RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

Note: The International Journal of Comparative Sociology invites communications in the form of short articles and reports about ongoing research, not exceeding 5,000 words, both in the empirical and theoretical fields.

EDITOR

1. Comparative Study of Four Community Councils in Rural Saskatchewan

JOHN B. HAWLEY
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, U.S.A.

In 1962, while conducting a field study of rural community councils in Saskatchewan as part of a larger study for the Centre for Community Studies, the writer attempted to test some notions suggested by Kimball and Pearsall in their study of the Talladega (Alabama) Community Council. Kimball and Pearsall have formulated eight principles of organization which they feel apply particularly to the community council type of voluntary association. Three of these principles are referred to here: Legitimation, Conformance, and Validation.

The principle of Legitimation states that an organization must establish its right to speak and act for its members and constituents; that is, it must become legitimate in the eyes of the community it is trying to serve. The principle of Conformance indicates that in order to perform its functions properly and effectively the organization needs to work closely with the individuals and groups from whom it derives its legitimacy; thus, it must conform to local power patterns by meshing with the leadership of the community. The principle of Validation states that an organization must gain recognition and social status in order to do its work; its legitimacy is thus validated through its accomplishments.

In January, 1959, with the help of consultants from the Centre for Community Studies, community councils were organized in three towns, one village-town and one village in rural Saskatchewan. By June, 1962, two of them had

1 John B. Hawley, Director, Community Development Services, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, formerly Research Specialist in Community Development, Centre for Community Studies, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.
3 Ibid., pp. 187ff.
4 The other five are: Participation, Involvement, Initiation, Structural Tangency, and Organizational Flexibility.
5 The 1961 population, in round numbers, of the village was 400, of the village-town 600, and of the towns 700, 1100, 1600.
disbanded, two were very active and one was somewhat active. The first four were the object of the 1962 study which dealt with various aspects of community council success and failure. The writer's special interest was to find out to what extent the organizational and individual leadership structure of the four communities was reflected in the councils and whether there were any differences in this respect between the councils that survived and those that died.

It was hypothesized that the two community councils which had survived and remained active had a closer relationship to the organizational and individual leadership structures of their communities – i.e., would show a higher degree of legitimation and conformance – than the two councils which had disbanded.

Furthermore, it was felt that, compared to the councils that had died, those that remained alive and active would not only have undertaken more projects and activities but would also have completed more of their undertakings, thereby confirming the principle of Validation.

When they were established, the community councils under consideration were expected to represent as many voluntary associations in the community as possible. Each council had but few members-at-large. Table I shows the number and percentage of community organizations represented on the councils during the period from January, 1959 to June, 1962.

**Table I**

*Organizations represented on the Community Council (1959-1962)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1961 Population</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Organizations in Community</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Organizations Represented on Council</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Organizations Represented on Council</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A1, A2, are communities in which the council disbanded.
B1, B2, are communities in which the council survived.

The Table above indicates that the organization elements of the community were more fully represented on the councils which remained active than on those which disbanded. The difference is significant at the .03 level.1

---

1 In this study the chi-square test was used to determine the significance of the difference between the expected distribution and the actual distribution under the null hypothesis. The .05 level of significance was accepted as the standard of comparison. When the number of organizations represented on the councils in A1 and A2 are combined and compared with the combined figures for the councils in B1 and B2, $x^2 = 5.5242$ with 1 degree of freedom, which is the level of significance mentioned above. The difference between the number of organizations represented on the council in B1 compared to A1 is significant at the .007 level; between B1 and A2 at the .06 level; between B1 and B2 at the .14 level; between B2 and A1 at the .15 level.