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Abstract

The United States is poised to experience one of the largest transfers of leadership in its history, markedly impacting rural community sustainability efforts. The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study was to identify themes related to rural leadership transfer using grounded theory and to test the facilitation of effective leadership transfer using structural equation modeling. Adult and youth

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leaders (N = 19) from three nominated rural communities comprised the qualitative phase and secondary data from a 2015 rural survey (N = 1991) comprised the quantitative phase. Mixed methods results indicated the environment conducive for effective leadership transfer (via broadened civic engagement) was facilitated when community hope became contagious based upon community development efforts achieved by hopeful, persistent community leaders. The presented findings offer greater precision to leadership research in community contexts and enable increased effectiveness in facilitating community leadership transitions, thus enhancing their generative capabilities.

Keywords: Community leadership, leadership transfer, civic engagement, mixed methods

Introduction

Between 2010 and 2060, the United States is estimated to experience a 75 USD trillion wealth transfer from the Civic and Baby Boomer generations to Generation X, Generation Y, and the Millennials (Macke, Markley, & Binerer, 2011). Simultaneously, the staggering estimated Baby Boomer retirement rate of 10,000 each day until 2030 (Martinek, 2008) will invoke a substantial transfer in leadership, constituting 55% of managerial positions as well as 640,000 not-for-profit executive positions (Tierney, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). In the midst of these transfers, the relational success, economic stability, and general well-being of individual companies and communities are reliant upon effective transitions in leadership. The current sustainability efforts within rural communities could be markedly impacted by such transitions, bringing vitality or destruction. The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study was to first, qualitatively identify common themes related to leadership transfer in rural communities using grounded theory and to second, develop and test a model describing the process of how effective leadership transfer is facilitated using structural equation modeling. The theoretical significance of this study is to identify and test factors associated with leadership transfer so as to assist leadership scholars in their precision regarding the study of leadership, specifically leadership transfer, in community contexts. The practical significance of this study is to enable organizations and communities to be more effective in facilitating such leadership transitions for the future, thus enhancing their generative capabilities.

Literature Review

To better understand leadership transfer in the context of rural communities, the following review of previous literature investigates the role of community development programming in effective leadership transfer. Following, leadership development within community development programming is discussed, identifying key elements related to the facilitation of leadership transfer sustainability. The final paragraph situates the present study within the existing literature and argues for its unique contribution through identifying common factors of successful leadership transfer, developing a model describing the process of how effective leadership transfer is facilitated, and testing such model.

The Role of Community Development in Leadership Transfers

The impending wealth and leadership transfers (Macke et al., 2011; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017) highlight the critical need for effective community development. For example, the expected 75 USD trillion wealth transfer prior to 2060 (Macke et al., 2011) poses an opportunity to strengthen community philanthropy or distress community financial legacy by transferring estate wealth to family living outside of the community (Edelman & Burke, 2007). The immediacy of this transfer period is not limited to wealth but also business and organizational leadership as 55% of management occupations are currently being held by individuals aged 45 and older, signaling a significant transfer period in the next two decades (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). This loss of leadership, knowledge, and experience poses a risk not only to for-profit businesses but also to nonprofits which are now faced with hiring 640,000 new executives – nearly two-and-a-half times the number currently employed – due to the loss of retiring Baby Boomers and sector expansion (Tierney, 2006). Effective community development programs and initiatives designed to prepare individuals for these significant leadership and wealth transitions are essential to the vitality of rural communities nationwide. Community development, defined as “the improvement of community residents’ well-being” (Pigg, Gasteyer, Martin, Apaliyah, & Keating, 2015, p. 4), requires diverse, local engagement in public

processes related to negotiation, mobilization, organization, and action. Thus, while successful wealth and leadership transfers likely result from effective community development planning and programming, effective community development relies on civic engagement as it allows a wider and deeper pool from which to identify and train upcoming leaders.

Predictors of Effective Community Development

". . . all of the tools that underscore the practice of community development require residents' engagement and skill deployment" (Pigg et al., 2015, p. 5). Broad participation of local residents is a critical asset for community development programs, especially those designed to aid in successful wealth and leadership transfers. Social ties, community attachment, and youth and family involvement are key factors in promoting civic engagement, which serves as the foundation for community development programs (Crowe, 2010; Duke, Skay, Pettingell, & Borowsky, 2009; Flaherty & Brown, 2010; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Pigg et al., 2015; Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao, & Mullick, 2005; Theodori, 2004; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997).

Social ties and community attachment have been strongly associated with civic engagement (Barnes & Sheppard, 1992; Foster-Fishman, Cantillon, Pierce, & Van Egeren, 2007; Gould, 1993; Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 2000; Ryan et al., 2005). For example, Ryan et al.'s (1994) study indicated that social resources supply the necessary tools to build community attachment, and the combination of the two have an impact on collective action. While several additional studies have documented the positive influence of social ties on community attachment (Crowe, 2010; Flaherty & Brown, 2010; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974), additional predictors of community attachment have included an individual's (a) length of residence (Crowe, 2010; Flaherty & Brown, 2010; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Ryan et al., 2005; Theodori, 2004), (b) life stage (Flaherty & Brown, 2010), and (c) social position (Flaherty & Brown, 2010). While social ties and their association with community attachment might drive initial resident engagement in community development programming, community development programming can enhance, diversify, and strengthen community

social networks so as to broaden future resident engagement necessary for successful community leadership transfer.

Four studies in the last 40 years have documented a significant relationship between civic engagement and youth and family involvement (Duke et al., 2009; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Youniss et al., 1997). For example, a national survey assessing the impact of 4-H involvement among former members (N = 16,177) documented that 4-H members were 1.99 times more likely to be involved in a civic organization as an adult and 4-H officers were 2.89 times more likely (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987). Youniss et al. (1997) identified youth involvement in organizations as a key element in the process of developing a youth's "long-lasting" civic identity (p. 629). Two additional studies, utilizing the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Duke et al., 2009; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012), identified family influence as a predictor of a civic engagement, indicating that youth and family involvement play important roles in community development.

Overall, diverse local engagement is often determined, at least in part, by whether or not residents have a social network within the community, feel a strong attachment to their community, have participated in a community as a youth, and/or have had a family environment supportive of community participation. While also acknowledging the influence of economic, political, and social structural systems on community development or lack thereof, for the purpose of wealth and leadership transfer, these civic engagement predictors contribute to the foundation for successful community development programming. However, community development programming might also serve to broaden civic engagement through (a) diversifying and strengthening community social networks (specifically through the inclusion of youth and families) as well as (b) enhancing community attachment. But what outcomes can and should be expected from community development programming and what outcomes might have implications for community leadership transfers?

Outcomes of Community Development

Universal outcomes of community development have long been sought after by community developers and scholars (Blanke & Walzer, 2013). Notable outcomes such as economic indicators (e.g., jobs created or

retained) and community well-being indicators (e.g., hope) are useful in (a) establishing public value (Franz, 2011, 2013; Kalambokidis, 2004; Kalambokidis et al., 2012), (b) providing evidence to stakeholders (Borich et al., 2013; Morse, French, & Scott, 2016), and (c) enhancing feedback for program improvement (Loveridge & Elrod, 2016). However, the search for universal community development outcomes continues not from a lack of measures (Blanke & Walzer, 2013; Community Indicators Consortium, 2019; Success Measures, 2019); rather, the uniqueness of communities' assets, needs, and goals create the challenge of identifying a specific, yet universal set of indicators (Bartik & Bingham, 1995). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's response, via Regional Rural Development Centers, organized community and economic development leaders in Extension to synthesize impact indicators relevant to tangible outcomes, ranging from number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented to value of grants and resources leveraged/generated to number of new leadership positions undertaken (Nichols, Blake, Chazdon, & Radhakrishna, 2015; NCRCRD, 2010, 2019). While psychological outcomes have been increasingly recognized as important to community development programming, the specific relationship between community leadership and community development outcomes remains largely unknown (Apalyiyah et al., 2012; Pigg et al., 2015). Thus, leadership outcomes of community development programming, to date, have largely been absent.

Importance of Leadership Development within Community Development Programming

Community-focused leadership development has been identified as a crucial and desirable asset for rural community sustainability in the midst of national and local changes (Etuk, Rahe, Crandall, Sektnan, & Bowman, 2013; Flora, Flora, Bastian, & Manion, 2003; Pigg et al., 2015; Ricketts, 2009; Russon & Reinelt, 2004; Vogt, Burkhart-Kriesel, Cantrell, Lubben, & McElravy, 2015). In community leadership development, as opposed to individual or organizational leadership development, context matters: "Developing community leadership begins with recognizing that both the practice of leadership and the situation

in which it occurs need to be understood" (Kirk & Shutte, 2004, p. 235). Pigg (1999) offered a similar sentiment by recognizing the difference between community leaders and organizational leaders: "Community leaders cannot rely on formal authority and the power derived from positions to get things done. Instead, they must rely on networks and influence . . ." (p. 196). Pigg et al.'s (2015) argue that, in order for community leadership development (CLD) programs to impact community development, CLD efforts must build stronger attachment to and capacity for the community context. Community interest in implementing such programs has become evident as well. In a report from a 2015 Midwestern rural poll, for example, approximately three-fourths of the near 2,000 survey respondents agreed that strong, effective leadership would prevent their community's decline (75%) and problems in their community could be solved through effective leadership (69%). In contrast, only 40% agreed that their community is effectively preparing youth to become leaders (Vogt et al., 2015).

Community development programs that prepare future leaders can be utilized to unify communities and enhance vitality (Dale, Ling, & Newman, 2010; Pigg, 1999). CLD members create and enhance partnerships and social ties to promote a common purpose among community members (Bono, Shen, & Snyder, 2010; Jones, 2009; Pigg, 1999; Ricketts, 2009). Such CLD programs can increase community knowledge, involvement opportunities, and social motives for civic engagement (Bono et al., 2010; Jones, 2009; Ricketts, 2009; Watt & Ziegler, 2009), creating the interest, knowledge, skills, and social ties critical to effective leadership transfer.

Individual Effects of CLDs

Most research in community leadership development (CLD) programs has centered on individual-level effects. Several program evaluation studies yielded demonstrated increases in individual leadership capacity, including reported advances in leadership skills, leadership behavioral competencies, motivation to engage civically, wider, more diverse networks, and enhanced capacity to deal with complexity through consciousness development (Clark & Gong; 2011; Etuk & Sektnan, 2012; Setknan et al., 2010, 2011; Vincent, Ward, & Denson, 2015; Wituk, Ealey, Clark, Heiny, & Meissen, 2005).

More comprehensive empirically based work has been limited to Pigg et al (2015) five-year study of CLD participation effects among (n = 637) participants in six states from 2000 to 2006, which indicated significant gains between pre- and post-program index scores across all six leadership outcome indices for CLD participants and a stronger rate of learning than control group participants. Pigg et al. tested individual-level outcomes contributing toward Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion, the linkage variables between individual- and community-level outcomes, demonstrating overall model fit (RSEA < .08). The only positive treatment effects from CLD participation in the model, however, were on the individual-level outcome of Community Knowledge, which also emerged as a predictor of Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion. Personal Growth and Efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of Social Cohesion, however was not significantly predicted by CLD participation in the model. Pigg et al. (2015) concluded that the central focus on Civic Engagement as being impacted by CLD participation holds up theoretically in the model, but the Social Cohesion element of the model requires further theoretical consideration as to the impact of CLD programs on social networks.

Overall, the inclusion of leadership development as part of community development programming provides a conducive environment for the development of individual leadership capacity directed toward enhanced social networks and civic engagement critical to effective leadership transfer.

Organizational and Community Effects of CLDs

While most CLD research has focused on individual effects, the inclusion of organizational and community domains in leadership development program evaluation has been highly encouraged (Black & Earnest, 2009). While CLD effects on organizational and community outcomes have been more difficult to measure and test, most studies examined the linkage between individual-level effects and organizational and community outcomes.

One of the most widely used community development models in the evaluation of CLD treatment effects on community outcomes is the Community Capitals Framework (CCF). Flora and Flora (2016) were the first to identify seven valuable elements, or capitals, that

contribute to the composition of a community, namely Built, Natural, Social, Human, Cultural, Financial, and Political Capital. Across CLD studies that utilized asset mapping of community development projects and/or qualitative data to ascertain perception of community impact, human capital, social capital, and cultural capital were commonly identified as being the most frequently developed by CLD participation and mobilized for community development projects (Emery, Fernandez, Gutierrez-Montes, & Flora, 2007; Etuk et al., 2013; Pigg et al., 2015).

Attempts to quantify the effects of CLD participation on organizational and community outcomes have been mixed. Results from Pigg et al.'s (2015) comprehensive study indicated that CLD participants were 2.8 times more likely to join new community organizations, 2.8 times more likely to increase the level of their organizational involvement, and 1.5 times as likely to increase the number of community capital areas represented in their involvement portfolio over time than nonparticipants after controlling for individual factors. Taken together, Pigg et al. (2015) argued that these organizational behaviors represent opportunities to develop bridging social capital (capital that links people across groups; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) and, therefore, civic engagement. Testing a community effects model, however, where individual leadership index scores were converted to community outcomes, was not successful as overall model fit was not within acceptable standards. Etuk et al.'s (2013) program evaluation study provided some evidence linking individual CLD effects to community outcomes as participants who had higher perceptions of their community's cohesion and problem-solving ability indicated significantly higher attributions of the CLD program to positive community effects.

Overall, the strongest demonstration of CLD effects has been at the organizational level, recognizing that very little research has been conducted in this area and early attempts to examine CLD effects on community outcomes have been more difficult to measure and test. The CCF, however, has been a useful, unifying framework to identify potential outcomes as human, social, and cultural capital are frequently mobilized to complete community development projects.

In the context of the current wealth and leadership transfers, well-developed community leadership programs are a platform for communities to prepare youth and adult community members to invest

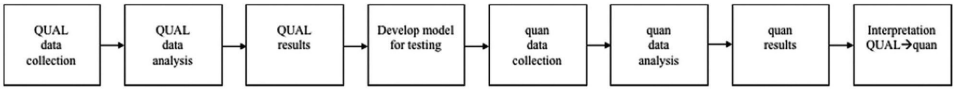

Figure 1 Exploratory sequential mixed methods design (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

and reinvest in their community's current and future generations. The present study provides a unique contribution as it seeks to identify common factors of successful leadership transfer, develop a model describing the process of how effective leadership transfer is facilitated, and test such model.

Methods

Figure 1 outlines the exploratory sequential mixed methods design utilized in this study. Given the lack of existing theory on community leadership transfer, the first phase utilized a grounded theory design to generate a theory around a process (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of leadership transfer in rural communities. The second quantitative phase, occurring after the completion of the qualitative phase, utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) because the theoretical model that emerged from the qualitative phase results involved both structural and measurement questions, which can be evaluated through SEM (Mueller & Hancock, 2010; Ullman, 2019).

Sampling Procedure and Data Collection

For the qualitative phase, five rural community development organizations from a Midwestern state unanimously nominated three rural communities that demonstrated successful leadership transfer trends, as well as sustainable economic status during times of transitions. One community was selected due to a 2005 study indicating that it was the only community within its county to experience an increase in migration and population from 1950 to 2000 ([State] Public Power District, 2005). Additionally, it created a community development leadership program focused on developing individuals and leadership potential. The second community was selected because they,

too, had experienced a population increase (3%) from April 2010 to July 2014 (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Additionally, this community worked with a community development group to establish an affiliate fund to supply community leaders and groups with resources to gain knowledge, skills, and contribute positively to their community. The third community was selected because of a demonstrated active engagement with young alumni, namely a growing young professionals group and an active job bank. Within each community, a local contact was asked to select a diverse pool of engaged community members who could speak to leadership transfer. **Table 1** outlines the sample population distribution in each community based upon number of local nominations and willingness to participate. Data were collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, ranging from 30 to 60 minutes in length, from 19 youth and adult community leaders. Respondents were asked a series of eight questions related to their experiences with leadership transfer in their community. Field notes were taken to include the emotional response, body language, and further observations. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. An interview verification form was signed and submitted along with any modifications to assure participants' agreement of accuracy. All requested modifications were updated before analysis and a pseudonym was applied to each file. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was attained to certify ethical code of conduct.

For the quantitative phase, secondary data were utilized from a comprehensive rural survey conducted in 2015 in one Midwestern state. This is an annual survey designed to understand rural citizen perceptions. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to 6,228 randomly selected households about community involvement and

Table 1 Sample Population Distribution of Men, Women, and Youth by Community for Qualitative Phase.

Community	*Youth*		*Male*		*Female*		*Total*	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Community 1	2	10.5	4	21.1	4	21.1	10	52.6
Community 2	1	5.3	3	15.7	1	5.3	5	26.3
Community 3	0	0.0	3	15.7	1	5.3	4	21.1
Total	3	15.8	10	52.5	6	31.7	19	100

community leadership, with questions pertaining specifically to well-being, community, climate and energy, community involvement, and education. A total of 1,991 responses were received from 86 counties, indicating a 32% response rate. Sample size requirements in SEM are nonlinear functions of the number of indicators, latent variables, and paths as well as magnitudes of factor loadings and factor correlations. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to determining adequate sample size in SEM, the sample size in the present study exceeds minimum sample size recommendations for models with a large number of factors and paths (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, & Miller, 2013) by a factor of four. **Table 2** outlines the demographic data of respondents.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Rural Poll Respondents as a Percentage of the Sample (N = 1,991).

Demographic Characteristic	*%*
Age	
20–39	31
40–64	45
65 and older	24
Gender	
Female	58
Male	42
Education	
Less than 9th grade	1
9th – 12th grade (no diploma)	2
High school diploma (or eq.)	22
Some college, no degree	23
Associate degree	15
Bachelors degree	24
Graduate or professional degree	13
Household income	
Less than $10,000	5
$10,000 – $19,999	7
$20,000 – $29,999	9
$30,000 – $39,999	9
$40,000 – $49,999	12
$50,000 – $59,999	11
$60,000 – $74,999	15
$75,000 or more	32
Martial Status	
Married	68
Never married	13
Divorced/separated	10
Widowed/widower	8

Data Analysis

For the qualitative phase, data analysis closely followed the systematic grounded theory framework outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Specifically, the stages of data analysis were open coding (create an extensive list of themes within the data), axial coding (link categories and subcategories), and selective coding (condense specific or excessive categories and remove categories that were specific to one community). Data were fractured into theme categories during open coding, then reconstructed during axial coding to make connections between categories. The axial coding phase included developing categories according to causal conditions that give rise to the central phenomenon, the context of the central phenomenon, the action/interaction strategies used to manage the phenomenon, and the consequences or outcomes that resulted. During selective coding, interrelationships among axial codes were configured to produce a grounded theory. Data were verified using member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018), memoing to track themes while coding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and triangulation of multiple investigators (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative phase results were audited by a nationwide panel of rural community development experts to ensure that the results were unique and consistent with communities that demonstrate successful leadership transfer.

The conceptual model of leadership transfer that emerged from the qualitative results was then tested as a structural equation model (see **Figure 2**). The qualitative phase findings provided the theoretical justification for the hypothesized variable order and direction of causality. Multiple researchers reviewed the rural survey questions to

Figure 2 Conceptual model based upon qualitative results.

determine which questions represented the latent constructs in the structural equation model. Data were entered into MPlus v.8 (Muthen & Muthen, 2017) and reviewed for entry error. Missing data were coded as '9', and all items were placed on their proper scale. Item missing data rates were less than five percent for each item, and missing data were removed from analysis using pairwise deletion. Skewness and kurtosis for all items included in the model were within acceptable standards of ±2.0 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). Data were analyzed in three phases: (a) preliminary analyses, (b) measurement model testing, and (c) simultaneous measurement and structural model testing. Preliminary analyses were conducted first and descriptive statistics were obtained to ascertain whether or not the data met the basic assumptions of SEM. The measurement models for each latent factor were tested first using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), then overall measurement model fit was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In order to verify the measurement model dimensions and the item-factor relationship pattern (Brown, 2015), the EFA and CFA were conducted with unique data sets. The original data set was randomly split in half via random number generator. The EFA was conducted with one half of the sample (n = 980), while the CFA was conducted on the second half (n = 1180). Following a similar procedure as outlined by Schriesheim and Cogliser (2009), the test of the structural model was conducted with the full dataset (N = 1991). Considering the item-level unit of analysis and that each item was limited to a three- or five-point Likert scale, non-normality of data was assumed. Thus, model parameters were estimated via maximum likelihood robust (MLR) estimation method, which corrects for non-normality and, thus, allows for retention of any possible outliers. Maximum likelihood robust estimation was also utilized to produce more precise standard errors and address endogeneity concerns as the regressors were measured, not manipulated. Criteria regarding model fit included meeting the threshold values of at least two statistics on the following list, as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999): (a) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > .95, (b) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < .06, and (c) Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < .08. Once model fit was deemed adequate, parameter estimates were interpreted.

Results

For the qualitative phase, **Figure 3** depicts the emerging model of leadership transfer from the grounded theory results. As previously mentioned, the qualitative findings were audited by a nationwide panel of six community development experts to ensure that the results were unique to communities that demonstrate successful leadership transfer. The qualitative phase results were presented via Zoom and a follow-up survey was administered. The follow-up survey items asked

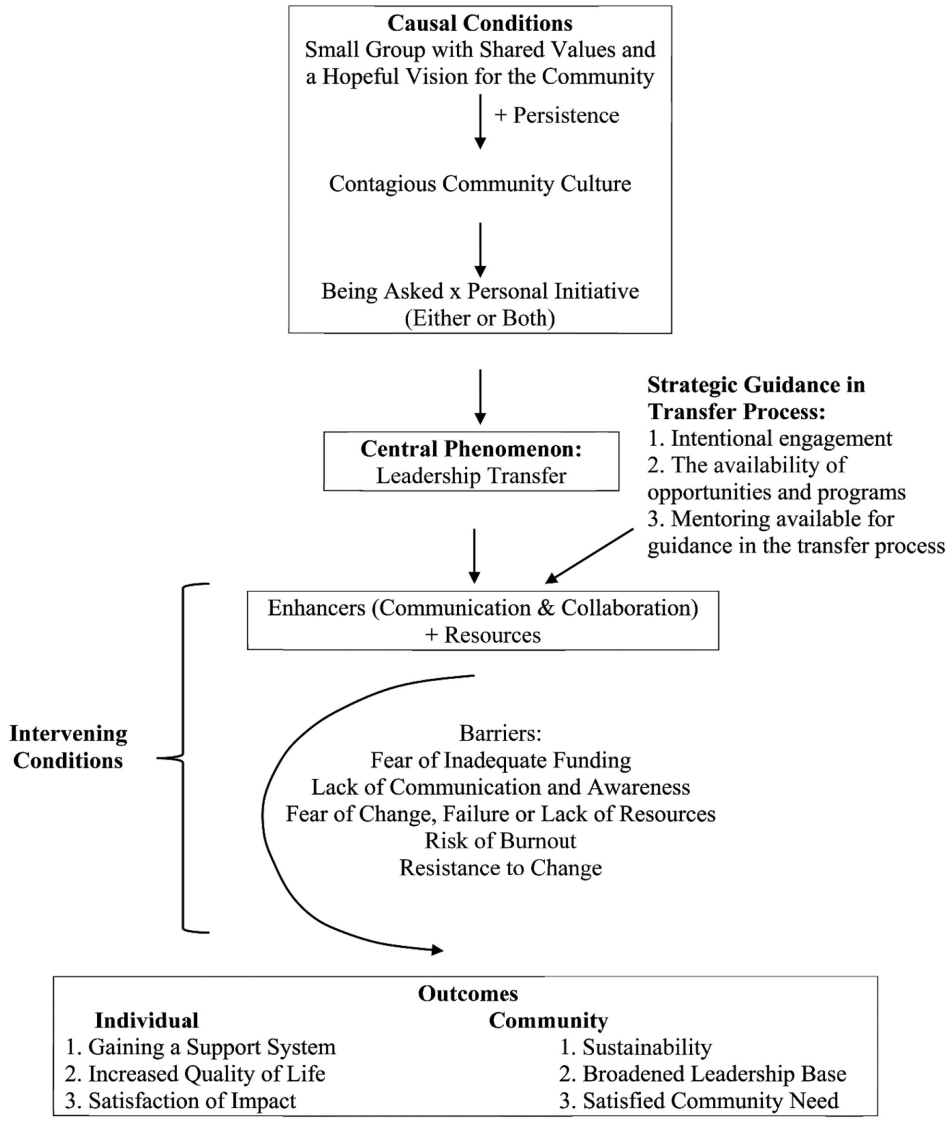

Figure 3 Emergent model of successful leadership transfer from qualitative phase.

panelists to indicate their level of agreement for each major qualitative phase finding as being unique to successful leadership transfer in rural communities (1 = This finding is not unique to communities successful at leadership transfer; 3 = This finding is unique to communities successful at leadership transfer). All panelist respondents rated each major qualitative finding at a '2' or above, offering expert acknowledgment to the qualitative findings as being largely unique and consistent with communities that demonstrate success in leadership transfer efforts.

The process of successful leadership transfer started with a small group of community leaders with shared values and a hopeful vision. Seventeen out of 19 respondents identified previous generations' role modeling of leadership as a significant influence on their own community involvement. Specifically, 12 respondents identified a small group of individuals that demonstrated a hopeful community vision and a shared passion for community investment. These same respondents identified the small group as having set the pace for their community and paved a way they wanted to follow, creating a ripple throughout the area. This phenomenon of role modeling was illustrated by a respondent who was a school official in his community: "I think [our community's] success is largely due to a handful of individuals who ultimately refused to let the community die."

Through persistence, the small group of community leaders created a contagious hopeful community culture which fueled a desire for other community members to get involved, creating a broadened base of involvement. Thus, an environment conducive for leadership transfer was established. Respondents indicated that their community culture changed by the small group of committed leaders who encouraged others to follow suit. When asked how other people's examples impacted his involvement, one respondent replied:

> There's a bunch of people taking time out of their day after work, their weekends, to help with different youth activities. And it kind of got me thinking while I was sitting on my couch watching a hockey game, just thinking, 'I do this a lot. But I could be using this time to actually be doing something for somebody else. And I probably would feel better about myself if I did that. And I probably would feel more productive, and I probably feel like I was making an actual impact in the area. And those are things that I actually care about.'

Other respondents offered similar sentiments: "I think overall that it's contagious in a way that these people are getting involved"; "It's that contagious thing . . . we continue to spread that leadership and community bug to others . . . it's gonna just keep going and going and will continue to generate excitement and . . . desire to be involved." The small group of community leaders ignited a contagious community culture, which created an atmosphere of involvement and an eagerness to ask others to join.

Effective leadership transfer in the three participating communities was facilitated through the use of action and interaction strategies, such as mentoring, growth-facilitating opportunities, and community-based programs – key to providing the necessary development, knowledge, and skills. Of the 19 respondents, 17 mentioned the importance of mentoring, including both formal and informal mentoring, within their community. Of those 17 individuals, 13 identified at least one individual who had been crucial in their own personal development as a leader and the remaining four mentioned mentorship as a key component to leadership transfer. The presence of leader growth-facilitating opportunities included growing the presence of youth leaders on community initiatives ("One of our main focus is engaging the youth . . . they need to know what kind of opportunities are around here so one of the biggest things is getting involved letting them take some ownership . . .") as well as establishing community philanthropic endowments. In addition to opportunities and mentoring, formal community development programs helped facilitate effective leadership transfer by providing incoming leaders with the necessary tools to succeed. Each community had a particular formal program in place that was used to fund, develop, or contribute directly to the community itself. Of the 19 interviews, 16 mentioned these specific community development programs. One respondent illustrated the impact of these programs: "[The class] has challenged us to not only our personal leadership which is very, very important for ourselves and our families . . . but our leadership program has also challenged us to become more connected with our community and to reach out." Community programs, when used in conjunction with opportunities and mentoring, served as effective strategies to facilitate leadership transfer by providing individuals with the tools, knowledge, and capacity necessary to navigate leadership transfer.

The enhancers, identified from the interview data as *collaboration* and *communication*, allowed the action/interaction strategies to circumvent potential barriers hindering leadership transfer. Thirteen respondents mentioned communication and collaboration as a key component to leadership transfer and community cohesiveness. Analysis of the interview data revealed that having enhancers with the action and interaction strategies had the potential to overcome barriers; however, multiple individuals from each community mentioned specific resources such as an economic development board and director, grants, and affiliate funds that provided additional thrust to circumvent barriers.

Outcomes realized from successful leadership transfer included both individual- and community-level outcomes. The individual-level outcomes included: (a) gaining a community support system (n = 15), (b) increased quality of life (n = 10), and (c) the personal satisfaction of giving back to the community (n = 12). The community-level outcomes identified by the respondents included: (a) enhanced sustainability (n = 16), (b) a broadened leadership base (n = 15), and (c) satisfying a community need (n = 10).

For individual-level outcomes, gaining a community support system through leadership transfer opportunities was indicated by 15 participants at a variety of ages as enabling the growth and development of individuals as leaders and professional, organizational, and community members. Ten participants noted that active involvement in community leadership had contributed to an enhanced quality of life and increased their devotion to future community involvement. Twelve participants indicated a sense of satisfaction in giving back: “You get the pleasurable feeling of being a part of something that’s helping the community and so I think those personal rewards, the good feeling of being a part of something bigger than just yourself is kind of what continued to draw me in to continue to do more.”

Community-level outcomes resulting from successful leadership transfer included (a) enhanced leadership sustainability, (b) broadened leadership base, and (c) satisfied community needs. Sixteen out of 19 respondents noted that the intentional engagement opportunities created from active leadership transfer resulted in enhanced leadership sustainability, specifically manifested through efforts toward succession planning, establishing long-term funds, and

significant consideration for future generations. Fifteen participants articulated that the ripple effect created by the small group of hopeful citizens grew the pool of potential leaders, signifying more capable individuals for leadership transfer activity and enabling communities to tap into new perspectives for enhanced sustainability. Last, leadership transfer enabled needs within the community to be satisfied, illustrated by the respondent comment, "I saw a need, and I was concerned that in the 80s we had an agricultural crisis here and we lost people. A lot of our talented people left . . . and it just became apparent to me that we needed to become intentional about creating opportunity."

The emergent model of leadership transfer led to a series of propositions that helped facilitate the creation of a structural equation model. First, a hopeful vision of a small group of community leaders, coupled with a shared value of investing in the community, created an environment for progressive change to occur. Second, with persistence, the small group of leaders in each respondent community accomplished something that initiated a contagion effect around hope. As a result of their efforts, all three communities experienced an accomplishment (the creation of a new community sales tax, the development of a new program, the creation of a community philanthropic fund, etc.) that gained community attention. Third, the contagious hopeful community culture created an incentive for other community members to willingly get involved. Thus, in establishing a broadened base of civic engagement, an environment conducive for effective leadership transfer was cultivated. These propositions led to the creation of a structural equation model (see **Figure 4**), where Belief in Community Leadership (defined as the confidence in community leadership effectiveness) is hypothesized to predict Hope in Community (defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways toward desired community goals; adapted from Snyder, 2002), and Hope in Community is hypothesized to predict Civic Engagement (defined as a sense of personal responsibility to get involved in one's community). While acknowledging the endogeneity of the regressors, previous literature did not necessarily provide a theoretical backing for including controls, and the researchers sought to maximize model parsimony (Bernerth, Cole, Taylor, & Walker, 2018).

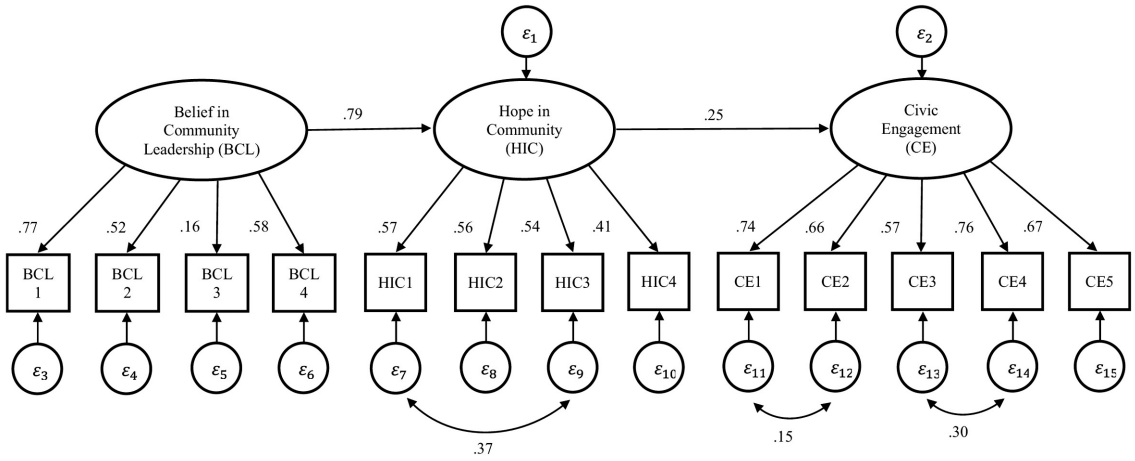

Figure 4 Model 1: Structural equation model with standardized coefficients. RMSEA = .04; CFI = .96; SRMR = .04; R^2 HIC = .63, $p < .001$; R^2 CE = .06, $p < .001$; N = 1,991. All standardized path coefficients significant at $p < .001$.

Survey questions representing respondent perception of Belief in Community Leadership (BCL; "overall, our community's leaders are effective and do a good job", 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), Hope in Community (HIC; "based on what you see of the situation today, do you think that in ten years from now your community will be a worse place to live, a better place or about the same?", 1 = worse place, 3 = better place; "My community is powerless to control its own future, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), and Civic Engagement (CE; "worked together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live", 1 = yes, within the last 12 months, 3 = no, never) were used to create the measurement portions of the SEM (see Figure 4, see Appendix for full set of questions). Preliminary analyses were conducted and descriptive statistics obtained and reported in **Table 3**. Inter-item correlations were all below 0.6; thus, no multicollinearity concerns were present. Measurement model testing was first conducted via EFA on the first half of the split sample (n = 980). BCL, HIC, and CE model fit statistics for one-factor solutions met fit criteria (see **Table 4**). All HIC and CE items were significantly predicted by their respective latent constructs at the $p < .05$ level. Only one BCL item, BCL3, was not predicted by its latent construct. However, since all BCL items represented the latent construct from a theoretical perspective, all items were retained

Table 3 Summary Statistics of Measured Variables in Measurement Model.

	Correlations												
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. BCL1	–												
2. BCL2	.43**	–											
3. BCL3	.10**	−.05*	–										
4. BCL4	.44**	.28**	.08**	–									
5. HIC1	.35**	.22**	.14**	.30**	–								
6. HIC2	.29**	.24**	.20**	.22**	.33**	–							
7. HIC3	.36**	.25**	.13**	.29**	.55**	.29**	–						
8. HIC4	.27**	.13**	.20**	.25**	.19**	.27**	.15**	–					
9. CE1	.08**	.06**	.10**	.03	.10**	.19**	.08**	.09**	–				
10. CE2	.05*	.01	.09**	.01	.07**	.15**	.07**	.12**	.57**	–			
11. CE3	.07**	.08**	.08**	.03	.09**	.18**	.08**	.09**	.45**	.36**	–		
12. CE4	.06*	.07**	.08**	.03	.12**	.15**	.11**	.09**	.56**	.51**	.60**	–	
13. CE5	.06*	.02	.10**	.03	.08**	.13**	.09**	.07**	.49**	.50**	.36**	.51**	–
M	.35	3.17	3.86	3.12	2.04	3.53	2.15	3.63	2.30	1.89	2.47	2.05	1.93
SD	.98	1.03	.83	1.00	.66	.98	.72	.96	.77	.79	.79	.87	.81
Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max	5	5	5	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	3	3
N	1905	1898	1886	1885	1909	1905	1910	1900	1936	1923	1942	1879	1932

BCL = Belief in Community Leadership; HIC = Hope in Community; CE = Civic Engagement.
** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 4 EFA Model Fit Indices for BCL, HIC, and CE 1-Factor Solutions Using Geomin Rotation.

Latent Construct	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
BCL	.98	.06	.02
HIC	.95	.11	.04
CE	.95	.11	.03

BCL = Belief in Community Leadership; HIC = Hope in Community; CE = Civic Engagement; EFA = exploratory factor analysis; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

in further analyses. Confirmatory factor analysis model fit statistics for BCL, HIC, and CE measurement models on the second half of the split sample (n = 1011) were within acceptable standards (CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05) with all items predicted by their respective latent constructs at the $p < .01$ level. Prior to hypothesis testing, a discriminant validity analysis of the predictors was conducted by testing a two-factor model with BCL and HIC items loading onto one factor. This model fit significantly less well as calculated via the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference test and log-likelihood comparison test, χ^2_{diff} (2, 1011) = 19.48, $p < .01$ and χ^2_{diff} (2, 1011) = 21.63, $p < .01$, respectively, signifying the originally hypothesized model as a better fitting model.

Structural equation modeling results indicated that the hypothesized model fit the data adequately (Model 1; see Figure 4). Global fit indices, including CFI = .96, RMSEA = .04, and SRMR = .04, all met fit criteria, indicating Belief in Community Leadership predicted Hope in Community ($\beta = .79$, $p < .01$), and Hope in Community predicted Civic Engagement ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$). Standardized path coefficients are reported in Figure 4 and unstandardized coefficients (along with standard errors) are reported in **Table 5**. Model 1 explained 63% of the variance in Hope in Community, but only 6% of the variance in Civic Engagement.

The qualitative results also specified that while the efforts of community leaders led to a contagious hopeful culture, which facilitated broadened civic engagement, respondents indicated that they engaged in their community because they were asked. Every respondent

Table 5 Unstandardized Parameter Estimates for Model 1.

	Unstandardized	
	Estimate	SE
Latent Variable: BCL		
BCL1	1.00	.00
BCL2	.71**	.05
BCL3	.17**	.04
BCL4	.76**	.04
Latent Variable: HIC		
HIC1	1.00	.00
HIC2	1.46**	.10
HIC3	1.03**	.05
HIC4	1.06**	.10
Latent Variable: CE		
CE1	1.00	.00
CE2	.91**	.03
CE3	.78**	.04
CE4	1.15**	.05
CE5	.94**	.04
Paths		
BCL -> HIC	.39**	.03
HIC -> CE	.39**	.05
Covariance		
HIC1 – HIC3	.12**	.01
CE1 – CE2	.05*	.01
CE3 – CE4	.11**	.01

BCL = Belief in Community Leadership; HIC = Hope in Community; CE = Civic Engagement
** $p < .001$; * $p < .01$

identified "being asked" as a key reason why they got involved in the community, illustrated by statements such as, "I think on every one I was asked if I'd be willing to serve" and "I wouldn't be involved in any of this type of stuff if it weren't for people, you know, asking me if I wanted to be in it."

This qualitative finding suggested there may be both a direct and indirect effect of Belief in Community Leadership on Civic Engagement; thus, a mediation model was also tested. SEM results indicated that the modified model fit the data adequately (Model 2; see **Figure 5**). Global indices, including CFI = .96; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .04, all met

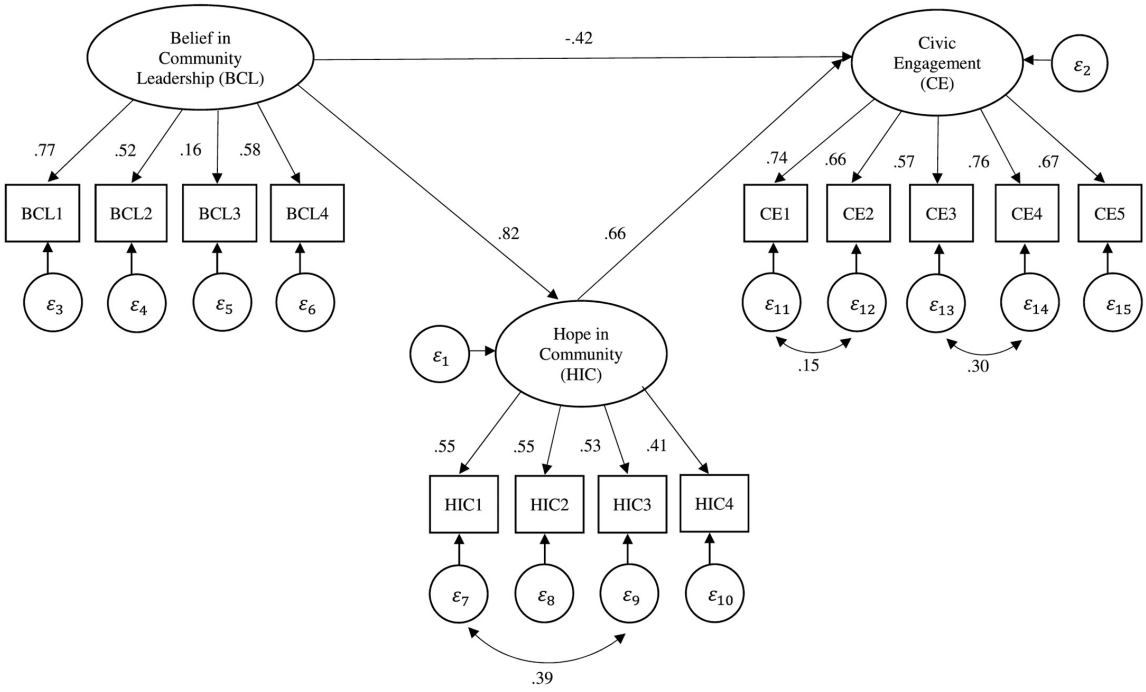

Figure 5 Model 2: Structural equation model with standardized coefficients. RMSEA = .04; CFI = .96; SRMR = .04; R^2 HIC = .67, $p < .001$; R^2 CE = .16, $p < .001$; N = 1,991. All standardized path coefficients significant at $p < .01$.

fit criteria. Direct effects indicated that Civic Engagement was positively predicted by Hope in Community ($\beta = .66$, $p < .01$) and, contrary to expectation, negatively predicted by Belief in Community Leadership ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .01$). Indirect effects indicated that Belief in Community Leadership, when mediated through Hope in Community, also predicted Civic Engagement ($\beta = .54$, $p < .01$). Standardized path coefficients are reported in Figure 5 and unstandardized coefficients (along with standard errors) are reported in **Table 6**. A nested model comparison conducted via the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference test and log-likelihood comparison test both signified Model 2 as a better fitting model, χ^2_{diff} (1, 1991) = 16.76, $p < .01$ and χ^2_{diff} (1, 1991) = 22.50, $p < .01$, respectively. The testing of Model 2 explained 67% of the variance in Hope in Community and 16% of the variance in Civic Engagement, an improvement from Model 1.

Table 6 Unstandardized Parameter Estimates for Model 2.

	Unstandardized	
	Estimate	SE
Latent Variable: BCL		
BCL1	1.00	.00
BCL2	.71**	.05
BCL3	.17**	.04
BCL4	.77**	.04
Latent Variable: HIC		
HIC1	1.00	.00
HIC2	1.48**	.10
HIC3	1.04**	.05
HIC4	1.09**	.10
Latent Variable: CE		
CE1	1.00	.00
CE2	.91**	.03
CE3	.78**	.04
CE4	1.15**	.05
CE5	.94**	.04
Paths		
BCL -> HIC	.39**	.03
BCL -> CE	– .32*	.10
HIC -> CE	.39**	.05
Covariance		
HIC1 – HIC3	.12**	.01
CE1 – CE2	.05*	.01
CE3 – CE4	.11**	.01

BCL = Belief in Community Leadership; HIC = Hope in Community; CE = Civic Engagement.
** $p < .001$; * $p < .01$

Discussion

The qualitative results indicated that the hopeful vision and persistence of a small group of community leaders led to a community development accomplishment, which initiated a contagion effect around hope. This contagious community hope then created incentive for a broadened base of civic engagement, therefore facilitating an environment conducive for effective leadership transfer. These qualitative results were represented in the path model where Belief in Community

Leadership was hypothesized to predict Hope in Community, and Hope in Community was hypothesized to predict Civic Engagement. SEM results indicated that Model 2, a mediation model, better fit the data, where Belief in Community Leadership predicted Hope in Community, Hope in Community predicted Civic Engagement, but that Belief in Community Leadership, only when mediated through Hope in Community, had a positive impact on Civic Engagement. Model 2 results perhaps offer a fuller picture of the qualitative results than the original hypothesized model (Model 1), in that, the environment for effective leadership transfer (in the way of broadened civic engagement) was facilitated when community hope became contagious based upon the community development efforts achieved by a group of hopeful, persistent community leaders. In Model 2, 67% of the variance in Hope in Community was explained by Belief in Community Leadership, suggesting that the community development efforts of community leaders are strongly associated with community hope. Additionally, the direct effect of Belief in Community Leadership on Civic Engagement was negative, suggesting that when there is higher belief in community leadership, community members perhaps feel less personal responsibility to get involved (or conversely, community members perhaps feel more personal responsibility to get involved when there is lower belief in community leadership). However, the direct effect of Hope in Community and the indirect effect of Belief in Community Leadership on Civic Engagement were positive, indicating that when belief in community leadership is mediated through hope, community members feel more personal responsibility to get involved, thus facilitating an environment more conducive for effective leadership transfer. The results of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study provide one tenable explanation of how effective community leadership transfer is facilitated. Replication of this study is necessary and will provide more confirming or disconfirming evidence.

Theoretical Implications: Model the Influence of Hope and Developmental Interactions

The present study offers theoretical significance in its identification and testing of factors associated with leadership transfer so as to improve precision regarding the study of leadership in community

contexts. The results of the present study along with a more judicious review of previous literature perhaps suggest that community development and civic engagement tend to have a circular or spiraling relationship. Pigg et al. (2015) argued that community development requires diverse, local engagement in public processes and several studies identified predictors of civic engagement, arguing its foundation for community development (Crowe, 2010; Duke et al., 2009; Flaherty & Brown, 2010; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Pigg et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2005; Theodori, 2004; Youniss et al., 1997). Yet two of the major research and CLD program evaluation studies reported changes in civic engagement and/or motivation to civically engage as a result of CLDs (Etuk & Sektnan, 2012; Pigg et al., 2015; Sektnan et al., 2010, 2011). Taken together, civic engagement serves as a foundation for community development and effective community development should result in enhanced and broadened civic engagement. The qualitative results from the present study indicated that the community development accomplishment of a small group of civically engaged leaders led to a contagion effect around hope, which then created incentive for a broadened base of engaged citizens. The broadened base of civic engagement then facilitated an environment conducive for effective leadership transfer. The quantitative findings offered support to the theorized paths but also highlighted the critical function of hope. The mediation model indicated that belief in community leadership, only when mediated through hope, positively impacts civic engagement. To date, the creation and contagion effect of hope has not been modeled in CLD literature and should perhaps be an included variable moving forward in the study of leadership in community contexts.

The qualitative results also point to the inclusion of developmental interactions (i.e., mentoring) in the study of community leadership and, specifically, leadership transfer. Effective leadership transfer in the three participating communities was facilitated through the use of mentoring, growth-facilitating opportunities, and formal community-based programs, key to providing the necessary development, knowledge, and skills for leadership transfer. While Flora et al. (2003) identified community-focused leadership development as the core to sustainable communities in the midst of local and national changes,

most CLD research has concentrated on CLD programs (Clark & Gong, 2011; Emery et al., 2007; Etuk et al., 2013; Pigg et al., 2015; Wituk et al., 2005); thus, little has been focused on developmental interactions, such as mentoring and/or coaching. Additionally, the studies focused on CLD content (Apaliyah & Martin, 2013; Bono et al., 2010; Vincent et al., 2015) only make mention of developmental interaction through group and teamwork, not through mentoring and/or coaching. However, many CLD studies tested and reported changes in social cohesion, ties, network, and capital (Emery et al., 2007; Etuk et al., 2013; Etuk & Sektnan, 2012; Pigg et al., 2015; Setknan et al., 2010, 2011). Thus, modeling the influence of developmental interactions in community leadership research may be an important consideration moving forward. Mentoring and coaching have both been identified as promising tools for leadership development, even in a community context (Day, 2000; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Korotov, 2016; Passmore, 2015; Solansky, 2010; Sylvia et al., 2010). Additionally, in consideration of developing younger community leaders for future leadership transfer, several strains of research in K – 12 and higher education have linked mentoring to leadership development, particularly socially responsible leadership (Campbell et al., 2006; Dugan & Komives, 2007, 2010; Dziczkowski, 2013; Hancock et al.,, 2012; Hastings, Griesen, Hoover, Creswell, & Dlugosh, 2015; Komives & Collins-Shapiro, 2006; Komives, Longerbeam, Mainella, Osteen, & Owen, 2009; Priest & Donley, 2014; Thompson, 2006).

Practical Implications

The results of the present study offer important practical considerations for effective organizational and community leadership transfer. Similar to the theoretical implications, the most salient practical implications center around (a) hope contagion and (b) intentional developmental interactions in CLD efforts.

Hope Contagion. While the impending wealth and leadership transfers (Macke et al., 2011; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017) highlight the critical need for effective community development, the qualitative phase results offer important encouragement and consideration for where community development can start. The hopeful vision and persistence of a small group of community leaders in the

respondent communities led to a community development accomplishment, which initiated a contagion effect around hope that incentivized broader civic engagement. Community development efforts intended toward impacting leadership transfer can start small and gain momentum through the spread of community hope. American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead perhaps articulated this idea best through her famous quote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." The community development efforts of a small group of engaged citizens has the power to drive real change through the spread of community hope. The key practical consideration, however, is in the deliberate spread of hope, both in process and in the wake of community development efforts. The quantitative results further elucidated the function of hope in impacting civic engagement as belief in community leadership only had a positive impact on civic engagement when mediated through hope. Facilitating the spread of hope should therefore warrant more thoughtful consideration in community development efforts and perhaps should not be regarded as something that happens by magic or happenstance. Deliberate and consistent communication of community development efforts can provide a vehicle through which community hope can be spread. Often, a communications campaign can be an afterthought to community development work, but perhaps should be a central component and budgeted element.

Developmental Interactions in CLD Programming. Relative to developmental interactions, the results of the present study suggest that CLD programs could be markedly improved by the thoughtful inclusion of developmental interactions, such as mentoring and coaching. As was highlighted in the theoretical implications subsection, while social cohesion, ties, networks, and capital have been identified as direct or indirect results of CLDs, content related to their facilitation is less clear. Enhanced community social networks, when leveraged, can certainly be a powerful tool in the success of community development efforts; however, community development practitioners should not assume that mere proximity to other community members in CLD programs leads to enhanced and productive social networks. Including mentoring and coaching as part of CLD programming has strong developmental prospect in the formation, depth, and

productivity of community social networks. Hastings and Kane (2018) offer important practical considerations when including mentoring and coaching in leadership development programming. For example, mentoring initiatives in CLD programming will require longer-term dedication than coaching, with both formal and informal investments made in personal and professional growth in leadership. Coaching, as a developmental interaction, is a more tailor-made, formal relationship designed to focus on coachee leadership behavior development and modification. Whereas the inclusion of mentoring in CLDs offers more utility for long-term personal and professional development in community leadership, the inclusion of coaching can be an individualized and agile leadership development tool in the wake of delivered CLD content. Considering the research in K – 12 and higher education linking mentoring to leadership development, particularly socially responsible leadership (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012; Collins-Shapiro, 2006; Dugan & Komives, 2007, 2010; Dziczkowski, 2013; Hancock et al., 2012; Hastings et al., 2015; Komives & Collins-Shapiro, 2006; Komives et al., 2009; Priest & Donley, 2014; Thompson, 2006), CLD practitioners may also want to consider the use of mentoring and coaching in developing prospective youth for community leadership roles. For example, through leveraging a partnership with the local school system, high school students could perhaps fulfill some of their community service requirements or social studies assignments by working alongside a community mentor in executing a locally identified community development project.

Methodically Addressing Structural Barriers to Civic Engagement. While the current study's findings offer practical considerations around the deliberate spread of community hope and the inclusion of developmental interactions in CLD programming, CLD practitioners also need to methodically address economic, political, and social structural barriers to civic engagement. Targeting CD and/or CLD efforts toward addressing economic, political, and social structural barriers to civic engagement could perhaps augment the spread of hope to traditionally underrepresented or underserved populations in the community leadership fabric. For example, CLD practitioner efforts dedicated toward changing the systemic and structural barriers might include: (a) Coordinating social movements to invoke public pressure for better racial and gender representation at all levels of community

leadership; (b) Developing innovative and alternative forms of access to community engagement, such as working with local employers to allow paid leave for community involvement, utilizing digital engagement platforms (i.e., Zoom) for working parents, and creating asynchronous opportunities for engagement (digital community feedback forums with personalized invitations and incentives to community members to participate); and (c) Influencing policy by working with local elected officials to remove access issues for new business development and re-assessing local tax policies to benefit economic development.

In addition to methodically addressing economic, political, and social structural barriers to civic engagement, CLD practitioners may also need to anticipate and address the influence of community divisions, compounded by economic, political, and social structural stresses, in transfers of community leadership. For example, CLD practitioners may want to generate public pressure to see contested local elections, with candidates representing diverse racial, ethnic, gender, community tenure, and industries. Additionally, grants from local community foundations might consider requiring proposal requests to address diversity and inclusion efforts within their organization and/or how the successful awarding of the grant will positively impact community diversity and inclusion efforts.

Study Limitations

The restriction of a rural, Midwestern U.S. sample limits the generalizability of the study's findings to urban and global contexts as well as rural regions outside of the Midwest; thus, future research should involve replicating the study in alternative contexts. Specific to the qualitative phase, while grounded theory methods encourage the use of purposive sampling, generalizability of the findings is greatly reduced. Thus, although the qualitative results provided helpful potential indications of successful leadership transfer, the findings may not apply beyond the context of the present sample. Additionally, the grounded theoretical model was generated entirely from interview data. Future research may want to consider triangulating interview data with observational data and community artifacts of leadership transfer so as to better validate the qualitative results.

Considering the longitudinal nature of community development and leadership transfer efforts, another limitation associated with the present study is using one-time-point survey data. Part of this limitation was addressed via the use of both quantitative and qualitative data; however, future research involving longitudinal data from multi-year community development interventions will be necessary in order to provide a more comprehensive examination of leadership transfer in community contexts. Additionally, independent variables in the current study were measured, not manipulated; thus, future research would benefit from examining exogenous variables that can indicate the independent variables or might influence the relationships proposed in this study.

Conclusion: Consider the Role of Generativity

CLD programs, in an effort to successfully manage leadership transfer, may be maximized through the intentional development of generativity. Generativity, as defined by Erikson (1950, 1963), is "the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation," (p. 267), and is made manifest through several forms of commitment to others including mentoring (Hastings et al., 2015; Peterson & Stewart, 1996) and service (Azarow et al., 2003), both of which could serve an important function in CLD programs. Leadership development programs have, in some cases, been directly associated with fostering generativity (Hastings, 2016; Hastings et al., 2015), including: (a) embodiment of one's self-concept as a leader promoting a sense of responsibility to mentor and develop others (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006), and (b) enhanced commitment to others and the common good (Astin & Leland, 1991; Bennis, 1989; Cress et al.,, 2001; Lipman-Blumen, 1996). Furthermore, generativity has emerged as the strongest predictor of social responsibility (Rossi, 2001), thus suggesting that developing generativity through CLD programs may serve as a key factor in sustaining a community through significant leadership and wealth transfers.

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Disclosures There are no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix: Transfer of Leadership Study Item Codebook

Item Name	*Rural Poll Question*	*Min*	*Max*	*Response anchors*
BCL1	Overall, our community's leaders are effective and do a good job	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
BCL2	We have a leadership crisis in our community	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
BCL3	Strong effective leadership will prevent our community's decline	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
BCL4	We are preparing youth to be effective leaders in our community	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
HIC1	Based on what you see of the situation today, do you think that in ten years from now your community will be a worse place to live, a better place, or about the same?	1	3	1 = Worse place; 2 = About the same; 3 = Better place
HIC2	Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My community is powerless to control its own future?	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
HIC3	Communities across the nation are undergoing change. When you think about this past year, would you say. . .My community has changed for the. . .	1	3	1 = Worse; 2 = No change; 3 = Better
HIC4	Ordinary citizens have a great deal of power to help make our community's leadership more effective	1	5	1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree
CE1	Volunteered or done any voluntary community service for no pay	1	3	1 = Yes, within last 12 months; 2 = Yes, but not within the last 12 months; 3 = No, never
CE2	Worked together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live	1	3	1 = Yes, within last 12 months; 2 = Yes, but not within the last 12 months; 3 = No, never
CE3	Belong to or donate any money to any groups or associations, either locally or nationally such as labor unions, charities, professional associations, political or social groups, sports or youth groups, and so forth	1	3	1 = Yes, within last 12 months; 2 = Yes, but not within the last 12 months; 3 = No, never
CE4	Been an active member of the groups mentioned above	1	3	1 = Yes, within last 12 months; 2 = Yes, but not within the last 12 months; 3 = No, never
CE5	Helped raise money for charitable causes besides donating money	1	3	1 = Yes, within last 12 months; 2 = Yes, but not within the last 12 months; 3 = No, never