will be provided in the methodology section. For now, the reputational method can be explained in simple laymen’s terms. The reputational method asks active community members— who do they believe has key influence in their community? This enables social scientists to understand and explain, in some detail, the overarching community power structure. Informant’s responses are weighted with a predetermined point structure, and these figures are totaled (Hunter 1956; Christensen 1982; Bearbower 2000). It is from those numbers that a final list of community leaders are tabulated, which is designed to indicate who the most influential leaders are within a community. In this study both an organizational and an individual list of community leaders has been created from substantive methodology, including interviews. The results of these interviews were then quantified to assess the influence of community members.

The interview guide used was modeled after previous reputational studies (Hunter 1956; Bearbower 2000). The term power was broadly defined and interview informants were allowed to express their own views with less structure. This served the dual purpose of providing quantitatively measurable data without confining the ideas of
informants. Particular focus was placed on opinions of grass roots activists, business leaders and politicians. It was these people who made up the vast majority of the sample of informants. Their expertise included subject areas such as the lumber industry, environmental campaigns, economic, cultural and other political dynamics.

An informal inquiry was undertaken at the start of this study to elicit the opinions of average citizens. Then, after implementing the methodology, the study ends with the formal data analysis of the research. Secondary data about the community such as racial, educational, and economic details as well as theories of power are used in juxtaposition to analyze these interviews. Such triangulation was incredibly beneficial in hypothesizing about the power relationships which affect variables on community influence.

Since the literature on the subject of community power is so diverse, several options for examining power structures using sociological methods have been presented. These options pertain to understanding the power structure within Humboldt County. However, they also could be used to understand other communities.

This thesis is also salient to contemporary American ideals of equality that are championed, at least rhetorically, by many American citizens. Many curious individuals have already peered into communities and questioned just how power and political will is really manifested (Dahl 1961; Domhoff 1983; Etzioni 2004; Hunter 1953; Mills 1956). This empirical examination of power dynamics seeks to illuminate such questions of influence and offer insights into various political arenas.
History is replete with examples of power struggles which are relevant to the formation of our contemporary systems of governance (Crick 2002; Curtis 1981). In a global sense such examinations of community power are a continuation of questions previously discussed by the ancient Greeks, during the enlightenment period, and by our founding fathers about the importance of the rule of law, human nature, divine rights, and the best governmental processes. Thus, community power is enveloped in the crosshairs of economic equality, social cohesion, and community action (West 2004) such that by default this thesis is informed by these concerns.

Social theorists including Robert Dahl (1961) and Billy Bob Wartenberg (1990) have stated, the empirical testing of community power is directly related to understanding democratic viability. In the opinion of this researcher then, a power theorist is inherently a liberation sociologist who is drawn to social justice, and whose findings will inevitably be used to either resist inequality, and/or to dispel myths about the perceived lopsidedness of community power and decision making processes. After all, "…the concept of power plays a fundamental role in describing and evaluating social inequalities" (Wartenberg 1990; p. 4).

In summary, this thesis makes inroads into understanding where, when and why individuals and organizations hold power. The findings and analysis section will discuss how the overall population, population growth, economic and racial diversity relate and substantiate assumptions about the equality of community power relationships found within the literature.
Following in the footsteps of previous studies about Humboldt County (Krause 1990; Bearbower 2000), the ultimate goal of this thesis is to provide both an academic resource, as well as guidance for community members seeking to understand and initiate change by framing community power interactions. This research may also provide a resource for those seeking to replicate similar studies.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review will serve four purposes which relate to a general understanding of social and political thinking about community power and influence. First, a few key thinkers who paved the way for more contemporary views of power will be discussed. Second, power will be clearly defined in general terms, and then in terms of this study’s measurement of influence in Humboldt County. Third, the particular advantages and disadvantages of competing methodological perspectives will be discussed, as well as the reasoning behind the choice to use the reputational method. Fourth, we will pursue a discussion of individual case studies that are salient to understanding the influence of individual and organizational relationships within Humboldt County.

A Very Brief History of Community Political Thought

Explorations of community power relationships were first undergone on a theoretical level instead of pursuing individual case studies. Major contributors to political sociology include Karl Marx (1818-1883) *The Communist Manifesto*, Max Weber (1864-1920) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Robert Michaels (1876-1936) *Political Parties* and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) *Prison Notebooks*. These men theorized about issues that would form the foundation of political sociology, including: the advance of industrialization, growth of class conflict, and the spread of
participatory democracy across Western Europe. By the middle of the Twentieth Century most activity within political sociology had moved to the United States where the popular question of the era was why some societies had become democratic while others had developed into totalitarian regimes (Janowitz 1984). ¹

Community power studies suggested that democracy is coincident with the rise of modern capitalism, an expanding educated middle class, a division in or the defeat of traditional ruling elites, open institutions and a value system that favors popular participation, rule of law, and tolerance for dissent such as in the United States. The empirical measurement of power studies gained prominence within this conservative, stagnant political climate which favored functionalist theory (Collins 1994).

There are many ways to look at power. For Weber, power is the probability that a person in a social relationship will be able to carry out his or her own will in the pursuit of goals or action, regardless of resistance (Weber 1978). As a sociological concept, power takes many forms. Power can be seen through institutionalized channels, or ascribed morals informing right and wrong such as customary social dictates like mores and folkways that carry their own micro political incentives (Collins 1994). It can be seen as an actor’s ability to gain power to, power from, or power over situations, actors or resources. There is structural power, both economic and bureaucratic as well as the power of agency to create, change, defy, or even subjugate. From a sociological

¹ Either Fascist: (1930’s Germany, Japan, Italy or Spain) or communist: The Soviet Union, Cuba, China, and North Korea
perspective power in itself is neither inherently bad nor good. However, it does have consequences and the morality and legitimacy of power are in frequent disagreement.

Whether or not power is seen as good, bad or neutral is situational, but regardless of the value judgments that are made about power, it is absolutely crucial to our understanding of all social dynamics. In short, it explains why things happen, which is the most pivotal purpose of sociology. Much of the discrepancies within the field of community power studies are rooted in the reality that power is amorphous, and an essentially contested concept within the field of sociology (Wartenberg 1990). In other words, there is no one agreed upon definition, so any mention of power is automatically complicated by such variations.

To explain it another way, power cannot be measured if the type of power is not agreed upon first. While artistic influences might profoundly affect a community, many might not consider artists powerful when compared with more measurable impacts (such as the creation of law, the creation or elimination of public space, and the economy). Power is related to values. White (1972) finds four main problems with its conceptualization that relate to these negotiations.

First, it is notorious that many divergent and often conflicting definitions of power are woven into the literature of politics. Secondly, there is no agreement about whether the term to be defined is ‘power’, ‘having power’ or ‘exercising power’: neither the relations between these terms, nor which of them is conceptually basic is obvious. Third, the circumstances in which it would be agreed that power is involved are always many sided, and there is nothing to be grasped as obviously that which a definition of power should define. Fourthly, there are important situations in which one cannot, even when in possession of all the pertinent facts, decide intuitively whether power is involved. (White 1972; 480)
For the purpose of this study it is absolutely essential that power be clearly defined. This study focuses on economic, social, and political relationships of individuals and organizations; and no particular type of power was excluded from analysis. Power was primarily depicted from the perspective of community informants; then cross analyzed through the literature, community demographics, and the researcher’s perspective as community member. In a critical sense this meant that power was left undefined in the sense that it was left open to respondent’s own interpretations. Instead of focusing on a conflict, Marxist, Weberian, Functionalist, Durkheimian or other perspective, power was defined as any mode of influence, whether that be political, economic, structural or other. Therefore, both informants and the researcher were free to include any details they deemed relevant to understanding community influence. For now, we will turn our attention to some competing methodological perspectives that benefit our understanding of power as well as why we chose the reputational method.

Competing Methodological Perspectives

There are three main methodologies researchers have used to measure power within communities. First is the positional technique which was a popular tool of theorists in the early 1900’s. It assumed power came primarily from elected officials within the government (Lynd 1929). Contemporary scholars now view the positional technique as myopic and incomplete since it leaves very little room for understanding other elements of influence, and naively assumes power centers around public officials
(Christensen et al. 1982). Although it is still a popular form of analysis and supplementary analysis within the social sciences, we had broader intentions for this study.

The second way community power theorists study power is through the decisional technique. The decisional technique isolates particular projects or decisions within communities, examines them in detail, then provides an evaluation of what significant variables (such as groups, individuals and activities) contributed to their outcomes (Dahl 1951). Much of the work based on the decisional technique describes the way competing interest groups struggle within communities creating a balanced, though perhaps unequal, distribution of power. The results provided by the decisional technique of power provide the most support for the egalitarian view of America supported by mainstream culture. Its validity is susceptible to the researcher’s choice of topics, particularly whether or not they are inclusive enough to represent an entire power structure within a community (Hunter 1953; Hunter 1981).

The third way community power theorists measure power is through the reputational method. The reputational method relies on the opinions of community knowledgeables to understand power dynamics. Its validity is based largely upon whether or not these opinions can be taken as accurate, as well as the inclusiveness of the case sample (Dahl 1961). For the purposes of this study the reputational method was chosen because its methodology offered a way for informants to express multiple types of power such as structural, economic, and social within a single interview session. This met the criteria of including all modes of influence within our definition of power. Although imperfect, it also offered an easily definable and ultimately comparable avenue
of analysis which has been proven by researchers (Hunter, Christensen et al, Krause, Bearbower) to be a relatively quick, cost effective, and reliable way to measure influence (Hunter 1953).

Individual Power Studies

In the opinion of this researcher power studies are controversial by their very nature. In identifying those with influence an allocation of at least some level of responsibility is inherently given. Power is political; the debate over what role government should play in the lives of its citizens as well as the nature and responsibilities of power goes back to antiquity (Crick 2001; Curtis 1981). However, formal evaluation of community influence using empirical methods goes back a much shorter time span (Bearbower 2000; Hunter 1953). This next section will cover a few prominent studies sited throughout the literature that deserve special attention since they are so frequently sited and are the basis for much argumentation within the field.

The first systematic power study was undertaken by Robert and Helen Lynd in Middletown (Quincy, Indiana) in 1929 and then again in 1937 (Lynd 1929; Lynd 1937). The couple gathered intimate statistics on economic activity, home life, child rearing, leisure, religious practices, and community activities. Their analysis closely followed a Weberian depiction of power forming around class and status, but conducted interviews and analyzed historical records in what amounted to a work of ‘in depth’ journalism (Hunter 1953).
The Middletown study was ground breaking not only because it was empirically based, but because the Lynd’s findings ran counter to the prevailing thought of the times which supported the positional approach mentioned earlier. Although it was qualitatively based, it provided attention to the field of power dynamics as well as an alternative to existing assumptions of power other theorists would expand upon (Hunter 1953; Mills 1956).

William Lloyd Warner’s five-volume study of Yankee City (1941 to 1959) is also well known for its examination of conflicts between social classes. His findings show (1) that the greater the importance of a city official the higher his social status, and (2) that members of the lower classes tended to be arrested by police more often than upper-class members (Polsby 1980). In summary Warner found that the upper classes and upper middle class dominate the high control offices.

Another similar study examining social class was Digby Baltzell’s investigation of Philadelphia (1940). He believed that an upper class might not necessarily be a ruling class, but that if it was not it would soon be replaced by a new upper class (Polsby 1980). It was also his assessment that only 42 Philadelphian’s deserved the term elite in that they were in a position to exercise significant power. The Lynds, Warner, and Balzell’s studies all support elite conceptions of power.

Earlier we discussed the three main ways theorists study community power; two of which gained prominence after these studies. For the purposes of this study it will be useful to explore the decisional and reputational studies in further detail, since this is where most contemporary debate lies (Lee 1991). When broken down into the simplest
form of analysis, studies that use the decisional method tend to develop findings that support diversity within a community power structure, while studies that use a reputational method tend toward a more elitist conclusion (Christensen et.al. 1982).

In the 1950s, researchers focused on a thorough and vigorous elitist/pluralist debate centered around these methods. They began to construct a discourse and refine methods which continue to influence contemporary questions about control, equality, and power structure. Most such work, focused on whom, if anyone, controlled communities. Obviously, these perspectives offered polar explanations about the way community power operates. At one extreme was the elitist model which insisted that a few individuals hold vastly disproportionate power in communities, and at the other was something approximating the pluralist model which claimed that individuals have greater equality in their influence resources (Christensen et al 1982). In between were types representing various degrees of pluralism which have gained traction in recent decades as these extremes were ultimately expressed as ideal types. In studying Humboldt County we will explore where the community sits on this continuum. For now we will discuss elite theory in further detail.

Elitist Theory

The basic tenants of Elitist theory claim there are a small number of high status community leaders who are disproportionately responsible for important community decisions which sustain their own interests (Domhoff 2002; Hunter 1980). While groups who sponsor other policy are allowed a high level of influence and control over specific
agendas, elitist theory contends this is due to an upper class disinterest with issues that do not challenge their welfare and power (Hunter 1953). When elites have a vested interest in decisions they get their way the majority of the time.

The Elitist Perspective and Pluralist Criticism

In 1956 C. Wright Mills brought attention to elitist ideas when he published his book, *The Power Elite*. In it, Mills outlined the interconnections between military, political, and corporate elites which he believed amounted to a “structural fact,” as well as the key to understanding the high social circles in America (Mills 1956). His view was generally unenthusiastic about the prospect of an informed citizenry. Mills, like many previous political theorists before him, was pessimistic about the ability average citizens had to make rationale decisions about the political process (Crick 2002). Mills believed most individuals were more mindless than dogmatic in their beliefs, emphasizing they held few consistent beliefs about political matters (Mills 1956).

Although frequently sited in contemporary literature, those critical of Mills insist his reflections are too anecdotal, and therefore more political than sociological (Wolfe 2000). They discount the validity of his theories due to his focus on describing the convergence of military, government and corporate elitism without detailing substantial methods to support his claims. Despite these criticisms, *The Power Elite* remains both influential and relevant to the discussion of contemporary inequalities of power, in particular as they apply to Structuralist and Marxist depictions.
Seven years after *The Power Elite*, Floyd Hunter published his own study on community power dynamics which supported the idea of elite control on the local level as well (Hunter 1953). Although Hunter had received a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in Sociology and Anthropology, he first studied community power as an employee of the United Service Organization, not as an academic. His goal there at the non-profit was to pull together committee groups in various cities around the United States which could raise money with minimal effort (Christiensen et al 1980). However, while searching the academic literature Hunter discovered a precise systematic way to study power had yet to be developed. In order to meet his goals at USO, he developed his own method: the reputational method. The main differences between Hunter’s study and those that preceded it were Hunter’s exclusive focus on power and his more systematic analysis (Christiensen et al 1982). While the Lynds and others had studied communities in depth, their analysis lacked clear numerical measurements.

Part of the appeal of Hunter’s reputational method was its qualitative accessibility as well as its simplicity. Whenever arriving in a new community Hunter would use local newspapers and organizational lists to create a list which likely represented potential leaders (Hunter 1963; Christensen et al 1982). Then, in order to produce a final interview list, an independent panel of judges was asked to choose which of these potential leaders were most influential. In the case of Atlanta the panel chose forty names out of 175 for interview. Of the forty individuals Hunter interviewed, the vast majority were bankers, manufacturers, and other business leaders. Only four were government officials (Hunter 1953).
This lopsidedness may either be attributed to the distribution of power in 1950’s Atlanta, or perhaps, in a way that is more favorable to democratic equality, that of newspaper, panel or researcher bias. “Many critics of the reputational method objected that Hunter had subjectively narrowed his sample; then, when he asked these people who had power, they naturally told him that they themselves did…But issues that were unimportant or unfamiliar to them might have been precisely those about which others have power” (Trounstine et al 1982; 28).

Therefore, a fundamental negotiation about what is meant by power must be dealt with before undertaking any research. In this study ideas about power were negotiated primarily by the questions asked (using the reputational method) and the interpretations and preferences of informants.

Pluralist Theory

Pluralist theory claims power is dispersed throughout many interest groups representing multiple class interests. Its basic tenant is while not all people or groups exercise power equally, diversity in the power structure creates a plurality (Lee 1991). Pluralist theory contends power cannot be understood simply by asking who controls decisions. Instead, the question of power needs to be studied by exploring specific decisions on specific issues (Dahl 1961). Where elitists viewed power as concentrated, pluralists saw it as dispersed. Where elitists believed power was based on class structure, pluralists believed it was based on the formal political structure. Where elitists studied
behavior through opinion, pluralists studied it through overt behavior (Trounstine et al. 1981).

The Pluralist Perspective and Elite Criticism

It was Robert Dahl (1961) and his fellow political scientists at Yale who developed the alternative theory of pluralism as well as their own alternative method, the decisional technique. Dahl originally popularized the term pluralist in *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (1953), and *Who Governs* (1961), and continues to write about the properties and expansion of democracy in contemporary nation states.

There are a number of works and authors who are positioned under the name pluralist. So many actually that the term pluralist is somewhat unclear—even as defined by its most prominent theorists (Lee 1991). Therefore pluralism has lost meaning, in part due to its definitional ambiguity as a sociological concept, and, in part, because of the necessary compromise between the notions of true equality and totalitarian or monolithic rule (Lee 1991). Some theorists have even characterized it as an umbrella or mutation theory signifying its lack of clear boundaries (Jordan 1990).

In an attempt to further define a pluralist stance, Dahl has offered the term polyarchy to describe democratic systems which are not monolithic, but fall short of pristine depictions of democracy (Lee 1991). It is clear the central premise of polyarchy is not equality in any strict sense of the word. Actually, Dahl’s opening sentence in *Who Governs* was: “In a political system where nearly every adult may vote but where knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials, and other resources are unequally
distributed, who actually governs” (Dahl 1961; p. 1), so Dahl clearly acknowledges inequality. His two main requirements of a polyarchy are that resources must be dispersed, but not equally, and that the system must “encourage responsiveness of leaders to non-leaders” (Lee 1991; 162). Given such vague criteria, some theorists have questioned how anyone could dismiss the general theory of pluralism so confidently (Jordan 1990). However, Dahl does provide a specific list of the characteristics of the system of dispersed inequalities, which are a part of a system of polyarchy, to work with:

1. Many different kinds of resources for influencing officials are available to different citizens.

2. With few exceptions, these resources are unequally distributed.

3. Individuals best off in their access to one kind of resource are often badly off with respect to many other resources.

4. No one influence resource dominates all others in all or even in most key decisions.

5. With some exceptions, an influence resource is effective in some issue-areas or in some specific decisions but not in all.

6. Virtually no one, and certainly no group of more than a few individuals, is entirely lacking in some influence resources. (Jordan 1990; 288).

Judging Empirical Methods, Another Perspective, William G. Domhoff

William Domhoff is one of the most influential authors in community power literature and our review would not be complete without his mention. His work is extensive, but for the purposes of brevity we will only discuss his contributions as they directly relate to the study at hand, as well as their connections to theory already
discussed in this literature review. Domhoff’s perspective falls in the elitist camp. Over the last few decades he has meticulously depicted his case that elites have and execute a vested interest in solidarity, self interest and disproportionate outcomes (Domhoff 2002).

As with other elite theorists, such as Mills and Hunter, Domhoff believes the best way to understand who holds power is to ask in whose interest an action serves. Much of his work is focused on the perceived methodological shortcomings of studies supporting the pluralism theory as well as their possible improvement or discontinuation (Domhoff 1983). For instance, Domhoff reexamined Dahl’s *Who Governs* in his book *Who Rules America Now* (1983). Dahl had shown New Haven to be a pluralistic community, but Domhoff claimed that by concentrating exclusively on the present, Dahl had missed crucial background information about the origins of the urban renewal program. He also asserted that although at first public servants appeared to be the central decision makers, they had merely implemented the urban renewal program elite leaders had already developed years earlier. Those offering public debate at lower levels of society were merely the politics puppets of the economic elite who had originally set the plan into motion (Domhoff 1983). Needless to say, the question in judging whose interest redevelopment served is somewhat complicated.

For one, the measure passed through the cities democratic political process indicating a substantial number of citizens who did not have a direct economic incentive supported renewal. This could be deemed sufficient, if, as with Dahl’s study, local public officials took credit and supported renewal. Even if Domhoff is correct to assume
business elites were responsible for redevelopment, it is still possible that redevelopment served a plurality of interests.

Elitist theorists are not satisfied with such postulates. For one, it is their belief that elites originally set the agenda (Domhoff 2002; Hunter 1953). They argue that crucial decisions could not be made without anticipating the response of elites, and therefore any methodology which simply observes overt behavior would prove inadequate (Domhoff 1983). This is especially true since it is unlikely to uncover the actions of local community business leaders who meet behind closed doors. Elite theorists also assume power is sometimes covert and untraceable and argue power is often implemented through the use of non-decisions, where elites suffocate agendas before they gain public notoriety. They point out many choices made by individuals are not accountable to the public political process, such as decisions regarding public property, donations, or the like (Domhoff 2002).

Therefore, theorists like Miller argue that,

If relatively covert economic dominants rather than officials actually control the community agenda, one will not be able to “see them” in action if one is an outsider. But there are people, knowledgeable, strategically placed, who do see the community live, breathe, and make decisions day after day. They know who actually has power in the community. (Miller 1981; 1281)

From an elitist perspective, it is not just that elites are disproportionately able to implement their agendas, but that culture protects their interests through media, morals, and overall, a better ability to set the agendas under discussion (Domhoff 2002).

Therefore, some central questions become: what evidence is there to support the idea of
elite solidarity, how significant are the ramifications of individuals on the public good, and how do non-decisions effect the public good?

Domhoff offers reasonable explanations to these questions, but there are many perhaps equally persuasive pluralist counter arguments (Jordan 1990). Nonetheless, a few things are clear. First, assumptions about the nature of power dynamics and decision making processes are taken with a level of faith. Second, it is useful to separate an overall judgment about the nature of a particular community’s power structure from the data’s practical application.

Practical Applications

In order to create the foundation of equality and participation which encourages democratic viability, the literature suggests several dimensions. These are active citizenry (participation) and access to resources (in multiple forms) including knowledge, economic prosperity, and social ties (Gordon 2001). These factors are directly related to Dahl’s institutional requirements of democracy and are also directly relevant to examining the community power structure of Humboldt County. The democratic endeavor requires informed, active citizens in order to produce a sufficient level of logical consensus or equality. It is equally true that significant knowledge of the subject matter is a pre-requisite for good decision making (Crick 2002). If all of these requirements are not met, there is little hope that the majority of Americans will be enabled to thoroughly participate in political and civic processes which encourage democratic viability and equality (Crick 2002).
By considering leadership diversity in Humboldt County, this case study offers a small step toward understanding and creating pragmatic policy that will encourage democratic viability and serve the needs of community members. This thesis will analyze whether influence in Humboldt County is spread out somewhat evenly among most local groups, if a relatively few really call the shots, or whether we are moving from one condition to another.

Previous community power studies on Humboldt County utilizing the reputational method were undertaken by Jerry Krause (1990) and Jerome Bearbower (2000). Unfortunately this researcher was unable to secure a copy of the Krause study. Bearbower’s 2000 study will be used later on to compare the trajectory of power in Humboldt County. Its focus was solely quantitative and focused on individuals, not organizations. In the analysis section, these findings will be used to assess how community power dynamics have changed over the last six years.

While only limited conclusions can be made regarding the validity of such methods in uncovering a community’s power structure, community power studies have provided valuable insight into influence processes. Even if studying power in isolated segments will never definitively uncover the totality of an overall power structure, at the very least we can conclude that when due diligence is applied these scientific demarcations are reliable and repeatable. It can therefore be assumed that if this study were duplicated within the same time period, the power structure study would provide a very similar list of individuals and organizations. It can also be assumed within a
reasonable degree of certainty that those individuals and organizations named do have significant influence within the community.

One widespread typology for understanding variations in community power structures comes from Terry Clark (1968). In this typology there are five main criteria which chiefly influence where a community lies within the elitist-pluralist continuum of power structures: city type and the size of a community, diversity, mobility of industry, structure of government, and political culture. For comparison purposes, only city type, size, diversity and structure of government will be analyzed since these were the criteria discussed in Bearbower’s 2000 study.

City type refers to what kind of city structure is in place such as residential suburbs, independent cities, rural villages, or trade centers. Each city type tends to promote its own kind of conflict, cohesion, and influence patterns. On a whole, metropolitan areas have a greater opportunity for diverse patterns of influence because of their diversity in economic and kinship as well as perhaps their better organized social strata such as class, ethnic, group or residential areas which are under their own leadership. In contrast residential structures usually have more cohesiveness, while in industrial suburbs diverse factions tend to create more conflict. Rural villages and trade centers are often in a state of flux (Clark 1968). With all city sizes, “*fluid structures are not* likely to be headed *exclusively* by either officials or non-officials” (Clark 1968; 152).

The size of a community is also central in theorizing about community power structures as it is often used as selection criteria when comparing influence patterns as well as various methodologies. Large cities tend to be pluralistic, but smaller cities have a
variety of power structures where a concentration of power is harder to predict. According to Clark *pyramidal* (communities with one dominant leadership group) structures are more often than not headed by elected officials. However, in larger cities with *multipyramidal* (communities with at least two durable factions or multiple coalitions which compete for advantage) structures non-officials tend to be found in greater numbers. Size also refers to development and the impact of that community on surrounding communities.

Another variable which is closely related to size is the diversity of a community. This includes both social and economic diversity. Economic variables include, but are not limited to the types of industries, number of business owners, local government revenues, local expenditures for education, total bank deposits, total local expenditures, number covered by social security, manufacturing establishments by size and total number of community employees. A community with a highly educated, more affluent population will likely have pluralistic decision making processes while a community with only one employer is unlikely to have such freedom of diversity.

Cultural diversity can be seen in the different viewpoints of a community, whether that is manifested based on religious, political, age, ethnicity or various social attitudes which create avenues to proactively mediate values and alleviate concerns. It can be measured using the number of varying organizations or less formal organized structures within a geographic area that mobilize influence and transfer these values norms and ideas.
The last variable we’ll discuss is the structure of government. There are governmental functions that vary within the United States such as a mayor versus city manager, partisan or non-partisan elections, how councilmen are elected (from wards or at large), and the size of the counsel districts. Such variations are limited within the United States as compared to the possibilities of cross national studies, but are nonetheless significant to the community’s decision making processes.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Setting

This case study took place during the fall of 2006 in the geographic locality of Humboldt County, a county on the northern coast of California. Humboldt County is geographically isolated with a population density of 36.9 per square mile. It has a relatively educated labor supply; 23% of adults 25 or over have a bachelors degree or higher, ranking 490 out of 3,141 counties in the U.S. (Census 2000 figures). Humboldt County also has an abundance of non-governmental organizations, yet retains a substantial poverty rate of 15.4%, or 987 out of 3,141 counties (Census 2004). The community was also of particular interest because of its racial homogeneity, university system, as well as the preliminary indication from many in the community that it might be in a significant state of fluctuation.

Research Steps

This study used the reputational method to measure community power. The reputational approach is an empirical method which relies on the insights and opinions of informants to understand community power by assigning numerical values to informant responses which are then quantitatively tabulated (Hunter 1953). While it is not perfect, the reputational method provides an inexpensive, relatively reliable and quick method of introductory analysis into specific geographic communities, and has been proven
repeatedly to be an efficient way to study community power (Christiensen et al. 1982).

Time tables are variable and several theorists compile data on a community for years
(such as: Lynd, Hunter, Dahl.) Each reputational study follows the same basic steps.

The first step is to obtain an extensive understanding of the community to be studied. For this study, information about local community events and the political/economic structure was collected by reading the local newspapers, including: The North Cost Journal, Humboldt Beacon, and The Eureka Reporter; and by tuning into local news broadcasts, and by participating in and listening to discussions where citizens conversed about community power relationships, projects and concerns. Special attention was given to recent projects in the public spotlight such as the Marina Project and Measure T, as well as other community events where success depended on the mobilization a large numbers of individuals. A content analysis of these mobilization factors was used to understand mobilization agendas, successes and defeats. Attention was also given to how key individuals contributed to mobilization efforts, and how considerable projects found their way into and continued within the public spotlight.

Topics which were more popular within the community discussion or with which the researcher was less familiar with were researched using a newspaper database. This provided a longitudinal perspective. Collected data was then used to inform interviews, and guide follow up questions. Data was stored on index cards or notebooks, and later backed up and organized on the computer.

Census and other sources of economic data were also consulted including (Humboldt County 2003 Economic & Demographic Profile 2003; The Humboldt County
These resources provided valuable information about Humboldt County poverty statistics, population dynamics, total GDP by industry, employment, and population distributions—All garnered data assisted in the understanding, and overall contextualization of our research findings within the setting of Humboldt County. Before researching these variables an interview guide had to be created. It was based on previous reputational studies, and the input of several community influentials.

The interview guide (see Appendix A) consisted of qualitative and qualitative questions. The first thirteen questions were quantitative. They were used to generate a list of the most influential individuals and community organizations, as well as to get an understanding of how those entities were connected to the overall power structure of Humboldt County. Each time an individual or organization was mentioned in response to quantitative questions they received a predetermined number of points which was used to assess their overall influence within Humboldt’s community power structure (the ranking system was based on Bearbower’s 2000 study for comparison purposes). For example, when respondents were asked “who is the most powerful individual in Humboldt County,” the person named received five points.

The second type of question was semi structured and qualitative. These questions were constructed to illicit information about informants' views of Humboldt County's strengths, weaknesses, and potential future problems. Respondents were free to discuss any subject they considered important to their vision of Humboldt’s future. Providing both types of questions increased the scope while also providing easily comparable data.
about community leaders and organizations. Instead of relying on a particular opinion using a particular quote, everyone interviewed was required to answer questions about the most powerful individuals and organizations to assure more balanced findings. In order to capture the full weight and detail of responses, and to carefully compare multiple interviews, all sessions were recorded and transcribed.

The second step in the Reputational Method was to systematically locate a group of knowledgeable informants through a “panel of judges” to be interviewed. Individuals who would represented diverse community interests were contacted to be part of the panel of judges. The researcher supplied subjects a questionnaire which was designed to get the names of high profile community leaders who held significant leadership positions, or understood high level decision making processes in Humboldt County.

Responses to preliminary questionnaire provided mixed results. Some individuals were forthcoming with their responses, while others had questions about the study's methodological choices. One individual provided a typical critique of the reputation method; stating questions were too vague and any specific response would have to include a particular project, community, and time frame. The initial participants shaped the interview instrument and motivated the inclusion of qualitative response categories in the research design allowing individuals the freedom to express more complex ideas.

As previously mentioned, Floyd Hunter used the names of individuals who frequently appeared in the local newspaper so his panel of judges could make final decisions about whom to interview (Hunter 1953). However, Hunter's method might have artificially biased the selection processes because of its focus on leaders who
receive media coverage, at the exclusion of more covert community leadership. To compensate for that short falling, a modified snowball technique was employed. The more votes an individual received from the panel of judges, the higher their interview priority. When final interviews began, findings were used to select individuals who had previously held equal interview priority based on initial panel choices. In keeping the selection process open, we reserved the ability to select informants which our initial selection process may have overlooked, and the capacity to ensure diverse interviews; which is highly important for a small sample.

The third step in the reputational method was to conduct interviews. Individuals were contacted and asked their willingness to take part in the study. These connections were usually made by telephone, but contact was also made through face-to-face interactions as well as through mutual contacts. If informants agreed to participate, a consent form was signed (see Appendix B) which assured each subject the guarantee of confidentiality. Participants were generally willing and excited to offer their political insights, time and knowledge, as well as their reflections on the community.

The first half of the interview guide was significantly based on Bearbower’s 2000 study. This was very similar to guides used by other researchers (Hunter 1953; Hunter 1980; Christensen et al 1982). Slight modifications were implemented based on suggestions from community influentials over several meetings. The second half of the guide was influenced by these influentials, Bearbower, and the researcher’s ideas about community themes.
In total, eleven in-depth interviews were conducted between September and December 2006. These interviews took place at the researcher’s home, a coffee shop, or the respondent’s work place, and lasted anywhere from one to three and a half hours. Part of one of these interviews was lost due to poor tape quality, but the quantitative findings were still utilized. Upon completion of interviews, results were tabulated using a hierarchical ranking designed to produce a list of top leaders and organizations in the community (see page 75).

Questions were assigned point values in relation to their generality and specificity. After obtaining demographic information about participants, the next set of questions asked respondents to provide information about groups of individuals and organizations that exercised influence in the community. For example: “If a project were before the community that required a decision by a group of individuals or organizations, which four could ‘put it over’?” was asked to establish which individuals and organizations could most effectively complete and gain support for community projects.

Individuals and organizations that were mentioned in these first questions received three points, while entities named in responses to questions that required participants to name a single individual or organization received five points. Though one question specifically inquired about organizations, it did not ask for a specific number of responses and was not used in the ranking system since it would have biased the study by catering to the views of respondents who listed more organizations.

After obtaining background information on Humboldt County, creating an interview instrument, conducting interviews, and ranking and analyzing the quantitative
findings, qualitative interviews were analyzed using Nvivo software. To do this the data
needed a structured way to be organized and synthesized. There are many ways to
evaluate findings and fuse understandings. Interviews were coded into themes using a
qualitative data software program, as well as by hand. (These themes included: shifts in
community power, the future of Humboldt County, types of power, government
functions, and leadership styles.)

Theorists who empirically study community power have committed themselves to
the thorough documentation of their methods to allow others to understand, compare and
further explore the complexities of power relationships. If descriptions lack detail,
validity or are in some other way inadequate representations of the community, future
work built on those methods and assumptions will suffer. With that in mind, special
attention has been paid to the limitations of this study.

Our own choices were heavily influenced by the methodological processes and
insights of previous practitioners of the reputational method (Bearbower 2000; Hunter
1963; Christianson 1982). It is the debate over methods and the theoretical arguments
that comprise the major differences between power theorists. Our choice to include a
qualitative research component was primarily based on two criteria which resonate
heavily with the ideas of Liberation Sociology (Feagan and Vera 2001).

The first reason to include qualitative research is to protest an over reliance on
positivist quantitative focus found in sociology throughout the last few decades. Those
using the reputational method tended to initially focus on quantitative descriptions of
community power with an emphasis on individual elites (Hunter 1953). Although we are
excited to include a who's who list of powerful individuals and organizations, we wanted
the opportunity to provide further explanation with qualitative results. One substantial
criticism levied against Hunter, in his reputational power studies of 1953 and 1980, was
he focused more on his conclusions than on explaining the methodologies and analysis
necessary to the process (Christensen et. al. 1982). It is our hope a qualitative focus will
remedy some of this concern in our own study. We believe this focus provides a greater
opportunity to explain and examine our informants’ responses in more honesty and detail
than would have otherwise been possible.

The second reason for this qualitative approach was to disclose our own bias.
Where many theorists wish to remain a-political, we acknowledge that all research rests
on political formulations, and will support modes of thinking over others. We wish to
offer more depth to our reader not only about the general field of community power, but
also information about their own community. We are optimistic our analysis will provide
detailed information to those Humboldt County residents who are invested in
understanding Humboldt's community power structure. We also hope that this thesis
encourages democratic visioning.

About the Interviews

Employing a semi-structured interview style provided a great deal of flexibility.
Interviews covered many subject areas, from informants’ personal involvement in the
community, to reflections on Humboldt politics throughout the last several decades.
Respondents were granted a great deal of freedom to delve into their own interests,
general reflections about community power, visioning and social change. The survey instrument was expanded from earlier drafts, and carefully constructed to avoid bias. Respondents were often probed regarding their visions and the roles and functions of community organizations and individuals. When respondents asked for conceptual clarification about the objectives of the study, or how to interpret questions the researcher reiterated the intention of the project was to understand overall modes of influence within the community, including all organizations and individuals, whether civic, political or otherwise designated.
CHAPTER 4

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Fellow asked me one time you know when I was running for office, you know, where are you on the issues. Depends on which grange hall you're in. Because if you're in the White Hall Grange Hall the issues that you're confronted with have nothing to do with what's important in the Rohnerville Grange Hall. - Ricky

Introduction

In this section we will explore community power dynamics in Humboldt County from the perspective of eleven individuals with significant knowledge, involvement, and ties to the power structure of the community. We will also analyze interviewees’ perceptions regarding politics of influence, economic development, the county's strengths and challenges, and the future of Humboldt County.

The Interview Sample

A total of 11 interviews were conducted with interviewees who were between 49 to 67 years of age with a median age of 60. The average respondent had lived in Humboldt County for 34 years. Three respondents had lived in Humboldt County their entire lives, and eight were transplants who had lived here for at least nine years. There were four females and seven male informants. All interviewees had at least a bachelor’s degree, six had multiple degrees, and four had a Master’s degree. Five of the respondents were graduates of Humboldt State University.

In regard to vocation four respondents held governmentally elected positions, one held an appointed government position, two were heavily involved in the daily process or
steering committees of local non-profits, and all had some involvement in community steering committees. Each had diverse community interests and were extremely involved within the public realm. Several different respondents were consistently involved in different organizations, boards, and projects, such as: environmental interest groups, historic preservation, political action, state wide boards, economic visioning groups, governmental boards, community service groups and organizations promoting the arts and humanities. To protect confidentiality respondents were given pseudonyms to mask informant identities.

Reflections on Reliability and Validity

There is substantial evidence to believe informants’ personal contacts, knowledge and expertise both shaped and limited the reflections about community. These influences were reflected by the common preface that an informant didn't know someone personally, and the more common preface, they had worked with specific individuals on boards, projects, or in other community settings. Although this is a small community, it is the belief of this research that this study is a glimpse of an overall power structure with significantly connected and disconnected processes.

While two informants spoke extensively about Southern Humboldt, more attention was focused on power structures within Arcata and Eureka where most informants resided. The communities of the Hoopa Reservation, Garberville, and McKinleyville received sparse attention; because of geographic proximity McKinleyville's power structure may be more significantly connected to those of Arcata.
and Eureka since citizens are likely to have more similar concerns and a greater chance of crossing paths. Hoopa and Garberville are farther removed, located at the north eastern and southern parts of the County respectively.

It is no surprise informants mentioned individuals and organizations that directly related to their experience, personal, professional or other community exposure. A background in community activism, public service, forestry, politics, or environmentalism lead to connections, assertions and views directly related to these experiences. This is perhaps obvious, but is crucial to our understanding of the fragmented perspectives of communities and the ramifications of a modest interview sample. Donald, a governmentally appointed employee, was particularly constrained by his position explaining, “…if you’re going to last in a public administration position…the politics of the community cannot matter to you. It has to be a kind of bi-partisan response to all issues.” While this interview was beneficial in understanding the city government system his refusal to provide a partisan viewpoint limited discussion.

An Analysis of Interviews

While coding interviews and organizing data, this study revealed a few key themes reflected by our research question. These included: 1) which individuals and organizations had community influence, 2) how the actions of those individuals affected Humboldt County. 3) general narratives about community power, 4) community projects, 5) economic development, 6) community visions, and 7) the strengths and challenges of
Humboldt County for the overall purpose of understanding community power dynamics. These themes were used during coding.

Concluding portions of interviews were specifically reserved for more general macro conceptualizations about Humboldt County, but such reflections were heavily dispersed throughout interviews. During these conversations, probes about individual status invariably lead to descriptions of larger community visions, strengths and challenges. Particular emphasis was placed on agendas, projects, visions and political modes in the county, as well as overall themes of influence such as competition, cooperation, and development.

Power as Contextual and Shifting

Several explanations were offered to explain how power and influence work within Humboldt County. Power and influence often worked in complimentary synergy, with respondents emphasizing certain modes of influence, but rarely discounting other forms of power. When describing community influence, informants employed themes about media, community collaboration, economic power, organizational structure, coalitions, networking and individual knowledge.

Within particular spheres of influence interviewees were generally confident about their ability to identify individuals and organizations which exhibited select forms of power. The belief that informants could make contact with influential people within their desired network reflected a high level of confidence about the ability to collaborate, and influence community processes. Not withstanding, most informants expressed at
least some ambiguity about their ability to identify community influentials who should be seen as the *most* powerful in the county within such a multiplicity of individuals and spheres of influence.

Amie, a long time resident who divided her career between community action groups and formal political office, reflected this idea stating, “I don’t think much about who has influence, who doesn’t. I just don’t think much about it. If I have a question or I want to do something or other I just call whoever I think has the best ability to get the information I need…” However, individuals were consistently identified as more powerful and influential than others, showing at least the perception of a strong identifiable power structure.

Ricky, a more cynical informant had this to say.

The ones you read in the paper all the time it's like so what, they're nah. I always get a kick out of these, they make a list of the movers and shakers, and I actually got quite a jolt of who somebody thought was a mover and a shaker. You know (pause) Yeah, perception, reality, it's miles and miles apart. What's going to work here. What prevails? What's the long standing thing?

When asked about the individual who has the most power in the county, Ricky looked astonished and exclaimed, “the most power in the county, wow!”, accentuating the difficulty of identifying a single individual.

In general, interviews were cautiously optimistic about identifying community influentials. In this statement Jade, a long time community leader in her sixties, reflects on her own influence in the community. (Other community members described her as a community heavy weight.)
Yeah, that's the art here is to figure out who's really got the power in all this. I mean I used to feel like I had a lot of power in the community. I don't feel like I do anymore. But it was not because I had money, it was because I knew a lot of people, and I just worked really well with people and so I could know who to call and make it happen which is Kathy Moxen's power.

She also emphasized a collaborative approach to leadership and community influence common in our interview sample, particularly with female interviews who stressed community connections, and networks of collective action. Another respondent, Katie, commented about the shifting power structure within the county: “It's not always apparent” (who holds power) and reflected,

In the time I've been here there has been a significant shift, and I consider that we're in a transition stage because the old guard have pretty much moved out, you know been moved out, even though some of them still act like they have power, and there's a younger like 40's kind of group of people who are actually wielding more power than they were allowed to in the past. It used to be pretty much who belonged to the Ingamar Club (Katie).

As discussed earlier, the idea that upper class elite circles exercise power through strong connections with other elites has been written about extensively by William Domhoff (1983, 1990, 2002). Venues like the Ingamar Club may be significant to socialization, networking, and influence tools for upper class individuals in Humboldt County. They also serve the purpose of differentiating members of the upper class from other members of society (The American Upper Class 1983). According to Domhoff (1990) such associations are based on shared values and status, and serve the purpose of reproducing the upper class just as elite private schools and elite universities do.
However, based on the accumulated data, this researcher cannot comment as to if these institutions are significant to the power structure of Humboldt County.

The term influence brought up varying connotations within interviews. Informants usually favored select types of influence over others when describing community power. When asked about community power, some informants first assumed they should focus on the *political* realm, or in contrast, *non-political* community leaders. Clarifying questions were often asked such as, “You’re looking for civic leadership or political leadership?” (Tom). When contemplating how to rank individuals’ power, Philip also expressed the difficulty in comparing individuals with different types of power. “Yeah, that would be almost impossible because people have different spheres of influence. So where someone might be very powerful in this sphere, they hold nothing in this other sphere.”

Every respondent mentioned in some form that power was relative to the project at hand. When asked about who were the most effective leaders at initiating and completing projects Katie explained,

…it's funny, you know I don't think in those terms. I mean it's not like, if you want to get something done, I don't think about the most powerful person. I think about who, you know more often on the lower levels, who really gets the work done because I believe in process, and process trumps all. I mean you got the wheeler dealers out there and they can do big stuff, but if people two or three rungs down the hierarchy don't want to see it happen they'll stop it.

Annie reiterated that power was project and information specific with her statement, “I don't think much about who has influence, who doesn't…I just call whoever I think has the best ability to get me the information I need”
While no interviewees agreed that one person or group had any kind of extreme power across all issues, there was an openness and acceptance about varying levels of influence. Individuals were mentioned because they possessed varying skills of influence. For instance, Richard Salzman and Peter Pennekamp were mentioned as powerful because of their aptitude as political organizers. Red Emmerson and the Arkley's for their economic power. Kathy Moxen, Alex Stillman, and Julie Fulkerson for their networking power. Bonnie Neely, Alex Stillman, Rob Arkley and Chery Arkley for their ability to initiate projects. John Campbell, David Cobb, Paul Gallegos, Kris Kerrigan, and Mike Thompson, among others, for their ability to influence public opinion.

In keeping with the theme of specialized knowledge, interviewees generally shifted towards topics in which they were directly involved or had accumulated specialized knowledge of. If an informant had substantial associations with charity, gentrification, transit, boards or organizations examples of power usually fell within these associations. With very few exceptions these references either referred to the informant’s direct involvement or the involvement of someone they were intimately connected to personally, politically or through business.

Third party sources such as newspapers, news letters or TV news were also referenced, but information based on the informant’s personal network was most common. The influence of media on the community is inconclusive based on the study’s findings. When asked about individuals who influence public opinion, Ricky, an elected
official in his sixties, mentioned six media personalities, and then provided details about individual writers.

He (Brian Papstine) has a large audience. He has a large audience of young people that build things, that do things, that have opinions, that speak out in the community, and he, he promotes that. And he's involved in city stuff. Rotaries and politics and things,…they're the ones that carry the water, you've got (Nathan) Rushton down here at the Eureka Reporter and you've got (James) Faulk over here at the Times. Hank Sims he's a controversial character, he was with the Arcata Eye and he's now with the North Coast Journal. And you've got Daniel Mintz, one of my favorite writers, Daniel Mintz is read in both Northern Humboldt and Southern Humboldt also. He's a radio commentator and they tackle political issues.

Organizations as Influential Community Actors

Of the 25 organizations the study identified as most influential six were governmental (Board of Supervisors, Arcata City Council, Eureka City Council, Coastal Commission, Humboldt State University, College of the Redwoods), four were environmental agencies (North Coast Environmental Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Redwood Coast Energy Authority, Sierra Club), two were newspapers (Times Standard, Eureka Reporter), two were liberal activist organizations (Local Solutions, Democracy Unlimited), two were businesses (Security National, Danco Construction Company). The remaining nine were other types of civic organizations (Democratic Central Committee, Humboldt Area Foundation, Redwood Community Action Agency, Eureka Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Morris Graves Museum, Tax Payers League, Humboldt Economic Land Planning, and Eureka Heritage Society).
Organizations as Ideological Instruments

Many of Humboldt’s most powerful organizations were transparent about their desire to create and foster a particular type of social agenda. Most obviously, these included environmental organizations, and political organizations. In particular, Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County and Local Solutions were mentioned as key influences shaping Humboldt’s political agenda. Mary believed Democracy Unlimited has been successful because they are well organized and

Because they’re also willing to really look at the power dynamics. They look at the power dynamics, … so they look at why, why are the people not in power, and not being able to, so they are, they really do examine the power structure, what needs to take place like a lot of people think just campaign finance reform, but they go deeper and they say no, it’s not just that, it’s the fact that corporations have personhood, you know they have the ability to act like people without the liability of people

She also described Local Solutions as an organization that successfully distributed knowledge and mobilized resources for the progressive community.

… (Local Solutions) I think is really just a way of letting people know what’s going on, on the political level. So it’s more of just a distribution chain. This event is going down, that event is going down, so and so is coming to town, you know that type of thing.

Many informants expressed that these activist organizations carried significant weight and influence within Humboldt County. Philip, an activist who has worked in or partnered with several of Humboldt’s humanitarian and social organizations described the influence a small group can have.

Alright, the real funny thing is about that. Is that, for example, are you familiar with moveon.org? Ok, I believe they have over a million members, they raise millions of dollars, they create millions of actions all over the country, they’re a
real force. It’s four people. Four people. Four well organized people are doing this huge national thing. And so it’s sort of the same in Humboldt County. It’s whoever has a small group of three four, five, six people of well organized people. And all you need to do is collect your thoughts, inventory the sorts of skills you’re going to need. The ones you don’t have, you go and you get them…

There were also organizations which were mentioned for their ability to remain non-partisan. Redwood Community Action Agency, and in particular Humboldt Area Foundation were mentioned multiple times. Mary described them this way,

They (Humboldt Area Foundation) handle over five hundred different funds. …they’re seen as neutral, but with the community focus, you know what’s best for the community on a lot of levels. I wouldn’t say I’d always agree with them, but I guess you can’t always get that, but at least they weight out certain issues… I would (also) say Redwood Community Action Agency because they also have the community issues, they live them on a day-to-day basis, and so they may have a different perspective… There’s a few other particular foundations, really have an influence and if you can get them to help fund you, you can get things done.

There were several difficulties with pinpointing influential organizations. Humboldt County, like modern society in general, is full of bureaucratic webs of interlocking organizations. This sometimes made it hard to separate organizations from their larger entities in a way that could provide a salient analysis of power dynamics. Such ambiguity was clear in the case of Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods, the community’s collegiate academic institutions. Both were identified as extremely influential, but when viewed from a practical political level, in which specific projects or agendas need to be accomplished, their influence was unclear. Although a force within the community, these institutions contain a multiplicity of divergent, perhaps even competing interests from the Young Republicans Club to The Society for Creative Anachronism. Most modes of influence are not organized from a central location.
It is obvious both HSU and College of the Redwoods have a broad and substantial effect on the community by the economic lifeline they provide. Further substantial implications are easily identifiable, such as: decisions about HSUs’ master plan, the effect of student dollars on local businesses, community activities or the productive effects of educated individuals within a community. Though, most modes of influence do not create a unified and holistic presentation or purpose that smaller organizations do. The theater department, CCAT, Associate Student Union, Housing Department, and Black Student Union etc. are all influential umbrella organizations of Humboldt State. Identifying HSU as influential may provide little practical significance if the goal is to enact particular influence in the community. In all but a few cases, actors would be more successful if they contacted a specific entity rather than the central administration of a University.

Civic Organizations

Many service organizations were mentioned as a positive force in the community, although it was not always clear to informants how or if that influence warranted inclusion in a list of the most powerful organizations. There are a multitude of such organizations within Humboldt County. To single out a few among hundreds is difficult and probably unproductive. However, standouts include the Rotary Club, The Arcata Endeavor, and Food for People.

All organizations carry their own influence which translates into some form of political power. One interview pointed out those organizations which seem to be a-
political...“are concerned with how a certain segment of the community is, the direction the community is going.” Little League was mentioned by two informants as influential. Such recreation, or performance organizations may hold substantial stake in decisions regarding public safety and community space.

Informants consistently reiterated that the power to accomplish a goal was contingent upon the project at hand. Sometimes general statements of influence were made, followed up by specific types of projects and related organizations. For instance, Amie, known as a powerful leader because of her ability to connect people offered a few examples about Humboldt's environmental scene.

If you're thinking about alternative transportations probably Green Wheel has done a lot. If you're thinking about energy you know Redwood Energy Authority is really picking up the pace. And just recently as far as recycling and waste it would be Humboldt Waste Management, they've really kicked in and started doing a lot of things they haven't done in the past.

Amie’s quote not only shows power as contextual, but constantly in a state of fluctuation where new things are being tried and new challenges overcome. Differences in the leadership styles within and outside organizations were also discussed as part of a growing shift within the community. Katie attributed these changes to

A growth in the social consciousness of the community and also a growth in the quality of leadership. I think that Cascadia Institute has really made a big difference in really teaching people how to, how to be more collaborative, how to be less dictatorial and authoritarian... the authoritarian style of leadership is not really a style of leadership that is sustainable in the long run.

In this quote, non-profit director Katie, again expresses a sentiment of cooperation. This might be expected of individuals involved in local non-profits since
they tend to work on many projects with partnering organizations, and the choice to be involved in that kind of community service might in itself predispose such ideas.

Economic Power

Respondents also discussed influence in terms of economics. Economic power was mentioned as a function of individual wealth, structure, geography and transportation, and individual’s shaping industry. Rich Ghilarducci of Humboldt Creamery, as well as agricultural farm Sun Valley were mentioned in two interviews for its influence as a major employer. Ricky commented

That's an organization that has considerable influence on, you know the landscape of Humboldt County. Folks like that, the folks over there in Sun Valley, they're definitely not to be discounted, you know who's, who's the brains behind all that. That's a little bit difficult to put your finger on. You know, say it's him, he did it. I don't know, did he? Is Ghilarducci the guy?

There was also skepticism about how money directly translated into power. Ricky mused,

We're talking about the most powerful guy in the county and you brought up money and I'm thinking well money, well whose got all the money, Red Emmerson. Red Emmerson has way more money than Arkley. He's got to have. Red Emmerson is the largest land owner in America.

According to Ricky, Red Emmerson has made substantial political contributions to Humboldt County; though no other interviewee mentioned Mr. Emmerson as powerful. His lack of notoriety might be due to the fact that he does not have

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2 Age 76, Red Emmerson made his fortune through real estate, timberland and timber mills. According to Forbes (2005) he is now the 207th richest person in America with a net worth of 1.5 billion.
considerable influence on the community. In line with elite theory, it could also reflect divergent social circles, backstage power and money affecting outcomes. Without further research such suggestions are mere speculation. However, such speculation does provide a real life example to test elite and pluralist theory since Red Emmerson’s influence may be do to indirect impacts.

Power as Potential and Actual Influence Terms

Perceptions about the power individuals exercise in the community varied within interviews. Respondents were asked to name both the individual and organization which had the most power, as well as the individual and organization who exercised the most power. Some respondents made little distinction between these two questions. Hypothetical questions such as, “Which organizations, if they came out against your project would you be most worried about?” provided an opportunity for respondents to reflect on potential power. Leaders who could potentially exercise substantial power, but did not reside in Humboldt were also mentioned. These included the California State University Chancellor, Charles Reed, who could potentially derail projects or make significant changes to Humboldt State, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

While many of their powers might lie dormant, a single decision might create significant ripples affecting countless lives. For instance, one informant mentioned that in 2004 Reed vetoed Humboldt State's Energy Independence Fund initiative which intended to supply all of HSU's energy needs through progressive energy solutions such as solar panels. As well, since taking office Schwarzenegger has supported heavy cuts to
California’s UC, CSU and junior college systems. Such dormant leaders may sometimes be overlooked because they inconsistently or never interact with most community influentials.

The Arkleys as Community Influentials

The majority of interviews had had personal contact with one or more members of the Arkley family. In interviews Rob and Cherie Arkley were often mentioned as acting “in concert,” but Rob was mentioned far more often as an individual entity. When describing the Arkley's community influence, informants mentioned concrete ways the Arkleys exercise power, while often framing their influence with symbolic references such as “Rob is the eight hundred pound gorilla in the room” or “It’s like a bunch of wolves bringing down a Caribou- they can do it but they have to work together.”

For many, Rob Arkely seems to represent a threat to democratic values posed by a bourgeoisie elite. This sentiment is also reflected by anti Arkley bumper stickers dispersed around town. Matt, a concerned environmental activist put it this way,

Well I think that there are two major visions. One is that the wealthy individuals within the county are going to tie in with making strong connections with outside corporations and bring in businesses that are sort of the local branches of big outside organizations… So for instance, the Balloon Track Project is a perfect example, where the Arkley’s are trying to… align with Home Depot Corporation, and they see that as the way the County should be going, where they would be the senior partners of large outside corporations. Which is not what I support.

Two interviewees acknowledged his power, but discounted the belief that any one person held considerable influence in the county. Somewhat unimpressed, stated, “Well ok, if we're out here looking at someone who's just exercising power it would be (Rob)
Arkley. Is there a result? Yeah, a little bit. The sun still comes up in the same place though.” Another interviewee, Tom, a heavy political player with intimate connections to Rob and Chery Arkley stressed that their contribution to the community is extremely positive, sighting their commitment to improving the community.

…the Arkley's did the zoo, and that's a huge project. They spent a couple of million dollars, and they got it done and it's beautifully done, and effective and good for everyone. It's what I was talking about earlier about the public good… the Co-op building down here is really neat, doing the Art Center here down on 5th Street. In the Swaze Building, he's putting in a new Art Center there. Doing it all with his own money so.

Tom continually supported the idea that people should work towards accomplishing common goals despite any differences of opinion on other issues between individuals. He also discouraged litigation because stopping projects was “not his idea of progress” and stated that “money to the attorneys doesn't go to the project.” However, he later acknowledged that everyone is in favor of accomplishing positive projects in the community, but obviously, there are differences of opinion about the merit of any given project.

In comparing Tom’s beliefs with those who see the Arkleys as a threat, there are clear implications about the role of individual freedom in community politics. Tom views these impacts as extremely positive; the implication being that an individual citizen’s commitment to improving his community through time and money is commendable. To those who see many of these actions as at odds with their own community vision and the visions of most of Humboldt’s citizenry such powers are viewed as antidemocratic. The Arkleys clearly enjoy considerable support as well as considerable opposition.
Power as a Fluctuating Dynamic

Interviews took place both before and after the November 2006 elections. Elected positions were seen as highly influential, and the loss of an elected position was significant to that individual's power base. While the election created a significant challenge to understanding a stable, point in time, power structure, it provided a valuable opportunity to view changing landscapes of community power within an election cycle. Two interviewees suggested that individuals who lost their public office significantly lost their power as community leaders. Alex Stillman was once Mayor of Arcata, stayed active in the community, and is now on the Arcata City Council. Although, one interviewee in a prominent elected position told me he wouldn't admit it to anyone, but that," he had no idea who Alex Stillman was before she ran for City Council."

This same informant also went into detail about the fate of those incumbents who lose re-election.

...you know Dave Meserve was a big noise over there in Arcata for quite a while. He was national news, he was here, he was there, he had an opinion about everything from warts to the nuclear war. And I guarantee you something, Dave Meserve is joined into the ranks of anonymity this morning, nobody gives a damn about Dave Meserve this morning. So that's how these political things can go. Nobody is going to call, nobody is going to call, nobody cares. Wheetly and Stillman, yep, there they are. They're at the top of the pile.

The idea that individual power shifts significantly based on elected position supports theories of bureaucratic power. This election theme, though not expressed directly by the informant, is part of a larger debate regarding the influence existing structures have on the community versus the power of individuals to influence change.
Ricky depicts confidence that elected positions are influential. His belief could be seen as part of the general conviction that structure and bureaucracy is a, or perhaps the, primary influence that shapes our lives. As laws, organizational regulations, and economic structures change the universe of potential actions are transformed. Matt described how power has shifted through economic diversity and new bureaucratic entities over the last few decades.

The lumber companies are relatively weak because they have less money and fewer employees, but they’re still a presence… what’s happening now is that as the lumber industry has declined a lot larger fraction of the employment is government. HSU or College of the Redwoods or various county agencies… So the governmental center has just become increasingly powerful locally, and people associated with the governmental sector. I’m relatively part of the governmental sector in that I work for a non-profit affiliate of HSU.

Analysis and Conclusions

Interviewees made compelling arguments based on their own sphere of influence, priorities, vision of community, and overall knowledge about Humboldt County. Most were skeptical of their ability to name the most influential individuals, as well as the likelihood they would repeat the same information in another session. These discussions require a confrontation regarding the general definition of power and the importance of some processes over others, which is inherently connected to depictions of power within communities. In this study I have focused on political, activist, and particular civic realms of power over associations dealing with the arts and humanities.

Although the research findings convey a high degree of reliability, interview content did not reach theoretical saturation. The study used only a small sample of Humboldt County actives. Although the amount of overlapping themes and perspectives
was encouraging, some themes and perspectives were not repeated, and would require additional probing to reach saturation.

It is difficult to compare the overall influence of particular individuals within diverse spheres of influence. While the opinions of media personalities may circulate throughout the community, it is unclear how influential their voices are on processes in Humboldt County, or how their influence should be compared with political representatives, city staff, organizational leaders, or other individuals exercising substantial power within the community. One possibility for future research would be to limit the scope of study to understand only one or two influence spheres. Should a study focus on a single influence sphere such as environmental activism, timber, charitable organizations, community performance art etc. samples might reach theoretical saturation.

Sample quality could also be improved by a larger interview sample. A great deal of the researcher’s time was spent transcribing interviews (approximately 120 hours). Either out of convenience, or to accomplish a larger project either another researcher or an intern might be used to transcribe interviews. Such collaborative efforts might also improve analysis since more ideas would be generated utilizing less busy work.

Once interviews were transcribed the qualitative N-Vivo software used was an effective organizational tool. Interviews were analyzed by organizing multiple interview segments from several interviewees by theme. The qualitative analysis tools offered by N-Vivo as well as similar software packages provide rich and diverse forms of analysis. These tools: particularly the implementation of more tree nodes, displays and analysis of
relationships between people, data query, and graphical models could be utilized more prominently in future studies.
This chapter will discuss the results of this study as they relate to social demographic variables that influence community power. The aim of this project was to understand influence in Humboldt County by understanding which factors create diversity within a power structure. The Clark typology (1968) as relied upon by Bearbower (2000) has been utilized for this purpose. The quantitative results of this case study will be presented and discussed to analyze these hypotheses. This thesis will then offer conclusions and recommendations for further research. Clark’s theory, as discussed in the literature review, will now be analyzed along with Humboldt County’s social and demographic variables to understand the community’s power structure.

Demographic Data

As acknowledged earlier, Humboldt County is defined as a rural community. Its city centers are far from a rural village, but are certainly not a large metropolitan area. It contains only 35 persons per square mile compared to the states overall density of 217.2 persons per square mile (Census 2006). About half of Humboldt residents live in unincorporated areas; the other half reside in its major cities: Blue Lake, Arcata, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad with the majority of the incorporated population living in the tri city McKinleyville, Arcata and Eureka area.
Therefore we should expect a median degree of secular activity, individualistic community, as well as a median degree of variation in the division of labor. The populations of major cities are likely to have more control over county decisions since a more condensed population lends itself to greater mobilization and education. Since Humboldt County has a relatively diverse blend of city structures that are spread out over a considerable geographic area, it is difficult to make predictions about an overall power structure. The knowledgeable informants interviewed tended to have a great deal of information on certain geographic subsections and influence groups, but were still unaware of many goings on.

Table 1. Humboldt County’s Historical and Projected Population Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arcata</td>
<td>15,211</td>
<td>16,651</td>
<td>18,180</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Lake</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eureka</td>
<td>27,025</td>
<td>26,128</td>
<td>28,870</td>
<td>29,830</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferndale</td>
<td>1,331</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna</td>
<td>8,788</td>
<td>10,497</td>
<td>12,560</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Dell</td>
<td>2,997</td>
<td>3,174</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated</td>
<td>56,949</td>
<td>59,278</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As of 2006 Humboldt County had a population of 128,330 with a growth rate of 1.4% from April 2001 to July 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau). This is a relatively slow growth rate in comparison to California’s overall 7.6% growth rate for the same period. In fact, from 1969 to 2006 Humboldt County’s population only grew at an average annual rate of 0.73%. Clark’s theory suggests that this lower growth rate should have created less pluralism in Humboldt County’s power structure than California as a whole; as existing power structures should have had time to solidify whereas few new groups would have formed to compete with the established power structure.
Based on Clark’s (1968) theory, Bearbower’s findings and demographic data from 2000 we can predict that the power structure has changed very little in the last several years; however the power structure probably changed considerably from 1940 to 1950 and from 1950 to 1960 when community populations jumped significantly. The researcher is not aware of any community power studies of this time to test this hypothesis. Nonetheless, it has been shown that significant population increase tend to create power diversity (Clark 1968).

Figure 1. Graph of Population of Humboldt County 1930 to present

(U.S. Census Bureau 2006)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>43,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>45,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>69,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>104,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>99,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>108,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>119,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>126,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>128,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Numerical Population Growth of Humboldt County Since 1930

(Significant Population Jump in Bold Print)
(U.S. Census Bureau 2006)

The third variable to consider is diversity. As far as cultural diversity, both variation in the racial and age makeup of a community will be likely to affect the power structure of the county. As of 2006, Humboldt County was comprised of 80% white non-Hispanic with 6% American Indian, 7.7% Hispanic or Latino origin and 6.3% of the population being of other or mixed origin (Census 2006). At the same time, California as a whole was comprised of only 43.1% white non-Hispanic origin and 56.9% minority populations (Census 2006). Of those minorities in Humboldt County, only 4.5% of individuals were foreign born vs. 26.2% in California as a whole (Census 2006). Based on the findings of previous research (Bonacich 1972) this researcher believes that the minority population distribution might be due to Humboldt’s lack of industry and scale of opportunity. In contrast, immigrants in other areas of California migrate to fill voids in the cheap labor market throughout California, and technical markets within Southern California and Silicon Valley.
The lack of minorities in general, despite the obvious presence of a significant Native American population, suggests that Humboldt County is unlikely to have an overbearing minority presence within the power structure. In order for this power diversity to shift the ethnic population would need to be diversified (Clark 1968). The individual power rankings from this study support that Humboldt County lacks a strong minority presence in the power structure which does not support even its twenty percent stake holding. None of the eleven knowledgeable informants interviewed were minorities. This lack of interview diversity was based on the individuals identified by the initial list provided by informants. If interviews were conducted with Native American leaders from local tribes such as the Hoopa more diverse leadership results might be expected to reflect a more diverse population (Clark 1968).

As far as the age distribution of the county, 20.8% of Humboldt County’s population is under 18 years of age, 12.6% of its population is over sixty five, and 66.6% are non-senior adults compared with 26.1% under 18, 10.8% senior, and 63.1% adult non-senior in the rest of California. There is less age diversity as a whole compared with all of California and the rest of the United States. However, the county’s lack of age diversity predicts more robust power diversity since adult and senior populations are more likely to participate in community processes than younger populations (Putnam 2000). It is also apparent that Humboldt County has a considerably weighted number of non-profit organizations for such a low population, which should contribute positively to quality of life and power diversity in Humboldt.
The county’s economic diversity has improved over the last several decades-easing away from an early and mid 20th century economy centered on lumber production. In the 1950’s around half of working residents were employed by the lumber industry (Dickerson, Kittleson, Ruprecht, Circa 1963). However, a major shift has taken place over the ensuing decades as shown in the 2006 Census figures. Farming, fishing and forestry occupations create the livelihoods of only 2.7% of residents in Humboldt County in 2006.

Although significant, and the source of many high paying jobs, the timber industry is no longer the cultural, political, and economic giant of the past. The significance of this key economic contrast cannot be underestimated as it pertains to Humboldt’s power structure. Wealth- old money- from traditional Humboldt County forest and fishing industries continues to influence local policy and elections e.g. the unsuccessful recall of District Attorney Paul Gallegos (2004); debates over infrastructure and railroad access for port development on Humboldt Bay Marina Project.
As the lumber industry’s economic significance has diminished, industries which gained in economic significance should have gained more social and decisional clout as well. Therefore, the lumber industry should have less influence over the community than in the last several decades leading up to 2000. However, based on the anecdotal reflections of our informants farming may have stayed constant or even gained a small amount of influence from 2000 to 2006. Therefore, if farming data was able to be disaggregated from forestry and fishing it is likely that the decline in forestry and fishing might become more evident. Nevertheless, by comparing industry figures of the two time periods we can test the prediction that the county’s economic power base likely changed very little over the period.

Three industry groups stayed relatively consistent: 1) management, professional and related occupations, 2) farming fishing and forestry occupations, and 3) construction,
extraction and maintenance occupations. In contrast, service occupations, sales and office occupations expanded 2.3% and 3.1% respectively. Thus, we should expect businesses and business owners involved in these industries would have gained community influence. (However, our study did not focus on business leadership enough to definitively measure these changes in power.) Production, transportation and material occupations changed most significantly—being cut by about a third, and dropping to 8.7% of the labor force. These changes mirror the overall changes in the United States economy, bowing to international market pressures and yielding domestic manufacturing jobs to cheaper overseas labor (Stiglitz 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional and related occupations</td>
<td>17,470</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Occupations</td>
<td>10,859</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Office Occupations</td>
<td>13,780</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupinations</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>4,856</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>6,995</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. 2000 Employed Civilian Population by Occupation (16 years +)
(U.S. Census Fact Finder, 2006)

Before analyzing the data several hypotheses were made based on Clark’s theory. First, we have hypothesized that the relatively small size of Humboldt County, its rural layout and low population growth since 2000 has lead to slow and relatively
homogeneous changes in leadership over the past six years. Such slow change has been relatively constant within Humboldt's history, with the exception of a few boom and bust cycles following the patterns of the larger U.S. economy e.g. the 1940’s population boom mentioned or the great depression. We also predict population growth in the community is likely to remain low and economic diversity is likely to continue on a steady pace favoring the service market, mimicking the overall U.S. economy. Therefore, we should expect that leadership distributions are unlikely to change dramatically in the next few years.

Second, we have hypothesized that even though Clark’s theory encourages the opposite hypothesis, leadership in Humboldt County will not proportionately reflect the minority population of the county. We make this prediction based on initial feedback from inquires within Arcata and Eureka. It is also hypothesized that Hoopa and other Native American groups have their own distinct leadership circles, and had interviews been scheduled in other places besides Eureka, Arcata and Fortuna, results might have differed considerably. The impact of Indian Gaming on the power structure might prove significant if data were available.

Our final hypothesis is that the prevalent city manager government format found in Humboldt’s municipalities will encourage diversity in power structure. It is also predicted that local leadership will have significant interactions with representatives from state and federal government. These interactions are particularly relevant for lower income counties such as Humboldt County which benefit greatly from state and federal programs. In addition, we have predicted that local elected representatives will be
significantly involved in the pyramidal structure, with a significant number of elected officials among Humboldt County’s most influential individuals.

Findings and Humboldt’s Most Influential Individuals and Organizations

The following list was developed using the qualitative data from this study. The rank and point totals of influential individuals are expressed below. This data shows the perception that a significantly disproportionate level of power exists within Humboldt County.

Humboldt County’s Most Influential Individuals

1. Rob Arkley  81
2. John Wooly  33
3. Bonnie Neely  30
4. Dave Meserve  21
5. Rodger Rodoni  20
6. Cherie Arkley  18
7. Alex Stillman  15
8. Julie Fulkerson  15
9. Richard Salzman  15
10. Harvey Harper  9
11. Kris Kerrigan  9
12. Peter LaVallee  9
13. Cathy Moxen  9
14. Mike Thompson  9
15. Arnold Schwarzenegger  8
16. Peter Pennekamp  8
17. John Campbell  6
In order to test our hypothesis that leadership distributions will have undergone relatively small changes within the last few years we need to compare our data with a previous study using the reputational method. Jerome Bearbower’s (2000) study of Humboldt County’s leadership distribution is an excellent comparison because of its similar methodology utilizing the reputational method. However, only individual leadership distributions can be compared since the organizational and qualitative components of our study were not present in Bearbower’s thesis.

Out of a possible twenty-five matches, ten individuals appeared on both the 2000 and 2006 list of most powerful influentials. Another eight were recognized by the researcher as current community leaders who had been mentioned in some capacity during the interview processes, but did not make our current list of most powerful individuals. It is extremely likely that had a larger sample size been used it would have yielded more matches. In any case it appears, at the very least, half of those individuals highlighted in 2000 remain in active leadership roles.
There are at least two important factors which need to be considered in reconciling these findings with our predictions and Clark’s (1968) framework. First, is the likelihood those additional leaders from the 2000 list who did not show up on our 2006 list would have surfaced with further examination. That is, they are still leaders of considerable influence who were not mentioned in interviews. Second, is whether these changes in leadership constitute a significant change in power and influence processes for the Humboldt community; or whether it is merely a small change in figureheads. The individual power rankings from Bearbower's 2000 study are below.

Most Powerful Individuals Bearbower 2000 study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bonnie Neely</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Wes Chesbro</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>John Woolley</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mike Thompson</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Stan Dixon</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rob Arkley</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Julie Fulkerson</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kathy Moxen</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Virginia Strom-Martin</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sally Arnot</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Roger Rodoni</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tom McMurray</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Nancy Flemming</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Paul Kirk</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Louis Bucher</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Peter Pennikamp</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Casey Crabill</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Connie Stewart</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Jack McKellar</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dale Neiman</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Phil Nyberg</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Patty Berg</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>John Murray</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Tim McKay</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ann Lindsay</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Liz Murguia</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ted Mason</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Libby Maynard</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Harvey Rose</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>George Schmidbauer</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>John Campbell</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>John Corbett</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Jimmy Smith</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Walt Giacomini</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Cherie Arkley</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Dennis Lewis</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Michael Fields</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jim Brown</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Connie Miller</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Bill Pierson</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>John Dalby</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to the 2000 and 2006 lists there has been some significant change in the county’s leadership. Without further exploration there is no way of knowing if these
changes reflect substantial changes in power; or only changes in individuals which represent similar interest groups. After all, an organization may have changed presidents several times, but that change does not necessarily alter its decisions, direction, and overall influence on the community. Leaders may have spurred movements that then carried on without them, or at least without their previously intense level of commitment. Therefore, it will be useful to look at the characteristics of those leaders identified to understand if any real change has taken place in Humboldt’s power structure. For instance, Tim McKay passed on, but the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) is still very active in the community.

In the 2000 study fourteen leaders were women and twenty-eight were men. Twenty-three represented government elected officials and/or politicians and appointed/elected organizational directors within important governmental bureaucracies. Eleven were from the business community and a remaining seven represented local non-profits (Bearbower, 2000).

In contrast, in 2006 only five of the top twenty-five leaders were women, while twenty of the influentials identified were men. Ten of these leaders were government officials, five were from the business community and ten were from community leaders not associated with the for profit business community. Some leaders were recognized as both economic players and community organizers and were categorized based on what they were best known for.

Two important shifts have happened. First, many of the very top leaders are women while there appears to be less female leadership overall. There also appears to be
more grass roots community leadership that is not directly affiliated with government or business interests. The charts below show individual power players by sector of influence. The higher up in the rankings, the more X’s given. The top ten individuals influence; the next ten received two (XX); and the remaining individuals and organizations a single X to delineate their perceived power in the community. Although an equal number of government officials and non-business community leaders appear on the study’s list of influentials, the study’s reputational method ranked government officials higher in terms of their ability to influence. The degree to which elected officials represent the interests of a majority of their citizenry is a positive sign for diversity within the power structure. Overall, our initial hypothesis following Clark’s theory seems to be accurate. Humboldt County appears to have undergone low to moderate change in its community power structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humboldt’s Power Structure/Individuals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</table>
Based on our study’s inquiries, our second hypothesis is also true. Although we did not attempt a scientific determination of the race of those on our community power list (asking how they identified their own race), all the individuals on the community power list that the researcher has met personally or seen in the media are Caucasian. There is a low percentage of minorities in Humboldt County and it appears that there is an even lower percentage of minorities represented in individual leadership.

As stated previously, this study’s questions and research were directed at Humboldt County as a whole. However, since only one interview took place with a resident who lived outside Eureka or Arcata this may have biased the sample and therefore our informants’ perceptions of leadership distributions. More interviews in Hoopa and Fortuna might have yielded more equitable results since these areas are more heavily populated with minorities than Eureka and Arcata. Despite this objection, our current data shows that Humboldt County falls short of Clark’s prediction that minority leadership diversity will be proportionate to the community’s percentage of minority
population. As mentioned earlier, a larger, more geographically diverse sample might have yielded more equitable results; however, it may also be true that Humboldt County does not in fact contain equitable levels of ethnic diversity in its power structure. The power structure reflected in this study primarily used interviews from Eureka and Arcata. This may be more closely representative of Eureka and Arcata and not of Humboldt County’s population as a whole.

Our third and final prediction was that the city government format would increase diversity and that government officials would play a prominent role in leadership. As far as political entities go, the Board of Supervisors was seen as particularly influential reaching the top ranking of all organizations in the county. Its members sit on various community committees that serve the duality of making important decisions and staying informed of community goings on. Board members were also mentioned for their longevity within the community, and their ability to be diplomatic decision makers.

Government leaders had the strongest weighted presence within the County, with slightly more influence than non-business community leaders. However, in many cases their power may be transient. Seated politicians reside on many boards and make crucial decisions about community processes, and once unseated, they may not have the political clout, knowledge, will or connections to remain a powerful force within the community. Nonetheless, many do remain in the same elected positions for many years or even decades.

There were also a number of governmental organizations which were mentioned several times in interviews, yet were not used in direct response when interviews were
asked to rank influence. For instance, the Coastal Commission was mentioned as particularly influential in the decision over what would happen with the waterfront in Eureka. However, informants did not feel the Coastal Commission deserved to be ranked highly within the overall power structure. Such responses support the idea that power is more diverse than the list of influential organizations would indicate. Informants also mentioned several Chambers of Commerce, but when asked to narrow it down to a particular location they chose the Eureka Chamber of Commerce.

The city manager format implemented in Humboldt’s cities was mentioned several times as a factor contributing to balance within city planning as well as city and county councils. Out of necessity, city managers are required to sustain a level of neutrality, or risk being replaced if council members believe that they are carrying out biased practices. Based on the perceptions of our informants, the thesis hypothesis that the city manager format will foster balance within the county is supported.

Unlike individual power holders, we cannot compare Humboldt’s 2006 organizational power structure with previous years. Nevertheless, much can be gained by understanding what kinds of organizations appear on our list. As mentioned in the qualitative section above, four are from the business community, four are from government, two are media organizations, and fifteen are other neighborhood organizations including non-profits. While none are primarily focused on the rights of labor or minorities Humboldt County does have a larger number of non-governmental organizations per capita than most communities. This is encouraging both because of the sheer plethora of organizations, as well as the apparent diversity of influence sectors.
these organizations represent. Based on the studies findings, a list of Humboldt’s most influential organizations can be seen below.

Humboldt’s Most Influential Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>North Coast Environmental Center</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Security National</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Humboldt State University</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Humboldt Area Foundation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Humboldt Economic Land Planning</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Eureka Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Local Solutions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Redwood Community Action Agency</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Democratic Central Committee</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Coastal Commission</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Democracy Unlimited</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Arcata City Council</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Eureka City Council</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Times Standard</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>College of the Redwoods</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Danco Construction Company</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Eureka Heritage Society</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Eureka Reporter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>League of Women Voters</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Morris Graves</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Redwood Coast Energy Authority</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tax Payers League</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As depicted in the chart below, three fifths of the influential organizations identified by this study were neighborhood and/or non-profit organizations. Such diversification does not automatically apply a mandate to the interests of average community citizens. In the opinion of the researcher, this is true for at least two reasons. First, the goals and actions of a community organization may not benefit a majority of its citizenry. Secondly, even though they have less representation numerically, business organizations are weighted more heavily in Humboldt’s power structure.

Humboldt’s Power Structure/Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Minorities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

When all of these various organizations are weighted for their perceived influence there is little effect on the community power structure; since weighted patterns are roughly proportionate to non-weighted patterns. However, it is of some interest that three
out of four businesses were mentioned in the first tier of influence while the only government entity to achieve this was the Board of Supervisors. It is also of interest that three out of four business interests were directly involved in land development issues which may or may not be related to the recent attention paid to the Marina Project.

Redevelopment issues have been and continue to be a prominent topic that generates heated debate in Humboldt County. They appear to be at the forefront of a great deal of business, environmental, government and non-business impacts. These affect a plethora of public interests including issues of: economic growth, historic preservation, and community space.

Security National, the third most powerful organization on the list, is intimately involved in these issues. Its core business is purchasing and servicing distressed residential and small commercial mortgages and its servicer quality rating has recently been downgraded by Moody’s Investor Services (Jackson, 2008). Its struggles, along with the recent economic downturn may create significant implications for Humboldt’s power structure since financing may be less available. It is noteworthy that Security National is owned by Rob Arkley, who easily attained the top spot on our list of influential individuals.
According to Clark (1968) communities can be placed into one of four power structure categories:

(1) **pyramidal**- a monolithic, monopolistic, or single cohesive leadership group;
(2) **factional**- at least two durable factions that compete for advantage;
(3) **coalitional**- leadership varies with issues and is made up of fluid coalitions of interested persons and groups;
(4) **amorphous**- the absence of any persistent pattern of leadership or power exercised on the local level. (Clark 1968; 445).

The findings of this study discredit the idea that Humboldt County has a pyramidal or amorphous community power structure. However, whether Humboldt should be considered factional or coalitional is debatable. In a factional model, the two factions could be deemed liberal and conservative, though these identifiers have their limitations. The conservative coalition incorporates pro-development, growth, non-local,
corporate factions, and considerable individualism. The liberal coalition incorporates environmental protectionism, sustainability, local rights, and prioritizes the public will over individual rights.

The other option, in choosing from Clark’s power structure categories, is that Humboldt has a coalitional power structure. Narratives of fluidity and project specificity were strongly represented by the informant sample. These findings support the idea that power in Humboldt County is made up of fluid coalitions of interested person and groups. Though personal ideologies limit the types of coalitions that occur, almost any two given people can find at least some cause they are willing to agree upon. Based on the findings of this study, Humboldt’s community power influentials have a myriad of interests. Therefore, the researcher has some preference for explaining Humboldt County as a coalitional community power structure.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

At its first level of conception, the possibilities of a study focused on Humboldt County’s power structure appear endless; it quickly became obvious that certain preferences would need to be supported over others. These preferences provide several points of reflection based on the limitations, details, and depth facilitated by methodological choices. It is no surprise that no researcher can do a thoroughly exhaustive study that can take into account all dimensions of all forms of power. Theoretical assumptions have been made and discussed when necessary, and methodological limitations acknowledged as needed: limitations of size, scope and time, as well as limitations of the reputational method.

The lists of powerful organizations and individuals produced herein do not constitute an infallible, extensive, or exhaustive gateway into the power dynamics of Humboldt County. Much is left to be desired in the ability to understand how influence processes happen, as well as how tiered leadership in Humboldt County actually is. Adding components aimed at understanding the organizational structures, as well as individual informant narratives about power, provided context for understanding the individual power list.

As mentioned earlier, in the opinion of this researcher and others (Dahl 1961; Polsby 1980), there are concerns about the reputational method to adequately depict how tiered a power structure is. The reputational method selects a finite number of leaders
based on the opinions of informants. There is always the risk that informant opinions will lack an understanding of key subtleties in the power structure, and leave off or add on leaders who do or do not deserve recognition. There is also a danger that interviewers may bias results or forgo the ability to compare and contrast information based on follow up questions.

In this study there was the logical tendency for informant answers to bring up cognitive links with associated individuals or organizations. In this way individuals who were prominent in the current stream of discussion were favored over individuals who had not been precipitously mentioned. When the researcher asked follow up questions about the relative power of individuals or organizations, informants sometimes modified their answers. This provided clarity and useful elements for comparison, yet biased informant answers.

Another substantial view about power which was acknowledged by this thesis was the power of bureaucracy: governmental, business as well as other organizations. Bureaucratic power may be equally or more significant than the actions of either organizations or individuals offering incremental changes (Collins 1994). This is because bureaucratic power significantly confines the universe of possible outcomes, especially over a short period of time. Delimitations of bureaucratic action include: civil service job protection, public employee unions, and the power implications inherent to day-to-day implementation of policy. This is another area that requires further research.

As a concrete example, the battle around Humboldt’s Marina project involves zoning- a bureaucratic obstacle that needs to be addressed in order to implement a private
project. On a daily basis, individuals and organizations must base their actions on law and other bureaucratic structure including tax implications and building regulations that are relatively constant (inheritance tax, non-profit status, building codes, state and federal programs, etc.). Thus, although these structures often provide possibilities for change, they can also erect significant obstacles to changes individuals and organizations wish to encourage. Emanuel Durkheim believed that the more in line a person’s beliefs with prevailing society the more freedom they possessed (Colins 1994). Future research might find it useful to test how bureaucratic obstacles affect the ability of individuals and organizations to make the changes they desire.

Another possibility for future research is network analysis. A network analysis is a map of the social structure designed to outline the relationships that lie between and directly or indirectly connect actors (Knoke and Yang 2007). These analyses include who has connections to whom, what these relationships consist of, and the empirical measurement and quantification of the strengths of such ties. Network analysis, however, is not a theory in itself; it is a method of analysis which could be molded to suite the needs of various methodologies. Given this reality, it has a wide range of applications and has been utilized to justify many views about social structures. In regard to studying community power it will be useful to keep in mind that large scale analysis of this kind is difficult, and that it might be most beneficial to study smaller groups such as businesses, organizations, as well as the financing and rationality of political networks. One idea for such a map might contain a conceptual triangulation of economic elites, political leaders, and significant organizations.
In addition, it is strongly recommended by this thesis that future research accommodates a larger sample size to strengthen the study’s findings; or that the project’s scope is significantly curtailed. One suggestion for limiting this scope would be to use an interview guide that shortened the length of informant responses. This could be done either by asking fewer questions or limiting informant’s response time. In the alternative, the qualitative format could be abandoned altogether in favor of a quantitative survey method (as used in Bearbower’s 2000 study). A classic reputational study of Humboldt County was undertaken in 1990 by Jerry Krause at Humboldt State University. This methodology was implemented by an entire class. Another well organized class project might solve such dilemmas of scope and depth.

Another alternative would be to modify the study’s focus to concentrate on particular sectors of power. These findings could be used for political action or to increase the involvement of citizens who wish to broaden their community participation. Such research could be used to justify grants, or to advertise particular sub populations who might be interested in living or going to school in Humboldt County.

Democrat struggle

As discussed previously, the researcher believes ideas of community power are intimately connected to the proliferation of democracy. With that in mind, it is important to note that in the final analysis community power is a commentary about equality and the ability for individuals to reach their goals and aspirations; and in some cases their basic survival needs. About two thirds of countries claim to be democracies (Crick
2002). Given such vague criteria, regimes can easily cloak themselves in pseudo
democratic rhetoric or democratic titles that are unrelated to freedom, equality or even
forms of popular majority rule (Crick 2002).

In discussing community power it is logical to ask what a community’s system of
democratic governance entails and how it preserves the integrity of the lives of its
citizens. Without such expressions of democratic voice, average citizens would gradually
loose their right and ability to influence many processes of political and social
governance (West 2004). It is also useful to note that for centuries, dating back to at least
the time of Plato and Socrates, theorists debated the limits ordinary citizens had in
controlling their own governmental affairs. Plato, for instance, believed that the rule of
the masses was the rule of opinion over fact and of emotion over reason (Crick 2002).

In very clear ways, theorists have suggested that a passive, inert, ambivalent,
apathetic, or ignorant citizenry does not deserve to govern, and cannot adequately
function as a participatory democracy. The public indictment of political philosophy
resonates at the very core of the democratic vision; it is a vision which rests on equality
through participation. Given these dynamics, continued commitments to citizen
participation and education which encourage equality are pivotal.

Understanding Humboldt County’s Power Structure

Humboldt’s inhabitants are concerned about many issues which have mutually
reinforcing and sometimes counter intuitive suppositions. The counterbalance between
economic growth, historic preservation, environmental cleanliness and the preservation
of public spaces are paramount. Therefore, this thesis finds that the questions involved in this counterbalance are substantive. Further research may offer insights into how such concerns are being structured, organized and mobilized as well as provide further details into the actions of top community influentials.

As mentioned in the analysis section, Humboldt’s power structure can be described as either *factional* or *coalitional*. The study’s findings suggest that there are clear dividing lines with regard to contemporary visions as well as the future of Humboldt County. The idea of an *Arkley Camp* and individuals vehemently opposed to the visions this group represents was palpable in most interviews.

Just how organized and cohesive such a group is, as well as the degree to which the Arkleys are a figurehead, as opposed to a heavy mobilizing force of leadership, warrants further attention. This is especially true since many important questions within the field of community power proliferate around the idea of elite social cohesion (Domhoff 1982) in that shared values, objectives, and concerns are major causes of policy cohesion (Domhoff 1978, 1998, 2002). The idea of *old money* or a *good old boy network* was mentioned by multiple informants. Its role, meaning how deep, pronounced, cohesive, and ultimately influential such a group might be in Humboldt County also remains a question for further research.

There are communities which contain drastic and debilitating power differentials such as in the Appalachian Mountains, and the County of Dahlia on the Mississippi Delta (Duncan 1999). These communities have pyramidal power structures which lack the rich civic culture necessary for the poor to escape poverty (Duncan 1999). In contrast,
the number of organizations and network connections found in Humboldt County encourage its civic culture and potential for equality. There appear to be significant efforts to mobilize, educate and connect Humboldt’s citizenry. Therefore, while there is still substantial poverty and inequality within Humboldt County, our findings are cautiously optimistic about Humboldt’s current and future power structure.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KNOWLEDGABLE INFORMANTS

Part I: Background Information

1. Name

2. Occupation
   (elaborate)

3. What are your principle memberships and activities in the community (include civic engagements, committee and organizational memberships, and how many hours you spend on each per week.)
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

4. Sex (check)
   female  male

5. What is your age (check)
   under 25  45-54
   25-34  55-64
   35-44  over 64 years old

6.a. How long have you lived in Humboldt County?

6.b. If you were not born in Humboldt County why did you come? If you stayed here why did you stay?

   Educational background (check)
less than high school
high school graduate
attended college
college graduate
attended graduate school
graduate degree (specify)

Part II: Ranking of Community Leaders
Place in rank order, 1 through 10, those individuals who most influence public opinion in Humboldt County. Why? How are they connected to politics and organizations? Where does their power come from?

1. .
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10.

Place in rank order, 1 through 10, those organizations who most influence public opinion in Humboldt County. Why? How are they connected to politics and other organizations? Where does their power come from?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10.
10. If a project were before the community that required a decision by a group of individuals or organizations, which 4 could 'put it over'? (Who are the most effective at initiating and competing projects.)

   **Leaders  Organizations**

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

11. Name the 4 most effective individuals and organizations at stopping projects.

   **Leaders  Organizations**

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

12. Name the individual and organization who has the most power in the county.

   **Individual  Organization**

13. Name the individual and organization who exercises the most power in the county.

   **Individual  Organization**

14. Which organizations, if they came out against your project, would you be worried about?
16) If you believe there are competing organizations and visions of power in Humboldt County, what are they? How do you label them? Do you believe this vision is static or changing?
    1)  
    2)  
    3)  
    4)  
    5)  

17) Of the ones you have just listed, which organizations/visions do you most align with? Explain.

18) What do you believe Humboldt County's greatest strengths and greatest challenges will be in the next few years?

19) If a project were before the community that you wanted to 'put over,' what people and organizations would you personally and/or your organization pair with?
    You  Your Organization  
    1)  
    2)  
    3)  
    4)  
    5)  

20) Please include any further information or thoughts regarding community power, leadership, ties etc. that you feel would benefit this study?
APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

Hello! You have been identified for this project as a knowledgeable informant regarding the distribution of leadership in Humboldt County. Before we begin the questionnaire interview, however, it is important that we first establish some basic guidelines. First, if you have any questions regarding this investigation or the procedures utilized at any time, please feel free to ask. Also, since your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, if for any reason you do not feel comfortable with either continuing with the interview process or with answering specific questions, please remember that you have the right to refuse.

Furthermore, official guidelines regarding the use of human subjects in research require that any potential risks associated with this project be openly discussed before interviews begin. Although the risks of this project are minimal, there is a remote possibility that the identity of an interview subject could be made public. However, at no time will subjects be identified by name or in any other way that may connect them to specific interview questions and/or information. In the event that a specific interviewee is mentioned a pseudonym will be used, and characteristics that might identify the individual will be avoided. In addition the researcher will take the precaution burning all interview materials after our research has been concluded.

These procedures will be conducted at the following location(s):
Subject’s workplace, HSU campus, or an agreed upon public meeting place.

Research procedures will take the following amount of time:
Usually questionnaire interviews take anywhere from one half hour to one hour.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact the researcher (mdblackhurst@gmail.com), or Dr. Betsy Watson (826-5421) at any time.

Thank-you sincerely for your participation!

_____________________________________
Signature

_____________________________________
Date