

## THE SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN MORONG, RIZAL

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Persons involved in the study of elites are generally divided into two categories: those who maintain that society is dominated by a single, multifunctional elite, and those who argue that a number of elites co-exist, share power and responsibilities and enjoy the advantages that power brings. The primary concern of the earlier writers on the topic was on the theoretical considerations underlying each of these two major divisions of elite study.<sup>1</sup> The decades of the fifties and the sixties, however, ushered in a new emphasis on the study of elites and students focussed their attention on the search for a method that would best determine who constitute the community power elite. Largely responsible for this development was the publication in 1953 of Floyd Hunter's study of the community power structure in Regional City.<sup>2</sup> Using the reputational technique as the primary means of locating community leaders, Hunter's study generated questions on methodology<sup>3</sup> and further intensified the conflict between adherents of the multifunctional elite and competing elites theories. As a reaction to Hunter's study, dissenting political scientists came up with the pluralist alternative to the study of community power<sup>4</sup> thus triggering off an interdisciplinary debate between the followers of Hunter who subscribed to the idea of a multifunctional elite and the followers of the pluralist group who adhered to the idea that competing elites exist. Out of the raging controversy, numerous studies on community power were conducted and three major methods of determining who constitute the community power structure emerged.

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier studies on the topic are represented by the works of: Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill and Co., 1939); Vilfredo Pareto, *Mind and Society*, A Livingston, translator. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World 1935), Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1940). See also, Raymond Aron, "Social Structure and the Ruling Class," *British Journal of Sociology*, I, no. 1 (March, 1950), 1-17; I, no. 2 (June, 1950), 126-144.

<sup>2</sup> Floyd M. Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> For an interesting critique of the reputational technique, see Raymond Wolfinger, "Reputation and Reality in the Study of Community Power," *American Sociological Review*, XXV (October, 1960), 636-644. The value of this method, however, was emphasized by W. D'Antonio and E. Erickson in "The Reputational Technique as a Measure of Community Power," *American Sociological Review*, XXVIII (June, 1962) 363-376.

<sup>4</sup> An outstanding representative of the pluralist studies on community power is Robert Dahl's *Who Govern?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

The first of these three methods is the reputational which was utilized by Hunter. It assumes the "covertness" of power<sup>5</sup> — that power is exercised behind the scenes and therefore would be difficult to index directly. Followers of this method therefore assess the reputation for leadership through a series of nominations by "knowledgeables" of the community under study. As used by Hunter, this method started by procuring four lists of leaders from heads of civic organizations, professional and fraternal organizations, government personnel and business leaders and "society" and "wealth" personnel as suggested by various sources. These lists were then submitted to a panel of judges for ranking.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, there was a high degree of correlation among the judges and the result was a roster of 40 names representing the 10 highest scoring nominations from each list. The leaders were then asked to choose 10 from the basic list of 40 and asked to add names which they thought should be included. There was a high consensus regarding the top leaders on the list of 40 and an absence of concerted opinion on the other names which came up thus giving Hunter reason to conclude that the men interviewed at least represented the nucleus of a power grouping.

Despite the heavy criticism hurled against the reputational technique, it can be considered as a systematic step in studying community power and its initial success could be gauged in terms of its having been replicated in several communities.<sup>7</sup>

The second method of determining the community power structure assumes that power is acquired by virtue of a person's formal position in society. In other words, formal authority is equated with leadership. Known as the positional method, the investigator first outlines the relevant aspects of community power, locates the positions through which this power is exercised, and finally ascertains whether individuals in the top position in one sphere are the same as those occupying the top positions in the other spheres. While this method identifies the "powerful individuals" who hold formal positions, it leaves out those who do not occupy formal positions but nevertheless affect decisional outcomes. In a way, this method does not bring out the invisible leaders which the reputational method tries to get at. This

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<sup>5</sup> This "covertness of power" was a major point of criticism against the ruling elite arrived at through the reputational method. As Robert Dahl puts it, it is the principle of "infinite regress" in operation as covertness would require the never ending search for who is the real leader behind the perceived leaders. See Robert Dahl, "Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," *American Political Science Review*, LII (June, 1958), 463-469.

<sup>6</sup> Hunter, *op. cit.*, 61, 269.

<sup>7</sup> For elaborations or variations of Hunter's reputational technique, see Robert Agger, "Power Attributions in the Local Community," *Social Forces*, XXXIV (May, 1956), 322-331; George M. Belknap and Ralph Smuckler, "Political Power Relations in a Mid-West City," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XX (Spring, 1956), 73-81; Delbert Miller, "Decision-Making Cliques in Community Power Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIV (November, 1958), 299-310; Robert Shulze and Leonard Blumberg, "The Determination of Community Power Elites," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIII (November, 1957), 290-296.

method is not usually used as a sole means of determining community leadership but its value lies in the fact that it serves as a means of validating the findings arrived at through the use of other methods.

The third method is the alternative provided by the adherents of the pluralist group to the reputational method.<sup>8</sup> Better known as the decision-making approach, it is based on the assumption that active participation in the community decision-making process constitutes leadership. This method requires the selection of a set of community issues, problems and decisions which would provide a starting point in the location of participants in the decision-making process. The roles of the participants are then studied and those who affect the decisional outcomes are then subjected to further interviews regarding their involvement in the various stages of the decision-making process. While providing a measure of participation, this method is usually restricted to a few decisions whose impact on the community itself is at times subject to question. As argued by its proponents, however, this method brings out the actually powerful as against the reputational method's potentially powerful. After all, as the pluralist claim, the critical test of power is the ability to use it to attain the desired ends.

All these methods have been subjected to extensive criticisms and overlooked in the cloud of dust it petered is the fact that each method carries with it an underlying concept of leadership. While the debate has subsided and the dust have settled, there is no evidence that the concepts brought out in the controversy is clearly resolved. All these methods provide certain dimensions about leadership, but the question is: do the concepts of elite or leadership brought out by the three methods yield overlapping ideas of leadership? This study therefore is an attempt to show that the three concepts of leadership do overlap and a combination of the three methods of determining community power structure will yield overlapping sets of leaders in some instances and specialization in other areas such as reputation, position and decision-making.

For analytical purposes, the term *elite*, as used in this study, refers to a minority of individuals who possess all or most of the key values in society. This term will be used alternately with the term leader in this paper. *Key values*, on the other hand refer to wealth, power, social prestige, education, political position and economic resources. Needless to say, the systematic utilization of key values towards a given end has determinable consequences for the many members of society. *Power* is taken to mean the ability of men to move other men to act in relation to themselves or in relation to organic and inorganic things.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore viewed as a system of relationships. The definitions will also help us see the areas of overlap in the three concepts as well as in actual practice.

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<sup>8</sup> Proponents of this method were Robert Dahl, Nelson Polsby and Raymond Wolfinger.

<sup>9</sup> A similar definition was also used by Hunter in *Community Power Structure*. See page 3.

The data used for this paper is part of a larger study of community leadership in Morong, Rizal, a Tagalog municipality which is 45 kilometers from Manila.

## I. DETERMINING COMMUNITY LEADERS: BY REPUTATION

In the use of the reputational method, this study is interested in finding out two things: first, who the reputed leaders are, and second, whether the person nominating the leaders perceive reputational leadership to include dimensions not brought out by reputation methodology.

To determine who the reputed leaders are, a two part questionnaire was formulated. The first part was a modified version of the Shulze-Blumberg questionnaire which was used in determining community leaders in Cibola.<sup>10</sup> It also included questions which required the respondents to nominate those whom they think are generally influential, those whom they think are possible sources of help in the solution of their problems on employment, elections and relations with public officials. Part two of the questionnaire required the respondents to nominate whom they think are leaders in the broad categories of community activities: politics, economics and business and socio-civic work. The questionnaire was then administered to a citizen sample drawn through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The total number of citizens in the sample was 282 but only 276 responded. (The administration of the questionnaire to the ordinary citizen instead of a panel of "knowledgeables" was based on the assumption that if the influence of the individual is pervasive, then the ordinary citizen will perceive it). The responses yielded a total of 270 names nominated as leaders in the different activities specified in the questionnaire. Of the 270 persons in the list, 118 individuals were nominated only once and were consequently dropped from the list. Names receiving only one nomination were not included in the list of leaders. At least a person must be nominated in two activities or he must be nominated by two persons. The list was therefore pared down to include those who received two or more nominations. The pared list included 152 individuals out of which the top 20 per cent nominated (30 individuals) were considered for this study as the reputed leaders of the community. The number was further brought down to 29 as one of the leaders passed away before completion of the study.

To determine whether the ordinary citizens associate other dimensions of leadership with reputed leaders, a correlation test was made on 10 paired variables. The data indicated two sets of results: In one instance, reputed leaders were not associated with other dimensions, correlation between the 8 other paired variables ranged between 0 to .2 which indicated that the correlation was negligible. On the other hand two paired variables yielded

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Shulze and Leonard Blumberg, "The Determination of Community Power Elites," *American Journal of Sociology* LXIII (November, 1957), 290-296.

instances of association of reputational leadership with other factors (with  $r$  values of .442 and .495.) The  $r$  value of .442 was arrived at after correlating the number of nominations for every individual in response to the question: "In this municipality, there are those considered to be generally influential. Will you please nominate those whom you think are generally influential?" and to the question: "If you have any problem that has to do with your means of livelihood like getting a job, who are the persons you would approach to help you?" The  $r$  value of .495 on the other hand, was a result of correlating the number of nominations for every individual in response to the questions on general influence (see above) and the question: "If ever you want to run for public office, who are the persons you would approach for help in order that you may get better chances of winning?" In these two categories, the data showed evidence of association. The correlation test for the nominations in the economic and political activities yielded an  $r$  value of .016, thus indicating that the nominators or the ordinary citizens do not perceive association in these two activities. (This can be taken to mean that the ordinary citizens do not equate economic power with political power).

The presence or absence of correlation between nominated leaders and their role in the different spheres of activity and the fact that the questionnaire yielded quite a number of individuals who were nominated only once merit careful attention. First, it points to the fact that the reputational approach yields a set of "leaders" that may or may not be associated with those who possess key values. Second, assuming that leaders are associated with possession of key values they are not looked up to as a source of help. Although this study utilized a variant of the reputational method which required the ordinary citizens to nominate the leaders themselves as against the Hunter method of providing a list of leaders and asking a panel of judges to rank the leaders and at the same time to nominate others whom they felt were omitted in the list, the data shows clearly that while there are perceived "reputed" leaders, they cannot be treated to mean those group of people who are to be approached for help or guidance. In the conduct of the interview in Morong, it was found out that the respondents were always initially at a loss as to who to nominate for the various activities. At the same time, they found it difficult to see themselves in the hypothetical situations posed by the questions. At the outset, this study assumed that if leadership is pervasive, then the ordinary citizen will perceive it but it seems field experience showed that for the ordinary citizens to nominate, they must at least know the leaders by name. The preponderance of relatively new names raised two possibilities: first, it could be due to the fact that the ordinary citizens, either due to the absence or lack of participation in community activities do not really know who the leaders are, or, second, it could be in keeping with the

Filipino idea of having a middle man to mediate between the ordinary citizens and persons in positions of authority and represent the former's problems and needs to the latter. The persons therefore whom they nominated were those to whom they have easy access, and these people are usually their relatives, closest friends, neighbors or kin whom they usually approach.

On the basis of the findings arrived at through the use of the reputational method, there were thirty persons drawn up who were considered the reputed leaders. The data showed that in some cases, the perceptions of reputed leaders overlap while in others, they do not.

## II. DETERMINING LOCAL LEADERS: BY POSITION

The positional method dictated the determination of the titular heads of the major organization in business, government, socio-civic and religious organizations.

### A. The Socio-civic-religious positions

Since Morong is a relatively smaller community as compared to those communities where this positional method was also utilized<sup>11</sup> all major socio-civic and religious organizations were included. Since organizations are usually based on geographical locations, picking out the major organizations therefore did not pose a problem. Included in this category were the various professional and educational associations like the Morong Bar Association and the Parent-Teacher Associations.

The list of officers of these local organizations yielded different names. Of the nominated leaders, 10 (33%) held positions in 13 of the 26 socio-civic and religious organizations at different times. Only 50 per cent therefore of all the organizations considered were under some form of control from the reputed leaders. While all the reputed leaders assume membership in the different organizations in Morong, the data shows that 20.6 per cent of them also hold positions and memberships in organizations outside Morong, specifically in the metro Manila area.

The interview data on the reputed leaders indicated that their role in the local organizations has been confined mostly to sponsorship of athletic games, donation of prizes, being guest speakers at induction ceremonies and contributing financially to some community projects instituted by the organizations. Again the data demonstrated the case that only 33 per cent of the reputed leaders hold membership in 50 per cent of the socio-civic-religious organizations. Reputation and actual membership are not significantly correlated. (See Table I).

<sup>11</sup> This was also used as one of the three methods in a study of Syracuse. See L. Freeman, T. Fararo, W. Bloomberg, Jr. and M. Sunshine, "Locating Leaders in Local Communities," *American Sociological Review* XXVIII (October, 1963), 791-798.

## B. The Political Positions

A list of elected and appointed officials from 1946 to 1969 was secured and of the total 70 officials elected or appointed (positions were limited to the offices of mayor, vice mayor and the eight councilors) 58.62 per cent of the reputed leaders have occupied political positions at one time or another from 1946 to 1969. Limiting the case to the 1969 political positions, the data showed that only 23 per cent of the reputed leaders held political positions. While there is a low percentage of reputed leaders occupying formal political positions, further interview with the leaders indicated that they were actively involved in electing these men. Seventy six per cent of the reputed leaders admitted involvement in the 1967 political campaign primarily in the form of financial contributions and active campaign. No doubt, the data shows evidence of overlap in reputed leadership and government position.

## C. The Business-Economic Positions

Proponents of the argument that economic power is equated with political power are always ready to assert that the possession of economic resources provide access to other bases of power. Whether this contention is perceived to overlap by the ordinary citizens is another question. To determine the positions of the reputed leaders in the various economic organizations, data on the Morong-based corporations were gathered and lists of members of the board of the different corporations were drawn up together with the stockholders. As of 1969, there were 10 corporations based in Morong, 7 of which had 33 per cent of the reputed leaders as members of the board. In terms of stockholding, however, 63 per cent of the reputed leaders own shares in the 7 corporations. Of the 63 per cent, 52 per cent hold stocks in 29 different corporations in the Manila-Makati area and 6 of these 11 or 55 per cent are members of the board in these corporations. The data show therefore that the locus of activities of the leaders in the field of business and economics is not confined to Morong but extends to the metro Manila area as well. This is further indicated by the fact that while a majority of the reputed leaders derive their income from the community, 31 per cent of them derive their income from the metro Manila area. This may also explain that the use of positional approach confined to a local community may mislead the interpretation that reputed leaders do not hold key positions. As the data indicated—reputed leaders are linked to economic positions outside the local community.

Comparing the percentage of leaders in each institutional area, the data reveal the following distributions:

**TABLE I**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REPUTED LEADERS WHO HOLD OVERLAPPING**  
**POSITIONS IN THE INSTITUTIONAL AREAS**

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Percentage*</i>
Business (corporate membership)	34
Government (elected positions)	23
Education	17
Socio-Civic-Religious	34

\* Percentage exceeds 100 due to overlaps.

Table I indicates that it is only in the socio-civic-religious and business areas where there is a similar percentage of involvement of the reputed leaders. The following data will show the percentage distribution of reputed leaders in the specific areas.

**TABLE II**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION LEADERS**  
**IN OTHER INSTITUTIONAL AREAS**

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Business	40%*
Socio-Civic-Religious	40
Government	0
T o t a l	80%

n = 5

\* The education leaders in the business institutional area are the members of the board of the local college which is also a registered corporation.

Table II indicates that there is an equal proportion of education leaders in the business and socio-civic-religious institutions. None of the education leaders are in the government. On the other hand, of the 23 per cent reputed leaders in the government, 57 per cent of them are in business and none are in other education and socio-civic-religious. In so far as the socio-civic-religious leaders are concerned, the following table show the distribution.

**TABLE III**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIO-CIVIC-RELIGIOUS**  
**LEADERS IN THE OTHER INSTITUTIONAL AREAS**

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Government	0%
Education	20
Business	60
T o t a l	80%

n = 10

Table III shows that the majority of those in the socio-civic-religious institutions are also in business but only 20 per cent of them are in education. Like the education leaders, the socio-civic-religious leaders do not hold any position in the government.

In so far as the business leaders are concerned, the following table shows the percentage distribution in the other institutions.

TABLE IV  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BUSINESS LEADERS  
IN OTHER INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Government	20%
Education	20
Socio-Civic-Religious	60
T o t a l	100%

n = 10

Table IV shows that of the institutional leaders, only the business leaders are distributed in all other institutional areas. While the data indicate the incidence of overlapping institutional positions of the reputed leaders, the evidence does not show that there is only one set of leaders who dominate the institutional areas.

The findings of the positional method may be summarized into the following:

1. The thirty reputed leaders are distributed in the four institutional areas considered for this study but they do not dominate all the areas. This is further evidenced by the fact that the list of officers of the organizations and the list of elected officials in the government, coupled with the data on the corporations yielded other names than the reputed leaders.

2. While the reputed leaders hold overlapping positions in the different institutions, the data also shows that:

- A. Of the reputed leaders who are also education leaders, none of them are in the government;

- B. None of the reputed leaders who are also in government are in the socio-civic-religious institutions;

- C. None of the reputed leaders who are also in the socio-civic-religious institutions are in the government;

- D. Considerable overlaps do occur in business and government and also in socio-civic-religious and business.

Studying leadership by positional approach may lead to data that misleads us on people's perception of leadership.

### III. DETERMINING LOCAL LEADERS: BY DECISION-MAKING METHOD

In the search for community leaders through the use of the decision-making method, this study was primarily interested in determining the following:

1. the issues, decisions and problems in the community for the ten-year period prior to the time the study was undertaken;
2. the individuals who participated in the decisions;
3. whether the reputed leaders were also the active participants in the decision-making process, and
4. whether the reputed leaders who participated in one issue were also participants of the other issues, thus indicating overlapping participation.

The officers of the socio-civic organizations (representing seven organizations), three mayors (the incumbent and the two former mayors) and the reputed leaders themselves were asked to nominate the issues on the basis of the following criteria:<sup>12</sup>

1. the issue must have been resolved by a decision;
2. the sum of money involved in the decision;
3. the number of people affected by the decision (i.e. whether it engaged the attention or interest of most citizens or whether it was germane only to a segment of the community);
4. the decision must fall within the time period 1959-1969.

On the basis of the above criteria, three issues were selected for this study:

Issue A—The putting up of a dance hall

Issue B—The proposed transfer of the municipal building

Issue C—The proposed increase in market stall fees

The persons who nominated the issues were also asked to name the persons who participated in the decision-making process. Specifically, this study was interested in getting the names of the persons who participated in the decisions in any of the following manners:

1. membership in the committee selected to handle the problem;
2. contacting others in behalf of or against the proposed decision;
3. speaking for a group about the decision; and
4. contributing to the support or defeat of the decision.

The records of the minutes of the meetings of the municipal council were also investigated but they did not yield adequate information regarding the deliberations on the issues. It was found out that the lack of information on this matter was due to the fact that the outcomes of the decisions were usually predetermined by a series of conferences and compromises among the council members of the session hall.

In the three issues selected for this study, a total of 48 names were drawn up as participants, of which 13 were the reputed leaders. This indicates that of the 29 reputed leaders, 44.82 per cent were involved in the decision-making process and they, in turn, constituted only 29 per cent of the total participants, while the remaining 71 per cent consisted of individuals not in the reputed leaders' list.

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<sup>12</sup> These four criteria are similar to those suggested by Nelson Polsby *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 168.

Further investigation of each of the issues indicated overlapping participation by the reputed leaders who have held or were at the time of the study holding government positions. This is explained by the fact that since the decisions involved the municipal council, the municipal council members were, therefore, in one way or another, involved in the different stages of the decision-making process. To find out the overlapping involvement of the reputed leaders in the three issues selected, the percentage distributions of leaders involved in the three issues were computed, thus yielding the following tables:

TABLE V  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REPUTED LEADERS IN ISSUE A  
WHO WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN OTHER ISSUES

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Issue B: municipal building	40%
Issue C: market stall fees	0
T o t a l	40%

n = 5

TABLE VI  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REPUTED LEADERS IN ISSUE B  
WHO WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN OTHER ISSUES

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Issue A: dance hall	20%
Issue C: market stall fees	20
T o t a l	40%

n = 10

TABLE VII  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REPUTED LEADERS IN ISSUE C  
WHO WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN OTHER ISSUES

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Issue B: municipal building	100%
Issue A: dance hall	0
T o t a l	100%

n = 2

The tables indicate the overlapping involvement of the reputed leaders in the different issues, with the highest percentage involvement of reputed leaders of Issue C in Issue B. While the incidence of overlap is evident, there is some indication of specialization in the sense that some leaders were confined to only one issue area. While the municipal council members were always involved in the issues, the absence of such persons in the computed percentage is due to the fact that the decisions took place at different times and therefore, the membership of the council varied.

The decision-making method as used by the proponents of pluralism appear to apply to communities which are faced with open conflict situations in the making of decisions. It must be noted that in any interacting group or in a community, the established order is built on dominant values, political habits and established rules which control policies and decisions. In the municipality of Morong where conflicts over issues are either suppressed or prevented by the accepted role of prominent individuals to mediate, compromise and consult, the applicability of the decision-making method is open to question.

### CONCLUSION

The three methods utilized in this study brought out three concepts of leadership. It is apparent that the reputational technique brought out those who were reputed to be powerful, those who could, in a given situation, exercise their influence and power, as perceived by the persons who nominated them. The positional method, on the other hand, brought out persons in positions of authority in the community, in line with its assumption that formal authority is equated with leadership. The decision-making method drew out the participants in the community decision making process. It must be noted that the reputational method was employed usually by those who adhered to the idea of a multi-functional elite while the decision-making method was employed extensively by the pluralist group. While each of them claim that their respective methods represent the method of determining community leaders, it is evident in the Morong study that their varying concepts of leadership tend to overlap in some cases but tend towards specialization in others.

It seems that while the three methods claim to differ in their determination of who constitute the community power elite, they all arrive at pre-conceived ideas of leadership which tend to bias the outcome of their respective studies. It is for this reason that the reputational technique always brought out a ruling elite while the decision-making method always came out with competing elites representing varied interests in the community. The study of Morong makes it clear that the concepts of leadership brought out by the three methods tend to overlap and while they view leadership in different dimensions, they also tend to converge in some areas.