

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

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Leadership Development in Core-Periphery Organizations

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Organizational theorists have argued that traditional notions of promotion and leadership assume a context of hierarchical positions within an organization. Many emerging organizations such as Wikipedia, open source software projects, and citizen journalism groups organize using neither markets, nor hierarchies, but rather network forms of organizing. Rather than a traditional hierarchy for leadership, network organizations rely on a core-periphery structure in which a small core of leaders have a dominant influence over the organization. Without a formal hierarchy or clear organizational roles and responsibilities, it is unclear how leaders emerge from the time they arrive in an organization as peripheral members to the time they are promoted into leadership positions. These studies aim to explore the factors that lead organizational members to become leaders in core-periphery network forms of organization.

The first study examines the production behaviors, interpersonal interactions, administrative contributions and community building behaviors that lead organizational members to become leaders. The model developed in this study using behavioral data predicts which candidates are promoted to a leadership position with an accuracy of 81%.

The second study uses social network analysis to examine the role weak ties, strong ties, and simmelian ties have on developing organizational members into leaders. We find that early ties to the periphery improved an editor's likelihood of becoming a leader, and later ties to current leaders improve a member's likelihood of becoming a leader. This study also finds that both strong and simmelian ties to leaders have a substantial impact on developing leaders. A qualitative analysis text content in ties with periphery members suggests ties to the periphery provide editors more production and task based support, while ties to leaders provide editors with more support for organization building and administrative contributions.

By combining both behavioral and social network data, the combined model can predict which candidates are promoted to a leadership position with an accuracy of 86%. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.