Chicago Public Housing Library Movement, 1961-1967: A Qualitative Social Network Analysis

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Abstract
This research utilizes qualitative social network analysis to examine a social movement of African-American women community activists petitioning for library facilities in a public housing community. The research elevates the groups' efforts in the claiming of information needs through a network of grassroots relationships. It challenges the privileging of the administrative voice of library decision-making, by situating the struggle in an urban context. The relationships presented in the networks are created from thirty primary source documents related the social movement. They include newspaper articles, annual reports from the Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Library Board meeting minutes, and reports and documents from the local community center. The poster demonstrates the effectiveness of analyzing documents through the development of network in order to link relationships, understand the landscape of a social movement, and positioning the library and information needs through the lens of the community.

The poster focuses capturing the network of relationships involved in a social movement of African-American activists in Chicago Public housing petitioning to have adequate library facilities built in their neighborhood from 1961-1967. Primary source documents are utilized to visualize the network of community, local government, and municipal stakeholders. A broader view of the case deals with many issues including: equity of access to information community social movements and the African-American female voice (Collins, 1998; Johnston, 2014; Malone; 2001). The network highlights municipal relationships and community relationships. The following describes the methodology utilized to capture the document links with descriptions of the visual relationships among stakeholders as represented by the diagrams are related.

The research project uses qualitative social network analysis, by employing an exploratory inductive examination of documents related to an issue. The analysis creates data visualization by highlighting the complexity of communication and relationships in social movements (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). A qualitative approach is "suitable for collecting data on actor interpretations, individual systems of relevance, and orientations of action" (Scott & Carrington, 2011, p. 407). For the current study, the data represent individuals, organizations, and political structures that are present in primary source documents that include all aspects of the social movement. This is done to situate relationships and clarify boundaries in the network (Scott & Carrington, 2011). Each primary source document was analyzed for participants of all facets of the network, and organized according to communication lines, relationships, influence, and collective attributes. The documents gathered include newspaper articles from *The Chicago Defender* and *The Chicago Tribune*. Other documents include annual reports from the Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Library Board meeting minutes, and reports and documents from the Henry Booth House Community Center. Each document was coded for relevant organizations, groups, institutions, government/municipal agencies, and significant individuals.

The analysis of documents revealed a multilevel network of twelve institutions, fourteen organizations, twelve groups, seven governmental agencies, and fourteen individuals. The municipal network emphasizes connections and relationships of municipal bodies to the central social movement committee, which acts as a bridge to the community stakeholders. The corresponding community network presents an organized community effort to appeal the municipal network. The process of creating a network provides a lens into the stakeholders that influence a local social movement.

The network illustrates the significance of gender, class, community relations, and library municipal intricacies. The African-American female voice is central to the gendered nature of the movement (Collins, 1998; Robnett, 1996). Women from the public housing community exhibit coalition building through community networks used to systematically appeal the library administrative board. The

complexities of the network reveal the relationship of local governmental bodies to poor communities and how the demonstration of community information needs, influence community change.

References

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