Chapter 9. The Role of Leadership Behaviors and Structures in Community Development

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BEHAVIOR OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter and completing the online learning activities, students should be able to

1. Recognize the value of competent community leadership.

2. Distinguish between sociological and psychological aspects of leadership.

3. Work effectively to help community residents understand the importance and nature of leadership.

4. Identify leadership challenges that community developers face when seeking change.

5. Explain the primary behavioral characteristics of developmental, directive, and permissive leaders.

6. Evaluate the effectiveness of your behavior as an active listener.

7. Understand how leadership development workshops can help potential leaders view themselves as part of a larger structure so that they and other community leaders can create and maintain network connections.

8. Analyze a community group and determine which leadership role best fits.

9. Identify the primary leadership characteristics of political power actors and economic power actors.

10. Appreciate the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of leadership in community development organizations.
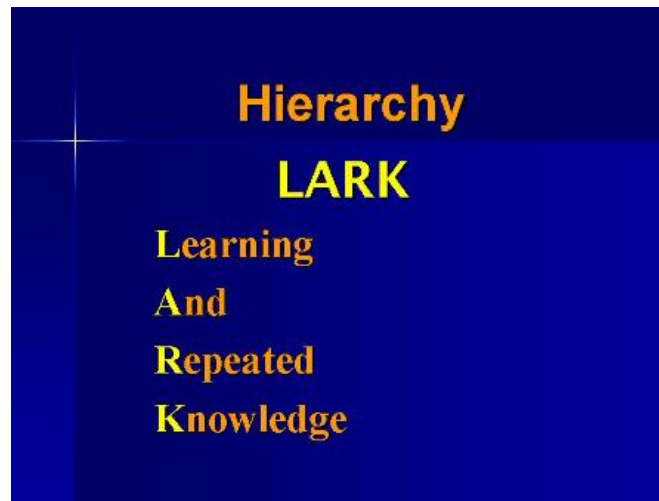
LARK Activity 9.1

Multiple Choice Questions

Select the Best Answer for Each of the Following Questions.

1. Emerging leaders in developmental public organizations realize that their groups:
a. Often unconsciously evolve to a particular style of group interaction that may limit their problem-solving abilities.*
b. Need a directive individual to give guidance to passive, dependent employees from time to time.
c. Should fix responsibilities for the group's division of labor by formal arrangements.
d. Depend on clear-cut, one-way communications when establishing group priorities.

2. "Operational leadership" refers to a leader's:
    a. Past experiences and contact during an organizational crisis.
    b. Power associated with the leader's public image.
    c. Behavioral attempts in an effort to work with others.*

3. How a leader acts in a particular scene is influenced by his or her:
    a. Early childhood experience and experience as a parent.
    b. Unique intellectual and physical traits.
    c. Image of the responsibilities involved in all leadership situations.
    d. Role expectations, group goals, and the leaders range of behavioral skills.*

4. In addition to seeking questions from everyone in the group, the developmental leader:
    a. Provides a chance for individuals to "get their gripes out of their system."
    b. Seeks to eliminate suggestions that may expose latent conflicts.
    c. Guides group interaction according to a hidden agenda.
    d. Provides specific opportunities for members to join in goal-setting.*

5. A typical remark by a directive leader whose style of behavior is judging might be:
    a. "I feel uneasy about all of this change."
    b. "Let's don't do anything. It's really their duty."
    c. "I told you yesterday what to do."*
    d. "Your suggestion supports what I thought."

6. "Turning on the charm" is a form of behavior most frequently used by:
    a. A developmental leader.
    b. A directive leader.
    c. A permissive leader.*

7. Conflicts created by "errors of omission" are most likely the result of which leadership role:
    a. A developmental leader.
    b A directive leader.
    c. A permissive leader.*

Match the following communication networks to the appropriate leadership role:

8.   Developmental Leader   Communication vacuum
9.   Directive Leader   Wheel of Interaction
10.   Permissive Leader   Chain of Command

11. When the developmental leader leaves the scene of activity, people ten to continue their work because:
    a. They fear another group member will report them to the leader.
    b. The developmental leader has left them work to do
    c. hey are confused and anxious to determine who has responsibility for the project.
    d. They are involved in the project and their work is important and challenging.*

12. The effectiveness of a civil defense group immediately after an area is hit by a tornado may depend heavily upon:
    a. Lengthy but democratic discussions of plans and shortcomings.
    b. The "comic relief" of a permissive leader.
    c. The control and predictability inherent in a directive leadership style.*
    d. A "wheel of interaction" type of communications network.
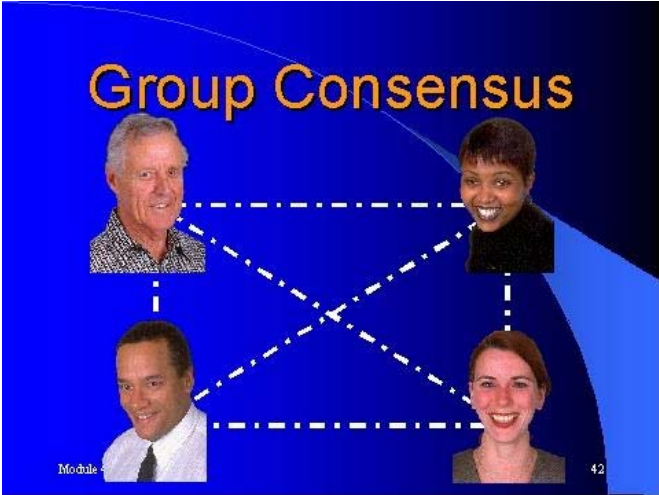
SOAR Activity 9.2

A Demonstration on Active Listening

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the power of active listening. Sometime today, practice active listening on an "unsuspecting person or stranger." For example, you could interview a clerk, a waitress, a salesperson, a professor, or a girl or boy friend. Select. a topic of interest.

Use the following active listening behaviors:
1. Lean forward
2. Nod you head for approval and agreement.
3. Asked open ended questions.
4. Avoid questions that require "yes" or "no" as a response.
5. Respond with, "I see;" "I understand;" "Hmmm;" etc.
6. Feed back what you hear. For example, you may say, "I hear you saying….Tell me more;" Are you saying that you believe this……..?"

Write up your experience in the space below and be prepared to share it with you class or team.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SOAR Activity 9.3

The Turned on Programmers

Jim Collins is Lead Programmer. Jim is very conscientious about his job and has set tight standards for his work group. He is quite proud of the fact that he is the boss and runs a "tight ship." He sees himself as "firm but fair," playing no favorites. He has also kept his distance from the persons in this group so that he can be completely objective about making assignments and judgments.

Jim has been on vacation for the past three weeks. During his absence, Harriet Ferguson took over. When Jim returned from vacation, he seems to be faced with an outright revolt from his group.

It seems that Harriet has really "turned on" all of Jim's programmers. They are constantly talking about how they liked working for Harriet. She has assigned jobs to each person that they enjoyed most. If a person did an especially good job, Harriet was prompt in giving praise. Also, she invited all members of the work group to come directly to her if they had problems, and they did. During and after break time, she would bring up problems to the total group and involve them in solving issues.

The entire situation upset Jim, but it really bugged him when one of his Senior Programmers told him hat the guys thought Harriet was the best Lead Programmer they had ever had in the Department.

Instructions: For individual and group work.

Working as a group of five teams members:

Step 1. Select a team recorder to report to the entire class;

Step 2. Develop a short answer to each of the following questions.

1. What is the problem here?
2. What are the primary leadership roles and behaviors used by each of the Lead Programmers?
3. If you were Jim, what would you do? List specific behavior styles you wouldn use.
4. If you were Harriet, what would you do if:
    a.   Jim came to talk with you?
    b.   If Jim did not come to talk with you?

Step 3. Share your responses with the entire class and your instructor.

LIFE Activity 9.1

Identifying the Most Appropriate Leadership Role for Your Situation

Behavior Analysis

Addendum   12

Levels of Group Maturity and Willingness to Carry Out Responsibilities

Low	Moderate	High
Totally unable and not yet confident or committed to carry out its responsibilities.	More able and willing	Fully capable, confident, and committed to carry out its responsibilities
^	^	^
|	|	|
Directive		**Developmental**

Appropriate Leadership Role

The figure above illustrates that as a group's maturity increases, leadership behavior, to remain appropriate outcomes, requires less control. The leader will need to guide a group through encouraging and structuring discussion, but eventually the leader does not need to handle all tasks.

This reality carries tremendous implications regarding a leader's effectiveness as he or she moves from one group to another, or as a group moves from one task to another. For example, for the director of a community development organization it will require that he or she varies

their leadership style when dealing with student volunteers or when dealing with the organization's Board of Directors. A committee chairperson with inexperienced members would have to behave differently in the first few meetings than in later ones, when the group is more experienced. Varying levels of group maturity and development call for different leadership styles and behaviors.

LIFE ACTIVITY 9.2

Determining which Leadership Role is Best for Your Work Group.
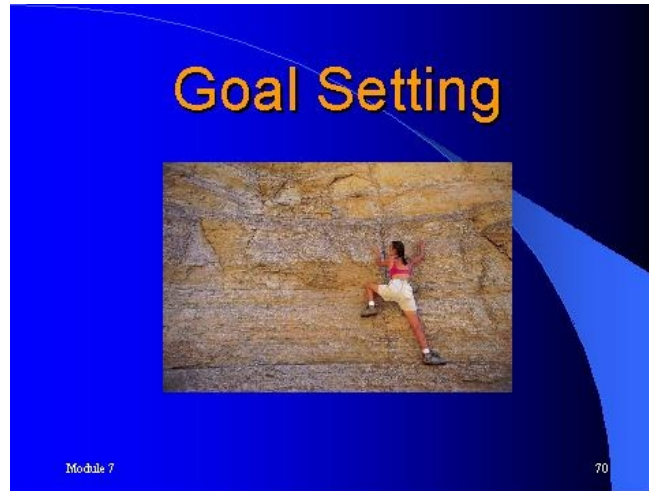
Objective: This activity will help a leader determine which leadership style is most appropriate for your work group as you face a new task.

Instructions:

Step 1.   Identify a difficult and challenging task that your group needs to complete and describe it below:

_____

Step 2.   Assess your groups willingness and ability to work effective on this task.

Below are 12 items, scales, which describe the way in which group members relate to each other and how they go about their work. Each item is presented on a scale of 1-8. At the end of each scale is a description of the item that is entirely opposite the meaning of the description at the other end of the scale. The numbers on the scale indicate a variety of possible responses, one that best describes your group from your vantage point. Circle the choice which best represents your group's position for each item.

Part I. Analyze your group's *ability* to handle the task listed in Step 1, above.

1.   How much experience has the group had with tasks similar to this task?

None at all   A great deal

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

2.   How skilled is the group in finding new information when needed?

Not skilled at all   Very skilled

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

3.   How skilled is the group in planning, organizing, and following through on this task?

Not skilled at all   Very skilled

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

4.   How accustomed is the group to evaluating its work and using evaluation results?

Not accustomed at all   Very accustomed

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

Part II. Analyze your group's *willingness* to handle the task.

5.   How enthusiastic and committed is the group to accomplish this task?

Not enthusiastic or committed   Very enthusiastic and committed

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

6. How confident is the group in its ability to accomplish this task?

Seriously doubts their ability   Completely confident

              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

7.   How much encouragement does the group need from you?

A great deal   None at all

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

8.　　How much satisfaction does the group get from this sort of work?

A great deal　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　None at all

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

Part III. Analyze your group's *relationship* maturity in handling this task.

9. How skillful is the group at involving all group members in decisions?

Not skilled at all　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Very skilled

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

10. How would you characterize interpersonal communications in the group?

Very cautious and closed　　　　　　　　　　　　　Frank and open

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

11. How strong is the team's identification with each other?

Very weak　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Very strong

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

12. How freely do group members praise each other for a job well done?

  Rarely and reluctantly　　　　　　　　　　　　Freely and frequently

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

Step 3. Which one of the above behaviors is the group's major skill?_____

Which one of the above behaviors most needs to be improved? _____

Step 4. Draw a line down through the page for items 1- 12 which connects each of the numbers you circled.

Now, study the worksheet to determine your overall impression of the profile in the group as it faces this task.

Step 5. Prepare three scores: one for *ability*, one for *willingness* and one for *relationships*.

1. Determine the score for items 1-4, "ability;" for items 5-8., "willingness;" and 9-12 :relationships by totaling the numbers circled in each of the three categories.

2. Enter the totals for the three scores at the proper places on the three scales, below:

Scale I: Task Maturity (Items 1-4)

Low			**Moderate**			**High**	
Unable to carry out task without direction			**Somewhat able complete tasks** `			**Completely able to carry out task without direction**	

Score: 4   8   12   16   20   24   28   32

Directive Leadership Role	**Developmental Leadership Role**

APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP ROLE

Scale II: Willingness Maturity Scale (Items 5-8

Low			**Moderate**			**High**	
Complete lack of confidence to carryout without direction.			Somewhat confident about completing task			Completely confident about carrying out tasks task without direction	

Score: 4   8   12   16   20   24   28   32

Directive Leadership Role	**Developmental Leadership Role**

APROPRIATE LEADERSHIP ROLE

Scale III: Relationship Maturity (Items 9-12)

Low	**Moderate**	**High**
Complete lack of ability to handle relationships within the group	Some ability to handle relationships in group	Completely able to handle relationships within the group

Score: 4   8   12   16   20   24   28   32

Directive Leadership   **Developmental**
Role   **Leadership Role**

APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP ROLE

Step 6. **Interpreting your scores.**

These three scores indicate the degree of emphasis that the group leader (you) should give to each of the concerns in terms of leadership behavior.

For example, if your scores approach "32" you essentially abdicate. But if your scores approach "4" you probably need to take charge and use directive behaviors to get the group back on track. Scores in the middle range are above indicate developmental behaviors.

Thus these scores give you some indication of what the next areas of developmental work are needed in your group and the types of leadership roles that are needed.
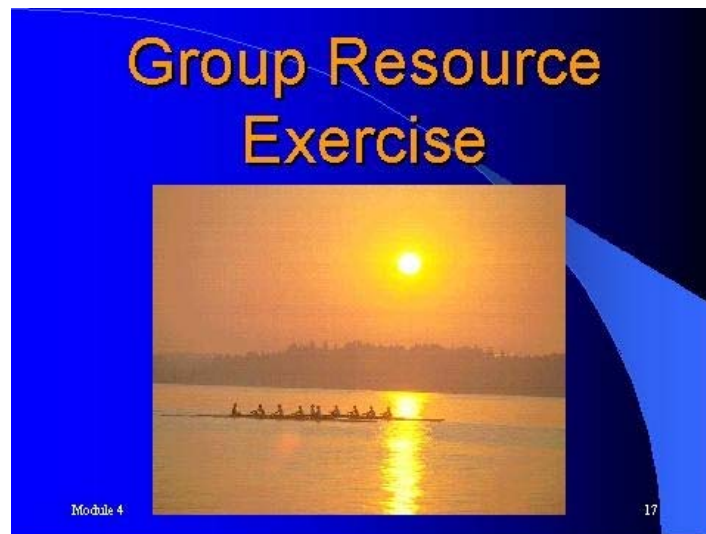
Step 7. **Develop a strategy that will maximize your skills and strengthen your weaknesses so you can be more effective with your group.**

I Will:

I Will Not:

LIFE Activity 9.3

A CASE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES IN TWO MISSISSIPPI DELTA TOWNS

By Josh Stovall

The Mississippi Delta, a rural area in northwest Mississippi, sits on an alluvial flood plain of the

Mississippi River at a very low altitude above sea level. Its location and weather made it a place

of world renowned agricultural production. The Delta has been an impoverished area for many

years, and has remained in persistent poverty, along with the Black Belt and Appalachia, while

other rural areas in the United States have seen improvement. The Delta has high unemployment

and poverty rates, as well as low educational achievement. In many ways, the Delta is a unique

place. It has been referred to in many ways, sometimes called, "the most southern place on earth"

(Cobb, 1992 Preface).

The Delta has counties with poverty rates over forty percent, and the region is 62.8

percent black in population, of which sixty percent live in poverty (Barton, 2003). Due to its

history in agriculture, large farms still dominate the Delta's society and economy, which has

been a major factor in the historical resistance to social change and economic development. The difference in economic status has been caused by the small group of white elites profiting from the work of lower-class whites and blacks, much like what has been the case in the Black Belt. In Appalachia, we see the same kinds of historical conflict that stems from different sources, that being mainly class based inequality as opposed to race based differences. The Delta is still one of the most rural places in the United States and has more rural blacks than almost any other region. Even so, issues relating to leadership such as poverty and education can be applied to residents of majority black cities across the United States as well as other rural areas. In 1990, the Delta had almost sixty percent of its population living in rural areas. This number had not changed much by the year 2000.

The population of the Delta has steadily declined since the 1930's. With the mechanization of cotton farming (the dominant form of agriculture at the time) beginning in the 1940's, black sharecroppers began to move out of the Delta as the primary method of farming changed to wage labor. Due to the weak economy, high poverty and lack of opportunities, young blacks and whites, who had a higher education, began a trend of leaving the Delta which has continued to the present, causing an increase in the gap between the "have's" and the "have not's". This has also resulted in a leadership gap, due to many former leaders aging and a lack of younger potential leaders to replace them. Identifying and understanding how the leadership structure of a community affects the potential of its various leaders to act is the key to effecting future actions and outcomes for communities. In many places such as these Mississippi Delta communities, it is readily recognized that while blacks' constitute a majority of the population, black leaders have generally not been a working part of the dominant leadership network structure in these communities.

One interesting issue concerning leadership and influence in the Mississippi Delta centers around the increase in political power of blacks versus the lingering economic power of whites. A majority of elected offices in the Delta are now held by blacks, putting them in a better position to make changes for the region. A curious angle to this development is the continued economic power held by a number of white elites, who can make or stop change by exerting their financial muscles. Some of these elites maintain ties to political leaders, white and black, and are able to control what goes in within a specific locale, often at the expense of effective community development.

The Leadership Problem

Effective and functional leadership should be characterized by leaders acting in the best interest of the community as a whole, versus toward their own interests. Even though one hope is that leaders will act in ways that benefit the community as a whole, clearly, this is not always the case. We examined these issues, through a series of research questions designed to address leaders' social networks. Specifically, we explored the rural Delta community leaders' network structures by: (1) documenting the networks of identified leadership showing how the leaders interacted with others in the community. For example, did they only interact with other leaders from their same race? and, (2) comparing our findings from each community's leadership structure with existing research.

Action Research to Identify Community Leadership Structures

Using the positional-reputational approach espoused by Trounstine and Christensen (1982), the top 15 leaders in Lee and Franklin (Pseudonyms), were identified. This method is based on the dual premise that power and influence rest in people who occupy important positions in a community and that a person's reputation of influence can be an index showing the distribution

of how influential they really are (Rogers, 2003). By identifying local leaders and interviewing

them, Stovall was able to determine the number of connections between white and black leaders

based on two main criteria, working together on community projects (weak ties) and

social/informal ties (strong ties). Figure 9.3 is used to help illustrate the marked difference in

weak and strong ties between white and black leaders in this study.

Importance of Leadership Structures

Regardless of whether the locality is rural or urban, leaders attempt to either maintain or change

existing community or organizational conditions. Their success in doing either is in large part

associated with their ability to mobilize resources and produce collective action in the

community (Brown, 1991). Their ability to mobilize resources is associated with the type and

strength of their network connections, both inside and outside the community. Consequently,

leaders' networks must connect them with the "right" people, those that will provide the largest

return to the organizer for his/her resources spent, and not just the right number of people.

A leadership structure composed of leaders with a mix of both strong and weak network

ties improves the chances of wielding power and creating (or maintaining) desired conditions

locally as it maximizes connections to a broad array of resources (Wilkinson, 1990). O'Brien,

Hassinger, Brown, and Pinkerton (1991) demonstrated these links by showing that a rural

community's relative viability can be predicted based on the quality of identified leaders'

connections to each other, to other members of the community, and to those outside the

community.

Individual leaders' positions within the leadership structure itself should influence their

ability to create or maintain desired conditions with leaders in the center of the network having

the greatest opportunity to mobilize resources (Galaskiewicz, 1979). Consequently (and not

surprisingly), how permanent particular leaders – i.e., how firmly they are positioned within the network -- are to the community's leadership structure is rarely measured. This will influence the shape of the structure itself as either more elitist or more pluralistic; thus, influencing how the leadership structure functions in the community. A pluralistic structure, while it ensures access to a greater number of resources for a community at any one point *in* time because it inherently taps into a broader range of people and their potential networks, is more unstable *over* time.

Agenda are determined by emerging issues and may not carry over from one set of emergent issue-based leaders to another. An elitist structure on the other hand minimizes network resources but maximizes its long-term stability by perpetually recreating itself and its issues. Though it reduces the potential number of resources leaders can tap into due to their limited networks, it may tap into some of the most important ones like money and political influence far more effectively than a pluralist structure. While this may assist in the structures' long-term survivability, it may also keep other important issues in the community from being discussed. Salamon (1989) demonstrates that even if leaders can mobilize people for issue-based short-term projects, they cannot sustain their efforts over time unless they receive considerable amounts of community support. Consequently, while an elite structure may have more difficulty addressing short-term issues effectively than a pluralist one, its sustainability is more secure. This leads to the paradox of "the stationary bandit" as articulated by Olson (2000); people are often willing to exchange a more pluralistic leadership structure for an elitist one due to the stability and predictability of the latter.

Operational Leadership Structures in the Mississippi Delta

To underscore the differences between *elitist* and *pluralistic*[1] leadership structures as first discovered in urban settings, we can apply them to our example of the Mississippi Delta. Lack of leadership has been identified as one of the most serious problems of the Mississippi Delta (Aiken 1995; Winter 1988). The Delta's long history of antagonistic race relations has been a barrier to effective communication, coordination, and cooperation between whites and blacks. Such conflicts have contributed to fragmented leadership structures in the Delta. This is especially alarming considering the fact that Delta communities like Lee and Franklin have populations with an overwhelming black majority and a majority of black elected officials.

The Delta remains one of the most impoverished regions in the United States despite many charismatic and talented leaders. Some of these issues have been addressed through an analysis of leadership structures in the Delta to determine whether white community leaders function through an elitist model of community power and whether black leaders function through a more pluralistic one.

In trying to answer these questions in the context of the Mississippi Delta, Stovall found that leadership structures were fragmented by race, with white leaders (the more centralized and entrenched leaders) having an *elitist* structure and black leaders, having a separate, *pluralistic* structure. Individually talented black leaders are curtailed in their ability to effectuate significant long-term changes in their local communities because their local community leadership structure does not facilitate the acting on their goals over time. This happens as a result of often being last

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[1] See Domhoff, W. G., (1990), *The Power Elite and the State: How Policy Is Made in America*, New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

to receive information regarding the community. For communities that have a majority black

population, this can create serious problems for development, no matter whether they are urban

centers or rural towns.

Bridging the Sociological Divide

Thinking about what we have already discussed, what do these bifurcated structures mean for the

future of leadership and community development in a diverse community? When examining

organizational literature, community development workers will find much that can be applied to

their context. Hirschman (1970) wrote on how businesses deal with the interests of people within

and outside their walls. In doing so, he outlines the "Voice" versus "Exit" problem. When

applied to community leadership structures, the "voice" or desires and concerns of the

community as a whole are not addressed. When one group or more sees itself as marginalized,

"exit" occurs, and the groups abandon that structure. The community is then left with decisions

based on the desires of only a few people, or just one segment of the population. Another result

is that separate structures may develop that act as a voice for marginalized groups but the

problem remains that the structure of the community remains fragmented and the marginalized

group, while having voice, only have such among themselves and not in the larger forum of the

community per se. Consequently, many diverse communities have problems with representation

that lead marginalized groups toward "exit" where they simply remove themselves either

physically or symbolically from community decision-making.

On the other side of the issue, people may try to work to change the structure from

within. This is a great point of intersection between the psychological and sociological

understandings of community leadership. Charismatic leaders who are able to use the structure to

their advantage provide a better opportunity for more community voices. The black leadership

structure is the exit group that has formed a separate mechanism to deal with the issues it sees as important. This explains the issue-based, and rapidly changing black leadership pattern seen in Stovall's (2005) work, as well as highlighting current debates about assimilation by the out-group. The white leadership structure represents the dominant community voice that is able to exist in a much more stable pattern. One of the reasons leadership trainers and community developers want leaders who can make changes in a community is because of the voice/exit problem.

One does not have to look strictly at organizational writing to see the value of understanding the role of leadership structures in American communities. There are many examples of community development studies that make this need clear. A recent case study completed in Idaho focuses on community coaching as a way for community development workers to empower citizens. The researchers admit that in one of the communities of interest, they remained outsiders who were distrusted by a group of local leaders (Cohen, Higgins, Sanyal, and Harris, 2008). Although the program used during this study was able to identify established community leaders rather easily, trying to engage new leaders into the development picture was more difficult. This struggle highlights how important it is to understand the interaction between the sociology of leadership and effecting change in a community. The difficulty that community developers have in trying to work around existing leadership structures underscores the reasons for not relying solely on creating leaders who are charismatic or who have other traits that are deemed desirable. No matter the personal characteristics of the "new leader", he or she will have a difficult time being heard by a large audience and will find few successes in local development efforts.

Figure 9.2. Ties with three central types of leaders in Lee and Franklin

Town/Year	Lee 1996	Lee 2004*	Franklin 1996*	Franklin 2004*
Total Strong Ties	19	21	20	21
Comm. Projects with Strong Ties	17	19	16	16
Comm. Projects without Strong Ties	18	12	16	11
Total Strong Ties between White Leaders	18	23	31	22
Comm. Projects with Strong Ties between White Leaders	12	15	14	12
Comm. Projects without Strong Ties between White Leaders	5	6	13	6
Total Strong Ties between Black Leaders	3	0	0	0
Comm. Projects with Strong Ties between Black Leaders	2	0	0	0
Comm. Projects without Strong Ties between Black Leaders	1	0	0	0
Total Strong Ties between White and Black Leaders	2	4	2	5
Comm. Projects with Strong Ties between White and Black Leaders	1	4	2	4
Comm. Projects without Strong Ties between White and Black Leaders	10	6	3	5

*No black central leaders (top three)

Responses to Questions for LIFE Activity 9.2

A Case Study of Leadership Structures to Two Mississippi Delta Towns
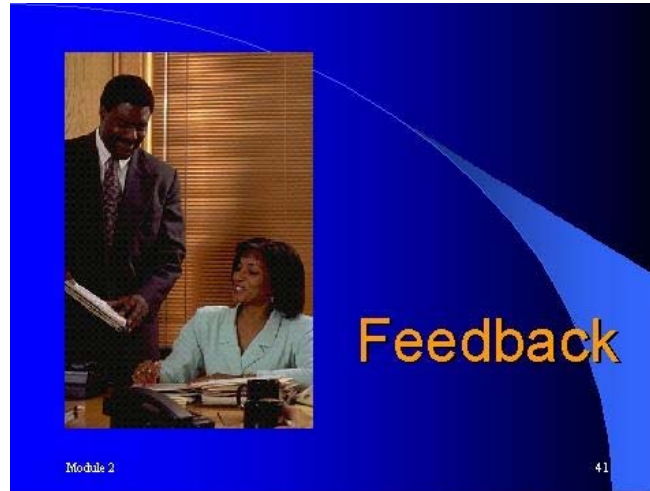
Instructions: After reading this case study, create a short answer of 50 – 75 words to each of the following questions:

1. Why do are most of the strong ties between white leaders?

2. What kinds of changes are likely to occur leadership structure of the two communities do you think will occur in the two communities within the next 10 years? Why?

3. Are the ties in the two Delta Communities similar to ties in other communities with which you are familiar?