Summaries in English

N.A.

From Individuals to Political Power and backwards
by G. P. A. Braam

The existence of political power often evokes a dilemma: On the one hand political power is considered necessary for attaining common goals, on the other hand it causes a great deal of discontent on the part of the citizens. The author tries to make a rough classification with regard to the problems that are involved in political power, to point to their causes and to discuss possible solutions.

The problems that surround political power seem to be brought about for the greater part by the *generality* of power, or, in other words, by a lack of specificity. Often the power is ill-adjusted to the gaols of the members of the power-system. Roughly speaking, this imperfect adjustment is manifested in two ways:

a). Some of the objects of the members of the system are *not* attained by those in power (This is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that governments are sometimes incapable of solving social problems).

b) Those in power pursue objects that are not endorsed by the members of the system.

The author has the opinion that — among other things — better measuring-instruments are required to check the use of power. Now it seems probable that this use of power is determined for a major part by the influence that is exercised on the authorities by persons and organizations in society. If we put it this way, it becomes of major importance to find out who have much influence and who have little (the distribution of influence). Investigation into this distribution of influence therefore, is a kind of evaluation-research into the use of power. Of course it is necessary that this kind of research should be carried out by independent agencies.

The seizable Power
by Mauk Mulder

Power differences and power motivation are analysed in micro structures in a series of simulation studies, and in macro structures in field studies. The power distance reduction theory is used as a tool for this analysis. The theory consists of 14 hypotheses; the core of the theory holds that persons tend to strive for reduction of power differences between themselves and the more powerfull, and that they will do so more strongly, the smaller this difference is (so: the more power they themselves already have. These hypotheses are strongly supported by the empirical data.

It is concluded that certain societal and organizational structures provide favourable conditions for the so-called 'power learning'; that is for learning to shift from dysfunctional power relationships such as blind formal or negative sanction power, toward more functional power, such as expert power; also from power toward non-power influence, such as persuasion; also and specifically from large power differences toward reduced power differences. This 'power learning' is seen as an important target for Work Councils, Schools, Unions etc.

Graph-theory as a formal model for the description of power- and influencestructures
by A. J. A. Felling

The purpose of this article is to show how digraph-theory may be utilized in developing a social network-theory, especially in the field of local power and influence. We have indicated some of the ways in which digraph-theory, which serves as a descriptive-explicative mathematical model, can be used to analyze components of theory of local power.

There are many reasons why we have focused our attention on the social-networktheory in the field of local power and influence.

The first is that there are contrasting conceptions of power in the empirical 'community power studies'. The 'elitist Hunter-school' focuses on the degree to which a single actor achieves his desired goals. Their power-orientation can be termed as individualistic. The basic elements in this orientation are the individual actor and his goals; neglected are other actors, as well as the structure of the system within which action occurs. The 'pluralist Dahl-school' conceives power primarily as a relationship between two actors, where the one is able to effect a change in the second. Their orientation is dyadic. This dyadic orientation tends to omit any reference to goals or to the broader structure in which power is exercised. The third orientation can be referred to as a cybernetic-systemic orientation toward power. Here is emphasized that power is a relational property. Power is not a characteristic of an individual actor; an actor is considered powerful only in relation to others in a given local community. Power is neither conceived as a property relating two actors, as in the dyadic orientation. This orientation emphasizes as basic units not individual persons or groups, but actors communicating with each other within a social system. Power may be looked upon as a specific form of the flow of communication. Not an individualistic concept of power nor a dyadic concept of power but a more cybernetic concept of power. The community comprises a system of inter-related social units linked together by information flows. The local power structure may be conceived as being linked almost entirely by information exchange. This 'communication-exchange' mode of analysis suggests a new approach to the study of the phenomenon power or influence. Therefore it is not surprising that our attention has focused on the theory of graphs as a possible source of measures and procedures for the formal analysis of powerstructures, conceived as a special social network.

The second reason why we have used the social-networktheory is that there are many community organizations which contribute to community change. For those occupying the lower positions in the hierarchy of power the understanding of the power structure of the community is one of the most important ingredients in successfull community intervention. Important topics for groups aiming at social change are how civic associations, voluntary leaders and municipal authorities fit into the power structure. A fundamental problem in the influence process by which individuals and groups at the hierarchical bottom of the local community reached their aims is their lack of an adequate insight in the configuration of power.

We conceptualize power as a system of social relations. This presupposes in every local community a certain network of excange ties. We seek a mathematical description of some of the properties of such a power-network. We use a mathematical model in the sense of a collection of definitions. The theory of graphs as a mathematical model in the study of local power configurations is, at least in the beginning, a descriptive theory of power structures. In a descriptive model based on the theory of graphs the power configuration (made of local

influentials and the set of relationships among them) is conceptualized as a graph (a directed, possibly valued, (multi)-graph). When this is done, theorems about the graph which is assumed to be isomorphic to the power configuration, can be translated into corresponding statements about the power structure. In this context the validation of such statements is a purely logical validation, a consequence of the assumed isomorphy between the graph and the power configuration. In this article we present this descriptive approach.

There are four concepts which are basic to graph-theory: joining, reaching, connectedness and distance. We have relied heavily on Harary, Norman and Cartwright's treatment of digraphs in our discussion. The graph-theory is a collection of theorems, deduced from the definitions. Like the definitions, the theorems can be translated into the language of social power-relations. This correspondence between terms in the graph-theory and terms related to the description of the empirical power configurational system is represented in figure 27.

There are many different techniques to identify leaders but only four are commonly used: the reputational method, the decisional method, the positional method and the social activity method. The first approach is based on the assumption that the process of power is so complex that it cannot be indicated directly. Instead of examining power or influence as such, proponents of this approach identify reputation with power or influence. The second approach to the study of power or influence is based on the assumption that active participation in decision-making is the same as power or influence. In such studies one or a series of community decisions is either observed or reconstructed, and an attempt is made to identify the persons who actually participate in concrete decisions and whose suggestions are actually followed. The third approach assumes that formal authority is power or influence. Here the occupants of the important positions in the authority-structure of the community organizations are taken to be the community leaders. The fourth and final approach to the study of power or influence looks upon leadership as a necessary consequence of social activity. Community power results from a high degree of voluntary activity in community affairs.

We can determine the communication-channels between the actors, which can be interpreted as potential influence-channels, by using, among other things, the sociometric test or by elaborating participation-schemes.

Finally two other techniques are mentioned which can be applied to the study of power or influence, namely the before-after method and the input-output analysis.

The graph-theory provides an abstract objective and systematic description of the structural properties of powerstructures. We have considered some of the measures of these properties which might apply to the analysis of social power-networks.

The study of social networks, which makes use of the theory of graphs, is still very much at its beginning. We should like to assert that there is not yet a predictive theory of social networks: nobody can say which inferences can be made from the structural parameters to the functioning of the power-influence system.

The construction of a social network-theory, which makes use of the graph-theory, can contribute to a better understanding of the power and influence in the local community, provided a qualitative analysis is added which focuses on

the interpretation of social reality from the perspective of the subjects.

Political participation: a political-economic approach
by M. P. C. M. van Schendelen

With the theoretical approach of the 'new political economy' it seems possible to give reasonable explanations of the phenomenon of unequal degrees of political participation by citizens and of the persistency of this phenomenon.

The argument is as follows. Referring to some empirical tendencies the author presumes a growth of political participation. Besides he ascertains that the resources for political participation are unequally distrubeted among the members of a political community and that the political wants and demands vary.

One result of these variabilities is a competition between political participants, which leads to an increase of the marginal costs of political participations, expressed in terms of political resources. This increase expells those with less resources from the participation-process and this feeds back negatively to initial growth of political participation, we presumed. This argument is illustrated with some Dutch data.