

The chapter analyses the dynamics of community power structure in relation to community development projects. A community is conceptualized at three levels, viz. sub-locational, locational and divisional. A community (at any of the three levels of generality) is treated as an open system whose throughput is constituted by the set of mental and physical activities that a project calls for. The focus of discussion is Kakamega District, Kenya, but a considerable proportion of the analysis is generally applicable to other districts of the country. The analysis proceeds under the headings: kinship and project site; wealth and influence; formal leadership; and sense of community identity. The focus is on how power dynamics tend to depress rather than promote development projects. The dynamics of power generate considerable and multiple intra-community disjunctions that impede project activities. Strengthening the institutional base of power (legitimate authority) and fostering a greater sense of community identity would most likely result in the diminution of disjunctions and thus, speed up community development praxis.