

Sociology and power



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Sociology and Power: A Critical Review Ellicott Maryland, is an unincorporated community and census-designated place which is located in Howard County, Maryland. With a population of a little over 56, 000 and slowly rising, Ellicott City today is a town of "stone and brick buildings, narrow streets, and steep granite cliffs." (National Scenic Byways Program, 2000). In order to come to a clearer and more knowledgeable understanding on this city, we will discuss a power structure of the community; in this case the topic will be the Ellicott City, Maryland police department. The aim of this paper is to discuss the issue of whether this particular power structure is a power elite or a pluralist structure, as well as the key elements which are related to this. This is what will be dissertated in the following.

The Howard County Department of Police is located in Ellicott City, Maryland. The Office of Sheriff in this police department is responsible for enforcing all federal, state, county, and municipal ordinances within the county. Included in these duties are the investigations of theft, vandalisms, assaults, illegal drug activity, reported child and or domestic abuse, as well as all other criminal allegations. Also, the sheriff is required to carry out all duties relating to the involuntary hospitalization of persons with mental illness and duties relating to condemnation of private property.

The power elite theory claims that a single elite, as opposed to a multiplicity of competing groups, decides the life-and-death issues for the nation as a whole. First coined by C. Wright Mills in his 1956 book, *The Power Elite*, the term, in political and sociological theory, is a small group of people who control a disproportionate amount of wealth, and privilege and access to decision-making of global consequence. Pluralists, on the other hand, are somewhat content with what they believe is fair, if admittedly imperfect,

system, the power elite school " decries the grossly unequal and unjust distribution of power it finds everywhere." (Reynolds, 1996). Pluralism is, in the most general sense, the affirmation and acceptance of diversity. The Howard County Department of Police is assuredly with more of a pluralist structure, in that although the individuals involved may constitute their own close-knit group, they are not part of a conspiracy that secretly manipulates events in their own selfish interest. " For the most part, the elite respects civil liberties, follows established constitutional principles, and operates openly and peacefully." (Reynolds, 1996). Pluralism is related to the doing of something for the common good that is best for all members of society, which is the most primary reason as to why this particular power structure would be considered as pluralist. Values such as mutual respect and tolerance are of great significance in the issue of pluralism, this being for the most part so that different groups can coexist and interact without anyone being forced to assimilate to anyone else's position in conflicts that would naturally arise out of diverging interests and positions.

From this review, we can more thoroughly understand how important power structures such as this are to communities, and how truly significant the elements of power elites and pluralism are. We can clearly see that it is beneficial that the Howard County Department of Police is a pluralist structure, and through the evidence and use of related literature shown, we can come to the conclusion that pluralism is the best possible structure in this situation.

Works Cited

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