

Stability Of And Differences In Black And White
Rural Community Leadership Structures Over
Time In Two Mississippi Delta Towns

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About the Study

- The towns of Lee and Franklin (Pseudonyms), Mississippi are typical of most rural Delta towns.
- Both communities have been subjects of leadership research since 1996.
- Reasons for continuing research are to examine attitudes and document change.



Research Questions

- What are the leadership structures in each of these communities?
- Have they changed since the initial research was conducted, if so, in what ways and to what extent?
- Do the top leaders socialize with one another?
- Do the networks indicate reciprocation of social ties?
- What are the attitudes of the leaders regarding community development issues?
- To what extent do the top leaders work together on community projects?



Methods

Positional-Reputational Approach: Trounstine and Christensen (1982).

Combines two methods used to identify people in formal positions of authority.

Community residents identify their leaders.

Based on a dual premise (Rogers 2003).



Methods Continued

Specific steps are outlined within the thesis.

Methods resulted in face to face interviews with the top fifteen leaders.

The final top fifteen list was analyzed as the leadership structure of each town.

Table 1. Basic Demographics of Lee Leaders in 1996.

Leader	Age	Gender	Race	Ranked 1	Occupation
1. Stevens	40	Male	White	5	Business/ Banking
2. Stanton	44	Male	White	4	Elected Official
3. Kirby	45	Male	Black	2	Teacher/ Elected Official
4. Connor	57	Male	White	1	Farmer/ Banking
5. Hampton	55	Male	White	0	Lawyer
6. Fields	50	Male	Black	1	Elected Official
7. Curtis	65	Male	Black	0	Pastor
8. Welsh	56	Female	White	1	Elected Official
9. Dubard	29	Male	Black	1	Elected Official
10. Singleton	45	Male	White	0	Banking
11. Rawlings	70	Male	White	0	Farmer
12. James	54	Male	White	0	Banking
13. Taylor	42	Male	White	0	Farmer
14. Landon	55	Male	White	1	Farmer
15. Stokes	45	Female	White	0	Business
	Median Age	Percent Male	Percent Black		
Total	50.1	86.6	26.6		

Table 2. Basic Demographics of Lee Leaders in 2004.

Leader	Age	Gender	Race	Ranked 1	Occupation
1. Stanton	52	Male	White	10	Elected Official
2. Stevens	48	Male	White	2	Banking/ Business
3. Hampton	63	Male	White	1	Judge
4. Kirby	52	Male	Black	1	Teacher/ Elected Official
5. Johns	48	Male	Black	1	Elected Official
6. Connor	65	Male	White	1	Retired Farmer/ Banking
7. Singleton	52	Male	White	0	Banking
8. Welsh	63	Female	White	0	Elected Official
9. Ames	64	Male	White	0	Insurance
10. Gibson	88	Male	White	0	Retired Business Executive
11. Todd	34	Male	Black	0	Elected Official
12. James	60	Male	White	0	Pastor
13. Payne	83	Male	Black	0	Retired Education Administrator/ Business
14. Gaines	47	Male	White	0	Business
15. Bonds	45	Male	White	0	Business
	Median Age	Percent Male	Percent Black		
Total	57.5	93.3	26.6		

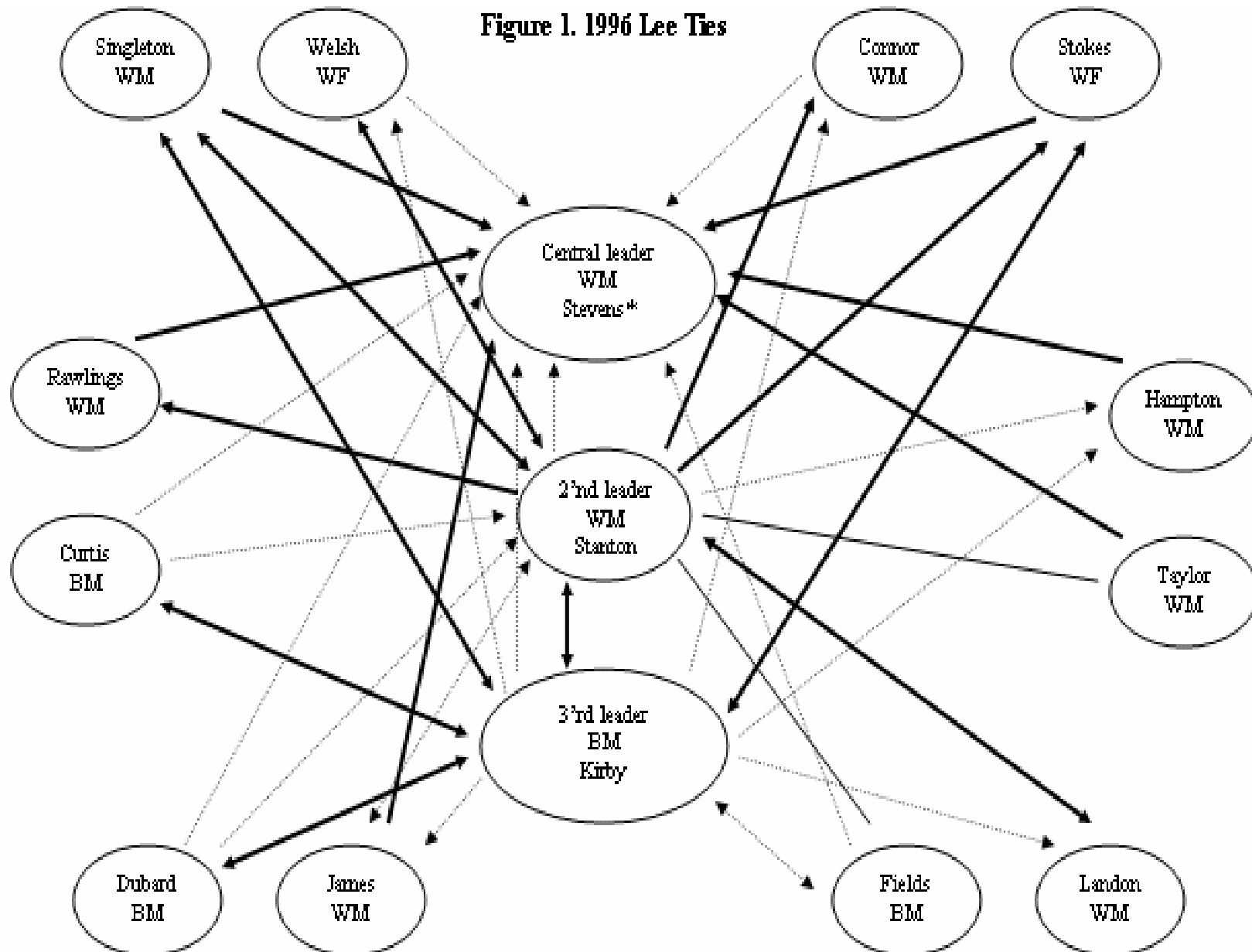
Table 3. Basic Demographics of Franklin Leaders in 1996.

Leader	Age	Gender	Race	Ranked 1	Occupation
1. Golden	62	Male	White	4	Lawyer
2. Simpson	45	Male	White	4	Banking
3. Riley	67	Male	White	4	Elected Official/ Business
4. Gunner	60	Male	White	1	Elected Official
5. Simmons	76	Male	White	2	Business Executive
6. Roy	42	Male	White	3	Elected Official
7. Russell	72	Male	Black	1	Elected Official/ Business
8. Ansley	69	Male	White	0	Retired
9. Thomson	62	Male	White	3	Lawyer
10. Keeton	50	Male	White	1	Banking
11. Landry	50	Male	White	0	Banking
12. Olson	46	Female	White	0	Elected Official
13. Alston	60	Male	Black	0	Actor
14. Randall	42	Male	White	1	Lawyer
15. Wilson	47	Male	White	0	Insurance
	Median Age	Percent Male	Percent Black		
Total	56.7	93.3	13.3		

Table 4. Basic Demographics of Franklin Leaders in 2004.

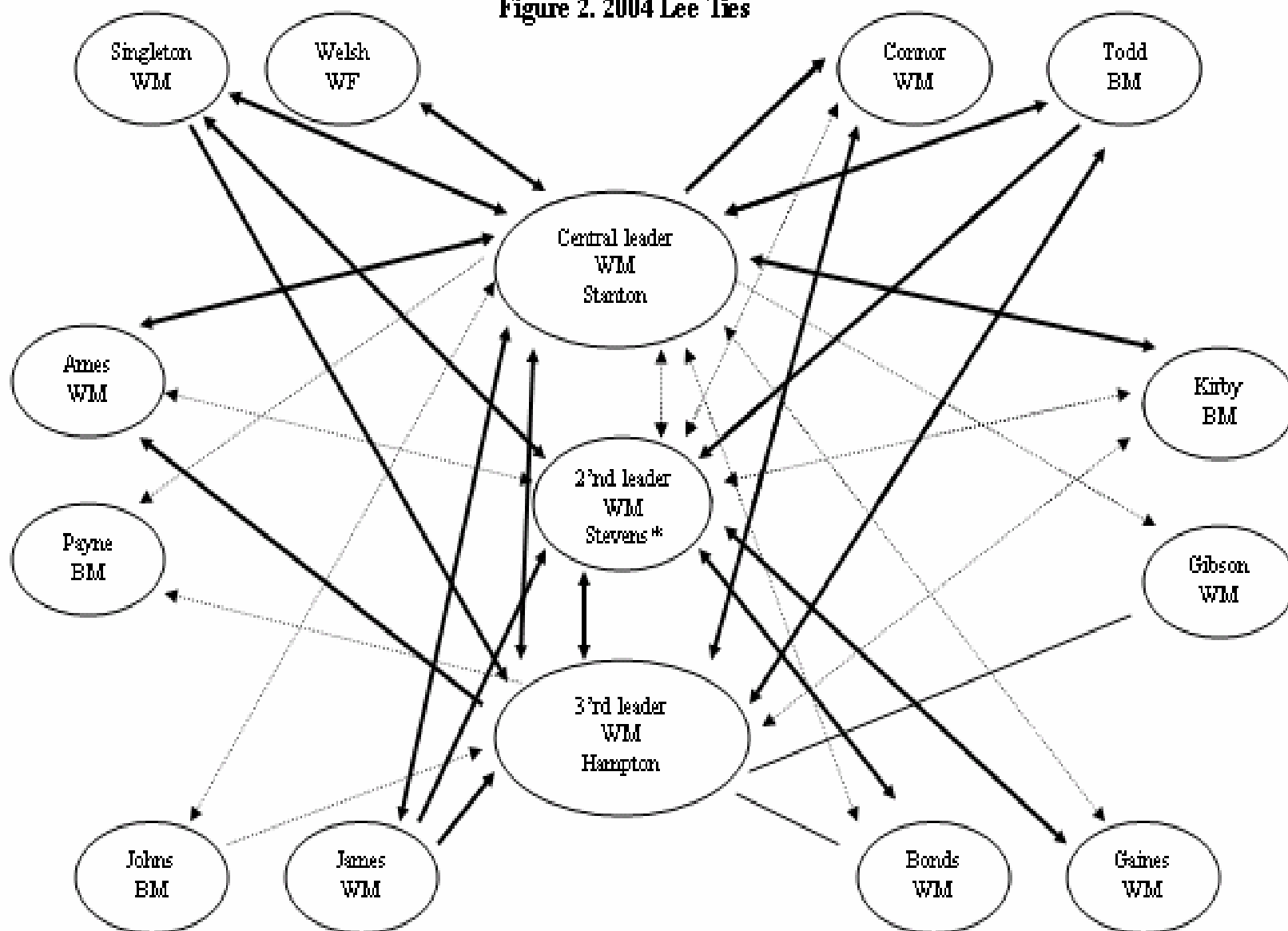
Leader	Age	Gender	Race	Ranked 1	Occupation
1. Roy	49	Male	White	5	Elected Official/ Lawyer
2. Simpson	52	Male	White	4	Banking
3. Simmons	83	Male	White	0	Retired Business Executive
4. Riley	73	Male	White	0	Elected Official/ Barber
5. Lavender	51	Male	Black	0	Farmer
6. Keeton	58	Male	White	0	Banking
7. Briley	43	Male	White	0	Elected Official
8. Golden	68	Male	White	2	Lawyer
9. Russell	78	Male	Black	0	Elected Official/ Business
10. Thomson	69	Male	White	0	Lawyer
11. Michaels	41	Male	White	0	Pastor
12. Lincoln	83	Male	White	1	Retired Doctor
13. Burt	45	Female	Black	0	Teacher/ Minister
14. Banks	73	Female	Black	0	Administrative Assistant
15. Childs	50	Male	Black	0	Business
	Median Age	Percent Male	Percent Black		
Total	61.1	86.6	33.3		

Figure 1. 1996 Lee Ties



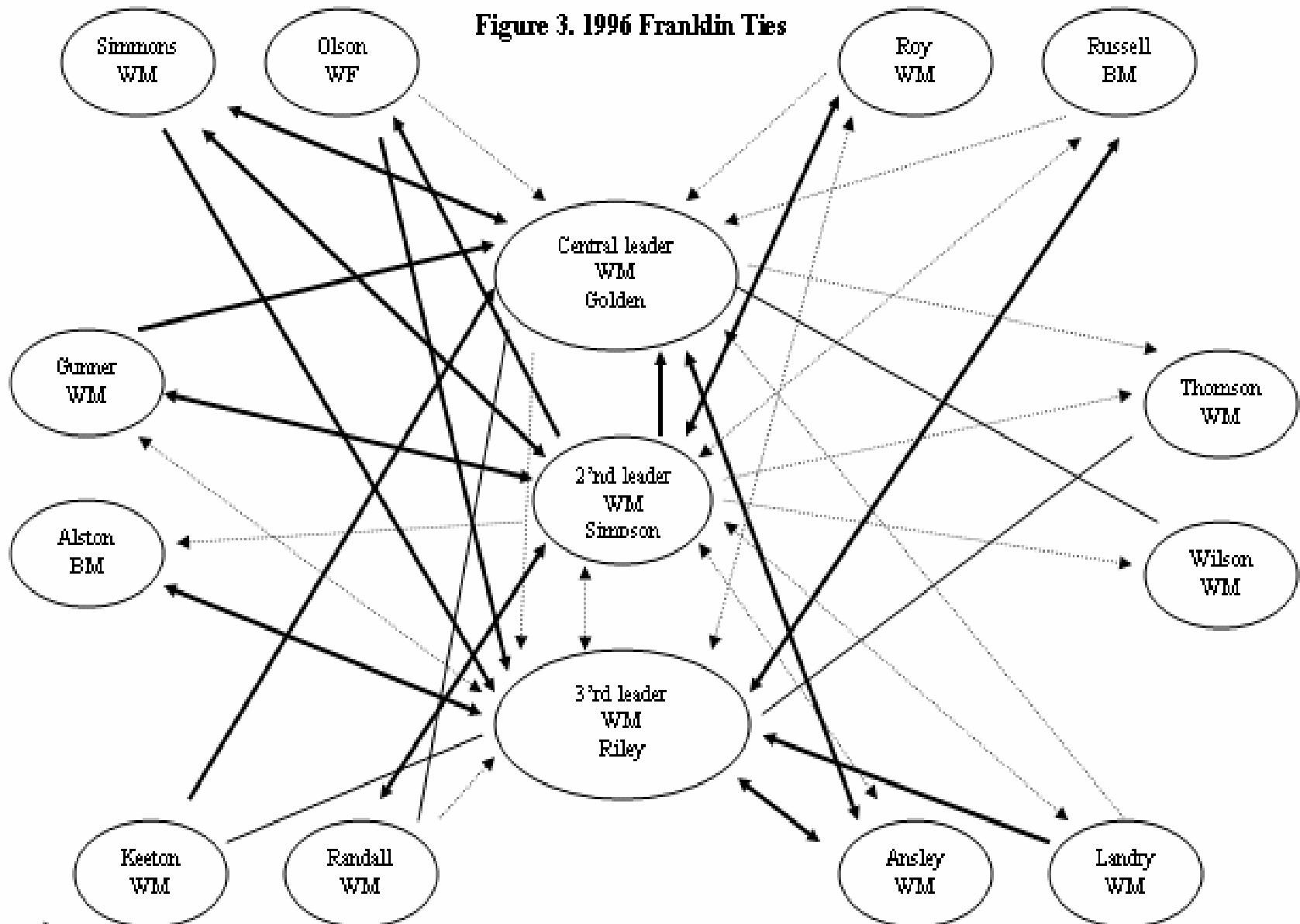
Stevens did not complete the 1996 survey; therefore ties coming from him are not represented in this sociogram. = Community Project Tie-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties; double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties. — = Strong Tie with no Community Project ties. —> = Strong Tie with Community Project ties-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties, double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties.

Figure 2. 2004 Lee Ties



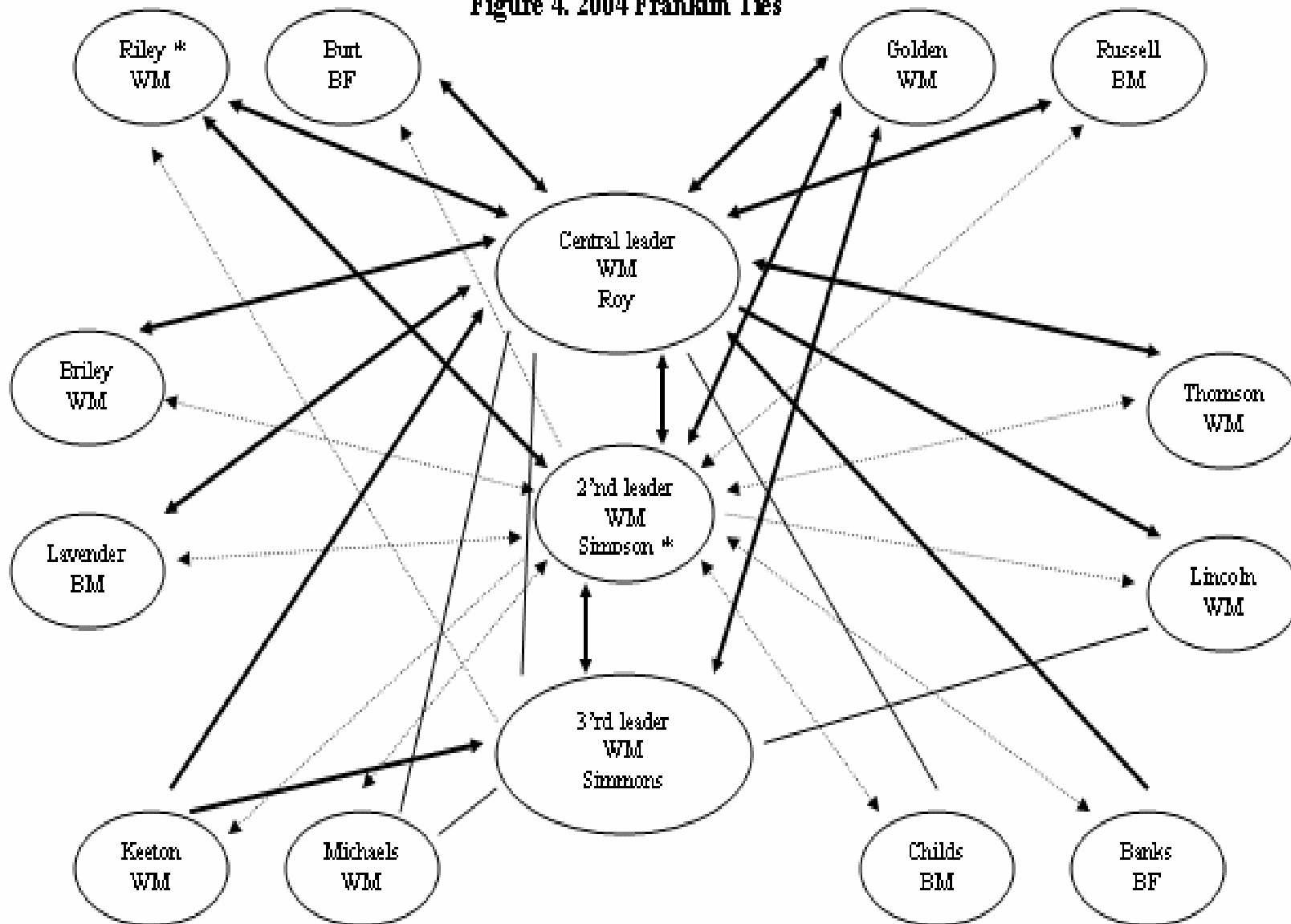
Stevens did not complete part of the 2004 survey, thus social ties coming from him are not represented in this sociogram. = Community Project Tie-
 arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties; double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties. = Strong Tie with no Community Project
 ties. = Strong Tie with Community Project ties-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties, double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties.

Figure 3. 1996 Franklin Ties



..... = Community Project Tie-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties; double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties. _____ = Strong Tie with no Community Project ties. → = Strong Tie with Community Project ties-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties, double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties.

Figure 4. 2004 Franklin Ties



Note: Asterisks beside Riley and Simpson indicate them as being the only reciprocal social ties Roy had out of 14 that he claimed. This is due to Roy misusing the provided definition. $\cdots \rightarrow$ = Community Project Tie-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties; double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties. --- = Strong Tie with no Community Project ties. $\text{---} \rightarrow$ = Strong Tie with Community Project ties-arrow(s) point to person(s) who claim ties, double arrows indicate reciprocity among Community Project ties.

Table 5. Number of Ties Represented in Each Sociogram

	Lee		Franklin	
	1996 Figure 1	2004 Figure 2	1996 Figure 3	2004 Figure 4
Total Strong Ties	19	21	20	21
Community Projects with Strong Ties	17	19	16	16
Community Projects without Strong Ties	18	12	16	11
Total Strong Ties Between Whites and Blacks	2	4	2	5
Community Projects with Strong Ties between White and Black Leaders	1	4	2	4
Community Projects without Strong Ties between White and Black Leaders	10	6	3	5

Table 6. Lee Leaders Opinions in 1996 and 2004.

Attitudes on Development Topics	Responses	Percent White		Percent Black		Percent Total	
		1996	2004	1996	2004	1996	2004
Federal and State Funding	Strongly Disagree	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Disagree	20.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	13.3	6.7
	Neutral	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7
	Agree	60.0	45.5	20.0	50.0	46.7	46.7
	Strongly Agree	10.0	36.4	20.0	50.0	33.3	40.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(10)	(11)	(5)	(4)	(15)	(15)
	Mean	3.40	4.09	4.80	4.50	3.87	4.20
Raising Taxes	Strongly Disagree	20.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	13.3	6.7
	Disagree	40.0	45.5	40.0	0.0	40.0	33.3
	Neutral	10.0	18.2	0.0	25.0	6.7	20.0
	Agree	30.0	27.3	40.0	50.0	33.3	33.3
	Strongly Agree	10.0	9.1	50.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(10)	(11)	(5)	(4)	(15)	(15)
	Mean	2.50	3.00	3.40	3.00	2.80	3.00
Outside Experts Doing Community Work	Strongly Disagree	0.0	0.0	20.0	25.0	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	30.0	18.2	20.0	25.0	26.7	20.0
	Neutral	20.0	45.5	0.0	25.0	13.3	40.0
	Agree	40.0	27.3	20.0	0.0	33.3	20.0
	Strongly Agree	10.0	9.1	40.0	25.0	20.0	13.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(10)	(11)	(5)	(4)	(15)	(15)
	Mean	3.30	3.27	3.40	2.75	3.33	3.13

Table 7. Franklin Leaders Opinions in 1996 and 2004.

Attitudes on Development Topics	Responses	Percent White		Percent Black		Percent Total	
		1996	2004	1996	2004	1996	2004
Federal and State Funding	Strongly Disagree	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Disagree	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Neutral	15.4	40.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	26.7
	Agree	30.8	10.0	100.0	40.0	40.0	20.0
	Strongly Agree	38.5	50.0	0.0	60.0	33.3	53.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(13)	(10)	(2)	(5)	(15)	(150)
Mean		3.85	4.10	4.00	4.60	3.87	4.27
Raising Taxes	Strongly Disagree	7.7	0.0	0.0	20.0	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	23.1	40.0	50.0	0.0	26.7	26.7
	Neutral	0.0	20.0	50.0	80.0	6.7	40.0
	Agree	61.5	20.0	0.0	0.0	53.3	13.3
	Strongly Agree	7.7	20.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	13.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(13)	(10)	(2)	(5)	(15)	(15)
Mean		3.38	3.20	2.50	2.60	3.27	3.00
Outside Experts Doing Community Work	Strongly Disagree	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Disagree	23.1	10.0	0.0	40.0	20.0	20.0
	Neutral	30.8	30.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	20.0
	Agree	38.5	60.0	100.0	40.0	46.7	53.3
	Strongly Agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	6.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	(13)	(10)	(2)	(5)	(15)	(15)
Mean		3.00	3.50	4.00	3.40	3.13	3.47



Summary Of Findings

- The leadership structures have changed little since 1996, with few ties evident between races.
- Blacks are better represented but are ranked lower in 2004 than in 1996.
- Lack of emerging young leaders in all 2004 groups.



Summary of Findings Continued

- Aging leadership signals a problem for future development in these communities.
- Leaders of different races are working with each other on community development projects more frequently, partly due to the nature their work.
- Leaders have an increasingly positive opinion on the role of federal and state funding in their community.



Summary of Findings Continued

- Most leaders have a neutral opinion on raising taxes to benefit their community.
- Most Lee leaders have a neutral opinion regarding hiring outside experts to help with community work.
- Franklin leaders are somewhat favorable to outside experts working in their community.



Discussion

- The lack of ties between leaders disrupts the utilization of resources which may be available to help solve community problems.
- Having mainly white leadership structures in towns with increasing black majorities maintains obstacles to developing effective leadership structures.
- Effective leadership structures must include significant representation from all segments of a community.
- Leadership programs must address the social nature of leadership structures in order to effectively use available resources.



Limitations Of The Study

- Does not identify ties leaders have outside their community, which would serve as indicators of how well resources are used in certain areas.
- The positional-reputational approach is considered ambiguous by some researchers.
- Some criticism centers around the accuracy with which people see the power structure.



Suggestions For Future Research

- Focus on ways rural communities can achieve functional, unified leadership structures.
- Emphasize collecting data on leaders' social networks to help inform leadership training programs.
- Identify why young black leaders are not emerging.
- Explain why reciprocity of community project ties is more common among leaders of the same race than among leaders of different races.
- Replicate this study in the near future to see if trends continue and to document other changes.