

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The perception that there exists a lack of leadership can be found throughout history. Currently, according to Robert Putnam, there does appear to be a decline in social capital. This research examines the connection between business leadership style and effects on social capital. Most research on corporate social responsibility focuses on the business entity. This research focuses on servant leadership developed by Robert Greenleaf, and how that leadership style may affect social capital. Articulation, a method described by Stuart Hall, is utilized to analyze Greenleaf's original essay to identify the speakers, the practices used to link the various speakers together and their overall effects. This research finds that there are multiple speakers in servant leadership, many of which are located outside of the business organization. There are four principle practices that link the speakers together: leadership style, service, community, and how power is exercised. The result is necessarily a business that builds social capital both internally and externally, serves the highest needs of its followers while also contemplating the impacts on speakers outside of the organization, including the least privileged among us. This research also argues that the measurement of a servant leader organization will be through elements of service and not purely economic dimensions.

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Serving from the Center: Servant Leadership and Social Capital

by  
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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Daniel Easdale, Author

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Where have all the leaders gone? This is the question posed by Sheena Iyengar (2016), professor of business at Columbia University. Professor Iyengar declares we are facing a global crisis in leadership citing a 2014 survey of 1200 individuals at the World Economic Forum in Davos in which 86% responded that the crisis in leadership posed a “serious challenge” to solving world issues. Complaints about a lack of leaders and leadership and our desperate need for this leadership commodity are commonplace and nothing new. Bennis and Nanus (1997) claimed the “need for leadership was never so great” and Greenleaf (1977) argued that there was a “leadership crisis”. The issue with an apparent lack of leadership is nothing new, partly because we cannot agree on exactly what leadership is, what it looks like in action, and how to measure it. When an outcome is determined to reflect leadership, like profit, it is rarely clear that rising profits are due solely to leadership. Furthermore, is the outcome achieved whether or not directly due to leadership, ethical?

In 2007 Lee Iacocca wrote a book called *Where have all the Leaders Gone?* Iacocca was one of the most famous business leaders of his time and his name is still well recognized today. He is viewed as a leader because, as a commenter on the book’s website states, “you can’t argue with success.” Iacocca also bemoaned the lack of leaders. In his book Iacocca describes nine “C’s” of leadership which are basically all of the character traits that begin with that letter, such as courage, competent, etc., with the one exception being “crisis”. Iacocca inherited a company in crisis, Chrysler, and turned it around financially in the 1980’s. For this business feat he is widely hailed as a leader.

So is leadership defined by a person who has the right characteristics or presents the right behaviors in times of crisis? Most researchers feel this is too simplistic of an explanation. There are many people who share these qualities who are not leaders and there are plenty of leaders that do not have these qualities. And who decides what qualities count as leadership ones? Iacocca’s book is an interesting example of the complexities involved in defining leadership. Iacocca, a business executive, spends much of the book railing against politicians, particularly George Bush. This begs the question of whether the same leadership qualities work in all environments. Does a business leader need the same qualities as a politician? Iacocca appears to feel that leaders would all share the same qualities. Researchers have argued that leadership style



and effectiveness depend on not just traits or behaviors, but also values, contingencies and service. The greatest irony with regards to leadership is there is no shortage of research, there exists a plethora of books and leadership training programs, and yet, an apparent lack of leaders remains.

In this research I will focus on one leadership style and theory called servant leadership. Specifically, I will be evaluating the original essay by Robert Greenleaf on servant leadership entitled *The Servant as Leader*. I will examine what possible connections and impacts this leadership style may have on aspects of social capital. In order to do this I will utilize a rhetorical methodology called articulation to analyze what elements are united within this leadership theory and how servant leadership interacts with forms of social capital.

This qualitative study is appropriate for two main reasons. The first reason is that terms like leadership, ethics, and social capital while defined and analyzed extensively, are largely dependent on personal interpretations and perceptions. Therefore measuring them with quantitative analysis, while valuable, can be limiting. For example, an analysis of a particular outcome seems null if we can't agree that the outcome is an ethical one or even related to leadership. The second reason is that quantitative data can be useful but does not explain why that data is important, right, ethical or unethical. My hypothesis is that servant leadership style and building social capital are synonymous.

So, how to define leadership? Researchers who have looked at many potential definitions of leadership currently describe a few central aspects. Leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers, involves some form of influence, and a shared goal (Ciulla, 1998). This is generally the current working description of leadership by many writers and researchers. However, these same writers and researchers admit the description has changed over time and will continue to evolve (Ciulla, 1998). While this may be an accurate description of leadership, it does not help much in defining "good" leadership. Let's look again at Lee Iacocca. While being hailed as a great leader for his turnaround of Chrysler in the 1980s, Mr. Iacocca was also the president of Ford Motor Co. and instrumental in pushing for the development of the Pinto model (for a description of the Pinto case see Treviño and Nelson, 2014). The Pinto had a known flaw that caused the fuel tanks on these cars to rupture and burst into flames even in low speed collisions. This led to multiple lawsuits and an unprecedented court case where Ford was charged with reckless homicide. Ford was found guilty and although nobody went to jail Ford

received the largest financial penalty in history. What made the case particularly galling to many was the evidence that Ford made a cost analysis of fixing the issue compared to paying for human loss and opted to go with the latter. This all occurred under the leadership of Iacocca. The Pinto case highlights the need for ethical and “good” leadership. Ford made a lot of money selling Pintos, a product that cost many people their lives. Was Iacocca a leader, but not a “good” leader?

Defining what a “good” or ethical leader is can be more challenging than simply defining leadership. Most scholarly work looks at two personal aspects: a leader’s character and behaviors. When looking at business leaders the idea of effectiveness is added. There are obvious difficulties in determining ethical leadership. How do you measure ethical leadership and who decides what the ethical qualities and behaviors of leaders are and what measures of effectiveness will be used? Furthermore, when that leadership is in charge of corporations with global impacts, ethical leadership has possibly never been more necessary than now. Again, there are leaders in many different arenas but for the purpose of this research I will focus on the issue of leadership in a business setting. The theory of servant leadership evolved from a corporate setting and while applicable to all forms of leadership, Greenleaf was particularly interested in business leadership. There are a number of reasons for focusing on businesses; their sheer size, impacts of globalization, changing legal status, influence and power.

Initially, the global economy means that most companies now operate in many locations all over the world. These companies are competing in multiple countries and cultures. The sizes of these companies are equal to or greater than many countries. Depending on how you compare (GDP to revenue, revenue to revenue, etc.) Walmart is equal to or larger than the majority of countries on the planet. In 2010 Walmart’s revenues were larger than Norway which would make it the 25<sup>th</sup> largest country (Trivett, 2011). Another measurement in 2014 would make Walmart the 12<sup>th</sup> largest economy (Freudenberg, 2015). This same report claims that of the top 100 economies, 63 would be corporations. Walmart has 2.2 million employees which is also larger than some countries and is the biggest employer behind only the US Department of Defense and the Chinese Army (Snyder, 2015). U.S. corporations are large and getting larger and there are hundreds larger than small countries. In 2013, according to a New York Times article (Norris, 2014), corporate profits were at an 85 year high while at the same time worker compensation was at a 65 year low (Norris, 2014). The legal status of corporations changed

dramatically in the U.S. with the Citizens United case (2010) which granted corporations status as people. This changed legal status has added to their power and influence particularly in politics and funding political campaigns. Corporations spend millions on lobbyists, negotiate (or hold hostage) tax breaks with states or threaten to move to another location where they can get a better deal (Besson, 2016). Multinational corporations often locate their headquarters in countries considered tax havens to lower business costs. Corporations are large, manage enormous amounts of revenue, have increasing legal protections, and wield enormous power and influence. The largest of these have reached a status where they have been deemed “too big to fail.” For all of these reasons, it is increasingly important that the leaders of these corporations are guided by an ethical leadership style.

The leaders of these companies are also being compensated at historic levels. The average CEO pay rose 997% since 1978 while average worker pay rose 10.9% for the same period. CEO’s now make over 300 times what typical workers make (Mishel and Davis, 2015). Additionally, according to the Pew Research Center, real wages for employees when considering inflation have at best been stagnant or have fallen (DeSilver, 2014). 95% of income gains since the great recession of 2008 have gone to the top 1% (Saez, 2013). Wealth inequality has widened dramatically. The top 20% possess 85% of all the wealth in the US while the bottom 40% has .3% (Norton and Arielly, 2011).

Recent corporate scandals at Wells Fargo, Enron, VW, and dozens of other major companies, not to mention the global recession beginning in 2008 caused in large part by banking practices have increased interest in ethical leadership styles. Confidence in corporate leaders is low and more people question the fairness of the current system. Take Wells Fargo for example. In 2016 Wells Fargo announced it was paying a fine for creating millions of fake accounts. The CEO John Stumpf touted his vision of “eight is great” meaning that each customer should have a minimum of eight products. In order to reach this goal employees began to create phony accounts. 5300 employees were fired, including some who had called the ethics hotline created to report exactly these kinds of fraud and other ethical violations. Many of those employees found it impossible to find work in the banking industry because their records were flagged. Meanwhile CEO Stumpf agreed to forego his annual salary of 2.8 million dollars during the investigation. He was finally forced out and when he resigned he stood to earn a compensation package of more than \$200 million dollars. All the senior officials were allowed to

resign and receive compensation packages. Corporate scandals such as Wells Fargo have fostered a search for “good” and ethical leadership.

There also has been an increase in awareness of how business decisions, particularly bad ones, can have very negative impacts in communities, societies and the environment. This is nothing new, but the housing crisis appears to have made the connection between corporate decisions and social impacts clearer. Millions of homes were foreclosed on after the 2008 crash, millions of people lost their jobs, millions declared bankruptcy, and the entire world economy was thrown into recession. Business has a significant impact on forms of social capital. Robert Putnam (2000) catalogued numerous forms of social capital in communities that are on the decline. Social capital can be defined in broad terms by the organizations, norms, networks, etc. that bring people or a community together. If social capital is on the decline as Putnam suggests and business has a role in impacting forms of social capital, what is the connection? Furthermore, what impact, if at all would the leadership style have on social capital?

The remainder of this thesis will be organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 is the literature review. I will review several categories of leadership theories, including servant leadership. The goal is to determine what broad category of leadership theory servant leadership fits. I also review social capital theories. Chapter 3 is methodology. This will include a brief discussion on the development of articulation theory and then how the method of articulation is applied. Chapter 4 is analysis. The theory of articulation will be applied to Robert Greenleaf’s original essay on servant leadership *The Servant as Leader* identifying speakers and practices and concluding with what are the overall effects of the articulated elements. Finally, chapter 5 is the conclusion. I will summarize the findings as well as discuss limitations and recommendations for further study. One final note, while there most certainly are legal and characteristic differences between terms such as business, organization, and company, the terms are considered synonymous unless specifically stated.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

There exist broad definitions of leadership that are generally agreed upon that include some consistent aspects. Applying the definitions to experience has proven more complex with certain aspects given more or less credence over time and as societal demands change.

Researchers state their version of a definition and then analyze theory by describing aspects of their definition. Leadership theories have evolved and focus on certain features of leadership that can be individual or organizational, behavioral or innate, ethical or driven by any number of motivations. I will begin by looking at general categories of leadership theory (trait, behavior, contingency, ethical) and then look more specifically at where servant leadership fits within the theoretical framework.

### **Trait Theories**

Trait theories can be summarized by the expression “leaders are born.” Early trait theories focused on individual characteristics of those in positions of leadership to find commonalities (Stogdill, 1948). These early trait studies have been referred to as the “Great Man Theory,” and as the name suggests, it was riddled with biases. Great man theory attempted to identify the traits these leaders were born with that distinguished them from non-leaders. The theory and many early studies obviously were gender biased, as well as, ignored the role of class. One typical study published in the American Sociological Review in 1954 looked only at men in the military (Borgatta et al, 1954). They were given a task to complete and the ones with the best results on task one were then given leadership positions for the remaining tasks and also subsequently referred to as “great men” throughout the rest of the paper. However, many studies that looked at “great man” traits found little correlation between these characteristics and success (Stogdill, 1948; Bass and Stogdill, 1990). Stogdill’s 1948 study reviewed over 100 of these studies and identified several characteristics mentioned at least three times in the literature; everything from height and weight to tone of voice. Stogdill concludes that the average person already occupying a position of leadership statistically exceeds other people in five ways: intelligence, scholarship, dependability in exercising responsibilities, activity and social participation, and socioeconomic status (1948). Given the historical context, it would be easy to dismiss these five characteristics as both gender and class biased, as well as, difficult to determine whether leaders possessing these characteristics are good or ethical leaders, or if they

are simply in leadership roles. Stogdill looked at 24 other characteristics and found little, null or negative correlation to leadership. Stogdill, does however, suggest a powerful caveat in explaining leaders with certain traits, it is highly dependent on the situation. He postulated that certain characteristics were effective in certain situations and ineffective in others.

The search for universal leadership traits seemed unrealistic (House and Aditya, 1997). Stogdill's findings shifted many researchers to other theories about leadership. Yet, trait theories did not go away. Researchers refined their techniques to eliminate bias and pinpoint specific personal characteristics and aptitudes. Stogdill repeated his survey of research in 1974, finding many traits with positive outcomes, however, the research tended to treat traits in an "atomistic fashion," suggesting each one acted singly to determine leadership effects (Stogdill, 1974). Stogdill did back away from a purely situational approach, admitting the influence of personal characteristics on leadership, while also making reference to chance and culture as mitigating factors in trait theory. However, while some researchers were hoping to declare trait theories dead (Bennis and Nanus, 1986; Slater and Bennis, 1964) other researchers continued to look at traits that constantly surface in leaders to declare that leaders are different and traits matter, maybe not exclusively but significantly (Cawthon, 1996; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). The difficulty was in measuring the impact of these traits. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) referred to these traits as the "right stuff," terminology scientifically difficult to measure.

With the development of a framework for personality traits, referred to as "The Big Five" or "five factor analysis," empirical studies began to look at the relationship between these personality traits and leadership. The five main dimensions of personality that are still used today are: extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. In a meta-analysis of studies by Judge et al (2002), they find a positive correlation between certain personality traits and leadership emergence and effectiveness. The objective of this thesis though, is not to analyze the various traits that researchers have posited as leadership qualities, but to broadly understand the theory in order to compare it with servant leadership theory in order to draw comparisons and differences.

These correlations between traits and leadership have been described as moderate (Colbert et al, 2012) and raised the question of the use of self-reported personality instruments (Judge et al, 2002). Self-reporting may be biased (Colbert et al, 2012) and may actually lower correlation than when observer reports are used (Oh et al, 2011). Another study found a strong

correlation between personality traits and leadership styles (De Vries, 2012). Further research has since looked at whether these traits associated with effective leadership are effective in and of themselves or because they are perceived to be effective leadership by followers (Colbert et al, 2012, Lord et al, 1986). Social cognitive explanations of perception suggest that leaders emerge by fitting shared constructions (Lord et al, 1986). Followers then tend to allow those to lead who match perceptions of what a good leader is whether or not there are measureable benefits (Chemers and Ayman, 1993). These perceptual-attributional perspectives may credit leaders for successes or failures they had little control over (Calder, 1977; Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987).

It has also been suggested that the nature of business has evolved, at times rapidly, over the last century (Daft, 2014). Not only has company size increased, but also scope as many companies now operate internationally. Companies not only have to pay attention to a bottom line, many now have a triple bottom line. It is understandable that the effective leader 100 years ago may possess completely different traits than the current model of leader as we shall see when discussing contemporary models of leadership (Carter and Greer, 2013).

In conclusion, although there are many contingencies to be considered with trait theory such as bias, situational factors, perception, and organizational structure, it is still undeniable that certain characteristics repeatedly surface in the literature as significant to effective leadership. Importantly though, the research is mixed on how exactly leaders with certain traits impact success or even if they are more effective than leaders with other traits (Yukl, 1981). At a practical level, businesses have a need to promote individuals into roles of leadership that give the company the best chance at success. Personality tests are quantitative information to be considered that appears to be supported by empirical evidence, although decisions based solely on personality are subject to a battery of contingencies and have a tenuous correlation to success.

## **Behavior Theories**

While there may be some merit in attributing leadership to traits, the evidence is not compelling in correlating effective or even leadership to just traits. If not traits, then what other factors could be attributable to effective and successful leadership? Behavioral theories focus on the actions of leaders as an explanation for why individuals become leaders. Behaviors also have the added implication that they can be learned, thus adding credence to the idea that leaders are “made” (Daft, 2014).

Similar to traits, behaviors were categorized into larger groups to facilitate description. An early study divided leadership behavior into autocratic and democratic categories (Lewin And Lippitt, 1938). Interestingly, they found that performance was achieved with both styles, but there were other outcomes and implications. Performance under autocratic style was achieved as long as the leader was present, but faded when the leader was absent. Satisfaction and autonomy was higher under democratic style. Also significant was the researcher's assertion that behaviors could overcome traits, a scientific fake-it-till-you-make-it explanation or in spite of one's natural traits, a person could demonstrate "unnatural" behaviors or behaviors incongruent with their natural traits when leading. If this is true then behaviors and thus leadership could be learned. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) described these two general categories of autocratic and democratic as being on a continuum. A leader could be more autocratic and less democratic, more democratic and less autocratic or any combination of the two along a continuum. They also suggested that the situational circumstances of the interaction would dictate how much autocratic or democratic behavior to use.

Researchers at Ohio State University took a list of almost 2,000 behaviors and narrowed them down to two categories: consideration and initiating structure (Hemphill and Coons, 1957). Consideration describes the extent a leader is concerned about subordinates; initiating structure describes a leader's regard for the task. Significant is the dichotomy established between people and task. These two categories were not described as a continuum; rather a person could be high or low in either category. Furthermore, the researchers found that any combination of high-low consideration-initiating structure could be effective. Additional research concluded that leaders that were more considerate had higher subordinate satisfaction rates measured by less turnover and grievances (Fleishman and Harris, 1962, Fleishman, 1998). However, research focusing on productivity or output found leaders with initiating structure behaviors to be more effective (Halpin and Winer, 1957). Additional research found the most effective leaders displayed high levels of both consideration and initiating structure (Hemphill, 1955). The connection of behaviors to effective leadership appeared to be highly significant to the outcome being measured.

Researchers at the University of Michigan evaluating business organizations developed a four factor description based on employee-centered and job-centered approaches (Bowers and Seashore, 1966). The four factors in this research are: support, goal emphasis, work facilitation,



and interaction facilitation. While these categories were similar to the Ohio State categorizations, there are two significant differences. Researchers found the two categories to be incompatible (Daft, 2014). A leader was identifiable as either employee-centered or job-centered but not both. The other significant finding was that the behaviors associated with leadership could be carried out by others in the group (Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Yukl, 1981). This is a significant observation recognizing that leadership behaviors can be exhibited by people in non-leadership roles. Again, the importance of the situation is cited as a significant factor in the emergence or use of certain behaviors. Blake and Mouton (1964) would later develop a leadership grid that charts seven distinct leadership styles depending on the level of concern for people and results.

One issue that both trait and behavior theories share is that most research is questionnaire based either given to leaders themselves or in most cases to subordinates (Yukl, 1981). These studies offer a static snapshot in time. This methodology makes it difficult to determine causality (Yukl, 1981). If for example a significant correlation is found between a leadership behavior and a performance outcome, it is not possible to determine whether the behavior impacted performance or vice versa or by an alternative variable. Testing this in the field poses issues around asking leaders to be less considerate and potentially harm performance and/or production and employee satisfaction. Laboratory studies have been conducted with university students (Herold, 1977) but results can be interpreted as suggestive rather than conclusive (Yukl, 1981). One field study offered training to supervisors and measured pre and post subordinate response (Hand and Slocum, 1972). While results suggest a positive correlation between consideration and positive outcomes, situational factors still influence confidence in agency (Yukl, 1981).

Another difficulty with behavior theories of leadership is the lack of consensus on taxonomy. Hemphill and Coons (1957) at Ohio State suggested two categories; Bowers and Seashore (1966) developed four. Other researchers have proposed six categories (Morse and Wagner, 1978), twelve (Stogdill, 1974), and even nineteen different behavioral categories (Yukl, 1981; Yukl and Nemeroff, 1979) for evaluating leadership behavior and effectiveness. This issue of taxonomy still plagues behavioral research (Yukl et al, 2002; Yukl, 2012). A broader taxonomy will relate to more kinds of leaders, but be situationally less useful in determining effectiveness. More specific categories can have the opposite effect and be more difficult to administer. Attempting to narrow down all the possible behaviors, like traits, to a few broad categories will necessarily limit nuance and offer only general conclusions. However, leadership

behavior does impact performance and outcomes. Research has found a positive significant relationship between consideration behaviors by leaders and various measures of outcomes and performance (Fisher and Edwards, 1988; Chemers and Ayman, 1993).

Trait and behavior theories have one big downside; there are no universal traits or behaviors that are predictors of effective leadership. Some traits and behaviors correlate more than others with positive results but often leaders with different traits and behaviors can produce results. For these reasons researchers focused on situational factors that might impact when certain behaviors would be effective. I am calling these generally contingency theories.

### **Contingency Theories**

In the literature, situational theories and contingency theories are used extensively and interchangeably. I have chosen to refer to them as contingency theories. Contingency theories, as the name implies, means that something is dependent on another thing. When describing leadership theories, whether or not to use specific behaviors or traits is dependent on the special situational characteristics (Daft, 2014; Yukl, 1981). Contingencies are the next level of complexity when attempting to describe leadership and effective leadership. If certain traits and behaviors cannot consistently explain why leaders are effective then analyzing the situation in which certain traits and behaviors are effective may lead to more conclusive results. However, while this approach may sound like common sense, adequately defining and evaluating what a “situation” is can be challenging (Korman, 1973; Chemers and Ayman, 1993). Situations are not static and are described differently depending on one’s perspective. One advantage that a contingency theory has over trait or behavioral theory, however, is its adaptability to circumstances (Chemers and Ayman, 1993; Daft, 2014).

Contingency theories are broadly divided into three categories: leader, situation and follower (Daft, 2014). Leader contingencies are traits, behaviors, and styles. Situational contingencies would be factors such as task, structure, systems, and environment. Follower contingencies refer to elements such as follower needs, maturity, training, and cohesion. There are many theories and models that look at one element of situational factors to describe effective leadership. I will evaluate one theory from each of the three situational areas.

Hersey and Blanchard’s situational theory (1972) is a contingency model that considers follower characteristics to be the essential element in a situation and for determining what would

then be the effective behavioral response from the leader (Hersey and Blanchard, 1972, Yukl, 1981). Hersey and Blanchard describe follower readiness on a scale of low to very high using two criteria: ability and confidence. Then, depending on the levels of ability and confidence of the followers, the leader would then apply one of four leadership styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and entrusting. The balance between follower readiness and leadership style slides along the two scales observed in behavioral theories: concern for people or concern for the task (Hemphill and Coons, 1957; Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Blake and Mouton, 1964). If followers need more guidance then the leader is more directing and more concerned about the task; if the followers are more independent then the leader is more supportive or entrusting and more concerned about the relationship. The theory assumes that follower readiness can be evaluated and identified and that the leader is keenly self-aware of their style and aware of what leadership response works best in each situation.

Hersey and Blanchard's theory understands that leader behavior may matter little if an employee lacks the training to operate machinery, for example. While a leader may have a task-oriented behavioral approach that may work well in this situation, it would not be effective for employees that are high-functioning, self-motivated individuals or groups. One contribution of this contingency theory is that leaders can impact outcomes by modifying behavior to match employee's ability and confidence levels and to build these capacities within the organization (Hersey and Blanchard, 1972; Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Yukl, 1981). It recognizes that leaders can adapt their behavior to meet individual subordinate's needs and continue to modify behavior as the situation changes (Yukl, 1981). On the other hand this theory has been criticized for its dependence on self-reporting which can skew data (Bass and Stogdill, 1990), as well as the difficulties of measuring maturity (Yukl, 1981). Yukl (1981) argues that the definitions are too broad and therefore impractical. It lumps situational factors into larger categories but is not nuanced enough to be very practical and does not consider the impact of other situational factors. Other researchers have argued that there is little evidence to support the theory (Yukl, 1981; Blank et al, 1987). They found that leader behavior did not have much effect on outcomes such as job satisfaction (Blank et al, 1987). Others suggest that a balanced approach of task- and people-oriented styles is always the best (Blake and Mouton, 1981).

An example of a contingency theory that focuses on situational elements is Fiedler's Contingency Model (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler's theory starts with the two major behavioral theory

categories: relationship-oriented or task-oriented. Fiedler suggests a questionnaire where one describes their least preferred co-worker (LPC). This questionnaire helps determine whether a leader's style is more task or people-oriented. Then a leader evaluates a situation based on three key elements: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power (Chemers and Ayman, 1993; Daft, 2014; Fiedler, 1967). The leader-member element refers to factors within the relationship between leader and subordinates such as trust, respect, and confidence. Task structure refers to clear goals, well-defined tasks and procedures. Tasks that are more creative such as research or strategic planning are less favorable to leaders. Position power refers to the amount of formal authority a leader has which includes organizing, evaluating, rewarding and punishing subordinates (Daft, 2014). Depending on the diagnosis of these three areas, a leader could surmise whether task-orientation or relationship orientation style would work best (Fiedler, 1967; Daft, 2014). Depending on the favorability of these three situational elements a relationship-oriented or task-oriented leader would have better results. This model gives a leader the ability to evaluate the favorability of the situation in order to employ a behavioral response that is more or less task or relationship-oriented depending on the analysis of the three situational factors.

As with Hersey and Blanchard's contingency theory we find similar critiques of Fiedler's theory in the literature. Researchers have applied the model and have found little statistical significance or predictability in their results (Graen et al, 1971; Nathan et al, 1986; Bass and Stogdill, 1990). Determining the link between least preferred co-worker, a leader's situational control and performance outcomes has been vague (Ashour, 1973; Chemers and Ayman, 1993). Chemers and Ayman refer to this dilemma as the "black box" of the theory (1993). Demonstrating the connections between situational factors included in the model and outcomes has been inconsistently shown. Others have questioned the weighting of the situational factors as random and arbitrary (Shiflett, 1973). There is no rationale for the weighting of the three situational factors. Finally, as with other theories, Fiedler's model does not consider other significant factors such as gender and culture (Chemers and Ayman, 1993).

A contingency theory that analyzes the leader situational factors is the Vroom-Yetton Contingency Model (Vroom and Yetton, 1973), also referred to as normative decision theory. This model looks at two principle ideas; leadership styles and decision making processes. The model first analyzes and diagnoses the decision making situation. The leader evaluates decision

criterion such as leader expertise, significance of the decision, urgency, importance of commitment, and team cohesion. Then the leader determines the amount of participation from subordinates that can be incorporated into the decision making process. Leadership styles range from autocratic where the leader makes the decision alone to very democratic where the decision is delegated to a group to make independently. Once the situation has been evaluated, decision procedures are divided into either autocratic, consultation, or joint decision making (Vroom and Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 1981). This model leans heavily on the situational factors of the leader to accurately assess the decision to be made, but also considers the response of subordinate's commitment to the decision, or in other words decision acceptance (Yukl, 1981). The goal is to maximize decision quality and subordinate acceptance (Yukl, 1981).

Field research found that the model matched leader's decisions in a majority of the situations measured (Vroom and Jago, 1978, Pate and Heiman, 1981). Furthermore, the decisions were seen to be effective about two-thirds of the time. A later version of the model improved the validity by adding questions designed to parse out individual or group problems, the amount of knowledge subordinates possess, and cost savings as variables to consider (Vroom and Jago, 1988; Ettlign and Jago, 1988).

As with other contingency theories once again the issue of validity using self-reported data is a critique (Field, 1979). Self-reported measurements introduce the possibility of bias. Jago and Vroom (1982) found different subordinate perceptions of male and female autocratic leaders. Females were perceived negatively while males were modestly positive. Researchers also found evidence of validity but only with managers and not subordinates (Field and House, 1990). One possible explanation is that the role one has, either manager or subordinate, provides a unique perspective on the prescriptive nature of the model (Field and House, 1990; Heilman et al, 1984). Part of the discrepancy in role perspective is that subordinates never rated autocratic behavior as more effective even when the model prescribed using that behavioral response (Heilman et al, 1984). As had surfaced with previous theories, a balanced approach between autocratic and democratic in this theory seems to always be preferred by subordinates (Heilman et al, 1984). The theory also has lacked statistically significant results (Field, 1982). Yet another critique of the model is that it fails to take into consideration other factors influencing decision making. One study found constructive controversy accounted for more decision success, indicating the Vroom-Yetton model may be initially useful in selecting a style, but that constructive

controversy may make a greater contribution when actually making the decision (Tjosvold et al, 1986) or that decision compliance is higher after an interactive group process (Ettling and Jago, 1988). Other studies dispute degree of participation as the sole leadership behavior influencing effectiveness (Sauers et al, 2005; Locke and Schweiger, 1979). Subordinate participation did not increase productivity just satisfaction. Autocratic leadership and subordinate knowledge were found to increase productivity (Locke and Schweiger, 1979).

While there are many difficulties in ascribing leadership behaviors to particular contingencies, it is important to remember that no single contingency theory professes to deal with all the facets of leadership (Vroom and Jago, 1988; Sauers et al, 2005). The models presented here look at specific situational factors and leadership behaviors; task or people-oriented behaviors. Broader descriptions of situational factors allows more generalized interpretations but little nuance. Yukl (1981) suggests that contingency theories are better at suggesting important variables. In limited situations, contingency theories offer generalized guidelines for leader behavior.

It is difficult to overlook the criticisms that contingency theories struggle to incorporate alternative behavioral responses, additional perspectives and particularly that the literature shows that multiple responses can be viewed as effective and successful (McCall, 1977). While an autocratic behavior may be the most likely response for success in certain circumstances, many times it is not and knowing when the scripted behavioral response is not the appropriate one for success is beyond contingency theory's reach. It could be as Kerr and Jermier (1978) suggest that there are substitutes for leadership that have more influence than any particular style, such as policy, practices or culture. What all of these theories to this point have not addressed is whether a decision, behavior or goal is ethical or not and how that would factor into leadership style.

### **Ethical Leadership Theories**

Ethical leadership styles attempt to address the issue of whether a goal, decision, behavior, policy, and any number of issues that arise in business are right or wrong. Answering this question has been the subject of vigorous philosophical debate for millennia. Take for example the position of Northouse in his textbook on leadership (2001). He claims that "all leadership is ethical leadership." Leaders have more power than followers and use influence over people to achieve their vision or goals (Northouse, 2001). A leader has to consider every action

and word as ethical because of the participation of others. However, no sooner than this argument is made and someone brings up Hitler. James Burns brings it up in the very first sentence of the foreword in *Ethics, The Heart of Leadership* (Ciulla, 1998). Is Hitler a leader? If a leader is someone who works with people, has influence and working towards a common goal, as is my working definition of leadership in the introduction, then Hitler must be considered a leader. But, is he a good leader?

Ciulla (1998) offers a way to distinguish what good may look like. She suggests there are two elements: morally (or ethically) good and technically good or effective (Ciulla, 1998). Hitler may have been technically good and morally reprehensible, according to Ciulla's theory. However, other researchers suggest that Hitler was not a leader at all, but "merely" a manager (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). "The manager does things right and the leader does the right thing" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). That is the heart of the question, how do we know what the right thing is? Whether one is manager or leader, "good" or effective, both leaders and followers adjudicate values to every action and individual. We may not agree on whether an action is good or bad, even with Hitler there are those that support his actions, but we either individually or communally assign right or wrong.

Agreement on ethical decisions may be elusive. However, there are a few different approaches to looking at the issue of ethics in leadership. There are three broad categories of ethical theories. They are virtue ethics, deontological, and teleological or consequentialist theories (Treviño and Nelson, 2014; Northouse, 2001). Deontological approaches focus on duties, obligations and principles: the word *deon* is Greek for duty. Teleological theories focus on the consequence or results of a decision or action. Finally, virtue ethics focus on the integrity of the actor rather than the act (decision or action).

Virtue ethics focuses on the moral actor not the moral act. In a few words, it means to be a good person (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). The factors to be considered are a person's character, motivations, and intentions. It is not that principles or consequences are not considered, but they are seen as evidence of a person's character and integrity. Virtue ethics are used frequently in legal arenas and with professional organizations. One's motives and intent is significant in determining the severity of a crime, for example. The Hippocratic Oath taken by doctors is an example of a pledge to be a person of integrity, at least minimally, in doing no harm. Virtue ethic theories may seem quite individual, and they are, but they are also influenced by relevant moral

communities, membership in formal or informal groups. If a person has a strong personal sense of integrity and relevant moral communities then the pursuit of integrity and ethics may be a stronger compass. Virtue ethics are still discussed and taught because researchers feel they can be learned and practiced and applied to organizational settings (Weaver, 2006; Velasquez, 1982). It is not a question of nature, rather nurture. “Instead of teaching people what to do, leaders should be training people what to be” (Northouse, 2001). So what are these virtues? Aristotle suggested several including self-control, honesty and justice (Northouse, 2001). Velasquez added more especially for leaders: public-spiritedness, benevolence and humility, for example (Velasquez, 1982). While most people can agree that certain virtues are generally agreed upon to be good, there is a sense of acculturation and relativism. Depending on the group, community, nation or other defining moral community, these valued virtues may change or be more or less important.

Another broad category of theories of ethical leadership is a deontological approach. Deontological ethics is first and foremost an approach around moral conduct. This theory argues that individuals have a duty to uphold universal principles in all situations: always tell the truth, never take a life, for example. An ethical dilemma would be resolved not by weighing the consequences but by doing what is “right” (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). An example of a deontological theory is Emmanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative. Kant’s moral rule was, “Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature” (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). In other words, what kind of world would it be if everyone made the same decision or behaved in the same manner?

There are two principal issues with a deontological approach. The first is how to decide what duty takes precedence over others. When two principles or rights come into conflict, which one is more significant? Should you be loyal to your boss or to the company; should you obey an order at the expense of sacrificing another sacred duty? Another conflict arises when upholding a deontological principle would have devastating consequences. Examples given in the literature are often extreme cases where telling the truth may cost an innocent person their life (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). To answer these types of ethical issues, theorists have turned to teleological theories.

Teleological theories weigh the consequences of decisions. There are many theories within the teleological framework. They can be visualized as moving along a scale of concern



where at one extreme is concern for oneself and at the other extreme concern for others. On the end most concerned with self are personalistic ethics, in the middle more utilitarian style theories and at the other extreme more altruistic ethical styles. As a leader gravitates from a more personalistic style to one incorporating more concern for others, the issue of defining who those others are becomes paramount.

Starting at the more personalistic end, these ethical theories should not be confused with egotism. These are theories that suggest moral rightness comes from one's own conscience or from a voice within or a gut reaction (Hitt, 1990). Philosopher Martin Buber is a proponent of personalistic ethics. One's personal convictions and conscience serves as the ultimate standard to live by and to fulfill one's purpose in life. Living according to one's conscience is how right and wrong are distinguished (Hitt, 1990). Another way of describing this ethic is a "gut reaction." A person living by his own conscience can be willing to stand alone, defy group think and react without having to weigh the consequences or rules. The locus of control for a leader with a personalistic approach to ethics would be individual.

This approach obviously poses some challenges in application. The first is how to justify any decision other than with "it felt right to me." If that is the criteria then how can any conflict be resolved? Each individual would have as much right to the truth as the next. The result could be ethical relativism (Hitt, 1990). Buber is the antithesis of Kant. Buber argues that there are no universally valid moral laws, no categorical imperative (Hitt, 1990). Further complicating personalistic ethics is that one's beliefs are expected to change over time as one matures. Buber exemplified his theory but it would be easy to see how this theory could devolve into narcissism or self-interest. It would also be challenging to apply within an organization and indeed we see most organizations develop common values described in mission and values statements. Personalistic ethics are one end of the spectrum of considering consequences.

Moving from the personalistic end of the spectrum towards a consequentialism that incorporates the concerns of self and others, one finds several theories. The most commonly referred to of the theories is utilitarianism which is often summarized as "do the greatest good for the greatest number of people" (Treviño and Nelson, 2014; Northouse, 2001). Utilitarianism is John Stuart Mill's theory which basically attempts to maximize happiness or pleasure (Hitt, 1990). Utilitarianism is a common theory used to evaluate decisions not just by businesses but almost universally (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). It is popular for many reasons, but particularly

because it is very practical and analytical and requires one to consider all persons affected by a decision (Treviño and Nelson, 2014).

Utilitarianism is used constantly because it is possible to make a list of stakeholders, possible consequences and evaluate them quantitatively. There is an example in Hitt's book that uses a utilitarian approach to evaluate the decision to get married or not (1990). Listing all the outcomes with a cost benefit approach can certainly be helpful for indicating which decision would have more potential benefits and maximize happiness on a measureable basis. Another benefit of utilitarianism is that one must include all stakeholders in the analysis. In order to identify the decision that benefits the greatest good, all persons or groups affected need to be considered. Including others in the calculation is what moves utilitarianism up the scale of ethical theories towards more concern for others and less for oneself (Northouse, 2001).

Business ethics textbooks often include a list of stakeholders that should be considered when making decisions which include owners, consumers, and employees (Ferrell and Fraedrich, 1997). This could be considered a starting point. Each of those areas could be subdivided. Employees can be further categorized by management and hourly, full-time and part-time, or by seniority for example. Other categories could be added such as local communities or environmental impacts. Evaluating who are the others impacted by decisions and their positive or negative consequences is practical, relatively easy to convert to a quantitative measure, and assures that in most cases a greater percentage of benefit will occur over harm.

There are, however, plenty of challenges with utilitarianism as well. The first is that it is difficult to acquire all the necessary information needed to make quantitative decisions (Treviño and Nelson, 2014). By the same token it is difficult to anticipate all of the consequences and to apply an equitable system of measurement of each consequence. Finally, and most importantly, a decision on paper of what may bring the most benefit may be a horrifically immoral act, such as slavery, or going to war. It would be easy to see how the rights and needs of minority groups could always be justifiably trampled using a system of utilitarianism (Treviño and Nelson, 2014).

Another theory that can be placed on the grid of concern for oneself and others is social contract theory. Social contract theory is Rousseau's philosophy on ethics developed during the Enlightenment (Hitt, 1990). Many researchers look at this theory as a unique category but it appears to me to work as a utilitarian style approach. The reasoning for not including it by most

researchers as a consequentialist approach is that Rousseau believes “the morality of a particular course of action cannot be determined by its anticipated consequences” (Painter-Morland, 2008). However, even if hindsight proves an action to be unethical after the fact, decision makers generally consider at least some anticipated consequences. For this reason I include social contract theory here as a utilitarian approach.

Rousseau attempted to describe how an individual could submit to some form of rule without losing his personal autonomy. Rousseau’s thinking about this relationship between individuals and states is widely credited with influencing the founding fathers of the United States. The basic concept is defined as “the moral rightness of an action is determined by the customs and norms of a particular community” (Hitt, 1990). This is a democratic approach where members of a community decide what those customs and norms will be. In some respects, this sounds very utilitarian. Assuming members of the community who decide or vote have access to information, together they decide what direction maximizes the greater good. Clearly many may consider more egotistical or personalistic consequences but as a whole the decision attempts to channel the will of the people and hopefully maximize the greater good. Individuals are willing to forego some personal freedoms for the benefit of belonging to a larger social community (Hitt, 1990).

Businesses and business ethicists are drawn to social contract theories because they replicate democratic applications at many levels. Creating a corporate or institutional culture is elemental for leaders. This corporate culture is created through policy, procedures, mission and values statements, the examples set by leaders, daily interactions among personnel, and many other forms. Culture is an unavoidable reality of business so managing or even taking advantage of the culture is vital to business. Apart from Rousseau there are many social contract theories. Dunfee and Donaldson (1994) developed an Integrated Social Contracts Theory (ISCT). Amitai Etzioni (1996) discusses an approach called responsive communitarianism which also attempts to balance individual freedoms within a social context. These theories and others reflect the reality of life and business where at some level individual beliefs and values are modified or integrated into generally agreed upon social norms.

However, as all of us know who live in a democracy or community, there are limits to social contract theories. Many philosophical issues are raised such as how to determine the general will when there is no clear majority or sharp divisions (Hitt, 1990)? As always, how do

we determine the common good (Hitt, 1990)? Is there a hierarchy of communities? It is common for individuals to belong to several “communities” whether political, religious, or social. What if these communities have conflicting ideas of what is the common good? Would this mean that the common good or moral guidelines change depending on the community one is in? Finally, what about minority groups or even the dissenting voice? What is their place within the social contract theories? These are difficult questions for social contract and utilitarian theories to answer.

At the other extreme of ethical theories is altruism. In an altruistic theory an action or decision is moral if its primary purpose is concern for the best interests of others (Northouse, 2001). A leader with an altruistic ethic would serve the best interests of others even if they are contrary to their own self-interests (Northouse, 2001) or in cases of “hard core altruism”, sacrifice self-interest even when there is no hope for reward (Bowie, 1991). Bowie refers to the former as reciprocal altruists. Altruism has been seen as a compartmentalized value for our private lives with little utility in business, especially in a capitalist system of competition where there are expected winners and losers (Kanungo and Conger, 1993). Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction, when modern businesses make poor ethical decisions they can have global effects. This is one reason altruistic theories are receiving more attention than ever. Another reason is that there are plenty of examples of successful businesses utilizing altruistic styles of leadership such as Starbucks or TDIndustries (van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2010; Baldner, 2012).

Altruistic theories are appealing for a few reasons. First they appear to be universal in the sense that all cultures share values of treating others well (Johnson, 2005). It is a theory that has been around for millennium, and is as ancient as it is modern. Second, altruism harmonizes shared personal values in all aspects of one’s life and does not compartmentalize private and public aspects (Kanungo and Conger, 1993). Thirdly, although we can’t always agree on what values we share, we all agree that ethical behavior--particularly for leaders--is important personally and for society (Johnson, 2005). Finally, altruistic ethics can be very powerful and inspiring for followers (Johnson, 2005).

There are several altruistic theories that generally focus on a certain aspect of leadership. For example, Heifetz’s perspective on ethical leadership suggests that leaders are to assist followers in confronting conflict (Heifetz, 1994; Northouse, 2001). Leaders should use their authority to create a safe place for followers to confront conflicting values that emerge,

especially in rapidly changing work environments (Heifetz, 1994; Northouse, 2001).

Transformational leadership and servant leadership are also altruistic theories. I will cover transformational leadership briefly before looking in depth at servant leadership.

Transformational leadership began to receive attention with the publication of *Leadership* by James Burns in 1978 (Johnson, 2005). Burns was a biographer and historian at the time and was looking at what made great leaders. His theory incorporates theories on moral development, hierarchy of needs, and leadership styles. Burns compared traditional leadership styles which he called transactional with transformational styles which he felt were more powerful (Johnson, 2005; Northouse, 2001). Transactional leaders seek to trade money and other rewards for labor and obedience. They tend to address basic needs on Maslow's hierarchy. Transformational leaders focus on higher level needs such as self-esteem, competency, and self-actualization. Burns believed that leaders were either transactional or transformative, the latter being less common (Hitt, 1990). The distinction between transactional and transformative is similar to the difference between leaders and managers. Locke and Kirkpatrick (1991) question whether transactional leadership should even be called leadership. Presumably, they prefer a term such as "manager" to refer to transactional leadership. Still, other research by Bass indicated that leaders could be both (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership is ethical and altruistic in that it concerns itself with the values of followers and attempts to appeal to those values to raise the entire group or organization to higher levels of motivation and morality (Johnson, 2005). Transformational leaders are also more focused on end values such as equality and justice rather than "modal" values like honesty or fairness (Burns, 1978; Ciulla, 1998; Price, 2008). Johnson (2005) refers to these as terminal and instrumental values. Burns does not suggest that modal values are unimportant, only instrumental in their support of end values (Burns, 1978; Price, 2008). The transformational leader is not preoccupied with their own goals and values but in elevating universal ones such as justice and equity. A big assumption though is that leaders have an epistemological privilege over others to know the greater good and thus are guided by end values rather than modal values (Price, 2008).

This theory assumes that the leader has a strong ethical foundation, well developed moral values, and a self-determined sense of identity (Johnson, 2005; Northouse, 2001). The transformational leader must inspire and motivate followers. The leader identifies the needs of

followers and guides them to higher levels of morality. This is the transformation in the theory. However, it is not just the transformation of followers, although clearly central to the style, but also the transformation of leaders and organizations in the process. Process is important but end results appear more significant and one result from the process is that this style of leadership should produce new leaders. The danger is in associating elements of success or effectiveness with transformational results. Winning or leading a corporate turn-around is not the same as ethical, transformational leadership. A leadership style only concerned about ends and not means would not be transformational, and reflects Johnson's (2005) concern about hero worship.

Transformational leadership has been criticized for being too "leader centric" (Johnson, 2005). For example, transformational leaders are "social architects" of the culture within the organization (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Northouse, 2001). This thinking places a lot of responsibility solely on the leader and does not appear to value the influence of followers. Another criticism of this leadership style is that it is often confused as a leadership trait rather than behavior (Northouse, 2001). Burns is describing behaviors that can be learned and taught. To muddle the behaviors with traits complicates the ability for this approach to be replicated in followers. Part of the confusion may come from the lexicon. The word transformational evokes the idea that one element, or a few elements, are more substantial in the process of transformation towards an ideal possibly at the expense of others (Northouse, 2001).

A unique undercurrent of this theory is that transformational leaders may not necessarily be the ones in positions of power within an organization. The transformational leader is the one who recognizes the other's need and is able to motivate individuals to move to higher levels of morality, to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization (Powell, 2011; Northouse, 2001). That being said though, this theory is dependent on the figure of the leader. Transformational leaders are described as "individuals who appeal to high ideals and moral values to bring about change in a culture" (Painter-Morland, 2008). The transformational leader is the focal point (Painter-Morland, 2008). This is significant since the leader has the vision of the higher moral ground where followers and the organization are bound. The leader is charismatic, motivational, inspirational and visionary.

And then there is Hitler again. After contemplating the Hitler question, since one could argue he fits all the characteristics of a transformational leader, Burns distinguished between authentic and pseudo- transformational leadership. The difference is in the results. Therein lays

the continually difficult task of determining whether we can agree on what constitutes moral and ethical results. Burns also suggests that we can evaluate a leader by looking at three aspects which boil down to means used, end values accomplished, and impacts on people led (Ciulla, 1998). This theory is very dependent on a strong personality and therefore equally dependent on that person's vision being one that is more other-focused than ego-focused, charismatic and ethical. Historically, groups, individuals, and nations are not always good at differentiating between the two. Furthermore, there are few examples of a transformational leader who does not have significant positional power within the organization. Data showing positive outcomes apply to current top leadership positions of organizations and not to other positions within organizations (Northouse, 2001). The implication is that these leaders occupy the highest levels of authority in an organization. It is difficult to find an example of transformational leadership that comes from other levels within an organization.

Another shift in thinking around transformational leadership which to some degree reflects the shifts in cultural expectations is the relationship of leaders to followers. The shift is from a more hierarchical framework to one of team or group approaches. Obviously in an altruistic approach this would seem fundamental, and it is, which is what separates transformational leadership from transactional. Transformational leadership is a relationship between leader and follower where both are lifted to higher levels of motivation and morality (Hitt, 1990). Transformational leaders are truly people persons. They talk to, they listen, and they get to know who the stakeholders in an organization are and what their needs are (Northouse, 2001). Transformational leaders provide intellectual stimulation that encourages growth, creativity, innovation and a space where followers can question assumptions (Johnson, 2005). However, other researchers caution that the drive to establish a corporate culture can cross into cultism which rewards groupthink and inhibits dissenters (Tourish and Pinnington, 2002).

Another advantage transformational leadership has is that there is empirical evidence that it is more effective than transactional leadership and produces better outcomes (Bass et al, 2003). Yet the results are not conclusive and do not suggest that transactional leaders cannot also produce results. This highlights another difficulty for all theories, how to measure success and what outcomes to use?

## Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf wrote his original essay on servant leadership *The Servant as Leader* in 1970. He describes the servant leader as “servant first.” Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead (Greenleaf 1970, 1977<sup>1</sup>). The antithesis of a servant leader is the one who wants to lead first. Servant leadership theory is an altruistic ethical leadership style. It is altruistic because the primary concern of this style is with the needs of others (Greenleaf, 1977) and ethical because decisions and actions are thought of in terms of right and wrong (Greenleaf, 1977). Since the rest of this thesis concerns this theory, before analyzing it in more detail, some background information about the author and theory is pertinent to a more holistic understanding of servant leadership.

Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) was an AT&T executive for 38 years from 1926 to 1964. Most of the time was spent at the corporate office in New York in various roles providing leadership training to staff and management within the organization (Frick, 2004). Although Greenleaf did not formulate his theory on servant leadership until after his tenure at AT&T, there are three key influences from his time at the company: corporate experience, historical events, and multicultural experiences.

AT&T is the direct descendant of the inventor of the telephone: Alexander Graham Bell. It has been in existence since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is still one of the largest corporations in the world. Greenleaf survived good and bad CEO’s (presidents) at AT&T, many restructurings, and technological advances. It appears that at times Greenleaf was given tremendous flexibility in training and evaluating leaders within the organization as well as potential leaders (Frick, 2004). Over the years he helped design or collaborated on several different training and/or evaluation programs. One that received quite a lot of attention for many years was the assessment center model. This was a model designed by large corporations at the time to evaluate leader potential from among their employees (Hunt and Larson, 1979; Moses and Byham, 1977). It was modified from a program designed to identify potential spies during World War II. Greenleaf closely observed this program and was instrumental in the design of the assessment center model (Frick, 2004; Moses and Byham, 1977).

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<sup>1</sup> The original essay was published in 1970 and is reprinted in its original form in Greenleaf’s 1977 book *Servant Leadership*. All subsequent citations of the original essay will be from the 1977 book.



An assessment center evaluated potential leaders in simulated situations using trained observers to evaluate behaviors. According to Moses (1977) only about 25% of candidates exhibited the correct behaviors. Assessment centers have been heavily criticized for isolating behaviors that are more conducive to managing than leading as well as not being a model that translates to the “real-world” (Meriac et al, 2014). Training programs designed by Greenleaf, such as the Bell Humanities Program, look suspiciously like a degree in Liberal Arts (Frick, 2004). They are, for example, stunningly diverse with invited speakers from politics, business, psychology, and theology, for example. Greenleaf regularly lectured at MIT and Harvard Business School not just to share his experience but to also invite feedback on ideas. One advantage Greenleaf had by being in one place for so many years was the opportunity to experiment and apply ideas in real-world business situations. Although Greenleaf had a position of authority in the corporate office he was also an employee whose programs were terminated at times with a change in management and direction. Nevertheless, Greenleaf’s lengthy tenure in a major corporation where he was in charge of leadership training gave him ample practical experience.

There were also a number of significant historical events that occurred during his time at AT&T that impacted Greenleaf. Soon after being hired the Great Depression began. He also lived through World War II, the Vietnam Conflict, the civil rights movement, and student protests and unrest. These and other events really challenged his thinking about corporate leadership response, especially during the tumultuous times of the 1960s (Frick, 2004). These events bleed through in his original essay in 1970. The language Greenleaf uses expresses his struggle to make sense of the events of the 1960s. He refers to protesters at times as “those that stir the ferment” and the poor as “legions of deprived and unsophisticated” (Greenleaf, 1977). He also refers to Blacks as “dark-skinned” (Greenleaf, 1977). However, while the language Greenleaf chose to use sounds offensive, he was most harsh toward those he called “privileged” or “favored” by current rules. Greenleaf recognized that he was part of the privileged and suggests that the best thing those in power could do, was to get out of the way of progress (Greenleaf, 1977). I believe Greenleaf recognized that change would not come from those in power and it may have taken the 1960s for him to incorporate the idea of serving others’ highest needs. The historical events Greenleaf lived through impacted his thinking on leadership.

Finally, Greenleaf availed himself of many different cultural and international experiences. He volunteered to help domestically in a program for refugees along with Eleanor Roosevelt, for example. He and his family participated in communal living arrangements; he explored many different religious faiths before settling with the Quakers. He also took a sabbatical and went to India to assist in a leadership program in that country (Frick, 2004). It is safe to say that Greenleaf was a “seeker”. If he was curious about research, a book, or an idea, he did not hesitate to contact that person. His position at AT&T certainly did not hurt in his pursuit of knowledge and experiences as it afforded him the ability and time to seek out other thinkers and theorists.

While Greenleaf’s experiences certainly helped contribute to his theory of servant leadership, a few caveats should also be mentioned. Greenleaf worked for a monopoly. AT&T enjoyed special status as a “regulated” or “natural” monopoly (Frick, 2004). In 1913, when AT&T was before the antitrust commission they made a deal; the Kingsbury Commitment, named after an AT&T vice president. AT&T would be allowed to operate as a monopoly but would do so “in the public interest.” AT&T’s monopoly continued until 1982, the entire time that Greenleaf worked for the company. Working for a monopoly afforded Greenleaf some privileges: stability and reduced competitiveness in the market. How much these advantages influenced Greenleaf’s work is not known, but applying a theory to a monopoly is inherently different than businesses forced to compete.

Another important aspect of AT&T that is significant to reflect on is the fact that leaders in this organization during the time that Greenleaf worked there were white men. This of course is not essentially different than any other company in the U.S. at the time but there is some evidence that Greenleaf had information and positional power to influence this trend, and yet there is little evidence that he did or was able to significantly alter the gender or racial composition of leadership at AT&T. As early as 1922, Johnson O’Conner, working at General Electric developed an aptitude test that showed women performed as well or better than men in all areas but one (Frick, 2004). O’Connor believed that every person, both women and men, possessed “hard-wired” innate potentials. Despite Greenleaf’s skepticism that tests could translate into success, he had early knowledge that women performed equally as well as men and yet there is no evidence that he pursued the inclusion of women in management at AT&T (Frick, 2004). Although the language in his original essay is somewhat sexist, Greenleaf does include

women in his discussion of leaders and prophets (Greenleaf, 1977). It may be that in this regard the organizational culture and CEO resisted change because Greenleaf knew personally very powerful and influential female leaders. Whatever the case, AT&T did not represent a diverse workplace. There is also language in his 1970 essay attempting to address the issue of race but the question of diversity during his tenure at AT&T remains murky, especially considering the civil rights movement.

There are at least three aspects of servant leadership that make it distinct from other styles. Servant leadership has been described as an upside-down leadership model (Painter-Morland, 2008; Spears and Lawrence, 2004). This description is drawn from the prioritizing of the needs of followers first over the needs of the leader (Johnson, 2005). The leader looks to serve those being led. This altruistic approach is unique from other leadership styles. Additionally, the nature of power exercised by the servant leader and the ethical consideration of the least privileged in society when making business decisions distinguishes servant leadership.

Service is not an unusual priority for business. Many businesses strive to serve their stakeholders, customers, shareholders, and even communities. However, with servant leadership the nature of this service is top down and specific. The leaders are to serve the followers' highest needs (Greenleaf, 1977) even before their own (Johnson, 2005). Each individual served will have their own specific needs and the leader must be attentive to their distinct nature (Northouse, 2001). Followers' needs are prioritized but not at the expense of organizational goals or customer needs, rather in benefit of them. Service in benefit of followers enhances the performance of the organization and better meets the customers' needs. Greenleaf offers a best test to evaluate the quality of the service given by the leader. "Do those served grow as persons? Do they ... become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants (Greenleaf, 1977)?" This is perhaps the most altruistic of the leadership styles in pursuing the highest needs of others.

Curiously, Greenleaf never mentions the term employees in his original essay. He prefers the term followers or those being led. I think he did this not to avoid the word "employee" but to emphasize a broader leadership style that would work for any type of organization. It seems logical in business situations that the principle "follower" would be employees and in many books about servant leadership, the focus is on employees (Baldner, 2012; Frick, 2009; Turner, 2000). Taking care of employees is also not a new concept in business, yet this is not rational

choice theory where the end goal is to fulfill individual goals through meeting others' needs, on the contrary, this is meeting employee's needs because they need to be met and it will help the other person grow as a person (Sendjaya et al, 2008). This goes beyond transformational leadership where the role of the leader is to inspire followers to meet organizational goals (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006; Parolini et al, 2009). In that sense, the organizational structure may be seen as upside-down, but there is still clearly a leader. Greenleaf refers to this as *primus inter pares* or first among peers (Greenleaf, 2007). Greenleaf recognized that human organizations still need a leader.

Many scholars have taken issue with various aspects of this type of leadership. Price (2008) argues that this type of leader would not have any goals or projects of their own, would not have agency in decisions because the leader would sacrifice their own needs or goals in service of other's needs. Price appears to advocate for a much more personalistic approach to leadership, where rational pursuit of one's own goals is highly important. Greenleaf is very clear that the servant leader is not just servant but also leader. Greenleaf's leader needs to have vision, foresight, wisdom and other characteristics typical of trait and behavior approaches. The servant leader is not sacrificing agency but acknowledges that others also have agency and needs equally as valid. The servant leader has the organizational vision and sets the tone and example for accomplishing the vision by serving and holding people including themselves accountable to the organizational values.

One further extension of this critique against servant leadership is how to analyze its effectiveness. Greenleaf himself alluded to the fact that servant leadership would be difficult to apply and operationalize in an organizational setting (Greenleaf, 1977). Since Greenleaf's original essay many researchers have developed tools to analyze servant leadership's effectiveness; Spear (2010) developed ten principles, Sipe and Frick (2009) established seven pillars, Laub (2004) created an assessment tool. These are a few of the many attempts since Greenleaf to analyze servant leadership. In a systematic literature review of research on servant leadership Parris and Peachey (2012) conclude that servant leadership is a viable theory that can lead to increased overall effectiveness of individuals and teams. This is far from conclusive but does add credibility to the theory as effective in organizational settings. Other researchers have found other leadership styles to be more effective (Choudhary et al, 2011). This is not the only concern with servant leadership though.

Klein (2002) suggests that followers can hold the same egotistical goals (i.e. wealth, power) as leaders. Therefore serving followers' needs in and of themselves would improve nothing. Klein suggests idealism and common sense. Followers will transcend their own egotistical desires through admiration of an ethical leader. Pursuing unwise or even wrong goals is a concern with servant leadership if the leader misunderstands the needs of followers. Greenleaf's test suggests, however, that individuals should show outward signs of personal growth and ultimately desire to be servants themselves (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf also suggests that a servant leader need not be the one with positional power, suggesting 1) leaders are not hierarchically arranged, and 2) persons with more positional power should choose to emulate servant leaders no matter their position within an organization (Greenleaf, 1977). Still, with any leadership style the risk that the vision is unethical or self-serving is always present. This valid concern speaks to how Greenleaf envisions the power relationship between leader and followers.

There are two key elements to the use of power in Greenleaf's theory; persuasion and consensus. These two elements reflect the importance of relationships in servant leadership. Not only is the leader to serve the highest needs of followers but the leader needs to practice unconditional acceptance of others (Russell, 2001). This does not mean acceptance of unethical action because Greenleaf does recognize that individuals and organizations are fallible, but understanding that every person can contribute and together greater goals can be accomplished than individually. Fundamentally, the leader must use persuasion and not coercion to accomplish goals (Greenleaf, 1977; Graham, 1991). Persuasion assumes that followers are able to "absorb" persuasion without deception or coercion (Graham, 1991). Greenleaf was critical of Gandhi, particularly his hunger strikes, because he felt it was a coercive act (Frick, 2004). Persuasion happens by sharing information, authority, privilege and power (Greenleaf, 1977; Northouse, 2001). The best possible result would be consensus, although Greenleaf recognizes that this is not always possible.

Another aspect of servant leadership and power is actively seeking out and hearing dissenting voices and diversity (Greenleaf, 1977; Graham, 1991). One of the first and foremost behavioral characteristics of a servant leader is that of listener. This implies listening to opposing views, different ways of thinking and being open to the possibility of change. Listening is consistent with understanding followers' needs, practicing persuasion, and sharing power.

Empathy is another characteristic mentioned repeatedly by Greenleaf as essential for the servant leader. In order to serve and meet people's highest needs the leader needs to listen and to empathize, not just with people within the organization but all affected by organizational decisions.

The involvement of followers in decision making has the ability to avoid a common criticism of servant leadership; namely the task is too ambitious for mere mortals (Northouse, 2001). If the burden were not shared it would require superhuman capacity and would most likely not be sustainable. Servant leadership does require vision and use of a non-coercive rhetoric but the role is simplified by concentrating on the task of serving.

The final element that is distinct in servant leadership is an extended ethical concern for the least privileged in society. This is part of Greenleaf's best test, "... what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?" Several scholars have noted the uniqueness of a consideration for the least among us (De Pree, 1987; Graham, 1991; Ciulla, 1998; Northouse, 2001; Sendjaya et al, 2008). This consideration for the least in business decisions, I believe, reflects Greenleaf's experience in a large corporation and monopoly and historical social events. It also acknowledges the huge influence that organizations can have, and Greenleaf had yet to witness the explosion of globalization. Moving ethical decisions beyond the confines of the organization requires additional considerations that most leadership theories do not ponder, or if they do, not as an ethical consideration, but strategic or economic considerations. This means that organizations must consider community impacts (Northouse, 2001), locally and globally, when making decisions. For this reason, social capital and more specifically, positive construction of social capital elements should go hand in hand with servant leadership.

## **Social Capital**

Community is an idea that has always been appealing. It is the idea that together is better, more effective, healthy, and productive than alone. Social capital is a way of describing and quantifying community. It isn't until the 1970's that interest in social capital begins to escalate (Field, 2003). This interest appears to me to rise as scholars notice and begin to study the negative aspects of social capital and social capital's apparent decline [although some researchers prefer the term transformation rather than decline (Halpern, 2005)], similar to

Paxton's (1999) argument that sociology was born due to concerns about declining community. Previously, social capital as a positive was assumed a given and even less studied as an element that could be positively impacted or built. The definition of social capital is evolving but contains some significant aspects. Primary among these aspects is the idea of networks: these networks imply reciprocity, trust and norms. This is essentially Robert Putnam's definition (2000) that social capital refers to the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them". These features of social life allow participants to act together more effectively than apart in pursuing shared objectives or values (Putnam, 1996). The core idea is that social networks have value (Putnam, 2000; Lin, 2001). It should be noted that social capital by definition cannot be the possession of a single individual and cannot be created without social relationships (Baron et al, 2000).

The idea that certain aspects of society can be capitalized on describes forms of capital. Social relationships separates social capital from other forms of capital such as human, which refers to the individual, or economic capital which refers to income, cash, access to financing, etc. The classic forms of capital are economic in nature. Newer forms of capital such as social, human, or cultural have been described as neo-classical forms (Lin, 2001). The classical understanding of capital is still evident in some researcher's descriptions of social capital. Individuals or groups will invest in forms of capital if there is an expected return such as profit or promotion (Coleman, 1994; Lin, 2001). Another consideration with all forms of capital is that there exists the possibility of inequalities; social capital is not exempt from this concern as we shall see (Lin, 2001; Field, 2003). Additionally, the concept of social capital does imply a relationship between social relationships and the economy or how these relationships interact with the way the economy works (Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000).

Putnam's book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) touched off a tsunami of interest in the topic of social capital. However, social capital has been of interest to scholars since the inception of sociology (Field, 2003). Yet it was Pierre Bourdieu's work in the 1970's that began to define this concept of social capital and to discuss its impacts. Bourdieu was a European sociologist with a Marxist lens (Field, 2003). However, Bourdieu carved out a space from traditional Marxist thinking for the concept of social capital. Bourdieu defined social capital as the resource a person can still mobilize to reproduce inequalities when all other things are apparently equal, particularly economic and cultural capital

(Field, 2003). Bourdieu was clearly attempting to explain social hierarchy replication and observed the influence of social relationships and networks in the maintenance of social inequalities. Acknowledging this form of capital as separate from other forms opened numerous possibilities for further research and analysis, many of which not even Bourdieu could have anticipated (Baron et al, 2000; Field, 2003).

The criticisms of Bourdieu's analysis of social capital are easy to deduce from hindsight which should not diminish his contributions. First, Bourdieu's description of social capital is primarily of individual use, particularly of elites (Field, 2003). It was the extra ingredient that elites could use when other forms of capital were not effective to maintain or access a higher status. There was no discussion in Bourdieu's work of less fortunate individuals or groups benefitting from social capital (Field, 2003). In this early conception of social capital it was uniquely an aspect of the upper classes. Another criticism relates to this compartmentalization of social capital in the elite realm, namely that social capital is largely benign (Field, 2003). Bourdieu describes social capital as merely a tool or instrument that is utilized to maintain or access power. Bourdieu does not discuss possible abuses or the "dark side" of social capital. Then again, if the benefit is only for one group at the expense of others, it might be said that social capital in this regard is primarily a tool with disproportionately adverse benefits. The final criticism is that this form of social capital is not suited for less hierarchical societies. Bourdieu spoke to the experience of highly stratified societies and this conception of social capital had little relevance to more democratic societies (Field, 2003).

James Coleman, a U.S. sociologist focused primarily on the area of education, studied the effects of social capital on educational attainment (Baron et al, 2000; Field, 2003). Coleman expands the concept of social capital in two important directions. First, Coleman argues that social capital is not just limited to use by elites or the powerful, but can also convey real benefits to the poor and marginalized (Field, 2003). Secondly, Coleman's understanding of social capital also goes beyond just individual benefits to include wider groups and networks (Field, 2003).

Coleman expanded the understanding of social capital to include other individuals and groups. However, Coleman was focused on two primary groups as drivers of social capital benefits: the family and church. Coleman was also a supporter of rational choice theory, an egotistical theory that assumes one act in their own best interest. Coleman suggests that the poor could utilize social capital in lieu of a lack of economic, political or physical capital as a means



of compensating (Field, 2003). The two best sources of social capital for Coleman were the family and church, which is why he bemoaned the apparent decline in these two institutions. Strong family and church connections could provide the capital boost needed to compensate for other forms of capital in attaining educational achievement. Coleman's research showed that family structure and church membership could statistically explain some educational attainment by individuals not blessed with power or upper class status; it was social capital (Coleman, 1994).

Yet, while Coleman's expansion of the understanding of social capital is vitally important, his interpretations are criticized. The first is Coleman's interpretation of social capital as merely self-serving interest. Coleman describes social capital as an unintended consequence of the pursuit of self-interest (Baron et al, 2000; Coleman, 1994); it explains the reason why people choose to cooperate (Lin, 2001; Field, 2003). There is no space for altruistic behavior within societies. Rational choice limits motives and utility for people's behavior. Rational choice also ignores basic concepts such as trust (Field, 2003). Also, Coleman seems to believe the primordial (family) and functional (school, church) forms of social structure are inherently capable of promoting social capital and skeptical that other constructed organizations could, even in the face of waning family and church influence. Finally, Coleman's theory is mostly benign. Social capital has benefits for those who utilize it through their social structures. But Coleman does not contemplate potential negative uses of family or church (or any other actor or group) on social capital, especially considering rational choice theory, that could be used to oppress others (Field, 2003).

Robert Putnam's research in the 1990s, culminating in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, brought the concept of social capital into everyday conversation and sparked a mini revolution in research on the topic. Putnam brought a perspective of political science into the equation. Putnam continued to expand the understanding of social capital by including all social networks, formal and informal, which act together to pursue a shared objective or goal (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003). Putnam then further refined his theory by differentiating between two types of social capital; bonding and bridging (Field, 2003; Halpern, 2005). Bonding social capital tends to reinforce exclusive identities and maintain homogeneity. Bridging social capital tends to bring people together across diverse social divisions (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003). Both types of social capital can be useful for meeting different needs. Bonding capital is good for mobilizing

solidarity, maintaining in-group loyalty and reinforcing specific identities (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003). Bridging social capital is better for linking external assets, information diffusion, and generating broader identities and reciprocity (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003).

Another of Putnam's contributions to social capital theory is the compilation and quantifying of statistical data. Putnam analyzed a myriad of organizations and community connections and concluded that social capital was on the decline (Putnam, 2000). Putnam cited diminishing membership and participation across the board as well as a concurrent trend in the decline of trust and perceptions of honesty. Putnam's two main reasons for this decline are generational differences and technological changes, particularly television. Putnam appears to lament a change in generational attitudes with respect to community engagement; younger generations are not as active in organizations as previous generations. But Putnam's biggest culprit is a culture of television. Putnam notes that heavy television users have virtually dropped out of civic life and to some extent relationships with family and friends, even though they receive little pleasure from television (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003). The title of Putnam's book conjures up an image of a person bowling alone. The truth more closely resembles a person who no longer participates in leagues or an organized social event but may bowl occasionally with a few friends or family. Putnam's empirical data can seem overwhelming and dire. Indeed Putnam's work spurred a flurry of activity around social capital and many questioned various aspects of his findings.

Of the many criticisms of Putnam's work, the first is Putnam appears to hold a nostalgic view of previous generations (Field, 2003). Putnam demonstrates that the generation born in the 1920s is about twice as active in civic organizations as the generation born in the 1960s (Putnam, 2000). While the empirical data does reveal distinct participation rates, other researchers have questioned exactly how much participation negatively affects social capital, whether other factors have more of an impact, and whether newer forms of participation other than membership in civic groups are replacing older forms of social capital.

The argument that less participation means less social capital, besides being a romantic, nostalgic notion, also appears to downplay the "dark side" of social capital. While Putnam does address concerns about negative consequences, particularly with bonding social capital, he does not evaluate completely exclusionary practices within organizations and civic groups (Field, 2003). Overt practices of racism and discrimination while still present within social

organizations have become more subtle. It is possible that participation in groups and organizations has declined as a movement from bonding forms of social capital to bridging social capital have disaffected the older generations. Organizations that were clearly racist like country clubs that excluded minorities are also on the decline. It may also be argued that racially exclusive organizations may be appearing in new forms, so how direct a connection is there between participation rates of “classic” civic or community groups and social capital?

Along with participation are a myriad of other potential social changes that have affected social capital that researchers feel have not been adequately addressed. Putnam does acknowledge that general busyness has contributed to declining participation rates (Putnam, 2000). However, sociologists have noted that families have less free time due to the necessity of two wage earners in households. Previous generations were able to support their families on one income, but at nearly identical rates as Putnam’s decline of social capital, women in particular, have entered the workforce. Putnam does acknowledge this trend but describes it as a contributory factor, since participation rates have declined for both women and men (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003). A parallel issue is that of income inequality which Putnam does not address. As income inequality has increased, trust and apparently social capital have declined at proportional rates. Putnam does discuss the trends with perceptions of trust and honesty with respect to social capital, but other social factors such as income inequality may also contribute to our understanding of decreased participation and declining civic engagement as much as elements of social capital, especially considering the similarities in the trends. Pluralistic explanations of social trends may have pluralistic causes.

One final factor that Putnam does not address is the influence of state and political actors (Field, 2003). Curiously enough, considering his background in political science, researchers have criticized Putnam for overemphasizing the sociological nature of social capital at the expense of political science. Putnam does not give enough attention to the impacts of political actors to influence social trends (Field, 2003; Maloney et al, 2000; Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000). State policy impacts on behavior are undervalued while sociological aspects such as volunteerism are overemphasized (Maloney et al, 2000). Putnam has been shielded somewhat from this criticism in that U.S. studies are not as long term as European studies and recent U.S. social capital trends are not mirrored in other countries (Field, 2003). U.S. politics could be a significant factor but what evidence connects U.S. politics to declining social capital (Field, 2003)? *Bowling Alone*

does have a local, grassroots focus. In a subsequent book, Putnam revisits the influence of not just state actors but also leaders (Putnam, 2002). Putnam concedes that leaders and state actors influence social capital but exactly how much and in what ways is under-researched.

Putnam's work is regarded as the dominant theory in social capital. However, his analysis is a snapshot of societal variables which are in a constant state of evolution. Researchers have questioned whether there are new forms of social capital that appeal more to the newer generations especially considering the technological advances in communication. Other researchers note that younger generations in other countries are more active than their U.S. counterparts (Maloney et al, 2000). So, are the measurements used relevant to possible newer forms of social capital or do they reflect the forms of social capital that were utilized in earlier generations? Will Putnam's measurements still be valid in the future?

Technology and social capital is an area where Putnam has generated significant interest from other researchers. Putnam referred to honorific forms of membership or "mail order" members (Putnam, 2000). Generally, these are people who belong to organizations but have never met personally face-to-face ever. Organizations like PBS or Greenpeace have many members who simply send money. Putnam and others are concerned that these digital connections are potentially counterproductive to social capital (Fukuyama, 1995). These connections may discourage social reciprocity and local networks building capacities (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003, Fukuyama, 1995). Other studies have found positive interactions between internet users and civic participation (Wellman et al, 2001; Gardner and Oswald, 2002). The issue is far from conclusive but illustrates the complexity of analyzing social capital impacts.

Other technological concerns surrounding social capital is the creation of a new division between those with and those without access to technology (Field, 2003). Depending on the extent that social capital can be created or enhanced through technology, may determine the degree to which sectors of a society are left out. While Putnam did acknowledge that technology can remove barriers and facilitate new networks, what we have witnessed is that technology can also reproduce the same compartmentalized groupings (Field, 2003). As was evident in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, misinformation was as prevalent as factual information and that people tend to get their information from the one source that reflects their beliefs. Online and social media networks may reproduce the traditional networks analyzed by Putnam and bonding types of social capital.

Another concern with the theories of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam is the lack of gender awareness (Lowndes, 2000; Wenneras and Wold, 1997). So many of the aspects of social capital and civic engagement are highly gendered (Lowndes, 2000; Field, 2003). There is a clear role that gender plays in accessing networks or advantages derived from social connections. Even though Putnam made some effort to address gender issues, some of the language he chose to use was highly suggestive of “maleness” and he tended to refer to more formal networks as male and more informal networks as female (Field, 2003). This is an area within social capital that merits further study.

Another general concern with social capital is who should attempt to intervene, create or foster social capital and how. These concerns arise partly to a lack of attention paid to the negative aspects of social capital. Bourdieu viewed social capital as another arrow in the quiver for elites to maintain that status. Coleman saw varying degrees of educational attainment depending on social networks, particularly family and church, and Putnam discussed racism and discrimination as an outcome of the actions of certain networks. But Coleman and Putnam prefer to focus on the benefits without apparent caution for also causing harm (Field, 2003). Social capital can also resemble gangs, organized crime, racism, or religious extremism (Field, 2003). If groups can harness social capital for good then groups can also activate it for evil. For example, migrants in this country have been denied many rights for decades. These already vulnerable people, having severed ties from social networks to move here, and are restricted in their ability to establish new ones. Examples such as this, give pause to theorists to allow organizations, especially government, to interfere in the creation or hindrance of social capital for fear they make matters worse, and prefer to leave implementation at the local or individual level (Field, 2003).

One last development in studies on social capital before moving on to why business should care about social capital is an addition to the types of social capital. Putnam discussed two types: bonding and bridging. Woolcock (2001) added a third type called linking social capital. Bonding or exclusive social capital tends to reinforce exclusive identities and maintain homogeneity. Bridging or inclusive social capital tends to bring together people from diverse social divisions. Linking social capital reaches out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those outside the local community, enabling members to leverage a wider range of resources (Woolcock, 2001). Linking social capital appears to be a natural extension considering the

modern reality of communities and a way to describe new forms of social capital creation. Linking social capital has been associated with macro-level discussions of social capital involving states, or nations while at the same time remaining mindful of power issues (Halpern, 2005; Woolcock, 2001). Micro-level social capital is referred to as individual and meso-level would be community social capital (Field, 2003; Halpern, 2005).

There are several reasons why business should care about social capital. Fields (2003) states social capital is all about relationships and networks as resources. Social capital is about people, not the product, and the connections that are made in numerous, complex and multifaceted ways. Business is also about relationships in many ways and at many levels: management and employees, coworkers, customer and employees, employees and community, and on and on. Servant leadership is also about relationships. Business, social capital and servant leadership have a natural affinity through relationships. Further, there is evidence that social capital affects economic performance (Baron et al, 2000; Lin, 2001; Halpern, 2005). Organizations that can cultivate positive social capital see enhanced economic performance.

Business is in many ways also about networks of people. Networking is a key buzzword of business schools. For people looking for work, most find employment through their network of family, friends and acquaintances (Field, 2003). There is also evidence that businesses that recruit through employees' networks save money and retain their employees for longer (Fernandez et al, 2000). But networking goes beyond hiring for businesses. There are internal company networks between departments, intra-company networks between suppliers and all along the supply chain, and external networks between the business and government agencies and other organizations. Businesses need to be well connected to these networks. Putnam (2000) even states that there are economic benefits to businesses that cultivate more social capital, although his finding is more suggestive than conclusive. It seems a reasonable extension that if internal, external and intra-networking is an important aspect of business life then cultivating social capital would also be beneficial as an additional way to manage resources.

Lin (2001) offers four explanations as to why social capital resources enhance the outcomes of actions. First, it facilitates the flow of information. Second, social relationships may exert the influence of actors, such as recruiters or decision makers. Third, social connections to individuals or organizations may confer social credentials of an individual or organization. Finally, social capital can reinforce one's position or status within a group, community, or

industry. Whether a business is actively attempting to create and nurture social capital it is already at work individually within the organization as part of the unspoken culture.

For many reasons diversity, or linking social capital, is beneficial to nurture and promote within an organization or company. Additionally, incorporating Woolcock's (2001) concept of linking social capital could expand networks, especially as companies move overseas and into other markets. Positive linking social capital development has the added benefit of establishing trust. Research has suggested where there is general interpersonal trust there is also a correlation with economic growth (Knack and Keefer, 1997). Furthermore, Fukuyama (1995) suggests that the more inclusive the social capital, a concept he describes as a "radius of trust", the more positive externalities are generated. Negative externalities occur when the radius is confined to members of one's own group (Fukuyama, 1997). Trust and reciprocity are essential elements of social capital. Social capital can be good for business and communities if appropriately utilized.

A leader has been defined by traits, behaviors and situations. All of these aspects contribute to how we view effective leadership. Yet, a person who has all the right traits and behaviors and can adapt them to situational demands still does not determine whether the leader is ethical or not. Within the realm of ethical leadership styles, leaders can lean more personalistic, utilitarian, or altruistic. Servant leadership is an altruistic style that considers the needs of those served as primary. Social capital describes the network of relationships and the norms and trust that arise from them. Fundamental to the idea of social capital is that these relationships have value for the individuals involved. To better describe the link between leadership style and social capital, I will use articulation as methodology to identify the unifying factors in Greenleaf's original essay on servant leadership *The Servant as Leader*.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### The Theory of Articulation

The theory of articulation, attributed to Stuart Hall, is finding the linkages that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions (Hall, 2002; Grossberg 1996). “The unity that matters,” clarifies Stuart Hall, “is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. (Hall 1986)”

Stuart Hall is credited with transforming cultural studies from a model of communication to a theory of contexts (Slack 1996). Strategically, articulation provides a mechanism for shaping intervention within a context. However, the theory and method of articulation should be thought of as temporary, always adapting, a process of creating connections rather than a thing. Articulation is an ongoing process of re-articulating contexts. Understanding a practice, identity or effect involves theoretically and historically reconstructing its context. Practices, identities and effects generally constitute the very context within which they are practices, identities and effects (Slack 1996).

One of the reasons Stuart Hall is most associated and credited with the development of articulation theory is that his theory, like his personal character, is spacious and encompasses multiple approaches with an avoidance of rigidity. Stuart Hall is associated with Marxist thought, but not in the classical sense. One of the classic tenets of Marxism is economic and class reductionism. Economic reductionism, simply stated, claims that economic relations or the mode of production controls and determines all other elements of a society. Class reductionism or determinism, views political or ideological practices as attached to a class and its corresponding mode of production.

When Stuart Hall began to develop the theory of articulation in the 1970's, there were other theorists beginning to loosen the tight grip of reductionism to Marxism. Althusser described society as a more complex totality structured in dominance, a structuralist approach (Hall, 2002; Slack 1996). There are relationships, correspondences, and contradictions between the levels. Laclau, describing class reductionism, sees it as a relationship in discourse. He used Gramsci's “common-sense” discourse language to describe an articulation as a link between concepts. This discourse may not be linked by logical relations nor the concepts be linked by



class reductionism, cultural practice or ideology (Slack 1996). There is, however, a link between discourse and hegemony. The powerful attempt to control the discourses and practices of both culture and history. Stuart Hall suggests that these hegemonic narratives should be resisted and we learn to live with difference (Rojek, 2003).

Like these other theorists Stuart Hall began to branch out from reductionism to a broader interpretation in order to encompass other factors. Stuart Hall especially creates space for the influence of other societal elements such as race, gender and cultural identity. Stuart Hall also unlinked cultural practices with any corresponding or necessary ideology (Slack 1996). Marxism was re-theorizing the process of determination. Stuart Hall explains that articulation is different than determinism, culturalism and Gramsci's idea of common sense. Specifically referring to hegemony and Gramsci, Stuart Hall expands the idea of common sense as broader and not determined or class particular (Clarke 2015). Stuart Hall describes himself as post-Marxist, Marxism without guarantees (Grossberg 1996). He is anti-reductionist but still retains the use of various Marxist concepts such as the “masses”, “struggle”, and “hegemony”.

After reading about Stuart Hall and the historical process of articulation theory I have identified several components to articulation.

### **Articulation and Conjunctural Theory**

The first is the necessity to analyze the historical conditions for the existence of a cultural or social practice. Stuart Hall identifies the social forces that go into social formation as always having multiple and contradictory determinations, that are historically specific (Grossberg 1996a). These forces are constituted by the varieties of domination and subordination that are in play in a conjunctural setting (Clarke 2015). The effect of a practice that takes place within this setting is largely determined by the network of relationships in which it is located (Grossberg 1996a). This is what Grossberg calls the conjunctural identity. The goal then of conjunctural theory is to identify how particular practices are positioned, into what structures of meaning and power, into what correspondences, they are articulated. This conjunctural theory reflects Stuart Hall's preference, as Grossberg states it, to “theorize from the concrete”. It also exposes Stuart Hall's belief in the temporal nature of theory. Any conjuncture may be described or articulated as a snapshot in time but the next moment may require a different way of thinking.

For this study, the practices of servant leadership within historical conjunctions and the network of relationships will be analyzed with the method of articulation. The practices of

servant leadership suggested by Greenleaf in his original essay will also be placed within the context of power in a business setting.

### **Articulation and Contingency**

The second aspect is that there are no guarantees. Social practices are contingent, produced and sustained or discarded. There is no certainty that an articulation that functions in one context will produce the same results in another context or even the same context at a different time. This level of complexity might also describe the evolutionary process that articulation theory has developed to this point and will continue to evolve in the future. Stuart Hall has conjoined various concepts from many theories, theorists and modes of work in a “multi-accentuality” approach (Grossberg 1996). Stuart Hall weaves in and out of various theories and attaches particular components while discarding others. Stuart Hall’s theory of articulation has Marxist roots but is not a classical Marxist theory in that it simplifies everything to economic reductionism. Stuart Hall draws from many different theoretical approaches to remind us that articulations can be fleeting.

Articulations can be temporal. This contingency will be considered when applying the method to Greenleaf’s essay. Practices described may work only in certain contexts, for varying lengths of time and with certain relationships. The amount of rigidity or flexibility in a practice may make it more adaptable to contingencies. Regardless, it must be kept in mind that there are no guarantees with any particular practice.

### **Articulation and Social Formation**

A third aspect of articulation is that there are no necessary correspondences. There may be equivalences between certain classes, practices and effects, but not necessarily. On the other hand there is no necessary deconstruction either. Deconstructing a social practice into separate non-related elements is not supported by Stuart Hall.

Stuart Hall distanced himself from the rigidity of economic and class reductionism. Yet he also avoids other variations on reductionist theories. Stuart Hall navigates between culturalism and its reliance on correspondence and post-structuralism with its opposite non-correspondence (deconstruction). Stuart Hall takes an approach that proposes that correspondences may exist but are not necessary. Societies are complex units, always having multiple and contradictory determinations that are historically produced (Grossberg 1996). Culturalism has a tendency to reduce culture to experience (Clarke 2015). Culturalism theorizes

that there is a series of correspondences between different levels of social experience, cultural practices, economic and political relations, resulting in a chain of correspondences with a common origin.

Stuart Hall theorizes that these correspondences are historically produced and are the sites of the struggle over power. The struggle is over how particular practices are positioned and into what structures and correspondences they are articulated (Clarke 2015). Stuart Hall creates a relatively autonomous space for social instances which allows for the appearance of other social forces, not merely class or culture but also gender and race.

Stuart Hall also rejected the notion that articulations are simply structural issues. He postulates a theory more on the grounds of a set of problems, a problematic (Grossberg 1996b).

In terms of applying this method, there may be class, culture, gender, or race impacts on practices in servant leadership or social capital theory, however, those correspondences may be generated from multiple factors that may or may not be connected. What may be said about correspondences is that they are the sites of struggle over power. Again, power will be analyzed with articulation method, but also important to consider will be dissenting voices. If struggle is a constant then there will be voices that should be identified and heard. The lack thereof or multiplicity of dissenting voices would be an important articulation.

### **Articulation and Tendential Force**

A fourth aspect is how links are articulated, both in significance and representation, gives them force. The more groups that can be articulated to an ideology for example, the more force an articulation could have. Stuart Hall identifies “lines of tendential force” as articulations that are particularly persistent, potent, and effective (Slack 1996). “Lines of tendential force” is Stuart Hall’s redefining of determinancy from fixed positions to “unity” which is constructed by the difference between rather than the homology of practices; “unity in difference” (Grossberg 1996b). The theory of articulation is partially to determine how particular practices are positioned, into what structures of power and meaning, and into what correspondences, they are articulated.

Identifying lines of tendential force would be one goal of articulation. Practices with more tendential force could be long-standing and difficult to change or practices that could withstand the vicissitudes of cultural factors. Additionally the more groups that can be articulated

to a practice, the more force the practice can have. This would be applicable to a business context or social capital relationship.

### **Articulation and Ideology**

One final aspect of articulation is Stuart Hall's concept about ideology which states that ideologies are not formulated within the individual consciousness or are products of individual intentions (Larrain 1996; Grossberg 1996a). Ideological statements are made by individuals, but they are not the construction of individuals. Rather, intentions are formed within ideology. Ideology constructs for their subjects positions of identification and knowledge that are then stated by individuals or groups as if they were their own (Grossberg 1996a). Ideology does not consist of isolated or separate concepts but the articulation of different concepts into a set or chain of meanings. Since ideology is located outside the individual it can be appropriated by any social group or individual. Ideology is not intrinsic to any particular group, political position or social identity; it must be articulated into a group or identity's position.

Another important factor in ideology is that it is located between discourse and the realities that discourse purports to represent (Larrain 1996; Grossberg 1996a). It is constructed in language but it is not equivalent to it. This means that the ideological field of struggle is the equivalence between discourse and reality. Articulation of ideology happens on two levels: signification and representation. It then becomes the task of individuals or groups to utilize relatively autonomous ideologies to construct particular interpretations and identifications of social reality. These ideological practices involve attempts to ascribe certain cultural significations and practices or representations of reality to particular social identities. The end goal would be to win subjects into their representations by articulating various social identities into chains of equivalences which are also articulated into structures of dominance and resistance.

While I will not be analyzing ideology specifically, it is important to note that companies create ideologies that hopefully are adopted by employees to form a corporate culture. The more buy-in from individuals within a company the stronger the significance and representation these ideologies can have; stronger lines of tendential force.

### **The Method of Articulation**

The methodology for applying articulation to a context or text is necessarily broad. I have narrowed the strategies down to four that tend to surface frequently in research and reflect Stuart

Hall's thinking around articulation (Sikka 2006; Sikka 2008). The first strategy is to examine the speakers. Who is doing the speaking? Who are the voices to be heard and listened to? Are there other actors to be considered that may not speak for themselves? This could be a single person, multiple persons, organizations, etc. Once the speakers are identified, it is necessary to evaluate their hierarchy. Are the speakers in a leadership role or position of authority? The second strategy is to identify and list the elements the speakers are trying to bring together. These elements (also referred to in the literature as actants) can be other persons, groups, organizations, but also objects, discourses and practices. I will focus primarily on practices and relationships. These are the elements the speaker is attempting to articulate or graft into the formation of a social force. The third strategy is to then analyze the effects (or potential effects) of the discourse of the speakers and the elements. What are the commonalities the speaker is attempting to suggest exist? What are the differences? What is being silenced or disarticulated? Is there a dominant effect or articulation? Finally, the fourth strategy would be to suggest other possible articulations apart from the dominant one.

Articulation has two definitions: one more discursive and the other representative of the anatomical sense, both significant for Stuart Hall (2002). Both definitions will be applied in the methodology. Articulation as linkage, as a physical structure that can be analyzed is the description utilized when identifying speakers and their dominant forces, "lines of tendential force". The speakers identified by the method are connected in a structure with relationships of power. The other definition of articulation as discourse, as an expression of connection, will be used in this research when focusing on the practices being used to unite speakers and differences in a particular context, business, and to also examine their impacts on society. A further goal will be to identify potential intervention strategies to resist or reinforce articulations that positively change business or society suggested by servant leadership theory.

I will be applying articulation to Greenleaf's original essay on servant leadership *The Servant as Leader*. I will analyze the speakers and practices listed in the text and then identify the suggested effects on speakers and practices. Within the speakers should be found the leaders and within the practices should be elements of social capital. Articulation will draw out the connections and help suggest the implications of these connections.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

### Articulation Applied to *The Leader as Servant*

The first strategy in applying the method of articulation to the essay *The Servant as Leader* is to identify and examine the speakers. Stuart Hall considered this step an analysis of hierarchy, so there is also the consideration of power among the speakers. Therefore the methodology includes not just identifying and examining those whose voice is heard because of a position of power but also those speakers whose voice may not be considered for lack of power and all speakers in between. In this research I have chosen to just look at human speakers. It is possible to have other voices such as animals or the environment, but Greenleaf's primary concern in his essay is on human relations.

### Analysis of Speakers

As a first step I created a list from Greenleaf's essay which includes all references to persons. There are approximately 225 different references to persons, many of which are used repeatedly. The complete list is in the appendix (appendix A). I then sorted that list into 12 general categories. The categories are broad and inclusion into a category was based on context. The categories are: anecdotal characters, servant, followers, leader, prophet, privileged, informers, least privileged, potential leaders, non-servant leaders, real enemy, and other generic voices.

The category of anecdotal characters refers to individuals or characters that are used in an anecdote or story to illustrate a point. These references are used in the story and not repeated at any other point in the essay. This category is interesting for the diverse and eclectic choices Greenleaf references but most are not used as examples of servant leaders, rather most are characters in an anecdote that are secondary to an aspect of servant leadership being described. The character Leo in Herman Hesse's novel *Journey to the East* is the inspiration for Greenleaf's theory, but Leo is a fictional character. Greenleaf does reference a few real persons, but the point of articulation is to examine the relationship between the speakers and the practices that unite their differences. For these reasons this category will be left out of the final analysis of speakers. A few of the characters would make good case studies, but that is beyond the scope of this research. The other category that will not be included in the final analysis is the other generic voices. Generic voices are generalized references to persons. The references to these voices are

not specific, context neutral or used in analogies such as, “parents who try to raise perfect children are certain to raise neurotics.” These two categories will not be considered as speakers in the analysis moving forward because they are either too broad or vague to characterize, are used as fictional references in an anecdote to represent a non-relational point, or are used as specific examples of other already mentioned speakers. The specific cases are intriguing and could be analyzed as case studies, but for this research it is the interaction between the broader categories that I am attempting to analyze. This leaves 10 remaining categories.

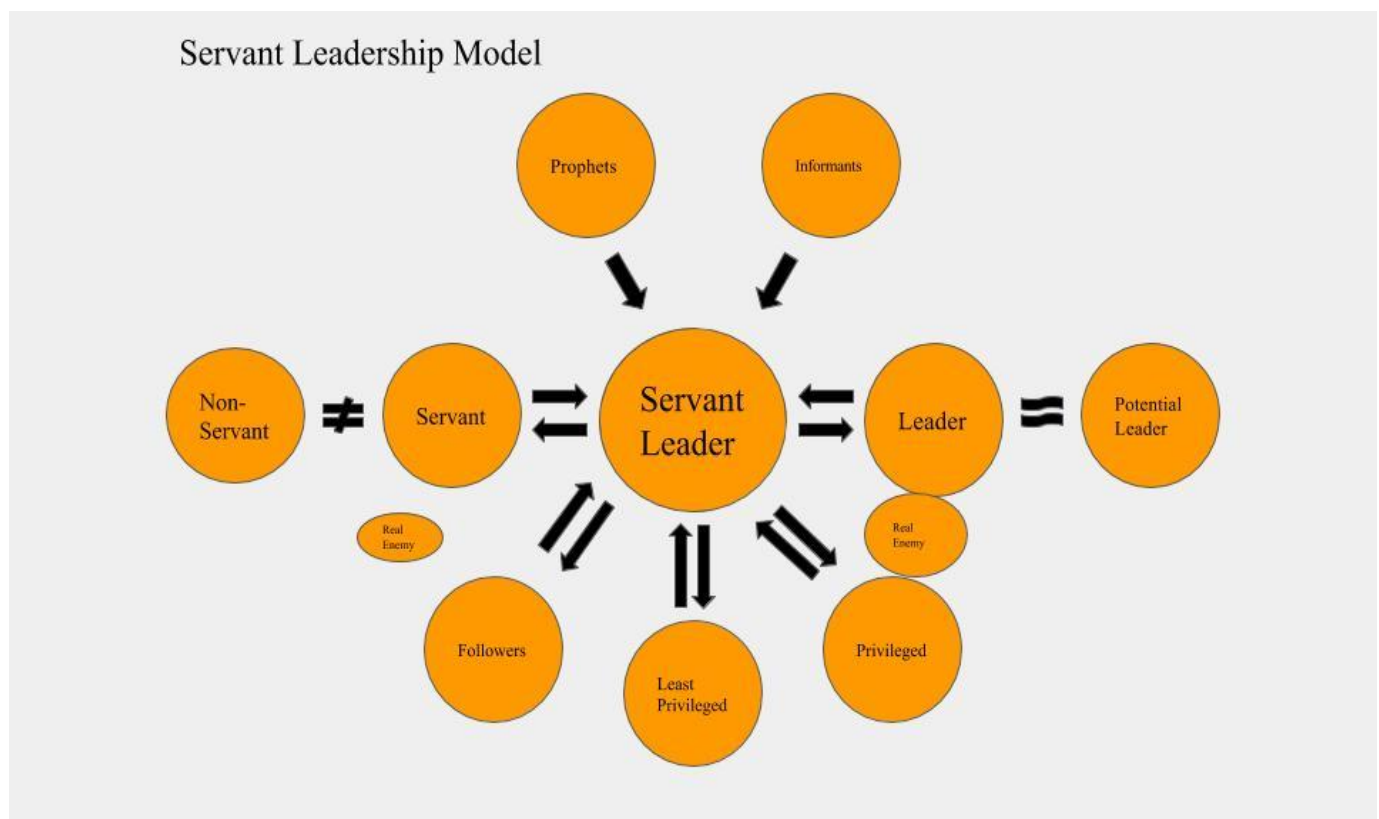
The remaining categories are named according to how they are explicitly referred to in Greenleaf’s essay (see appendix 2 for the entire list divided into the 12 categories). The references within each category are implied or directly associated with the category name. Most of the references are descriptive such as the “leader” or “servant,” for example. On a few occasions certain specific jobs or positions are directly associated with the category name. The list of potential leaders includes many general job titles that are referred to directly by Greenleaf as where one might find leaders, but are not necessarily considered actual leaders. Those referred to as actual leaders are placed in the “leader” category. Prophets are referred to frequently, but Greenleaf also mentions many others in which it would be prudent for a leader to hear, thus the separate category “informants”. Another reason to make the distinction between “prophet” and “informants” is the question of time. Prophets are mentioned in reference to predicting the future, whereas many of the other voices are referred to in order to gather information on actual or historic conditions. Followers are neither leaders nor servants and they are referred to as individuals or groups of people. There are many references to the “privileged” and the “least privileged”. The distinction between the two categories represents power relationships. The references in these groups may be leaders or servants or both, but the difference appears to lie with the ability to influence. The privileged have more ability or opportunity to influence those in power than the least privileged. The references placed in the “non-servant” category are not necessarily negatively impacting societies but seem to be at odds with Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership either in substance or practice. Primarily, Greenleaf mentions these persons or groups as not being servants or the antithesis of servants. A neutral example would be protestors or disruptors. These speakers are not helpful if all they do is “stir the ferment”. These speakers are considered non-servants. However, these same people who may offer a vision, dream or path forward could be considered a prophet or informant. Finally, there is only one group Greenleaf

specifically calls out as the real enemy and they are good, intelligent, vital people with fuzzy thinking. They do not lead nor follow servant-leaders. Greenleaf clarifies that the enemy is “strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead or choose to follow a non-servant.”

Once the speakers were divided into categories, I then condensed the list by eliminating redundancies and all references to the category title. For example, in the category “servant” I eliminated the word servant from all the references leaving just the descriptor. This left a mostly descriptive list of qualities for each category (see appendix C for the condensed list). The descriptive categories give a reasonable image of what a speaker in each category would look like. Yet, there is still some overlap between categories. This can mostly be explained by the combination of servant and leader. I did not create a separate category for servant leader because Greenleaf clearly attempts to describe the two as distinct. However, in a final graph that looks specifically at the interaction and hierarchy of these speakers, servant leader reappears (See graph below).

I have identified 10 speakers in Greenleaf’s essay. They are organized around the servant leader (See figure 1 below). The servant leader combines aspects of servant and leader. The servant leader listens to prophets and informants. The servant leader then interacts with servants

**Figure 1: Servant Leadership Model**





and leaders as well as with followers, privileged and least privileged. Non-servants do not represent servants. They are the antithesis. Potential leaders could become leaders and even servant leaders, but that is not a given. The real enemy as Greenleaf described is the person with real servant leadership potential that either does not lead or follows a non-servant. This person could be at any level within an organization and possibly could be attached to any of the other speakers. Ideally knowing who this person is and isolating them in a separate category is why I have chosen to represent this speaker as a separate category. Greenleaf does not condone removing them because as he puts it, “their removal would not change matters, not for long.” This is the relationship between the speakers in Greenleaf’s essay.

### **Relationship of the Speakers**

The central speaker in this essay is clearly the servant leader. All the other speakers are connected to the servant leader; either directly influencing or directly influenced by this central role. The servant leader is the hub that connects all the spokes. This is the person that combines the desire and skills to serve others with the talents and abilities of leaders. They exercise this authority over the followers, privileged and least privileged. Prophets and informants have the ear of the servant leader and may be at the same time part of the privileged, least privileged or followers, but are not practicing as servants, leaders or both. The servant leader takes the information and discerns the direction to go and actions necessary to be carried out. The servant leader is the speaker with potentially the most authority. Greenleaf appears to acknowledge that there are those with more natural ability to function in this role than others. There are those that can better balance the authority given to the leader and ability to serve the needs of others. The other speakers are not without authority though. These speakers have the ability to influence, a task which might be accomplished without a servant leader, but the servant leader synthesizes the voices of the other speakers in order to make decisions. If the servant leader is the head of a corporation or large business the number of “others” to hear or that are affected by decisions can be numerous.

Non-servants and the real enemy have power, at the very least the ability to gum up the system, and should be identified and noticed by the servant leader. However, they do not appear to participate in any organized manner or participate in a manner that is neither servant nor leader. Take for instance the role of protesters. Greenleaf mentions them a couple of times in his essay. Greenleaf appears to differentiate between those who protest or complain or disrupt from

the dreamers, poets or commentators. The difference is whether a person or group has only identified a problem that affects them personally without any vision for a solution or willingness to participate in the work of constructive building. Greenleaf does not dismiss their legitimacy. He argues that getting rid of them would do no good as they would quickly be replaced by other groups. However, not being able to articulate a solution or see any other person's needs but one's own leaves these speakers without a clear articulation to the servant leadership model.

### **Articulating Speakers**

The next strategy in articulation is to list the elements that are being articulated by the speaker with the most power, in this case the servant leader. What are the elements (persons or groups, objects, discourses or practices) that the speaker is attempting to bring together? Once these are identified it will then be possible to analyze potential, dominant or unstated effects.

Initially it is apparent the servant leader is attempting to bring together several different speakers. This can be seen from the above model listing all the speakers. Principally, the servant leader unites the qualities of being a servant and a leader. Greenleaf suggests that some people are natural servants and others are natural leaders. A servant leader is servant first; then makes a conscious decision to accept a position to lead. This formula is preferable to a person being leader first and then opting to serve. The servant first will be careful to assure that other people's highest needs are taken care of first. However, certain aspects of traditional leadership, such as foresight and decision making, are highly valued and melded into the servant leader. A person who is purely leader first and the person who is servant first are extreme opposites. The leader first is the one who has a "need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions." Most leaders fall somewhere in between.

There is also a clear attempt to bring together prophets and seekers. Greenleaf describes prophets as "men and women pointing to a better way" who speak with clarity and with insight when addressing the problems of the day. A prophet is also unrelenting in their demand for us to confront the terms of our existence, specifically that human existence is fraught with suffering and joys and plenty of imperfections. This concept is similar to Stuart Hall's thinking on one function of the intellectual as "articulating contradictions" (Hall, 1980). Greenleaf's prophet, like Stuart Hall's intellectual, is conducive to social change. Greenleaf suggests that "creative builders" understand that from these "imperfections wholeness can be constructed". And yet,

there are no prophets without seekers. Anyone can be a seeker who believes there are prophetic voices to be heard and filters what they hear through the “context of past wisdom”. It is possible for seekers to find prophets on their own, but Greenleaf suggests that servant leaders can serve as an articulation between the two. The servant leader adapts the advice of prophets in addressing the needs of others and creating a vision. Servant leaders do not wish to reinvent the wheel so without “ignoring the great voices of the past” they are “searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel is in the making.” Seekers will choose this kind of leader.

Another articulation along these lines is between those in authority and those led. Greenleaf, writing in 1970, had just witnessed a decade of social unrest yet to be resolved. He felt like more natural servants were surfacing and challenging the pervasive injustices of the time. These servants were forcing people to “take a fresh look at authority and power.” Greenleaf felt that the only authority that would deserve allegiance from the led would be the one “whose clearly evident stature as servant leader was acknowledged.” The viability of authorities and institutions would depend on leaders who are “proven and trusted as servants.” This articulation implies that the needs of both leaders and followers will be considered and that leaders will be more responsive to those they lead.

Greenleaf also articulates a juxtaposition in the discourse of those who criticize and those who build. The critical difference is between those who just “stir the ferment” and those who participate in “affirmative building”. Criticism has its place, but Greenleaf asserts it is sterile by itself, especially in times of crisis. Greenleaf uses different synonyms for the critic, such as analyst. His concern is that potential leaders get stuck in analysis paralysis, or as he describes it a “complete absorption with dissecting the wrong”. Greenleaf points to several potential causes of this over analysis especially among the young that diverts them from actual participation in solutions. His fear is that potential leaders may opt for easier alternatives to servant leadership, such as withdrawal or destruction. These responses to the system, either putting as much distance between as possible or completely destroying an institution or practice and starting over, serve little purpose if there is no consideration given to what will take its place. This articulation between the discourse of the critic and the builder requires a leap to participation and involvement in the solution without waiting for perfect analysis or having all the information, which as Greenleaf suggests, never happens.

Greenleaf's articulation of so many different groups with their own abilities, needs and contributions is indicative of a concern for building social capital. The importance of relationships for Greenleaf could easily be viewed as both bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital can be particularly reflected in the relationships among speakers within an organization caring for each other while bridging social capital reaches out to those outside of the organization to link them together. Greenleaf's articulation of relationships closely mirrors social capital theory. It is a discourse that builds trust and reciprocity which should translate into benefits for all.

### **Articulation of Practices**

Apart from the many speakers articulated in Greenleaf's essay there are also numerous practices. Many of the articulated practices are individual to the servant leader, but there are some significant exceptions to practices that apply more broadly to organizations. I will begin by covering the more individual servant leader practices.

First, the practice of service is the dominant practice in the essay, leadership is secondary. The difference is that the "desire to serve" should be first, then a choice made to lead. Service for the servant leader is articulated in a few ways. First, the servant leader should "meet the highest needs of those being served". Knowing and understanding what those needs are would require a relationship with those being served. The servant leader is asked to be "accepting" and "empathetic" and to "never reject the person." Acceptance of others and empathizing are common to many leadership theories. The practice of service of other's needs, the most critical role for a leader, is unique to servant leadership. What makes it even more unique among theories is the extension of service from the trustees of an organization all the way through to the least privileged of a society. It appears Greenleaf is advocating for a form of social impact value chain. This implies that a leader or organization would know all the layers of people impacted by its decisions and policies and will take them into account when considering organizational direction. Greenleaf states that minimally the least privileged "would not be further deprived". Negative impacts would not be acceptable.

The next practice articulated by Greenleaf is that of leadership. Leadership in the servant leadership model is individualistic in many respects. It shares concepts such as change starts at the top, a leader has to maintain some order, and that "a leader persuades not with coercion" but

by gentle supportive rhetoric where the leader “says just enough and allows the followers to make the leap of faith to follow.” However, the practice of leadership for servant leaders varies in that the leader continually refines their hypothesis and decisions on what serves others best. Greenleaf further suggests that what might be best is for leaders who are privileged in the current system to “stand aside and serve” and let leaders from among the “dark-skinned, the deprived and the alienated” find their way. The “now-privileged” need to “abandon their present notions of how they can best serve and wait and listen” until the “less favored define their needs in their own way.” This idea appears to be a historically significant perspective considering the social unrest at the time of the publication of Greenleaf’s essay. Either way, there is also an acknowledgement that those in a position of privilege are less likely to push for change since they benefit the most from the current situation. The ability to hear the dissenting voice and to allow those voices the space to lead is an unusual aspect of servant leadership. It also reflects Greenleaf’s position that leadership should be bestowed, “freely given by followers.” Leadership needs to be responsive to its followers, which implies that followers have some recourse in choosing leaders and decision making.

Along these same lines is the practice of exercising power. If one is to “accept the human condition” and to “work with its imperfections”, then it starts with the leader. That is where “the process of change starts”. That assumes a position of humility. The servant leader will listen more than speak. The leader will not blame. The servant leader creates opportunity and alternatives and allows the people to choose autonomously. The leader can use gentle persuasion but not coercion. “Power is used to create choice” which allows followers to act autonomously. This would suggest that followers are not automatons blindly following rules but instead have the autonomy and confidence to make independent decisions when the needs of others are not being met.

Significantly, the servant leader “takes the risks of failure along with success” with the followers. This concept taken seriously implies a number of structural differences in leadership than other theories. It would suggest no special conditions for a leader that followers would also not benefit from; no golden parachutes, no special salary incentives or bonuses not shared by all. Also, in bad times, leaders share in the suffering. Compensation packages for leaders should be radically different in servant leader organizations than in other companies.

Finally, the leader must be willing to move outside of their comfort zone to be able to challenge power, authority and injustice. This last aspect of the practice of servant leaders is meaningful because leaders are generally considered the ultimate authority within their organization barring (at least on paper) trustees. This would imply that a servant leader will challenge larger systems when faced with unmet needs of followers.

Another practice of the servant leader is to be an active listening historian-prophet. Greenleaf describes the servant leader as a person rigorously prepared, part historian, analyst and affirmative builder. Despite Greenleaf's skepticism of the role of higher education when devoid of participation in problem solving and actual doing, Greenleaf's servant leader needs a sense of history, the ability to analyze experiences and a certain level of detachment to see the forest for the trees. At the same time, the servant leader is constantly and actively listening to multiple voices, both affirmative and dissenting. The servant leader moves among the followers, listens and is able to conceptualize insights gained. At the same time, the servant leader listens to prophets and has a sense of prophecy. The servant leader has a "sense of the unknowable," can foresee the unforeseeable and clearly state the vision and goals of the organization or company. Greenleaf did not mean that the servant leader would be able to predict the future with complete accuracy, far from it. The servant leader is constantly dealing with limited data and knowledge and must "make decisions based on imperfect information". Thus, if a leader has a style that is part historian, analyst, active listener, and prophet, a more insightful decision might be made. Even so, the servant leader must have the wherewithal to course correct when and if necessary.

One final practice of the servant leader is a sense of community. The servant leader builds a group of people, does not use people but puts people first. This idea goes beyond what many theories refer to as team building, to include the larger communities in which the organization is located. The servant leader builds the people up around them as well as the community at large. This implies that a servant leader is building social capital within the organization and in the larger community.

These practices have the predictable outcome of building trust and a sense of shared reciprocity, two elements essential to the theory of social capital. A leader who follows these practices would also be building social capital.

It is also of note to mention what practices are absent in Greenleaf's theory. Notably missing is any reference to making money or profits. He does not suggest making money or profits is good or bad, Greenleaf just never mentions it<sup>2</sup>. Greenleaf also never mentions shareholders or investors. Furthermore, he omits the word employee, although it can be assumed that followers could be a synonym. These omissions are not accidental. Greenleaf's own background is from corporate America and this theory is clearly meant for the business milieu. However, a business is located within Greenleaf's vision of a larger community; perhaps for this reason, the terms used to refer to the voices are generally broader. Greenleaf did not wish to imply that this theory could not be used in many different settings and organizations, business being just one of them. The omission of any discussion surrounding financial gain or profit is a clear indication that money is not the yardstick to measure this theory. People and their well-being, are the tool to measure servant leadership. Greenleaf give us the tool to measure in his best test, "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?" (Greenleaf, 1977)

### **Analysis of Effects**

The third step to articulation is to analyze the effects, potential or actual, of the speakers and the elements the theory is attempting to unite. The servant leader has been identified as not the only speaker in Greenleaf's theory but the speaker attempting to synthesize and unify the other voices as well as the speaker who also has the most authority. Servant leadership brings together these multiple voices through specific practices such as service, the exercise of power, and specific leadership approaches analyzed above.

The first effect of servant leadership analyzed with articulation theory is a change in the organizational structure of a business. The move is away from a more hierarchical structure to a more relational one. The leader is the servant of the others in the company and the community at large. This new structure does not imply that there is no leader or the leader has no influence.

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<sup>2</sup> In a paragraph about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, Greenleaf quotes the founder as suggesting that the organization will not use money to do the work. An apparent acknowledgement from Greenleaf that money cannot solve some issues, but not an extrapolation regarding money to all organizations.

The servant leader is still very much in charge, but is “*primus inter pares*, or first among equals” (Greenleaf, 1977). Not only is the structure less hierarchical but it is also much more flexible. With an emphasis on relationships and meeting the needs of followers, the structure may and should look very different from one department to another even within the same organization.

The effect is an organizational structure like that of the model previously discussed in this research. The servant leader is located in the middle of the model attentive to the needs of others around them. A rounder model such as the one proposed in this research is structurally more flexible than a triangular hierarchical one. A round structure is easier to move than a triangle. It also suggests that the model is not an inverted hierarchical structure as some have proposed (Painter-Morland, 2008; Spears and Lawrence, 2004). An inverted structure suggests the leader is only concerned with the needs of those above is an ever increasing order of importance. The model in this research reflects a servant leader who is responsive to meeting the needs of various groups while moving the organization forward as a whole.

A second effect of servant leadership is to reconsider who should be the leader. Greenleaf’s experience in training leaders and attempts at evaluating potential leadership over many years at AT&T appear to have left him somewhat dissatisfied with the results. AT&T attempted to identify leaders primarily through behaviors with limited results (Moses and Byham, 1977). One of the first projects Greenleaf worked on after his tenure at AT&T was a collaboration with Hersey and Blanchard at Ohio University (Frick, 2004). Hersey and Blanchard later developed a situational leadership approach. Greenleaf certainly applies some situational components but takes a different approach to who should be a leader. Greenleaf claims the leader should be servant first. The leader should also be more inclusive to include women and minorities. No doubt the events of the 60s and early 70s influenced Greenleaf’s thinking. He also felt that those in positions of privilege may have to “stand aside” in order for other groups’ needs to be met. There is an acknowledgement in servant leadership that privilege may not always be helpful in leading and that a diverse leader voice will meet more needs of the others often overlooked. This effect is also an example of bridging and even linking social capital where multiple groups and diverse groups are brought together in positive ways.

Servant leadership, as described in Greenleaf’s essay, is largely an individualistic theory built around the role and character of the servant leader. The servant leader is servant first but without relinquishing the title of *primus inter pares*. The servant leader may have positional



power but seeks consensus as the primary decision making format as often as possible. The servant leader may be described as a type of “synthesizer;” one who listens to voices of the past, voices within the organization both dissenting and affirming, and prophets. The servant leader displays a willingness to place oneself in the middle of myriad voices, in a point in time between history and prophecy and to serve in a leadership role all the while clearly stating the vision and direction of the company. The articulation of vision to the changing environmental, societal, and economic developments must necessarily adapt as new information is obtained and one can never cease to gather new inputs from multiple sources.

This leads to a third effect with regards to decision making and what that looks like. Greenleaf suggests that consensus, while not always possible, is the best decision making style in servant leadership. Servant leadership is a move away from autocratic, top-down decision making to a consensus model. This means a redistribution of power. In particular it means listening to a diverse number of speakers and in particular hearing the dissenting voices. There are two main reasons for this approach to decision making. The first is that in order to know the needs of the others you have to listen to them and allow them agency in the process. The second is the recognition that nobody can possibly know it all, have all the information, and always make the right choice. A diverse range of opinions and knowledge will help inform decisions better. Once again we also see an effect of linking social capital by encouraging diversity in positive ways.

Greenleaf also felt that the leader should be one whose authority “is freely and knowingly granted by the led.” Followers “will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants.” This concept not only speaks to decision making and consensus but also to how individuals are chosen for positions of authority. It appears Greenleaf suggests followers be given some agency over this decision. It would follow that if followers have some agency in how leaders are promoted then they should also have some agency in how leaders are removed. Greenleaf is implying not just shared decision making but also shared power.

A fourth effect of servant leadership is a change in corporate existence from purely economic motivations to a focus on service and mutual personal growth. Greenleaf is not suggesting abandonment of financial concerns; rather financial concerns are subservient to the needs of others. By extension, profits would also be used in the service of others. If a business

exists to serve those it leads and those led are impacted by its operation and profits, then those profits are at the service of others to meet their highest needs. If a business or organization purports to follow the principles of servant leadership then the motivations for the existence of the business, which one would expect to see reflected in the mission and value statements, would be first and foremost about service and not about economic goals.

As an extension of the last effect, another effect would be a sense of social responsibility. The servant leader of a business would necessarily understand the impacts of the business on the larger community and assure that minimally no harm is done; ideally the highest needs of the community are also met. This continues the chain of valuing relationships and serving on a holistic level, or the level of bridging capital. The larger implication of servant leadership theory is that servant leadership is constructing social capital. Servant leadership does not accidentally construct nor secondarily construct, it actively seeks to build social capital. This applies not just within the confines of the organization but externally to the larger community impacted by the organization's operations or where a company operates. For multinational companies the implication is that the business will consider impacts to its worldwide labor force and the worldwide community. It also implies that the environment is implicated as human communities are dependent on the health of the natural environments they live in.

Furthermore, companies will necessarily build all types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. The three types of social capital all have merit within a company and will build community if the form social capital takes remains inclusive. Bonding social capital will build strong teams and company culture. Servant leader companies cannot be content with only building strong bonding social capital. The danger of bonding social capital is that it can turn exclusive and result in groupthink or other internal biases. Bridging social capital will demonstrate that a company is thinking beyond its own self-interest and includes additional groups. Servant leadership organizations do not have the luxury of choosing some followers at the expense of others. An organization, for example, cannot choose to serve shareholders at the expense of stakeholders, management over employees, or business over community. The servant leader and business have the obligation to listen to many speakers and to consider the impacts on the least of all. For large national and multinational companies, this means also building linking social capital. The inclusion and consideration of diverse groups and measuring the impacts on them will demonstrate linking capital. Servant leadership without any corresponding forms of

inclusive social capital is hollow and probably more destructive than simply utilizing a transactive approach due to the hypocrisy.

A final effect is the measurement of servant leadership style. Servant leaders should display many traits, behaviors and situational leadership characteristics but the ultimate measurement for ethical and effective servant leadership will be service. The measurement of the servant leader or business is determined by their ability to serve and thus build social capital. This service starts with the followers within the company but also extends far beyond to the least privileged. The servant leader does not ignore the financial solvency of the company for there is no servant leader company or any other type of leadership company that does not manage all the bottom lines. Recent research is showing that measurements of service and economics are related. Taking care of people has positive impacts on economic factors while the same is not often true inversely. But it is not a servant leadership company or leader if the economic measurements are more significant than measurements of service.

Measurements of service would match Greenleaf's own suggestion for evaluating effective servant leadership: the personal growth and health of followers. Are followers more likely to become servant themselves and what is the effect on the least privileged? For the servant leadership company measuring elements of service makes sense for two reasons. First it is a way to evaluate the servant leader. Instead of measuring the traits and behaviors of the leader, measure the effects of leadership. If evidence of effective service is observable then the servant leader most likely is also demonstrating the behaviors and traits of servant leadership. If followers are showing growth and health then the servant leader is also adapting his style to meet the situational characteristics of the follower. Just measuring leaders has the disadvantage that possessing the right traits and behaviors may not translate to the anticipated outcomes. For example, Sipe and Frick (2009) in their book describe the seven pillars of servant leadership. It is a lengthy description of the traits and competencies of the servant leader. While it is important to develop leaders, it also is not enough. Being a person of integrity or using honest communication is not simply a leadership quality, it is something we expect in every relationship. While it is important for leaders to demonstrate these qualities, we must also look at the outcomes. Those outcomes will be evident through service.

The other reason for measuring elements of service is to evaluate followers. Servant leadership should demonstrate that followers are growing, becoming healthier, and becoming servants themselves. Followers should show indications that the services provided to them are effective. Evidence of follower health, as well as community health, should be evident from a servant leader company.

There are many elements already commonly used to measure service to followers and community, such as job satisfaction, sick leave used, longevity, community service hours, and philanthropy. These are just a few of the measurements that could be used that are already common. However, it should be noted that Greenleaf referred to followers' highest needs. It would appear logical that basic needs must be met first before highest needs can be achieved. Whether considering Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Kohlberg's moral development, for example, basic needs of food, shelter and health must be met. Consideration of higher needs and positive impacts not just on company bottom lines but also on aspects of social capital is the one of the focuses of self-determination theories. This in my estimation means servant leader companies must establish fair, livable wages and provide benefits for its followers. Employees concerned about issues of housing, food and health cannot focus on higher needs of self-actualization or higher education, for example. If basic needs are not met then the leadership style appears more transactional than servant leader, a mere exchange of labor for a paycheck.

The utilization of measurements of service also underscores the value of relationships in servant leadership and social capital theory. These relationships should look diverse, collaborative, and valued. Servant leadership organizations should be diverse as they look to create both bridging and linking social capital, seek out prophets, dissenting voices, as well as creative and innovative speakers. Relationships are valued as collaboration and consensus are sought to make decisions.

As businesses grow, become more powerful and influential, servant leadership companies must remain clear on the goals of serving people above profits. The current administration in the United States is extremely pro-business and will attempt to reduce regulation and taxes for businesses. Servant leadership companies will be responsible for self-managing and continuing to prioritize relationships and social capital over economic benefits. It will be challenging for

companies without a strong culture of servant leadership to navigate the trappings of power to continue to serve others' highest needs.

### **Alternative Articulations**

The final step in the methodology is to consider alternative articulations. Could the arrangement of the speakers in Greenleaf's essay be arranged in another manner? The diagram of speakers used in this research seems ideally reflective of Greenleaf's theory. In practice, it is possible that the arrangement look different especially if the servant leader abdicates too much of the role or other speakers disrupt the model. An organization is an organic, evolving creation and not a static model. Speakers within the model can change roles and should be expected to, but the model assumes a fairly balanced approach to power and influence. So, while the servant leader may be *primus inter pares*, some semblance of power sharing could remain despite fluctuations. An alternative articulation with regard to speakers would be one where speaker's roles are fixed or encouraged to be rigid. This in my interpretation would be a corruption of the speaker model suggested in this research.

In the analysis of the actants being brought together, this research focused on relationships between the speakers and practices within the organization, there is plenty of space for alternative articulations. Relationships and practices can be manipulated for other ends. Both the means and the ends are significant in servant leadership. Persuasion and influence are perfectly legitimate tools but not coercion. The goal is to serve the highest needs of those being led. Alternative articulations would arrive at different ends or utilize different means.

A final alternative might be a historic interpretation of servant leadership. Servant leadership might be explained as a reaction to the events and personal experiences of Greenleaf. This style may a temporal response to historic conditions. Curiously, Greenleaf's theory lay mostly dormant for 30 years. It really came to the forefront with the many horrific examples of corporate leadership fiascos in the late 1990s and 2000s. Additionally, the changes that Greenleaf witnessed through the 1960s have been matched by paradigm shifting changes in technology, globalization, etc. equal to those events of the 1960s. Historic changes are constants and certainly influenced the development of the theory, but it appears the nature of leadership itself is driving the shifts in attitudes. One articulation could be that leaders recognize that their own autocratic rule has not paid off, except in limited circumstances. Another could be that the

importance of healthy followers has risen in significance. This might especially be true for skilled workers in fields with shortages, but servant leadership appears to extend beyond just these voices. It could be that innovation and creativity are more critical than manufacturing and have displaced previous forms of leadership. There are many possible alternative articulations considering historic shifts that might possibly have influenced the need for new leadership styles and many have merit. However, given the constant that is historic change, servant leadership will continue to add articulations to the theory or lose relevance.

The method of articulation applied to *The Servant as Leader* organizes the speakers in the essay and examines the structure of relationships. This structure is then further analyzed to determine the relationships and practices that are unifying elements. The method also allows for contemplating what is missing or being de-amplified. Then the effects of the articulations are considered as well as alternative articulations. These steps have all been taken with Greenleaf's essay and with this analysis complete, there are some conclusions that can be made about the relationship of servant leadership style to social capital.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The goal of this research has been to study the connections and impacts of servant leadership with forms of social capital and in particular what elements and practices are articulated that unite the two theories. The findings described in this research detail two theories, servant leadership and social capital, that are so similar as to be nearly synonymous. Business leadership should be about building community. So wouldn't any leadership theory have the same goal? In general leadership theories are about building bonding social capital which looks like strong teams and a corporate culture. Servant leadership goes farther and makes a concerted effort to also build bridging and linking social capital by explicitly incorporating speakers from outside the organization and seeking consensus. Servant leadership reorganizes company goals to focus on relational goals built through service.

More researchers agree that building social capital is positive, and given the amount of concern over declining social capital (Putnam, 2000), this research could have significant implications. First, there are lessons for the communities themselves. If communities are aware of their needs and understand that companies that profess to be servant leaders could assist in building social capital, it appears beneficial for communities to recruit servant leader companies that match their needs. This research could also help communities identify legitimate servant leadership companies by analyzing whether companies tout their economic or service outcomes. Communities desperate for any form of employment for its citizens often settle for short term solutions that add little or even continue the decline of social capital.

For servant leader businesses and individuals, there are two significant implications. The first is the connection between business and social capital and the second is a distinct organizational structure. Servant leader organizations have made it part of their business to build social capital, not just internally but externally as well. Focusing on the internal social capital may cause positive externalities but a servant leadership company will not assume this to be true. One way businesses will do this is by not choosing amongst the many possible others to serve. Servant leader businesses are aware of all the others that are impacted and served and will consider all the consequences.

Considering the impacts for all those served by business will be increasingly important if the current national trend of fewer taxes, less regulation and increasing consolidation continues.

Maintaining good feedback loops that include listening to dissenting voices in an atmosphere of trust will assist in avoiding institutional crises before they can have international consequences. It is also a golden opportunity for servant leader businesses to demonstrate that they are viable options when the incentives to serve are ethical and not economic.

The other implication for businesses is a different perspective on how organizations are designed. Rather than considering the business as a hierarchical structure, whether inverted or not, a servant leader business looks more like a circular structure with the servant leader in the middle. Given the importance placed on listening and consensus, this organizational structure has advantages. It places the servant leader in the middle in closer contact to more groups and allows the business more flexibility for change, at least structurally. The potential disadvantages would be that the entire system could be overly dependent on the servant leader and if new servant leaders are not identified and prepared the whole structure could collapse. The other concern would be that the same system that allows for more flexibility does not guarantee that the movement will be forward, the whole company could just as easily move backwards. Regardless, the implications for servant leader businesses are that they must be vigilante in serving to prove the theory viable and ethical.

One final implication is what the measurement of success for servant leader businesses will be based upon. As demonstrated in this research, success will be measured through indicators of service not economic measurements. It is not that the economic is not important, but economic success alone would not equate to successful servant leadership. Greenleaf's own best test includes no mention of any economic measurement for servant leadership. That being said, focusing on service does not imply that companies can ignore the economic positions of followers. In order to meet the highest needs of followers, their basic needs must be met and this would seemingly include adequate compensation and benefits.

This research does demonstrate the close articulation of servant leadership to social capital. However, there are limitations to the findings and new questions are generated about servant leadership and social capital that merit further research.

## **Limitations**

A study of this nature is not immune to limitations. Initially, all of the major terms used in this thesis are not easily definable: leadership, social capital, articulation. These major terms



can be analyzed by descriptive aspects but not completely agreed upon definitions. Another difficulty is the tendency of these terms to evolve and adapt. The expectations and requirements of modern societies for being a leader look completely different today than it did even 50 years ago. This is reflected in business school curriculums and literature on leadership. Likewise, what qualifies as social capital will necessarily adapt as societies and technology eliminates some forms and creates new forms. Apart from these issues with vocabulary there is one linguistic issue worth mentioning in further detail.

The word “servant” is fraught with ambiguous meaning and historical baggage. Yet the potential implications of this term are not discussed in the research. It is not mentioned, for example, in Russell and Stone’s (2002) review of servant leadership, nor in any of Laub’s research and development of an assessment instrument (1999, 2003, 2004). Greenleaf (1977) himself does not address any troubling aspects of the term servant other than it sounding contradictory. Even Spear’s book (1998) titled *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant-Leadership* fails to make any reference to these concerns. But for a number of reasons, primarily one of awareness, a short discussion of implications of this term is included here.

There are significant implications of class, race, and gender with a term such as “servant.” Greenleaf, a white man of privilege, communicating a leadership theory using the term servant is significant in two ways. The first aspect is the issues of class, race, and gender. The use of the term “servant” evokes images of class as the position of servant historically has gone to minorities and women. Being a servant is not associated with positions of power. While Greenleaf addresses openly the juxtaposition of the terms “servant” and “leader”, he does not go further to discuss other issues associated with his choice of terminology. This vocabulary choice has important implications, especially for the relationship between leaders and followers. If leaders are asking followers to also be voluntary servants without sharing in any of the benefits of also being leader, there is a real risk of disservice, reflected in concerns of researchers over negative aspects of social capital. This would once again reflect a hierarchical structure that separates people by class in particular and generally by race and gender as well. Leaders need to be highly conscientious of these class, gender, and race issues and not avoid the historical

implications but remind and exemplify the benefits of service, not positional subservience to power.

Another reason I suspect Greenleaf misses the historic and power implications of the term “servant” is religion. While most research fails to mention the class, race, or gender issues, many do note the religious connotations (Laub, 1999). Greenleaf does not hide the religious influences on his theory but makes a concerted effort to stress that his theory is not just for religious organizations. The idea of service is significant for most religions. Many of the examples in the literature are from religious organizations, or clearly religious individuals (Baldner, 2012; Turner, 2000; Frick, 2009). While there is nothing inherently wrong with religious influence on a leadership theory or the ideal of service, religious organizations have plenty of horrific historical examples of oppression in the name of service and, coincidentally, they tended to negatively impact minorities and women. So if the religious implications of a term are apparent and analyzed it would behoove organizations and researchers to also analyze class, race and gender issues within a theory as well. It is not the focus of this research to cover these issues, only to mention that they exist and should be considered.

As is always a concern with qualitative research, there is no quantitative research to support the conclusions. It is not the goal here to rehash the arguments for or against quantitative vs. qualitative methods. Both are valid approaches and both are needed. There is a growing body of research that uses quantitative methods as well as instruments for measuring servant leadership aspects in individuals and organizations (Laub, 1999; Laub, 2003; Grisaffe, 2016). However, the caution here is in knowing what criteria to use to measure a concept like servant leadership. The theory presupposes certain outcomes especially in regards to the overall health of followers. I would suggest that measurements of employee satisfaction and happiness are more valid than company profits or stock price. A careful qualitative analysis should assist in more effective quantitative analysis and thus, and ultimately, help leaders to know what measurements in a data obsessed world actually suggest servant leadership is alive and well within an organization.

As far as the methodological approach of articulation and servant leadership, there is certainly room for different interpretations as well as distinct focuses with the method. The approach I have used is not new and it is replicable. However, it is focused on speakers and

practices rather than ideologies or objects. Perhaps nuance has been gained but inclusion lost by focusing on speakers and practices in this research. Stuart Hall was very clear that articulation is effective for capturing historical moments in time (Morley and Chen, 1996). For this reason, this research must be taken as an evaluation of a theory at a particular point in history. As the theory evolves and situations change certain articulations may no longer be valid.

## **Recommendations**

There are many aspects of servant leadership and social capital that would lend themselves for further research. More specifically based on this research I would recommend continued research on servant leadership at the individual and organizational levels and also research on the connection between business and social capital at the organizational level.

At the individual level and as extensions of this research, I would recommend a few aspects for further research. The first is the strong connection between servant leadership and Christian religious ethics. Greenleaf makes an attempt to broaden the theory to non-religious businesses and organizations but the literature still appears to mainly reflect religiously inclined people as the primary proponents of the theory. This was partially Price's concern (2008), among other concerns, that the leader was acting more on religious or external motivations than a rational internal one. More qualitative studies on individuals that propose to use this theory who are not also motivated by religious concerns would add credibility to the idea that the theory can be extended to secular institutions.

Additionally, more clarification should be given to specific business practices that support servant leadership theory. If the highest needs of followers are a template for practices, for example, certain standards and practices for compensation and benefits would appear to support or be counterproductive for servant leadership companies. A move from mere idealistic vision to specific tangible practices would appear to give credence to the theory.

Finally, and considering the previous recommendation, as measurements of servant leadership evolve, a primary articulation for Stuart Hall is the one between discourse and practice. Business leaders can profess many motivations and visions but it seems particularly important for leaders who claim to serve the needs of followers to display and execute practices that support this vision. Servant leadership is particularly relationship-based and a tighter

articulation between discourse and practice would appear to also have positive effects on performance and follower outcomes.

Servant leadership has tended to be an individual practice but not an organizational one. This means, individuals within an organization may profess to be guided by the theory of servant leadership, but that may not be the reflection of the organizational standards. As more companies declare themselves as servant leader entities more research can be done to see if their values as servant leaders set them apart in any way. There is some qualitative data on a few companies to suggest that servant leadership is a viable business model, but more data on how exactly these organizations stand apart could prove invaluable to the continuation of the leadership style.

Along with the previous recommendation, I suspect that the difference may manifest itself in the commitment to building social capital particularly within the communities they closely operate. Some quantitative research measuring the amount of community building and social capital construction within the organization and externally and measurements of servant leadership businesses may provide evidence of a model for civic entities to encourage. I find little evidence of the connection between servant leadership businesses and positive social capital change in the literature. Baldner's book (2012) *Successful Servant Leadership* focuses on La Crosse, Wisconsin and mentions a few potential social capital benefits to the city. Further research could reveal how strong the connection is between the amount of servant leader businesses in a community and the strength of social capital or social capital trends in communities where they operate.

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## Appendix A

Servant	Speaker	A moral person	Difficult offenders
Leader	Teacher	Members	Patients
Great leader	Coach	Thomas Jefferson	The mentally retarded
Prophetic voices	Administrator	Mentor	Old people
Men and women of stature	Communicator	George Wythe	Those being cared for
Hearers	Percy Bridgman	A substantial man	Those who serve
Prophets	Fellows	Scholar	One who is served
Seekers	Cult	President	The older generation
Contemporary ones (prophets)	Group of people who isolate themselves	Conservative colleague	The primitives
Older ones (Prophets)	Proven able leader	Colleague	Group of people
Dead prophets	Commentator	Ambassador	Trustees
Great voices (prophets)	People who go for leadership	Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig	The presider
The led	Natural leader	Large peasant population of serfs	Active persons
Servant-led	Servant-as-leader	The peasants	Those who would serve and lead
Those who stir the ferment	college president	Chronicler	Trustee bodies
Affirmative builders	Educator	Danish peasantry	Able dedicated servant-leaders
Servant-leaders	Student(s)	Underclass	Able people
Gardener	Family	Estate owners	Shakespeare
Young people	Silas	Government officials	Moral individual
Builders	Hired man	A well-to-do middle class	Truly giving enriching servant
Analyst	Farmer	A theologian	Neutral person
Artist	Wife	Student of history	One whose net influence is to take away
Hermann Hesse	Husband	Young adult	Rabbi Hershel
Leo	The halt	Masses	True prophets
Albert Camus	The lame	The “cultured”	False prophets
Sisyphus	Half-made creatures	Confused visionary	Questioner
Individual	Mother	Peasant youth	Ken Kesey
Person with creative potential	Head of a vast organization	The dark skinned	Big Nurse
Natural servant	“little” people	The deprived	Mac Murphy
The old	Perfect people	The alienated	King
The young	Parents	Privileged elite	Confucius
Contemporaries	Children	Exceptional people	Thieves
People who are logical and consistent	Neurotics	Privileged	Busybody modern man
Leader-first	“typical” person	Elite	Those who are favored by the rules
Servant first	Half-people	Those who are now favored by the old rules	Those who accept the world as it is
Other people	“sensitives”	Miguel Serrano	Enemy
Those served	The hesitant decision maker	The now privileged	Evil people
Least privileged	Scientist	Today’s privileged	Stupid people
Legions of deprived and unsophisticated people	Poet	Less favored neighbors	Apathetic people
True servants	Wise leaders	Less favored	The protestors
The rest	Prescient man	Paulo Friere	The disruptors
Paul Goodman	Machiavelli	John Milton	The revolutionaries
Others	Prince	Highly creative men	The reactionaries
One who states the goal	Prudent man	Ministers	Offending people
Dreamers	Historian	Psychiatrists	Good intelligent vital people
Those who follow	Contemporary analyst	Chairman	Critics
Able man	The practicing leader	Healer	Experts
Team	William Blake	Doctors	Strong natural servants
Those who lead	Man	Catholics	Able servants
Sensible person	Jesus	Jews	Brutal non-servant
True natural servant	Woman	Protestants	Extraordinarily able mature servant-disposed
Non-servant	Mob	One who is being served and led	men and women
St. Francis	Challengers	Alcoholics	Exceptional people
Alfred North Whitehead	John Woolman	Philanthropists	Narrator
	Quaker	Very wealthy man	Twisted and tormented ma
	Slaves	Poor	
	Slaveholders	Orphaned children	

## Appendix B

### Anecdotal Characters

Hermann Hesse  
 Narrator  
 Twisted and tormented man  
 Leo  
 Albert Camus  
 Sisyphus  
 Paul Goodman  
 St. Francis  
 Alfred North Whitehead  
 Percy Bridgman  
 Silas  
 Machiavelli  
 Prince  
 William Blake  
 Jesus  
 Woman  
 Mob  
 Challengers  
 John Woolman  
 Quaker  
 Thomas Jefferson (scholar, president, ambassador)  
 George Wythe (a substantial man)  
 Conservative colleague  
 Colleague  
 Nikolai Frederik Severin  
 Grundtvig (theologian, student of history)  
 Miguel Serrano  
 Paulo Friere  
 John Milton  
 Shakespeare  
 Rabbi Hershel  
 Questioner  
 Ken Kesey  
 Big Nurse  
 Mac Murphy  
 King  
 Confucius  
 Thieves  
 College president  
 Farmer  
 Hired man  
 Wife  
 Husband  
 Ministers  
 Psychiatrists  
 Chairman

Healer  
 Doctors  
 Catholics  
 Jews  
 Protestants

### Servant

Servant  
 Natural servant  
 Servant first  
 True servants  
 True natural servant  
 Servant as leader  
 Those who serve  
 Those who would serve and lead  
 Able dedicated servant leaders  
 Truly giving, enriching servant  
 Strong natural servants  
 Able servants  
 Extraordinarily able mature servant-disposed men and women  
 Those who accept the world as it is

### Followers

The led  
 Servant-led  
 Those served  
 Those who follow  
 One who is being served and led  
 One who is served  
 The rest  
 Others  
 Fellows  
 A cult  
 Group of people who isolate themselves  
 "Typical" person  
 Group of people  
 Hearer

### Leader

Leader  
 Great leader  
 Servant leader  
 Leader first  
 One who states the goal  
 Those who lead  
 Proven able leader  
 People who go for leadership

Natural leader  
 Wise leaders  
 The practicing leader  
 Gardener  
 Able man  
 Sensitive person  
 Prudent man  
 Historian, contemporary analyst and prophet  
 Trustees  
 The presider  
 Active persons (as opposed to trustee)  
 Trustee bodies  
 Able people  
 Moral individual

### Prophets

Prophets  
 Prophetic voices  
 Contemporary ones  
 Older ones  
 Dead prophets  
 Great voices  
 True prophets  
 False prophets  
 Men and women of a stature equal to the greatest  
 Confused visionary

### Privileged

Privileged elite  
 Privileged  
 Elite  
 Those who are now favored by the old rules  
 The now privileged  
 Today's privileged  
 Very wealthy man  
 Those who are favored by the rules  
 Estate owners  
 Slaveholders  
 Government officials  
 A well-to-do middle class  
 The cultured  
 Philanthropist

### People to listen to

Analyst  
 Artist

The old  
 The young  
 Contemporaries  
 People who are logical and consistent  
 Other people  
 Young people  
 Dreamers  
 Team  
 Speaker  
 "Sensitives"  
 Scientist  
 Poet  
 Mentor  
 Chronicler  
 Commentator

### Least privileged

Least privileged  
 Legions of deprived and unsophisticated people  
 The halt  
 The lame  
 Half-made creatures  
 "little" people  
 Half-people  
 Slaves  
 Large peasant population of serfs  
 The peasants  
 Danish peasantry  
 Underclass  
 Peasant youth  
 The dark skinned  
 The deprived  
 The alienated  
 Less favored neighbors  
 Less favored  
 Poor  
 Orphaned children  
 Difficult offenders  
 Patients  
 The mentally retarded  
 Old people  
 Masses  
 Alcoholics  
 Those being cared for

### Potential Leaders

Affirmative builders  
 Builders  
 Person with creative potential  
 Teacher

Coach  
 Administrator  
 Communicator  
 Mother  
 Head of a vast organization  
 The hesitant decision maker  
 Prescient man  
 Exceptional people  
 Highly creative men  
 Seeker

### Non-Servant Leaders

Non-servant  
 Those who stir the ferment  
 Neutral person  
 One whose net influence is to take away  
 Busybody modern man  
 Enemy  
 Evil people  
 Stupid people  
 Apathetic people  
 The protestors  
 The disruptors  
 The revolutionaries  
 The reactionaries  
 Offending people  
 Critics  
 Experts  
 Brutal non-servant

### Real enemy of better society

Fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people

### Other Generic Voices

The older generation  
 The primitives  
 Young adult  
 Member  
 A moral person  
 Man  
 Perfect people  
 Parents  
 Children  
 Neurotics  
 Family  
 Educator  
 Students  
 Individual

## Appendix C

### Servant

Natural, first, true, able, dedicated, as leader, who serve, truly giving, enriching, strong, mature, servant-disposed, men and women, accept the world as it is.

### Leader

Great, servant, first, states the goal, who lead, proven, able, go for leadership, natural, wise, practicing, gardener, sensitive, prudent, historian, contemporary analyst, prophet, trustee, presider, active, moral

### Followers

Led, servant-led, those served, who follow, being served and led, the rest, others, fellows, cult, isolated group, typical person, group, hearer

### Prophets

Voices, contemporary ones, older ones, dead, great voices, true, false, men and women of a stature equal to the greatest, confused visionary

### People to Listen to

Analyst, artist, old, young, contemporaries, people logical and consistent, others, dreamers, team, speaker, sensitives, scientist, poet, mentor, chronicler, commentator

### Privileged

Elite, those now favored by (old) rules, now privileged, today's privileged, very wealthy man, estate owners, slaveholders, government officials, well-to-do middle class, cultured, philanthropist

### Least Among Us

Least privileged, legions of deprived and unsophisticated, halt, lame, half-made creatures, "little", half-people, slaves, large peasant population of serfs, peasants, Danish peasantry, underclass, peasant youth, dark skinned, deprived, alienated, less favored neighbors, less favored, poor, orphaned children, difficult offenders, patients, mentally retarded, old, masses, alcoholics, those being cared for

### Potential Leaders

Builders, affirmative builders, creative potential, teacher, coach, administrator, communicator, mother, head of a vast organization, hesitant decision maker, prescient man, exceptional, highly creative, seeker

### Non-Servant Leaders

Non-servant, those who stir the ferment, neutral, net influence is to take away, busybody modern man, enemy, evil, stupid, apathetic, protestors, disruptors, revolutionaries, reactionaries, offending, critics, experts, brutal

### Real Enemy

Good, intelligent vital people with fuzzy thinking