

# **SIGNS OF LEADERSHIP**

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**A THEORETICAL INQUIRY ON THE  
ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP**

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## **DEDICATION:**

**FOR MY GRANDFATHER, ROBERT WESTHEIMER, MY HERO,  
AND THE GREATEST LEADER I'VE EVER KNOWN.**

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To all of you, and all of my friends, thank you.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

*The crane is calling  
In the smoking lake  
Difficult to know  
From above or below  
- Josè Cedillos, 2001*

The thesis that follows comes from a rich history of inquiry.

In June of 1995, my father received his Ph.D., from The Union Institute of Cincinnati, Ohio, in Institutional Analysis and Education. I remember that day very clearly – the pictures, the commencement exercises, and the exuberance. After teaching public school for almost 20 years, my father set out to get his Ph.D., and five years later, he accomplished that goal. I was twelve years old.

Six years from then, I was a first-year student at Brandeis University, and in a class called *Time*. This class, which fulfilled my first-year seminar requirement, was especially meaningful for me; it was refreshingly focused on intellectual inquiry, and demanded far more intellectual preparedness than was offered by my alma mater, Batavia High School. With such demands, matched with the academic demands of Professor Sadhana Bery's upper level *Social Movements and Identity Politics* class, I stood at Brandeis and knew I needed help. So I turned to my father.

After speaking with my father for several hours that fall, about the school work I had and the ideas I wanted to explore, it became very evident that much of his doctoral dissertation would be meaningful and pertinent for my research. For that reason, and instead of having him recite his ideas and sources over the phone, I asked for him to send me a copy of his doctoral dissertation – a document that I admittedly had never read.

“Turning It and Turning It Again,” I read the title, six years after it had been written. As I turned the pages I began to see my life explained before me, not because of

the biographical information it narrated, but for the ideas, the theories, and the analysis that graced its pages and informed my life. My father presented ideas in his dissertation that had informed his values, thoughts, and perspectives, and, for that, they seemed so familiar. His methodological approach – which largely influenced my final paper’s topic in *Time* – made sense to me as I began to formally approach theoretical issues, in my seminar class and in sociology. Indeed, it served as a reminder of life’s complexities, and stressed the importance of understanding concepts and things as discriminate elements indiscriminately linked to a whole. One quote from his dissertation rang especially true when I first read it. It speaks to this essence of the human experience, and is something that has, to this day, informed all of my scholarly work:

We can experience, analyze, understand, and describe autonomous components of the perceived world. We do breathe; we eat and love and live and die. And we can experience and describe and come under the influence of these aspects of the whole. This, no doubt is the human condition: being touched and entering a sustained relationship with everything we come into contact with. But we do so only on one level. On another, we exist as an aspect of “undivided wholeness of flowing movement” (Westheimer 36).

With an intellectual guide, I began my academic career seeing life and academics in this way. Embracing a framework that encouraged the integration of many concepts and “truths,” I began to build an intellectual repertoire, pull in more and more ideas – not just those found in my father’s blue-bound dissertation – and seek ways to use them as relevant and revelatory for whatever endeavor, academic or otherwise.

Over the past four years, the material in my personal repertoire has come from many places. I have taken many courses at both Brandeis and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid; I’ve studied politics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, art, and language. In my journeys, have been exposed to many people and things, in classrooms and dorm rooms, club offices, sunny lawns, cafes, discotecas, crowded

streets, and dark theater houses. Simultaneously, I have been growing, changing, developing into the person I am to be, and the person I hope to be. Over time, I have grown to become a young man with hopes and dreams.

It is interesting to think about this growth, and think about how, throughout my life, I have wanted for myself to be many things. “When I grow up, I want to be a...” – that common childhood phrase has ended with “policeman,” “farmer,” “fireman,” “investor,” “soccer player,” and even “rock star.” However, over the past several years as I have come into adulthood, another vocation has called my name. This one, which bears no fixed occupation, has captured all of my life being, all of my purpose and will, and has fixed itself upon me as an identity, a goal, and a passion. This new calling has become so ingrained in my life that I have come to ponder its origin. As I say, “When I grow up, I want to be *leader*,” I wonder *why* I want to be so.

Throughout my studies and experiences of “the whole,” I have heard “leadership” mentioned and discussed, and I have paid due attention, considering my personal relationship with its meaning. As I have listened and read, I have waited for someone to tell me “why” I wish to be a leader, but I have never found a compelling explanation for the origins of the “political vocation.” Those who claim to explain the origins of leadership offer intriguing ideas, but merely provide their answers on a broad social structural level – and rarely on the individual level. However, leadership is a concept that deals with human interaction on an individual level. Leaders are individuals with their own histories. They are leaders of many people, including those who deterministic theorists would assume to be leaders themselves. And this has left me perplexed, searching for a more appropriate explanation for the origins of the political vocation.

Therefore, this thesis resembles my personal journey to understand the makings of leadership: slow and reserved at first, frustrating and slightly confusing in the middle, and refreshingly revelatory in the end. In Chapter 1, I address the foundations of leadership studies by reviewing some of the most influential and important work done on the subject. However, what starts as a review turns into a laboratory for new ideas. In Chapter 2 I begin to ask questions. Departing from the traditional texts of leadership studies, I begin to implement well-known theories and ideas not usually associated with leadership. The result of this is an innovative attempt to explain the process of “becoming a leader.”

While I could have ended this thesis with the two chapters included in Part I, I offer Part II as a chance to adhere theoretical concepts to practical examples. While this offer may not seem too out of the ordinary, my methodology, for many, may seem odd. In Part II, I use an autobiographical brush to illustrate ideas and concepts related to leadership. By looking at autobiographical examples of social interaction in Chapter 3, I am able to use Chapter 4 make new conclusions about leadership and leadership studies.

With this practical/theoretical dual strategy, I am able to come to two conclusions not contained in the work of my thesis. Firstly, by shedding light on the theoretical foundations of leadership, I have been able to see the strengths and weaknesses of traditional leadership studies, and have been able to challenge my own conclusions with productive results. The advantages of this approach should not be overlooked, and its legitimacy should not be second-guessed. I study my history not as a traditional case study, where the actions taken and the stories told add subjective substance to an argument; instead, I recount elements of a life I know well – in this case my life – and

from this process of telling a story, the theoretical model I work with is illuminated, and unforeseen faults and fortes are revealed. I conclude that this methodology add no substance or legitimacy to my work; rather it inspires a more substantive and legitimate analysis of it.

My second conclusions is that I am now satisfied. I was encouraged to impart in this study because I had dissatisfaction with traditional leadership studies. However, after hundreds of hours of reading, thought, writing and re-writing my ideas and conclusions, I am now satisfied and proud to submit this senior honors thesis. The process of writing this thesis, much like the process of leadership, has brought about much change. If for nothing else, this exploration on becoming a leader has resulted in the process of becoming an academic, and only in that sense am I not yet satisfied. I hope that this work is only the first of many to come.

Nathaniel W. Westheimer  
Waltham, MA  
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# PART I

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THEORY

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **LEADERSHIP AS WE KNOW IT**

*Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.*

*-James MacGregor Burns*

Despite the abundance of work on the topic, it is safe to say that the term “leadership” lacks consensus in meaning or definition. Many of the books addressing the concept of leadership are heralded only in their time, and some have a more enduring impact. Max Weber’s work on political vocation and charismatic authority is commonly recognized as the most lasting contribution to leadership studies, while books like *Leading Minds*, by Howard Gardner, and *Authentic Leadership*, by Bill George, are contributions that offer legitimately authoritative perspectives, but have not created any profound effects on the general discourse on leadership. In each attempt, however, an author describes a different process that he or she calls leadership, and often times chooses to identify different “styles” of leadership. Pervasive in leadership studies is this classification of leadership type and a focus on the individuality of leaders themselves.

Max Weber gives the cornerstones and foundation to further study leadership in a social context. However, over the past hundred years, political scientists, anthropologists, biographers, philosophers, and psychologists alike have all poured into the theory, the evidence, and the people of leadership. Leadership studies are infused with so many concepts from all of these fields, that every step deeper into a compilation of such concepts and study seems to leave the student of leadership studies further confused and farther from a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Nonetheless, by looking at the commonalities involved in leadership studies, specifically in sociology, there are

areas of consensus that can be useful for framing the ongoing discovery of the subject. For instance, no matter what the relationship may be between the two groups, scholars always mention “leaders” and “followers”<sup>1</sup>. It is also important to note that the general relationship between leaders and followers is central to the conception of leadership. Therefore, instead of tackling leadership studies by reviewing the teachings of Max Weber along with countless other theories and observations of leadership, the following literature review will center on the *common relationship between leaders and followers* and focus even more specifically on identifying the *leadership process*.

### The Leader/Follower Hierarchical Relationship

The hierarchical model is the most common and traditional method of viewing the process and relationships of leadership. In hierarchical models, there is a distinguishable difference of power between the leaders and followers, and in most cases, hierarchical models of leadership place the leader as dominant over the followers. In regards to this dominance, there is rarely an absolute claim that one party has complete dominance or holds all power; however, scholars always recognize the leaders for their greater degree of agency and power. To address this, we turn to Max Weber.

#### ***Max Weber & the Charismatic Leader***

Max Weber is the first noted sociologist to address directly the issue of leaders and leadership. Weber describes the subject of his essay, *Politics as a Vocation*, firstly as an issue of “political associations,” and recognizes the state as the most basic form of these associations. The nature of political associations, Weber proposes, can be

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<sup>1</sup> If the terms “leader” and “follower” are not used, theorists have substituted words such as “facilitator” and “collaborator” to better align the terms with the theories of leaderships, although the concepts and the basic relationships between the groups may be the same.

determined according to its “means” of existence, which he claims is the “*monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory” (1946: 78). Weber furthers his analysis of the state by adding that when working for or with a share of this power, one’s actions are said to be “political.”

Here, Weber identifies the three basic “legitimate” authorities, or legitimations of domination: firstly, Weber identifies a “traditional” domination, a reference to hereditary rulers, and domination by lineage; secondly, Weber identifies the “domination by virtue of ‘legality,’” whereby a person rules by the process of law, or some legal-rational default; thirdly, and most closely studied for this and other works of leadership studies, Weber offers the *charismatic authority*, a legitimation of authority derived solely by the personal and independent qualities of the an individual. Regardless of the type of legitimate authority, the quest for authority is an objective for all who practice politics: “He who is active in politics strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egotistic, or as ‘power for power’s sake,’ that is, in order to enjoy the prestige-feeling that power gives” (Weber 1946: 78). Decisively, political work is based on power, dominance, and authority.

Lineage rules, norms, or formal laws identify legal and traditional authorities. Their presence rests on these concrete grounds (or institutions), and can only be “delegitimized” when the institutions on which they rely are stripped of legitimation as well. However, Weber identifies the charismatic leader as one whose legitimation rests wholly on individual grounds. As Weber describes the nature of the charismatic leader’s status, he states, “Devotion to the charisma of the prophet, or the leader in war, or to the great demagogue in the *ecclesia* or in parliament, means that the leader is personally

recognized as the innerly ‘called’ leader of men” (1946: 79). It is this social election, the choice made by self-defined “followers” to call a charismatic authority “leader,” which defines the social status phenomenon of leader, and is made by “followers.”

As the leader’s task is to establish legitimate power, or authority, his or her relationship to these followers becomes important. Weber sees the motivations of leaders, or vocationally political figures, as directly linked to their ability to create legitimacy. Weber alludes to this in his reference to those who work for “power for power’s sake,” and further describes this distinction by saying, “Either one lives ‘for’ politics, or one lives ‘off’ politics” (1946: 84). To Weber, this definition is mainly economic – whereby the motivations for assuming a political vocation are determined by the economic necessities of a given person – and establishes the necessity of personal wealth for a person who lives exclusively “for” politics. The idea here is that by engaging in politics for economic welfare, one will be visibly swayed in the way that politics is done, thus creating a sense of illegitimacy. Without such distractions, a leader living strictly “for” politics can lead directly by and for her personal convictions, exemplified by three pre-eminent qualities: “passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion” (1946: 115). To address the nature of leadership, Weber concludes by again reinforcing the need for legitimacy in a leader’s identity. A true leader,

...Acts by following an ethic of responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: ‘Here I stand; I can do no other.’ That is something genuinely human and moving. And every one of us who is not spiritually dead must realize that possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man – a man who *can* have the ‘calling for politics.’ (1946: 127)

Hence, Weber's leader is a "genuine man," and one whose character and personality moves his potential followers to grant him the authority of "charismatic leader," for through his character, his calling to lead is legitimized.

However, no matter the genuine motivations of the leader, his identity and status of legitimate "leader" cannot be solidified without legitimate actions. Looking at leadership as a process, the genuine nature of a charismatic leader is seen as important only when that "nature" produces what is required from his followership. Explaining this best in his essay "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," Weber states,

The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength in life. If he wants to be a prophet, he must perform miracles; if he wants to be a war lord, he must perform heroic deeds. Above all, however, his divine mission must 'prove' itself in that those who faithfully surrender to him must fare well. If they do not fare well, he is obviously not the master sent by the gods. (1946: 249)

Weber identifies that the status of leadership is one that must be "gained and maintained," thereby explaining that a purely social or charismatic leader must somehow secure the welfare of others by doing things that both provide and make apparent that she is providing. In this sense, the identity of "leader" and the process of "leadership" appear to be dependent concepts. Diving the nature of a leader's actions, Weber exposes another reciprocal aspect of leadership actions. When leaders do what it takes to prove their charisma and enact domination over their followers, they do so in a revolutionary sense, which "means a rejection of all ties to any external order in favor of the exclusive glorification of the genuine mentality of the prophet and hero" (Weber 1946: 250). Weber claims that the charismatic leader cannot abide by established principals that govern behavior, but instead must do everything with a "sovereign break with all traditional or rational norms: 'It is written, but I say unto you.'" (1946: 250). By intentionally making

his actions “sovereign” of established norms, the charismatic leader reinforces the individual and proprietary nature of the authority he seeks, establishes, and maintains.

Concerning the nature of the “sovereign” leadership actions, Weber discards any assumption that leadership makes the intentions and actions of the leader inseparable from the desires and will of the followers. Of this matter, Weber argues that charismatic leaders only know “inner” determination and restraint, and therefore have the ultimate mission of finding those who will follow that mission. Weber explains that this process of status and power achievement (through sovereign action) occurs only after a leader finds prospective followers. With the onus on the leader to find a followership, Weber finalizes that “it is the *duty* of those to whom he addresses his mission to recognize him as their charismatically qualified leader” (1946: 246-7). This duty, undoubtedly, stems directly from the legitimacy present in the phenomenon of charisma, or “personal gift of grace”; we can therefore see charisma as the nature of relationships and processes that maintain the hierarchical separations of power that support leaders. By this measure, leadership is the attainment and maintenance of the status of “leader,” the process through which a charismatic authority finds a followership that will be satiated and moved by her “sovereign” actions. Weber’s description gives much agency to the leader, but recognizes the importance of followers and the leader’s dependence on them. The crux of this faction-making process called leadership is the fact that the needs of followers ultimately sustain the leader herself.

### Leadership & Bureaucracy

Max Weber made a lasting impact in sociology when he ascribed the concept of charisma to social (and therefore non-theological) relations. But in addition to this work,

Weber made a lasting impact in at least one other area: the study of bureaucracy. Where the studies of leadership and bureaucracy intersect, we learn important lessons about the nature of leadership relations and role-playing within a structure, which gives us a better understanding of the constraints on leadership actions. The rigidity of Weber's pure bureaucracy shows the opposite end of charismatic leadership, where innovation cannot be exercised, and strict role enactment must be an official's main concern.

A monocratic bureaucratic authority, according to Weber, is a structure where tasks are carried out by an administrative body, whose officials, organized hierarchically according to authority in specific arenas, perform regulated and fixed duties, and provide for an efficient and effective institution. The expansion of the free market economy, according to Weber, is the main cause of the rise and existence of bureaucracy, and is a part of a larger movement away from the "communalization" of social relationships towards an "aggregation" of them<sup>2</sup>. Working from the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, developed by his contemporary F. Toennies, Weber makes a basic but important distinction between traditional and modern relations and organization. Traditional associations, according to Weber, originate from "any kind of emotional, affectual or traditional link," while modern associations occur in the context of rational association, such as free market exchange, interest group participation, or "voluntary union based on absolute ideological values; for example, a rationally oriented sect which

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<sup>2</sup> These terms, "communalization" and "aggregation," which describe social conduct, are translations of Toennies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, which are terms that Weber also used in German. These English translations are from H. P. Sechcer's translations of Weber's *Basic Concepts of Sociology*. H. H. Gerth, in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated the same terms as "community action" and "societal action." In this work, each term will be used according to the origin of the matter being discussed. Other terms may be: traditional or prior society (*Gemeinschaft*) and modern society (*Gesellschaft*).

ignores emotional or affectual interests...” (1972: 91-92). This latter context for social relations – routinization, rationalization, “aggregation” or *Gesellschaft* – seeks order in society by managing interest, and achieves these aims through the routinization of relationships. This, in its pure form, is a modern bureaucracy.

In modern society, the work and authority of a member is determined by explicit rules, which are understood by all, and followed by everyone. The quality of an official is determined by his or her ability to perform the duties assigned to his or her rank, and ascension to higher ranks is determined by the capacity of the worker in relation to the positions available. Opposed to the flexible and vulnerable nature of the traditional/charismatic leader’s status, Weber says of the bureaucrat, “His social position is guaranteed by the prescriptive rules of rank order...” (1946: 199). All status held by the bureaucratic official pertains to the position she holds and society’s value of that role (rather than any personal qualities she may possess). Therefore, change in member status in bureaucratic organizations can happen only two ways: a shift in structural position within the organization, or a change in value that society ascribes to members of bureaucratic associations. Of these changes, the official has no control or authority. The official must then work at a higher and higher capacity if he or she has *ambition* to achieve a higher status.

It is important here to recognize that the scope of leadership extends farther than the pure types presented by Weber. In modern societies, leaders, as status holding individuals, have effectively fixed roles and positions much like the bureaucrat. The leader’s status, as in the modern bureaucracy, exists only in relative terms to others in the social organization, or local society. As Weber discusses bureaucracies in terms of rules,

roles, and routinization, it is useful to acknowledge that the nature of authority in pure bureaucratic organizations is an essential part of everyday life in modern society.

To continue, we should consider again the distinction of working *for*, rather than *with* authority. Weber instructs that that leadership requires “a sovereign break” from rationality, rules, or routinization – the elements of purely bureaucratic associations. Therefore, Weber concludes that “leadership” must rest on traditional relations. But this is not how Weber expects to find leadership in everyday settings. Weber recognizes the likelihood that most examples of legitimate domination will not be in the form of one pure type or another – we may find an example of a mayor, elected through legal systems, supported by individual relations, and legitimized somehow from the residual fact that his mother was the mayor of the same town. A wholeness of legitimacy is looked for in a modern political actor; but Weber shows that a political actor, if she to be a *leader*, is one whose attention is affixed on her independent relationships, and actively works outside of institutional guidelines. “To take a stand,” Weber states, “to be passionate – *ira et studium* – is the politician’s element, and above all the element of the political *leader*. His conduct is subject to quite a different, in deed, exactly the opposite, principal of responsibility from that of the civil servant” (1946: 95). This responsibility – the specific responsibility of a *leader* – is that which Weber states early on: achieve legitimacy through charismatic performances of leadership directed at a group of followers, in order to form a relationship that can sustain itself.

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### *Marshall Sahlins & “Big-Men”*

When Max Weber described the qualities of a charismatic leader – legitimized by personal characteristics, faction seeking, welfare securing – he may as well have been looking at the Melanesian “big-man,” as studied by Marshall Sahlins. In his important study, *Poor man, rich man, chief*, Sahlins uncovers the rich political culture of Melanesia, whose “primitive” societies provide incredible examples of leadership in action. Beyond legitimating Max Weber’s work and theory, the details of Sahlins’ essay provide a better understanding of the charismatic<sup>3</sup> leader’s strengths and weaknesses.

Melanesian society is arranged by small factions of nearly one hundred people, and headed by a leader natively referred to as a “big-man.” The nature of the big-man’s authority is completely personal and an independent social convention, much like the charismatic pure type presented by Weber. “It is not accurate to speak of ‘big-man’ as a political title, for it is but an acknowledged standing in interpersonal relations – a ‘prince among men’ so to speak as opposed to ‘The Price of Danes’” (Sahlins 322). Beyond the title of “big-man,” there are certain variations of status which infer variation of role in society; these are: “man of importance,” “generous rich-man,” “center-man,” and “man of renown”; and we find that the latter two statuses are most crucial for a leader’s development of “big-man” status and his power maintenance.

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<sup>3</sup> Sahlins’ use of the term “charisma” is virtually interchangeable with Weber’s use of the very same word. Sahlins says of the Melanesian man, “So a man must be prepared to demonstrate that he possesses the kinds of skills that command respect – magical powers, gardening prowess, mastery of the oratorical style, perhaps bravery in war and feud” (323).

According to Sahlins, a “center-man’s” status comes directly from his personal relations with other tribesmen. Adding to this fact, the support from followers comes in a very similar fashion as Weber’s charismatic leader.

‘Center-man’ particularly connotes a cluster of followers gathered about an influential pivot. It socially implies the division of the tribe into political in-groups dominated by outstanding personalities...It is not that the center-man rules his faction by physical force, but his followers do feel obliged to obey him...” (Sahlins 322)

A center-man achieves a loyal followership, and from them his status. The relationship between this big-man and his followers is somewhat reciprocal. Big-men, compete with other big-men to win followers by providing the potential followers with insurance of well-being. They concentrate a wealth of capital on securing loyalty, and creating a faction; “The making of the faction...is the true making of a Melanesian big-man” (Sahlins 323). To be a successful center-man, capital – shell monies, food, pigs, or other various goods – must be distributed in “calculated generosity” as “private assistance.” A center-man provides essential material security, but the big-man who wishes to provide physical security to his faction-in-the-making, and retain membership in his faction, must concentrate as well on being an effective “man of renown.”

The “man of renown” status comes from the fact that big-men, working as center-men, are in constant competition for followers against other big-men. To secure their status among other big-men, center-men must see that no violent action is taken against his own, and that his faction does not transfer allegiance to another big-man; and he does this by diverting attention and resources “outward from his faction.” By putting on great displays or hosting feasts for the occasion of another big-man (like the erection of a house or the marriage of a daughter) – generosity that create personal debt among big-men – a big-man achieves the status of “man of renown.” This personal debt provides

security against inter-factional, intra-tribal violence, but also provides for cooperation and group action in times of war. “Big-men do instigate mass action, but only by establishing extensive renown and special personal relations of compulsion or reciprocity with other center-men” (Sahlins 322-323).

Sahlins goes in great detail regarding the specific norms of big-men driven society, and leaves a reader with a very powerful message in regards to social leadership. Leadership is about political capital – it’s about “amassing a ‘fund of power’”; “A big-man is one who can create and use social relations which give him leverage on others’ production and the ability to siphon off an excess product...” (Sahlins 324). Dilemmas in leadership arise mainly from the paradox between the necessity of being a center-man and a man of renown. Although both are essential for building a fund of power, they insinuate contradictory performances, which can cause the implosion of big-man leadership. While the relationship of a center-man to his followers is reciprocal, the necessity to build personal renown, the competition with other big-men, forces an exploitation of the relationship a big-man holds with his faction, and from this exploitation an “inevitable tide of discontent mounts...” (Sahlins 325).

The relation a big-man has with his followers is a shared security, though for the followers it is merely with material capital, and for the leader it is material and political. The limits on this kind of leadership rest on the capacity of the leader: his ability to produce goods, and his sensibility in balancing renown, factional attention, and personal ambition. The quality of leadership is dependent on the quality of relationships he manages to accumulate; the calculated generosity, the investments of political and material capital, the charisma, and the foresight to understand the paradox of big-man

leadership – to see that “the ultimate defense of the center-man’s position is some slackening of his drive to enlarge the funds of power” (Sahlins 325) – are all qualities of good leadership.

The aforementioned balance of faction and renown is certainly a main concern to the ambitious big-man. However, in conclusion, Sahlins offers several concerns regarding the nature of this kind of leadership. Due to the fragility inherent in the big-man’s balancing act, there is a high rate of factional disintegration in Melanesian society. Not only are followers quick to leave dissatisfactory factions, but also the death of an influential big-man can create a significant political “trauma” and causes the collapse of his faction. On a greater social level, Sahlins sees this fragility as socially problematic:

Developing internal constraints, the Melanesian big-man political order breaks evolutionary advance at a certain level. It sets ceilings on the intensification of political authority, on the intensification of household production by political means, and on the diversion of household outputs in support of wider political organization. (Sahlins 326).

*Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief* is an essay comparing the political organization of Melanesia to the political organization of Polynesia, where hereditary chiefdoms are the political tradition. While examining the highly structured Polynesian political organization in detail may have little use here, there is use in Sahlins’ comparison of the two societies – much like the comparison of traditional and modern societies. In fact, the differences between Polynesian and Melanesian leadership are very similar to those that Weber sees between his community action and societal action leadership. As one can imagine, by reexamining Sahlins’ concerns for the big-man political order, Sahlins acknowledges that, while not as egalitarian or popular, the hereditary leadership of Polynesia provides greater stability, more intense authority, a greater ability to push for the production of socially needed material, and has less restrictions in the expansion of a

political domain. The chief has a greater ability to push his underlings – as their relationship is *not* directly reciprocal – in order to achieve personal or societal aims.

In all regards, Sahlins' work provides a crisp example of leadership that is to be referred to in detail with any study of non-institutional, social leadership. Understanding the work of the big-man reveals the process by which Weber's charismatic leader leads, and the process by which leader statuses are attained in a real society; the story of the big-man shows how leadership is about the reciprocal exchange of capital for material and social gains.

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### ***James MacGregor Burns & "Leadership"***

*Leadership*, a book by the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winning author, political scientist, and historian James MacGregor Burns, gives scholars of leadership studies a valuable assessment of the concept of leadership, which, according to the author, is "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (2).

Burns identifies two essentially different types of leadership: transactional and transforming. Nonetheless, Burns is able to make the general statement: "We have conceived of leadership... as the tapping of existing and potential motive and power bases of followers by leaders, for the purpose of achieving intended change" (448). Like Weber and Sahlins, Burns eyes the process of leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers, directed by the leader's agency. In naming the different leadership types, however, Burns concentrates on the nature of the exchange between leaders and followers.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Imagine, for a moment, Melanesian society, where big-men get their political support in exchange for providing food to fellow villagers, within the complex societal and political structures of modern life. Burns, of his “transactional” leadership, says, “This theory...conceives of a leader and follower as exchanging gratifications in a political market place. They are bargainers seeking to maximize their political and psychic profits” (258). Burns includes in the category of transactional leadership five different subtypes (“opinion leadership,” “group leadership,” “party leadership,” “legislative leadership,” and “executive leadership”), each defined by the products exchanged and the marketplace for these exchanges.

In the exchange of reciprocally valued products common and characteristic of all transactional leadership, such goods may be conceived as jobs and votes, or verbal endorsements and moral justification. In this sense, Burns agrees with sociologist Peter Blau, whose structural exchange theory will be discussed in greater detail in forward sections of this thesis; in essence, they agree that in order to reach a mutual goal or make mutually desired change, the leaders offer something the followers want, in exchange for the authority the leaders want. Adding to this, Burns stresses that, different from regular free-market transactions, transactional *leadership* occurs to accomplish a social goal. Following in the hierarchical tradition of leadership analysis, Burns assigns the impetus and credit for accomplishing social goals to the leader.

Despite the rational natures of transactional exchanges, the “valued things” exchanged are different for the different subtypes. Opinion leaders, for instance, apply and align existing societal values and ideals to mobilization efforts, while group leaders work to “persuade their followers not only to want but to deserve and *expect* certain

goods ... and when leaders in turn help convert these expectations into *demands*, they become leaders of... groups that make claims of other... groups, and on government” (Burns 304). Transactional leadership is required, therefore, to manage and optimize the resources and desires of a group or party for political purposes.

There is one final element of transactional leadership that makes its existence and practice significant. Because transactional leadership is naturally affixed to structure, changes in the status quo by managing political wants and needs and extracting political gains cannot happen without conflict within that system. Burns says the following of transactional leadership:

It rests on reciprocal responses of leader and led to perceived wants, needs, expectations, and values. It, too, depends on conflict for movement; to the extent that conflict is either suppressed or permitted to break up into fragments, stalemate or chaos results and the transactional process has failed. (Burns 368)

This picture of leadership’s dependence on conflict reveals a telling face of transactional leadership: A leader is *motivated to create conflict*, for without that conflict, there exists no role in the structured society for her as leader. Transactional leadership does not provide the moral grounds to justify this conflict, and is restricted in the amount of conflict that can be caused; therefore the leader’s management of needs and wants occurs only within the current social framework.

### Transforming Leadership

Nonetheless, there is a form of leadership that creates societal advancement through structural change, rather than mere reorganization. *Transforming leadership*, the second type of leadership presented by Burns, motivates followers to make sacrifices for a leader’s cause, rather than receive reciprocally valued goods. As with all leadership, the leader’s cause is born from the needs, wants, and goals of followers, but unlike

transactional leadership, this type of leadership, transforming leadership, takes on the goals and desires which cannot be realized with the tools provided in current social establishments.

Burns' identification of transforming leadership encompasses four specific varieties: intellectual, reform, revolutionary, and heroic/ideological. In theory, all transforming leaders operate with the mission to cause significant change for a common good. Their work is to redefine society through "positive" change; nonetheless, just as Burns shows for transactional leadership, "Leaders, whatever their professions of harmony, do not shun conflict; they confront it, exploit it, ultimately embody it" (39). Conflict so inherently becomes a part of transforming leadership, that the pinnacle of this type of leadership is revolutionary leadership, where "In its broadest meaning revolution is a complete and pervasive transformation of an entire social system" (Burns 202). Reinvention of society, which is specific to transforming leadership – and an essential requirement of Weber's traditional/charismatic leadership – requires a special relationship between leaders and led; in accord with the process of leadership already established by Burns, namely the process of raising expectations and exceeding or meeting them, one must imagine that transforming leaders raise expectations and demands from followers that fall outside the normative expectations.

Along side these four types of transforming leadership, Burns notes that there are roughly four specific ways to surpass the normative expectations. Intellectual leadership involves a new way of thinking about concepts of power and motivation, as in moral and scholarly justifications; reform leadership identifies a different way to live and organize, and manages to create the new structures by following impressively moral and effective

routes; in revolutionary leadership, the commitment of leaders is so extraordinary that the followers are motivated, inspired, and believe in the cause they front. “The leaders must be absolutely dedicated to the cause and able to demonstrate that commitment by giving time and effort to it, risking their lives, undergoing imprisonment, exile, persecution, and continual hardship” (Burns 202). Finally, Burns describes heroic/ideological leadership as a process consisting of similar feats and sacrifice as revolutionary leadership.

Transforming leadership creates a new framework for society that resembles measurable change. “Ultimately,” Burns expounds, “the effectiveness of leaders as *leaders* will be tested by the achievement of purpose in the form of real and intended social change” (251). The process of transforming leadership, resting on the ends it achieves, involves masterful political skill and genuine attention to the required group of followers. “*Real* leaders – leaders who teach and are taught by their followers – acquire their skills in everyday experience, in on-the-job training, in dealing with other leaders and with followers” (Burns 169). Therefore, transforming leaders use their social aims and personal experiences as themes for their leadership. The result, when leaders appropriately apply their leadership abilities, is the potential for powerful mobilizations and significant changes.

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In both his descriptions of transactional and transforming leadership processes, Burns describes a process of change through the tapping of resources. These resources, as well as the direction of change, come from both the leaders and led, from their goals and desires and needs, and can be seen in the shifts or change of public opinion, party alignment, moral direction, and social structures. It’s also important to recognize that

Burns describes these types as pure-types. While thinking of Burns' types of leadership in their purest form effectively illustrates their natures on a grand scale, it is also important to recognize that Burns sees these types of leadership as forms that can exist on a smaller scale. In conclusion of his chapter titled "Toward a General Theory," Burns laments,

Traditional conceptions of leadership tend to be so dominated by images of presidents and prime ministers speaking to the masses from on high that we may forget that the vast preponderance of personal influence is exerted quietly and subtly in everyday relationships... Local, unofficial, unrecognized leaders of opinion, themselves motivated by needs such as self-esteem and esteem from others, they understand what motivates the people they see face to face, day after day, to a degree and with an accuracy that the leaders outside cannot match. (442).

Burns' final reminder is to look at leadership in its everyday nature. Regardless of scale, we must pay attention to the motivations of people and the source of these motivations. Leadership *requires* no less than genuine concern for societal development, it *demand*s a leader-led relationship that ends in the acquisition or creation of power, and is *born from* the needs and goals, present and anticipated, of the mass of people to be led.

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### ***Exploring Leadership through Social Movements***

The perspectives offered by Weber, Sahlins, and Burns, the reader should acquaint us with some of the most important concepts and contingencies surrounding leaders and led. Thus far, our attention has been fixed on the process of leadership, and from observing it, we have learned a lot about the interactions, the leaders, and the followers. However, looking too hard and too long at the leadership process may both strain our thoughts and complicate our conceptions; we must again note Burns' warning of studying too much only to understand too little. We now divert our attention to social movements, which, given their purpose of creating change by challenging the status quo, are prime areas to examine the emergence of leadership. The two sections that follow

illustrate the dynamic between contentious movement and modern structure, therefore illustrating the dynamic of innovation, conflict, and structure.

Roche & Sachs in “The Bureaucrat and the Enthusiast”

Social movements, whether religious, political, or social, often provide clear examples leadership’s influence. According to the authors of *The bureaucrat and the enthusiast*, John P. Roche and Stephen Sachs, there are two major types and functions of leadership that emerge in social movements. These types, similar to (and inspired by) Weber’s charismatic and bureaucratic-legal pure types, are identified in the title of their work. While Roche and Sachs agree with Weber that we are not likely to find pure-types in practice, they do maintain that most leaders in movements will closely resemble one of these types; and, therefore, they worth studying generally and separately. Roche and Sachs also agree with Weber that attention and study of pure-types support the analysis of more moderate types.

The bureaucrat works for an organization or movement as an organizing force. “While he may have strong ideological convictions,” say the authors, “he will be preoccupied with the reconciliation of diverse elements in order to secure harmony within the organization and maximize its external appeal” (208). While producing the ideology of a movement may not be the bureaucrat’s calling, producing and managing effective policy is. The authors identify a need for organizational prowess in a movement, and the bureaucratic leader offers this, due to her attraction to harmony and compromise. Roche and Sachs explain, “the bureaucrat, conditioned and molded by his intense awareness of, and concern for, the opinions of others, both within and without the organization, is ‘other directed’” (212). Organization in general adds to a movement’s capacity and

stability – stability because the bureaucrat directly counters the “enthusiast,” Roche and Sachs’ second leadership type.

By definition, a social movement works towards a goal; ideology and innovation are huge components of this. Directing from the inside out, the enthusiast leader imbues her values and ideology directly into the policy and practice of a movement, and demands dedication to “the cause” from her followers. To the dislike of their bureaucratic counterparts, enthusiast leaders find their strategic direction from abstract intellectual journeys rather than from objective rationality. This intellectuality helps the enthusiast innovate and invigorate their followership, and is part of a general tendency towards abstraction in her daily work. “The enthusiast, seldom an office holder, and quite unhappy when in office, concerns himself primarily with what he deems to be the fundamental principals of the organization...” and in actuality, “the enthusiast, with his fondness for abstraction, identifies [the organization] with a corpus of principals” (Roche and Sachs 209-210). It is this outlook, standing and moving from the dedication to ideals, that the enthusiast performs an essential role in a social movement or organization. Whether by providing an “ideological dynamic” or by his ability to innovate and ignore structural rigidity, no social movement can survive, according to Roche and Sachs, without the power and guidance of the enthusiast.

Roche and Sachs conclusion is simple but provocative. A social movement cannot exist without the direction of both bureaucrats and enthusiasts. A balance between these two forces will allow for the stability and dynamic that will assure a successful and sustainable social movement. In practice, therefore, there must be an integration and interaction of these two forces, as “Each by himself works badly; left alone, the

bureaucrat simply goes in concentric circles around his precious organization, while the enthusiast rushes unbridled from one ideological orgasm to another” (Roche and Sachs 221). Needing both these characters and characteristics, the authors note, successful organizations will undoubtedly have both, and, with their coexistence, there will be conflict. “But this conflict, inevitable as it is, is by no means a mere disruptive influence; on the contrary, it is a life-giving dialectical process in which each force counters the weaknesses of the other and from which a movement can emerge with both dynamism and stability” (Roche and Sachs 221). Leadership, it seems, means a balance of the structural and intellectual qualities leaders tend to possess.

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#### Von Cranach & Leadership as a Function of Group Action

In *Leadership as a Function of Group Action*, German social-psychologist Mario von Cranach presents a theory of leadership in functionalist terms, where the leader and leadership emerge in groups out of structural necessity. Social movements are examples of sustained group action with their task oriented towards challenging a status quo; in the achievement of its future goal, a group action is “instigated by external stimuli and forces, but instantaneously activated by internal energy and steered by internal information; directed behavior means that this internal information depicts the behavior and/or its results.” (von Cranach 116). Von Cranach is concerned primarily with the group, the task, and its sources of energy and stimuli. This energy comes from the processing of information.

Von Cranach’s model for group action accepts that groups will organize with a task structure, with positions aligned both horizontally and vertically (distributively and

hierarchically), according to the importance of tasks. “In group action the task structure is projected onto the group structure” (von Cranach 121). In this picture, the horizontal relationships represent people with the same task responsibility, as co-workers and equals, both required by the group to perform a similar task. But the vertical-hierarchical relationships are comprised of individuals with different responsibilities and a difference of power and influence in the overall direction of work. Within the hierarchical structure, the author differentiates between low-order and high-order tasks, and from this, he finds a cause for leadership: “Apparently, leadership results at least partially from an interaction between task and group: The task demands leadership functions from the group, and the group creates leadership in response (which may in turn lead to the creation of new tasks)” (122-123). Groups, therefore, make themselves like bureaucracies; they create structurally powerful positions, leadership positions, from which leaders direct lower-order group members to perform specific tasks in order to achieve a common goal.

Although much of von Cranach’s theory points towards the structural necessities of group action, his theory also concerns itself with the behavior of leaders in these structurally hierarchical positions. The specific action of the group leaders, according to the author, is information processing. “On the individual level, individual cognition and emotion operate in their usual form of three-dimensional organization (primary information processing)” (120). Leaders must be able to process external and internal information and direct informed by that information. Von Cranach explains the significance of this complexity, and says,

Group action is always complex action; its information processing does not proceed in a linear way but constitutes a network in which several communications to variable addresses tend to occur simultaneously...I subscribe to [the] conclusion that leadership is associated with privileged positions in the network. In fact, a great amount of leadership

activity is related to creating and maintaining a network suitable for leadership functions. (126)

Using a structural position to advance information processing, the leader can effectively perform her role and tasks of directing and energizing the group.

In conclusion, von Cranach explains the existence and purpose of a leader by stating, “A group without leadership behaves like an individual without a cerebral cortex” (von Cranach 133). The importance of the leadership position is determined by the importance of the task, and the resulting structure a group. Hence, leadership is to be seen as a function of group action; this does not mean, however, that leadership cannot be examined on an individual level. Leaders, if they are to be seen as analogous to the cerebral cortex of group action’s body, have personal influence on the direction and character of the group action itself.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **DOING “IT:” LEADERSHIP IN ACTION**

## **– ENACTING LEADERSHIP –**

## **BECOMING LEADER**

*Why'd I open my eyes?*

*because*

*I wanted to*

*-Jack Kerouac, Book of Haikus, p. 74*

Increasingly, it seems that lacking a specific definition for “leadership” does not deter from our comprehension of the concept. In fact, by assessing the guidance we’ve received, we find ourselves left with a string of concepts for leadership that require us to work toward a deeper (rather than broader) conception. From Weber, for instance, we are introduced to the duality of bureaucratic-legal and charismatic leadership, and must explore the dynamic of that duality. From Sahlins’ analysis of Melanesian and Polynesian political systems, we must analyze *competition* in the context of agency and structure. For Burns’ model of transactional and transforming leadership, we must find ways to account for structure, innovation, conflict, power, and legitimacy, in an inclusive framework. Finally, there is a dynamic between structure and agency further illuminated by Roche and Sachs and von Cranach, that remains to be explored in day-to-day life.

We know what leadership looks like in society – in what form the *statuses*, *roles*, and *functions* exist – but how, in regards to leadership, are the roles enacted, the statuses achieved, and the functions learned in society? To answer this question, we can start by anchoring ourselves in Goffman’s role theory and Blau’s exchange theory. In regards to

competition, we will refer to Ronald Burt's theory of "structural holes"; and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital will add to our understanding of power and performative creations. Seeing that so much of leadership is the "making" of fronts, conflict, and performative creations, we will need a method of understanding all "creations"; and so, we will ponder Claude Lèvi-Strauss' concept of "bricolage," which will provide a theoretical explanation for leadership as a way of life. Finally, we'll introduce the concept of socialization, with which we will be able to ask the ultimate question of this thesis: "What does it mean to be imbued with leadership? What is does it mean to be "leader?"

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### ***Enacting the Leadership Role: Goffman & Blau***

In his first book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman examines the ways in which individuals present themselves in social settings. He describes a process whereby, to perform a role, an individual must enact a "front," display a commitment to the role such a front suggests, and promote the pre-determined definition of that role by incorporating the prescribed societal values into their role display. Goffman says,

When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both. (27)

Individuals can either sincerely believe or cynically reject that their overall performance is indeed the "real" and genuinely necessary representation of "who" they "are." (They may also find themselves somewhere in the middle of this continuum.) However, to successfully perform a role, one must ensure that the front created has credibility in the

potential audience. One must demonstrate a connection between displayed personal qualities and experienced personal qualities. Goffman's principle is that intended relations can be successful if each party, when performing his or her role, follows the socially prescribed rules for that role. It's important to note that a limited number of socially recognizable fronts actually exist – these are “stereo-types.”

The display and enactment of a role can be different for different sub-stereotypes<sup>4</sup>; however, according to Goffman's concept of idealization, while there may be different demands of performance on different leaders, all types of leaders must behave in a way that idealizes and therefore legitimizes the existence of their main role (“leader”) and means of existence (domination). In this way, a leader aims “incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society...” in the presentation of self (Goffman 35). Goffman states that this behavior demonstrates one way in which a person is “socialized,” which is a concept that will be addressed later in this chapter.

Goffman also describes a process of directing behavior away from one's faction, which rings of the “man of renown” status achieved in Melanesian society. When a leader distances himself from his faction, he loses credibility with his faction at first, but, according to Goffman, such distance can “mystify” the leader's image among his audience. As an act of regulation, a leader may control the process of mystification and attempt to accentuate certain positive displays, thus compensating for any lack of credibility in other elements of the front.

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<sup>4</sup> If a stereo-type is a main role, like “athlete,” than a sub-stereotype is a category contained the larger role, like “soccer player,” or “cheerleader.” An other example might be the stereo-type of “leader,” and the sub-stereotype of “charismatic leader.”

A key dynamic of Goffman's role performance theory, and one to remember as we progress, is that a performer's motivation can either be drawn from the "desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front." For a leader, this could mean "living for politics or off politics" (as Weber would put it). Important, though, is that regardless of this difference of motivation, the common task is to perform as a leader would, and to promote that status. If a leader must increase his "fund of power" and authority, raise the ideals of his followers, or delegate and manage the work of structurally subordinate group members, he must do this because the role of "leader" dictates that action. In this way, a leader enacts his self as leader; he "sustain[s] the standards of conduct and appearance that [his] social grouping attaches thereto" (Goffman 75).

Goffman's theory shows how a leader's display of self is structured by the society around her. It focuses solely on the dynamic between individual behavior and normative expectations. However, we have come to know of leadership as more than a display of status, and have also concentrated on the process of exchange that takes place between leaders and followers. Peter Blau theorizes this exchange process similarly to an economic model, where our social lives are comprised of negotiated transactions, much like Burns' model of transactional leadership. Though many motivations have been highlighted in the leadership process, Blau's structural exchange theory focus on relationships founded with the intention of extracting some sort of reward or gain. Jonathan Turner uses Blau's theory to show very clearly how exchange theory and role performance can be applied to leadership:

In entering an exchange relationship, each actor assumes the perspective of another and thereby derives some perception of the other's needs. Actors then manipulate their presentations of self so as to convince one another that they have the valued qualities

others appear to desire. In adjusting role behaviors in an effort to impress others with the resources that they have to offer, people operate under the principle of reciprocity, for, by indicating that one possesses valued qualities, each person is attempting to establish a claim on others for the receipt of rewards from them... Social life is thus rife with people's competitive efforts to impress one another and thereby extract valuable rewards. (333)

Since Blau's argument also starts with the assumption that social statuses are ranked structurally throughout society, and hence are assigned different values and different resources in different quantities, it is understandable that, like Burns' transactional exchange leadership, the "valued goods" offered and desired in Blau's exchanges will be different for different individuals. For a leader, these goods will include, as we have mentioned several times now, power, authority, support, control, influence, and social capital. Leaders will actively seek competitive exchange relationships that offer the ingredients of leadership as a reward.

There is an element of leadership, however, that is neither traded nor received: compliance. Blau suggests, "Differences in power [resulting from an exchange of power] inevitably create the potential for conflict. However, such potential is frequently suspended by a series of forces promoting the conversion of power into authority, in which subordinates accept as legitimate the leaders' demands for compliance" (Turner 335). The conversion, Blau states, "rests on the common norms in a collectivity of subordinates that constrain its individual members to conform to the orders of a superior" (Turner 335-336). Blau therefore sees the creation of compliance as a quality stemming from both the affirmation of followers and an appropriate display from leaders, therefore being a quality of goods received by leaders.

While Blau's exchange theory explains the ground rules of power exchange, and the creation of compliance from individual exchanges, it fails to address the strategies

through which individuals gain compliance or status through interpersonal exchanges. To do this, we will turn to Ronald Burt, whose “structural hole” theory will successfully integrate the sorts of individuals actions captured by Goffman’s role performances and Blau’s social exchanges with the opportunities and constraints provided by fixed social structures. Burt’s framework illustrates the acquisition of power and reveals the social agency possessed by a leader. He begins with the process of competition.

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### ***Ronald Burt & “Structural Holes”***

In *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*, Ronald Burt outlines a theory of social relations that explains how individuals can optimize returns on investments in a competitive field. Burt’s theory of structural holes is entirely applicable to the political vocation, and provides a sociological framework with which we can analyze the agency of leaders. Structural holes explain the social networking of a Melanesian big-man as well as the privileged positions of information processing addressed by von Cranach. The development of structural holes is partially the development of leadership.

Burt’s basic premise is the competitive arena. He asserts that within that arena there exists any multitude of individuals who are individually linked at varying degrees, creating a social network. In the competitive arena, like that of politics (where “big-men” are competing amongst themselves for political profits), an actor must use her resources, in relation to those people in her network, to make wise investments and extract the profits she seeks – this is explained by Blau. But Burt goes farther:

The competitive arena has a social structure: players trusting others, obligated to support certain others, dependent on exchange with certain others, and so on. Against this backdrop, each player has a network of contacts... Something about the structure of the

player's network and the location of the player's contacts in the social structure of the arena provides a competitive advantage in getting higher rates of return on investment. (Burt 11)

Burt establishes the concept of competitive advantages, in specific regards to the social arena, or current structure. If we delve deeper into Burt's theory of structural holes we will begin to see the important correlations between "competitive advantages" and the leadership theories we have come to know thus far.

Burt's concentration on social networks in the context of competition demonstrates the value of social capital. Like monetary capital in *its* market, social capital can be used as a bargaining device, a resource to lend and create debts; social capital works in the social market, or society. While compliance was a quality of the exchange of power in Blau's model, the exchange of social capital in Burt's model has two rewarding outcomes. The first, "information benefits," can allow a person to act as precisely as possible – better information means more exact and effective role performance. This starts with the assumption that everyone in a network possesses information. Whether it is information of a job opportunity or insight into some group's values and need, such information is sometimes proprietary and sometimes common, and knowing a lot of people must then have many benefits. When it comes to social networks, "Bigger is better," Burt says. "Acting on this understanding, people can expand their networks by adding more and more contacts...But increasing size without considering diversity can cripple a network in significant ways" (16-17). In other words, big networks provide a lot of information, but perhaps not the optimum information for competing with others. If one knows the same information that another competing leader knows, then the opportunity for benefiting from that information is reduced. "Players with a network optimally structured to provide these benefits enjoy higher rates of return

to their investments, because such players know about, and have a hand in, more rewarding opportunities” (Burt 13).

To better describe “network optimality,” Burt create the concept of “structural holes.” Structural holes are points in a social network where a person’s relationship with two people is “nonredundant.” In other words, “Nonredundant contacts are connected by a structural hole... As a result of the hole between them the two contacts provide network benefits that are in some degree additive rather than overlapping” (Burt 18). An individual situated in a structural hole – between two structurally nonredundant contacts – will therefore benefit from optimal quantities and quality of information, as the information possessed by one contact is not likely to be equal to that of the other.

Beyond the *information* benefits of structural holes, players can capitalize on *control* benefits. Information opportunities are not just about personal access and timing; when filling a structural hole, people can benefit from knowing about the needs, wants, resources, and skills of one person and how they relate to the needs, wants, resources, and skills of another. In a structural hole, “You become the person who first brings people together, which gives you the opportunity to coordinate their activities.” Burt explains, “These benefits are compounded by the fact that having a network that yields such benefits makes you even more attractive as a network contact to other people, thus easing your task of expanding the network to best serve your interests” (23). What is made clear by Burt’s theory of structural holes is that one can, by actively negotiating with the information received from one’s structural position, actively create information and control benefits for oneself.

To describe this position of the successful broker, Burt borrows a sociological term, *tertius gaudens*, or “the third who benefits<sup>5</sup>.” As a third party, acting on structurally privileged information, the *tertius gaudens* gains control benefits in one of two ways. Firstly, he can put himself between two people seeking the same relationship or good, negotiate the conditions of trade, and extract a higher price. This, as Burt mentions, is the exchange that a store clerk makes with two customers wanting the same product. As the one profiting from this competition, competition is something the player tries to incite among others. In the second place, a *tertius* can intentionally create a conflict or tension. From this tension, a player can benefit from by negotiating the solution or resolve. Burt sees tension as essential to the competitive process, and finds that “The tension essential to the *tertius* is merely uncertainty” (33). In dynamic networks, where conflicting factions of interpersonal loyalty exist, an uncertainty of control allows the optimally positioned *tertius* to make informed investments and extract control benefits, making him the *tertius gaudens*.

If it is not already apparent to the reader, there are several ways in which Burt’s structural holes theory works with the leadership theory described by others. The structural position of *tertius gaudens* functions similarly as von Cranach’s leader, coordinating the relationships and activities of lower-order group (or network) members. By taking on the role of negotiator and manager, Burt’s theory of structural holes also shows how the leader successfully *places* (or displays) his self in the position of leader in a structured social network.

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<sup>5</sup> From Burt’s notes: “Georg Simmel introduced this phrase in papers on the importance of group size, translated and published by Albion Small in the *American Journal of Sociology* (Simmel, 1896: 393-394, 1902: 174-189)” (273).

The filling of structural holes is a strategic action, requiring individuals to assert their agency to gain benefits that Burt describes. We remember that Weber, Sahlins, and Burns, all legitimize the leader's agency, but they do not explain the source of that agency. Burt's theory of structural holes addresses this issue intact; he says, "When you take the opportunity to be the *tertius*, you are an entrepreneur in the literal sense of the word – a person who generates profit from being between others" (Burt 34). Burt seeks to explain the entrepreneurial spirit – a way to finally address the root of agency – and finds an answer sociologically congruent with the rest of this theory: Burt says, "If I find a player with a network rich in the structural holes that make entrepreneurial behavior possible, I have a player willing and able to act entrepreneurially." Therefore, Burt sees "motivation and opportunity as one and the same." Explaining the missing link between social structure and individual agency, Burt says, "If all you know is entrepreneurial relationships, the motivation question is a nonissue. Being willing and able to act entrepreneurially is how you understand social life" (36). Leadership is therefore linked, in some manner, to the opportunities confronted by individuals.

This model of structural holes provides a further example for why leadership may not easily occur in highly structured organizations. Since opportunity equals motivation, a bureaucratic leader will not be as motivated to behave entrepreneurially. Bureaucratic organizations are structured specifically around role enactment as a part of a prescribed mission, rather than independent acts of investment and capitalization.

With all this said, structural holes theory begs that we engage in a more profound exploration of how information and control – politics for that matter – can manifest itself in everyday contexts. Burt's theory describes the elements of social capital as they occur

in major exchanges, but it does not explicitly incorporate more everyday concepts and constructions like symbolic power and cultural capital, which are extensively, though less consciously, parts of our everyday social lives. While these aspects of society are not explicitly part of Burt's model, studying them in some detail may be useful, and somehow relate to the theory of structural holes.

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### ***Pierre Bourdieu & Symbolic Power: The Habitus of Leadership***

In the course of our everyday lives, we display our selves, and engage in exchanges with those around us. Leadership, as we have learned, comes from strategically optimized actions with the prescribed intention of enhancing one's leadership capacity. However, we know that the activities of much of our everyday lives, and even those of vocational leaders, are not comprised of conscious power seeking and blatant deal brokering; even if social entrepreneurialism is a cultural phenomenon, as Burt proposes, there is more to a socially entrepreneurial person's life than overt politicking.

*Pierre Bourdieu's theories ask that we put everything we now know about leadership into a new context, where both agency and structure are deciding factors in individual and collective action within their particular socio-historic contexts. Exhibited in his book, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu's fundamental model for human conduct is the premise from which the rest of his theories stem. This model is *habitus*:*

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as a structuring structures, that is, as principals of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (Bourdieu 1977: 72)

This long-winded description of *habitus* situates the social structures leaders work from in a chronological dependency on previous institutions and constitutions of society.

Today's society will frame tomorrow's. The framing of these institutions, and human action in general, is determined by individual and collective actions that abide by the normative (or "orchestrated") standards of a given "type of environment." These norms are also born from previous norms, and so the actions people behave with, however different from those around them, are variations of a historically informed tradition.

Habitus informs every aspect of one's life – from dress and forms of speech, to thought and opinion – and defines the limits of an individual's daily actions and interpersonal exchanges. Bourdieu forces us to examine leadership in different terms because with habitus, structured factors such as status and class become structuring features of routine behavior; these factors are projected in speech, thought, dress, argument, and the dynamics of exchanges. Additionally, individual variation on structured behavior (personality) is limited by the constraints imposed by the habitus from which, and to which, one performs. (Bourdieu calls this deviant behavior a "structural variation.")

Before entering a detailed discussion of *how* one varies behavior and creates leadership, it may be useful to review Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, which stems from that of the habitus. In *Language & Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu "portrays everyday linguistic exchanges as situated encounters between agents endowed with socially structured resources and competencies, in such a way that every linguistic interaction, however personal and insignificant it may seem, bears the traces of the social structure" (Thompson, introducing Bourdieu 1991: 2). Oral language is a useful place to start

understanding the concept of symbolic power (as it relates to leadership) because discourse and speech (or “haranguing” in the life of the Melanesian big-man) is a pervasive element of all life.

Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power comes from a frustration he has with traditional exchange theories which focus on objective economic rewards, and wrongly work from an ethnocentric and “*restricted definition of economic interest*” (Bourdieu 1977: 177). To escape this common trap, the same one we might accuse Blau of being in, Bourdieu says,

The only way...is to carry out in full what economism does partially, and to extend economic calculation to *all* the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation – which may be “fair words” or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults, honour or hounors, powers or pleasures, gossip or scientific information, distinction or distinctions, etc. (1977: 177-178)

This concept of exchange, where the term “valued goods” extends farther Burns’ conception of the phrase, introduces us to the precursory ingredient of symbolic power, which is *symbolic, cultural capital*. Endowed by one’s socially structured situation, the holder of symbolic capital has those socially valued and rare qualities like “hounor and hounors” that are found within the ranks of socially dominant groups. As the individual’s actions are a product of his habitus, so too are the symbolic products, productions, and guiding standards. Dominant groups therefore have the capability of making dominant productions, and standards that maintain their dominance.

One of the most prevalent forms of dominant cultural capital is legitimate language. Bourdieu maintains that the linguistic exchange is an act “based on enciphering and deciphering”; therefore, it relies on a code. Competence of the linguistic code is experienced in linguistic exchanges, which reveal different competencies with the

dominant code; the difference in competence will then expose and enforce differences in power, making the transition from capital to power. The content of linguistic exchanges are thus “signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed” (Bourdieu 1991: 66); however, the nature of the linguistic, and therefore symbolic exchange is unlike Blau’s structural exchange theory, and Burns’ act of transactional leadership, in that they are not necessarily grounded in conscious or rational rules of exchange. Symbolic capital can have the invisible effect of censorship, where a gradient of capital prevents an exchange altogether, as well as have the very noticeable effect of a large-scale symbolic exchange. Symbolic power is therefore the control over an encounter by making apparent, through inference or display, the necessary symbols which grant authority over others.

The display of symbolic capital is essential in leadership for its presence throughout all classes and groups in one form or another. All people use language, and hence all people can relate to the authorized language. If each class and group had its own ways of enciphering, and only engaged in exchanges among themselves, there would be a relatively exact outcome in the deciphering of that exchange. However, when two parties pertain to different groups, one being dominant and with greater access to the legitimizing and legitimate structures and standards of production, then symbolic differences will become symbolic powers, even without (especially without) planning and calculation. From this exchange, symbolic power will behave as any power would, “capable of producing real effects without any apparent expenditure of energy” (Bourdieu 1991: 170).

Though we know the nature of cultural capital and symbolic power, we have yet to address the issue of agency, which includes the manner of an individual's structural variation in everyday exercises. Variation, or innovation, is something that we've established as essential for successful leadership. Therefore, we must wonder how variation works into Bourdieu's concept of habitus guided routine exchanges. Bourdieu theorizes:

But even in the most ritualized exchanges, in which all the moments of the action, and their unfolding, are rigorously foreseen, have room for strategies: the agents remain in command of the *interval* between the obligatory moments and can therefore act on their opponents by playing with the *tempo* of the exchange. (1977: 15)

Bourdieu does not leave a detailed explanation of what "tempo" is; therefore, one is left to wonder. Might tempo be an expression of one's personality? If so, is charisma merely a structural variation with a successful tempo? A leader, looking to extract the variable goods of leadership out of everyday encounters, must then operate with a tempo and variation honed for leadership, leadership that must be revolutionary, new, and different

Habitus and structure only go so far to explain the actions of the leader and therefore everybody else. Leaders perform structural variations in regards to their habitus, which somehow relates to the habitus of others and their variations. Although there seems to be a chaotic mix of factors involved in variation and structure, Bourdieu states that habitus provides a model where "no 'choice' cannot be accounted for, retrospectively at least," (1977: 15). Therefore, directly addressing the dichotomy of Weber's "*Gemeinschaft*" and "*Gesellschaft*," and Bourdieu's variations and habitus, we learn, "Those who, like Max Weber, have set the magical or charismatic law as the collective oath or the ordeal in opposition to a rational law based on calculability and predictability,

forget that the most rigorously rationalized law is never anything more than an act of social magic which works” (Bourdieu 1991: 42).

We are dealing with one act of leadership, not two; the combination of leadership styles that Weber and so many others present us with do not have to be founded on two variables, yet can be looked at in *the singular framework in the theory of practice presented by Bourdieu; and when successful, these actions should be considered no less than “social magic.”* The leader’s objectives in producing social magic has in no way changed from how we understand leadership, but by examining a leader’s habitus, which includes the societal and individual histories of the leader, we come away with both a framework to retrospectively frame a leader, and one to move forward with. We can now examine the production of social magic to a greater extent, to better understand the leader’s capacity to be leader, and do leadership – to better assess his cultural capital, symbolic powers, structural variation, and tempo.

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### ***Bricolage in Leadership: The Socialized Bricoleur***

We now have a tightly constructed idea of how leaders lead, and know the nature of their doing “it:” consciously they position themselves to enact their role as leader, and are constantly, at times consciously and at many more unconsciously, reinforcing their structural leadership position through routine and contentious symbolic exchanges. Weber says, a leader “lives for politics” and “knows no other.” This means the representation of one’s self as “leader” is performed at every moment (Goffman), and the socially entrepreneurial person will behave as such due to his structural (dis)position (Burt, Bourdieu). Bourdieu’s “habitus,” cultural capital, symbolic power, and structural

variation are highly effective ways to narrow leadership behavior into the confines of “social magic.” But here we are confounded. Without fully knowing the act of social magic, there is no way of understanding the fundamental and universal act of leadership – that which takes into account both structure and innovation, individual agency and structural determinism. The two questions that remain are the most important questions this part of this thesis seeks to address. Firstly, what exactly are leadership skills? And secondly, how is one imbued with those skills?

To address this first question, we turn back to the concept of social magic. Bourdieu says, “The act of institution is an act of social magic that can create difference *ex nihilo*, or else... by exploiting as it were pre-existing differences... Social magic always manages to produce discontinuity out of continuity” (1991: 119-120). The skill of working with and within structure, of creating chaos, order, and sense in the same action – “social magic that works,” or “structured structure” – is the skill we find most eloquently described as *bricolage*, in Claude Lèvi-Strauss’ book, *The Savage Mind*.

We can orient bricolage around Bourdieu’s model of habitus and symbolic exchange by thinking of the bricolage process as one’s dialogue with the structurally available materials and the means of execution for a given task. Lèvi-Strauss attributes this “dialogue” to what he calls “mythical thought and rituals,” which comes from a greater structure of thought and action that, like Weber, Lèvi-Strauss sees as produced by clear distinctions between modern and “prior” life-styles. Working from this distinction, he refers to the ritualistic and intellectual guides of “magic” and “science,” which respectively correspond to traditional and modern society and life.

Lèvi-Strauss' first major declaration is that, in regards to magic and science, our daily operations in the realms of ritual action and intellectual thought are not evolutionarily separable modes of operation; rather they are “two parallel modes... one very close to, and the other more remote from, sensible intuition” (Lèvi-Strauss 15). We are not, the author instructs, to take magic any less seriously than science. (Of course we already see charismatic and rational performances as codependent, similarly with structural variation and structure.) Lèvi-Strauss maintains that the advent of science (and therefore rational organization and routinization) is nothing new at all.

Myths and rites are far from being, as has often been held, the product of man's ‘myth-making faculty’, turning its back on reality. Their principal value is indeed to preserve until the present time the remains of methods of observation and reflection which were (and no doubt still are) precisely adapted to discoveries... which nature authorised from the starting point of a speculative organization and exploitation of the sensible world on sensible terms. This science of the concrete was necessarily restricted by its essence to results other than those destined to be achieved by the exact natural sciences but it was no less scientific and its results no less genuine. (16)

Sensibility, which does the job of, but is not modern science, is a faculty that encompasses all action, but rests on the magical, rather than scientific approach. Here, we are where Boudieu left off – with “science of the concrete,” sensibility, or “magic that works” – leaving us wondering exactly what this sensibility is, and what the condition of the skill is.

### Bricolage

The initial description of bricolage, and its importance to our cause, cannot be explained better than with the words of Lèvi-Strauss himself:

In its old sense the verb ‘bricoler’ applied to a ball games and billiards, to hunting, shooting and riding. It was however always used with reference to some extraneous movement: a ball rebounding, a dog straying or a horse swerving from its direct course to avoid an obstacle. And in our own time the ‘bricoleur’ is still someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman. The characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited. It has to use this repertoire,

however, whatever the task at hand because it has nothing else at its disposal. Mythical thought is therefore a kind of intellectual ‘bricolage’ – which explains the relation which can be perceived between the two. (16-17)

Imagine if we continued this thought and said, “social magic is therefore a kind of social ‘bricolage.’” By contrasting the bricoleur with the craftsman (or the magician with the scientist), we can effectively situate the two in the continuum of flexibility and rigidity that we find with charismatic and bureaucratic leaders.

We turn to bricolage, however, because the bricoleur, like any person, lives within the structural constraints of his habitus, therefore having limited access to the authorized tools for a given task or exchange. The distinguishing feature of a bricoleur is his ability to take all bits of knowledge, accessible tools, and generally “whatever is at hand,” and *to reorganize them to make a solution for the presented problem* (be it mending a fence or constructing an effective front). The rational (political) scientist, on the other hand, knows only one set of tools and materials to accomplish a given task; the bricoleur, however, merely needs to reorganize the whole set of tools and materials presented to solve his problem. Therefore, Lèvi-Strauss maintains that, *to the bricoleur*, tools, knowledge, and raw materials neither represent predetermined concepts nor underdeveloped precepts (like mere images); instead, the collection of knowledge, tools, and raw materials – the “valued goods” of a bricoleur – represent *signs*, or the “link between images and concepts.” The bricoleur “interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could ‘signify’ and so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialize but which will ultimately differ from the instrumental set only in the internal disposition of its parts” (Lèvi-Strauss 18). The “definition of a set” is synonymous with a structured constitution symbolizing the solution to a problem, which is not limited by prescribed forms. Social magic is

therefore the product of bricolage: “difference *ex nihilo*” – or making anything out of nothing for that matter – is the nature of the bricoleur.

It is difficult not to feel compelled to continue exploring the nature of bricolage, considering the clear and undeniable connections it has to the process of leadership. What Lèvi-Strauss identifies as the “treasury” is analogous to a broader sense of the big-man’s “fund of power.” The inclusivity of this treasury includes objects that function as “signs,” which function the same as Bourdieu’s symbols in their way of effortlessly inferring and creating concepts like obedience or censorship. The way in which the *process of bricolage* works to illuminate the *process of innovation* clarifies and invigorates the *process of leadership*.

Despite the link bricolage has to political innovation, there is one aspect of bricolage that will make some hesitant to identify it with leadership. When we think of the charismatic, enthusiastic, or transforming leader, the word “revolutionary” comes easily to mind. We may recall Weber referring to a “rejection of all ties to any external order,” or Burns identifying a “complete and pervasive transformation of an entire social system.” But how do we match our conception of revolutionary leadership against bricolage, while Lèvi-Strauss explains, “The elements which the ‘bricoleur’ collects and uses are ‘pre-constrained’ ... the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuver” (19)? This dilemma at first seems to separate bricolage from the process of leadership. However, if we remember the habitus, and think of revolutionary leadership as behavior directed by ongoing structural deviation from the habitus, the rejection of ties to an “external order” can simply be that deviation.

Furthermore, the “complete transformation” of a social system would then result from the leading of people to become aligned with that deviation, in fact routinizing it and structuring it. Going further on this point, bricolage may be the only way in which habitus is the, as Bourdieu puts it, “structured structures predisposed to function as a structuring structures” without “orchestrating action.” Since bricolage is a manner of going about everyday business – not itself intended orchestration – the structuring of structures occurs from individuals acting as leaders, or performing in the only way they know how: by deviating, exchanging, and consequently aligning people with that deviation.

We are now beginning to see that bricolage is not only a way to describe the act of social magic, but also a model with which we can examine the direction of social magic, and thus the manner of innovative leaders. Formalizing this connection, Lèvi-Strauss speaks of bricolage as an artistic creation. He states, “The process of artistic creation therefore consists in trying to communicate (within the immutable framework of a mutual confrontation of structure and accident) either with the *model* or with the *materials* or with the future *user* as the case may be, according to which of these the artist particularly looks to for his directions while he is at work” (27). Reconsidering *The Bureaucrat and the Enthusiast* with this idea in mind, one remembers that the bureaucrat works with concern for the model (the organization) and the enthusiast with concern for the user (the followers), making the materials something they both work with, though in different manners. The communication highlighted here by Lèvi-Strauss invokes the previously mentioned “dialogue” between materials and means of execution, as well as the leader’s task of creating a front which appropriately communicates the supposed

position of leadership. But, to show how this distinction in “dialogue” relates to a political “artist’s” relationship with structure, Lèvi-Strauss says,

Professional or academic art internalizes execution... and purpose (‘art for art’s sake’ being an end in itself). As a result, it is impelled to externalize the occasion (which it requires the model to provide) and the latter thus becomes part of the signified. Primitive art [bricolage], on the other hand, internalizes the occasions... and it externalizes execution and purpose which thus becomes a part of the signifying. (29)

Internalizing the occasions and externalizing the execution and purpose makes bricolage even more connected to the charismatic leader. By making his political bricolage external in its act, the leader brings people along in the process by signifying to followers that their followership is an obligatory part of the leader’s leadership process. By making the followers’ needs and goals a part of the material used to build a set, the process of bricolage makes Burn’s statement, “Leadership, unlike naked power-wielding, is thus inseparable from followers’ needs and goals” (19), ring very, very true.

Bricolage is not just the process of making things for purposeful applications – in fact it’s best when it’s not purposeful at all. Bricolage effects every ritualistic or independent execution a person may engage in; it governs the manner “valued goods” are put together, transferred, accepted, catalogued, and valued; and bricolage is a way of life like leadership is a way of life – it’s “politics as a vocation” – where a person not only lives *for* politics, but lives *by* political bricolage. We may conclude that to a political bricoleur, like to Weber’s charismatic pure type, power is not an end in and of itself, but rather a sign. It’s not “power for power’s sake,” but power as a sign, signifying the possibility of a set; it’s power for the set’s sake. Moreover,

The ‘bricoleur’ also, and indeed principally, derives his poetry from the fact that he does not confine himself to accomplishment and execution: he ‘speaks’ not only *with* things, as we have already seen, but also through the medium of things: giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities. (Lèvi-Strauss 21)

By saying that bricolage is a “way of life” which encompasses the skill of creating social magic in that manner of living, we can, for a moment, put this concept to rest for future development. Nonetheless, we are still left with our second question. Now knowing what the skills of social magic are, we may wonder how is one imbued with that way of life. *How does one become a “political bricoleur?”* Sociology provides several models for answering the question “how does one become...” For our purposes, we’ll look at socialization theory, which will serve as a valuable guide in answering this important query.

### Socialization

Leadership is essentially social, and based on sustained relationships with all facets of society. Therefore, it is not difficult to assume that the values, symbols, roles, behaviors, images, norms, identity, and language of leadership – indeed the very skills and manner of the political bricoleur – are learned; contact with the individuals, groups, and institutions of one’s life will somehow promote the development of these elements for a prospective leader. *Socialization*<sup>6</sup>, sociology’s primary method of explaining the learning of these aspects of self and society, explains the *process* of “becoming leader” in a way that portrays the prospective leader delicately developing an awareness of her structurally influenced role and status in society and learning the appropriate skill set and an identity which makes her “leader.”

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Ferguson’s sociology textbook (2002) defines “socialization” in the following manner: “*Socialization* refers to those social processes through which an individual becomes integrated into a social group’s culture and his or her roles in that group. It is largely through this process that an individual’s concept of self is formed. Thus, socialization teaches us the cultural norms, values, and skills necessary to survive in society” (111). She continues by explaining, “An important point about socialization is that societal values, identities, and social roles are learned and *not* instinctual. We have to learn the social norms and behaviors our society expects from us” (124).

Throughout these past two chapters, there have been references to the process of socialization as it pertains to leadership, with Burt's reference to the culture of entrepreneurialism the clearest example. In this more profound examination of socialization, we may be best served to approach the topic similarly to how we've approached leadership in general; trying to follow every detail – attempting to know exactly which people, groups, and institutions become instruments of a developing leader's socialization – would likely become dizzying and useless, considering the extent of possibilities in this research. Instead, by analyzing the process of “becoming leader” with more general conceptions of socialization, we can paint a more holistic, applicable, and digestible picture of what the socialization process of leadership may be.

A very central aspect of socialization in general is the cultivation of a “sense of self,” or identity<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, we may find insightful direction from the innumerable sociological ventures seeking to explain the phenomenon surrounding *gender* identities and the engendering processes, which is a process of socialization that touches all people. One such venture – *Doing Gender*, a critical and innovative essay by Candace West and Don Zimmerman – sees gender “as a routine, methodological, and recurring accomplishment” (126). Rather than painting gender as an identity which is simply constructed and learned (a commonly used model based on highly complex variables), West and Zimmerman root the socialization of gender in *accomplishment* – the successful management of situated conduct in the context of “a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities.” In this model, socialization is a perpetual process of “doing.” While “doing gender” may seem closely linked to

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<sup>7</sup> The identity of “leader” is no exception to this. See Gardner 1995: 24 – 25.

Goffman's concept of role-playing and performance, West and Zimmerman claim that, "There are fundamental equivocations in [Goffman's] perspective. By segregating gender display from the serious business of interaction, Goffman obscures the effects of gender on a wide range of human activities" (130). The authors state, "Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (126).

Another fundamental division in society is the relationship of power or authority between leaders and led called "leadership." Simply glimpsing at the preceding paragraph and replacing the word "gender" with "leadership" points to a potentially innovative method of understanding the socialization of leaders. Although West and Zimmerman state that their model uniquely works for gender, rather than the other varying social identities (because "we are always women or men"), one could remind his- or herself that we are always social beings, and therefore a part of a social structure that promotes varying, nonetheless existing differences in power and authority. It is conceivable that the vocationally political is socialized by the same process of "doing gender," in the sense of "*doing leader.*"

The model of "doing leader" suggests that the socialization of leaders comes from routinely sensed cues which cause an individual to feel hostage to the production of leadership activities and exchanges which determine that person's perceived competence as a member of society. This model shows compatibility with concepts of leadership that we've worked with already. West and Zimmerman state, "Gender may be routinely fashioned in a variety of situations that seem conventionally expressive to begin with";

and, “Many situations are not clearly sex categorized to begin with, nor is what transpires within them obviously gender relevant. Yet any social encounter can be pressed into service in the interests of doing gender” (138). The sense gathered from these descriptions of the model of “doing” makes the *process* of bricolage a sensible compliment to process of *doing*. That the *doing* of gender “seem[s] conventionally expressive” rings of the bricoleur’s manner of externalizing expressions *through* his works. In both cases “who” one “is” is determined by the actual rendering a set from symbolic capital. This set, or solution, is the manner of coping with being hostage to gender performance as well as it is may be the set for a leader, or whoever else, of coping with being hostage to the demanded production of that identity. While bricolage extends here the idea of “doing,” by linking it to the act of creating a set (note the second of the two quotes above in this paragraph), it is also true that “doing” extends the idea of bricolage. Now we can see bricolage as a manner of coping with, or managing, the multiple identities one may feel “hostage” to at a given moment. Instead of thinking that a male leader would have to produce both “male” and “leader” sets, combining the process of doing with bricolage suggests that the bricolage created set would be capable of producing sets that compensate for any and all quantities of demands, and thus identities.

To drive the connection between the model of “doing” and bricolage closer, we merely have to examine West and Zimmerman’s formulization that, “If we do gender appropriately, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements that are based on sex category” (146). In essence, this makes the doing model responsive to the “pre-constrained” nature of bricolage as well as the

structural boundaries of Bourdieu's habitus. Linking "doing" to the habitus promotes the formulization that bricolage-produced sets, fronts if we may, will be as all-encompassing as the materials included in the habitus, the variety and origin of cues acted upon, the internalization of the cues<sup>8</sup>, and the realm at which the response takes direction. "Doing" and "bricolage" combine to extend West and Zimmerman's abovementioned idea that "any social encounter can be pressed into service in the interest of doing gender," and suggests that, simply, any social counter can be pressed into service in the interest of "doing." Socialization appears to be the pressing into service of, as Lèvi-Strauss puts it, the "mutual confrontation of structure and accident," in order to achieve the routine and non-routine accomplishments required for the maintenance and development of identity. Doing leader, therefore, is the doing of oneself within a social context that allows for the enactment of leadership.

This model for the socialization of leaders allows us to examine the lives of people in the wholeness of their lives. Structure, resources, meaning in internalization, and method of externalization all play an important part in "doing leader," and therefore of how we understand leaders and leadership. Before, we asked, "How does one become a leader?" Now armed with a process that explains the socialization of self in a meaningfully relevant way, we have suggested an answer to this ultimate question, and have done so with the tools acquired from the resources used throughout this thesis. Doing leader is doing life, when life so calls.

Indeed, this conclusion is a bricolage work.

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<sup>8</sup> Recall Lèvi-Strauss saying, "Primitive art [bricolage]... internalizes the occasions... and it externalizes execution and purpose which thus becomes a part of the signifying" (29)"

# PART II

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## LEADERSHIP ILLUMINATED & REVISITED: A CASE STUDY & A CONCLUSION

We now have the opportunity to realize and illustrate how the theoretical ideas and formulations of leadership from the last two chapters may be applicable to everyday lives. It is time to put leadership into context. Hence, I present, in these next few chapters, illustrations of the concepts worked with in the last two. The brush I work with is personal; the illustrations will be illustrations of me.

“Study yourself as a leader?” you might be asking, or accusing.

At first glance this may seem astonishingly arrogant, or at least narcissistic or romantic. But let me assure you, however, that at a second glance, it is not. While attempting to analytically address elements and processes of “becoming leader” through autobiography may seem in some way subjective, unscientific, and even conceited, it is actually a grounded starting point. Indeed, based on the manner in which we’ve discussed leadership, there are really only two modest conditions to base the claim on: status and vocation. To qualify myself as leader, therefore, I can recall being recognized as a “leader” in various significant and insignificant ways. There have been no parades for me, but that’s not necessarily a requisite for being called “leader.” Claiming that I am a leader comes from nothing more than the recognition of others – cues, if we may – that I possess some or many of qualities that the term suggests. The second modest claim is the self-recognition of leadership as my vocation – a personal claim, and a claim that I “can do no other.” These are the grounds on which anyone could be retrospectively studied as a “leader.”

I’ve chosen to study elements of my life rather than the life of any other “leader” for practical reasons. The purpose here is to draw vivid illustrations of life, adding context and process to the theoretical concepts we’ve been dealing with. The intention is

to better understand these concepts; therefore, I study myself because I am most knowledgeable of the “facts” surrounding my own life. Again, the details of my life are not intended to tell a complete story, but rather to help communicate an idea; this is a methodology defended by sociologist Sulamit Reinharz, author of *On Becoming a Social Scientist*. She explains, “the closer I come to accurately describing my reality the greater is the potential of illuminating the situation” (xvii). I hope to describe my reality in order to illuminate the concept of leadership.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I described several concepts and ideas, like group action, structural exchange theory, habitus, structural holes, bricolage, and “doing.” In describing them I presented individual components of the whole of leadership, which related to all other components and, in careful examination, *depended* on all other components. My methodology will be similar for this part of the thesis. Instead of a linear autobiographical telling of all of my life’s happenings and how they may or may not relate to a vocation of leadership, I continue by taking many of the concepts already discussed, along with several others, and exploring how those concepts have played out in my development of self, specifically in regards to the status and vocation of “leader.”

Thus, the following chapters will discuss various components of my life, past, present, and future, using the ideas and concepts that have already been discussed in the past two chapters. It should also be reiterated that because this case study serves to strengthen and “illuminate” the ideas presented in the previous two chapters, and not to appraise my own leadership, addressing specific histories of leadership actions that I’ve participated in are not inherently important. This is not to say that personal memories and anecdotes will not be important – they will be widely used, and will certainly add color to

the lines drawn from a concept to its practical manifestation; nonetheless, the focus here is on those concepts and components of leadership presented as important in prior chapters.

As I intend to illustrate the concepts of leadership using examples from my own life, I would like to first explain to my reader the approach that I continue with, using the following description of my room as the illustrative example:

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*If you look at the room out of which I've been living for the past year, you'll recognize the tell tale mess of a busy college student. Clothes are piled either on the bed or in the blue plastic laundry basket at the bed's foot; whether or not the individual garments are clean or worn is unknown. There is a pile of papers stacked next to my chair and a few empty cookie boxes lying next to the garbage can in the corner of the room. Perhaps you could say that there is a lot of "character" to the room. Some might say the room is dirty. I'd say it is definitely lived in.*

*But it hasn't always been that way. The walls of my third story bedroom were bare and dirty when I arrived at this run-down building, and beside the plastic glow-in-the-dark stars that speckle the ceiling in a seemingly random fashion, there was nothing here besides an old desk, a used mattress, and a sad looking dresser standing in the corner where the angled ceiling and shortest wall meet.*

*When I arrived and found this as my room one year ago, I saw a structure badly in need of some life. Perhaps this life is not in its best form as a stack of clothes – after all, that condition changes in direct relation to the time I spend on a the variety of things I happen to do with my life other than put away and organize my collection of clothing. However, a broad glance at the space I found, and since have changed, reveals the life I've lived in great detail. It only takes a little digging.*

*On the westward wall, there's now a bookshelf (the very first addition to the room) that houses a shrine of favorite books with the prison of mandatory reading for the various classes I still take. On top of the bookshelf, as well as in other places in the room, a few picture frames show the faces of people I love and places I've been; and facing these cherished photos are several posters: of a favorite movie, my Spanish university, Picasso's reminder of Guernica, and Goya's hope of "El Perro Semihundido." On the southward wall hangs a flag of the Spanish Republic (given to me by a true "brother"); on the eastward wall hangs another flag, this of Real Madrid F.C.; and finally, my wall preserves a special painting by the amazing Falcone Leandro (or just "Willy," to his friends). In the corners and along the walls of my room are boxes and crates filled with a hodge-podge of (mostly unnecessary) belongings, or artifacts from my recently ended stay in Madrid, Spain. An old television set crouches on top of the sad dresser.*

*Not contained by the drawers, shelves, walls, frames, or crates of my room is an unorganized medley of articles that compose, or have resulted from, my everyday life. Scattered over my desk, aside from the various pieces of equipment that make digital living possible – a*

*printer, a digital camera stand, an external hard-drive for backing up my electronic belongings, and various power chords dangle to charge them – receipts from recent (or not so recent) purchases tell the tale of my habits of consumption; sprawled books tell of the current work I'm attending to, or perhaps ignoring; newspaper pages speak with smudged ink of the current events and issues that supposedly have significance in my life. And to someone who would walk in and see this room at a moment's glance, things would seem slightly chaotic.*

*But, there is a purpose to everything strewn about, at least if our task is to tell a story or explain something. Like the particles that compose a hologram, each random article on the floor, bed, or desk tells the story of everything related to it in that moment. I pick up worksheet and it describes some of the books on the shelf; the books may speak of the art on my walls; and the art of my journey to Spain, and thus the crates of stuff that line the room. Indeed, the room, with its chaos and wholeness, makes me think of the habitus and its ability to say a lot about a moment and a person, or bricolage and ability to make order out of the chaos by associating ideas and objects in abstract or innovative ways. There are structures, objects, and themes that contain the field (which in the presented example is my room), and structures, objects, and themes that lie within the field. How I go about my everyday life in that room is generally governed by norms and routine. However, the room changes, and gains a certain character or manner about it; it continues to progress with the adding of things, the interaction of things already in place, and the unpredictability of life. If there were a fire at my house, everything would be destroyed. There is, then, an effective framework with which we can approach the story of my room. This framework is, as Levi-Strauss puts it, "the immutable framework of a mutual confrontation of structure and accident" (27). There is a certain relationship of things that when found in relation and interaction, speak of the whole of the field; it says, "The room changes, I change, and the things within it change. There is change and there is wholeness."*

The following chapters exist to address the structures and accidents of my life<sup>9</sup>. I want to explore how I became the person who I am today, and most specifically focus on the phenomenon of status and vocation – of me being and doing “leader.” Even before we continue, I see that the actual happenings and truths of my life contrasts with the theory presented in Part 1. I look forward to exploring with my reader what that contrast looks like. To begin, though, I'd like to introduce myself.

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<sup>9</sup> Many theorists attempt to place things within a similar framework of agency and structural determinism. C. Wright Mills referred to the intersection of “biography and history,” but ultimately these frameworks operate with the same purpose. We deal with “structure and accident” because it comes from Lèvi-Strauss, whose work on bricolage has been found as a central aspect of this thesis.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **ILLUMINATING THE LEADER**

### **(AN INTRODUCTION)**

*I'm Nathaniel Wayne Westheimer*

“Hi. Nate Westheimer. Nice to meet you.”

Introducing myself properly – giving a good first impression – has always been something important to me. Look the person in the eye, extend a hand, and speak.

“Nice to meet you too,” people say.

It's an everyday exchange. Young people to young people, old people to old people, and old to young as well. What could be more normal than an introduction? Nonetheless, in this exchange, it seems, not so much the action, but the elements of the action of introduction can make something that seems to routine and mundane, a “hi” and “hello,” an important exercise. If we think of the introduction in Erving Goffman's terms, a good introduction is actually a meaningful introduction, and the meaning of an introduction is the quality and qualities of the (attempted) *front* that is displayed. Does the front communicate the right cues, or is there dissonance? I introduce myself, but do I believe in “who” I introduce? Do others? Will I accomplish what I've set to do?

Look the person in the eye steadily, extend a firm but gentle hand, and speak, articulately and assuredly.

It's potentially powerful, and can have a great affect on people. It's the handshake of a leader, the handshake of my self. But is this all I that I show in my introduction? Is the only important part of the exchange my name, my voice, my eyes, and my hand?

“Hi. Nate Westheimer...” I'm white, with a Midwestern accent, you see.

“Nice to meet you...” Do you see that my clothes speak well of me? Do you hear that my speech pattern is syntactically marked with the controlling accent of the bourgeoisie? I am tall enough to demand the same respect the rest of my front demands?

For this reason, if I am to introduce myself, allow me to do it properly. My name is Nathaniel Wayne Westheimer; I’m white, with Anglo and Jewish heritage; I was born into wealth, education, and a last name that, in some circles, carries high regard; I am heterosexual and a citizen the United States of America. In my introduction to you, I represent all of this, and more. Goffman was right. If I see myself as a leader – if my genuine representation of self is that of “leader” – than the performance of a handshake will represent that.

I’ll cue you in on something: *I am* a leader.

I am Nathan Westheimer. It’s a pleasure to have you reading. Follow me.

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### **Foundations of life**

I explained earlier that there would be no linear recounting of my life and times, that there would be little chronological autobiography in this autobiographically informed part of my thesis. Indeed, I will focus mostly on the specific elements of becoming a leader, and the representations of those elements, or components, in everyday life. However, in disregard to this general method, I’d like to start by explaining the building blocks of my life – the structure I was born into.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1983, I was born at home to my parents, Debbie and Dick Westheimer, and my then two and a half year old brother, Gabe. My home, a humble but well kept farmhouse in rural Ohio (thirty minutes from Cincinnati), was a quiet place at

the time. My father, a “product” of an affluent and well-known Cincinnati family, had gone to Clark University in Massachusetts, and at the time of my birth, until 1991, worked as a fourth grade public school teacher at Anderson Place Elementary, one of the more troubled schools in the Cincinnati Public Schools system.

My mother, formerly Debbie Lewis, and of a middle-class upbringing, was 25 when I was born. At the time, she was just five years out of Earlham College of Indiana, which she left after two years in their “Ag, Living, and Learning” program, to explore things that better interested her. In 1979, working as a student teacher, she found a young teacher named Dick, and his unkempt farm. They married in March of 1980. Very soon, they found a passion together, and began parenthood. My big brother, Gabe, was born that August.

The privileged, educated, and generally intelligent nature of both my parents was the foundation for a lot of what happened on the day I was born and beyond. Nothing was more important for my parents than providing as best they could for their children, and doing so in a way that fit their collective ideals of simple, natural living, egalitarian relationships, peace, respect, and generosity. As I mentioned, I was born at home. This was a decision made for the several and proven benefits for low-risk births. *Not* being institutionalized in a hospital ward – being away from tubes, and beeps, and shots, and tests – provides a very real and important experience for a baby’s first moments and days in the world. My parents researched and studied this. Part of healthy childrearing is also the allowing the baby to go immediately to natural breast-feeding from birth; and my mother was right there for me. Without a doubt, I was born into an institution of closeness, care, and love. The natural and healthy attention from my parents was all I

knew at the time. Their education, their knowledge, and belief in natural and healthy care, actually a belief in themselves, brought me, a healthy baby, into a world of love and dedication – a world of agency.

The values and lifestyle traditionally associated with simple and natural living were certainly present in a large part of other aspects of my early life. From the time of my earliest recollection I was immersed in an abundance of community and civic activity. My parents structured my life around farm work, outside play, potluck dinners, family time, various responsibilities, public service outings, trips to the theater, trips to museums and parks, and a plethora of other activities – and almost everything provided for a constant learning of values and ideas like the ones my parents brought me into this world with. Learning, or “education,” was of special importance in my house. One can imagine this being the case considering my father was a teacher and my mother upon leaving college was a student teacher. But mixed with the egalitarian and natural values that my parents shared, the education my parents had in mind for me and my brother was of non-traditional nature. At three years old, I was enrolled in The Children’s Meeting House, a Montessori school in a town a half hour away from ours. Montessori school, which implemented a hands-on method of learning, was short lived for us, however. Even with the quality and freedom of the Children’s Meeting House, my parents wanted for more liberty and agency in our education. In the fall of 1988, at five years old, my parents filed paperwork with the Batavia Local Schools informing the “authorities” that Gabe and I (our two year old sister, Hannah, wasn’t school age yet) would be “home schooling” for the year.

One year turned into two, and two into many more. It became a very important and central part of my life, and is something I will readdress in this thesis. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the unusual amount of agency and influence my parents had in regards to their children's lives. Home schooling – the act of taking one's children from compulsory institutions in order to have more control over their lives – highlights this agency to a great degree; but it is also represented in the decision to birth at home and utilize non-traditional medicine. It is clear that my life was structured around parents who could make these choices. Reciprocally, while my life was structured around them, their lives were structured around the purposeful enactment of this agency. Their privilege of education and social class created structures of alternatives, of choice and of agency. Their valuation of deviant means of living allowed them to take advantage of these structural alternatives.

Therefore, a fundamental aspect of my early habitus (the structured and structuring structures of my life) was comprised of my parents and their habitus (the structured and structuring structures of their lives). In recognizing the structures I must also humbly recognize another aspect of my foundations: myself as an agent. I was born into this world as lucky as can be. My body functioned in healthy shape; I had no ailments, and was born without deformity. As a starting point, the privilege of personal health is very considerable, and should also be considered when addressing one's foundations.

It is this foundation, a healthy body, a supportive and attentive family, wealth, and simplicity, which I went forward in life with. Indeed, none of these founding elements of my life have changed. I am still lucky. But none of this is yet attachable to leadership, or

the process of becoming leader. The foundations and themes of my life can only be considered important elements if we see how they've interacted with, or caused, the other elements and structures in my life.

### ***Leadership found doing***

Recall the two conditions we used to begin this case study: the *social status* of leader and his or her *vocation* towards leadership. We ended the first part of this thesis by talking about the concept of “doing leader,” which was best explained as the “doing of oneself within a social context that allows for the enactment of leadership”; therefore, using the model of “doing leader,” we can proceed by showing how doing oneself, living or “doing life,” may relate to doing leader.

We learned from Ronald Burt, that the *structure* of one's social life can determine the entrepreneurial spirit one operates with, and the status one holds in a network. At its surface, Burt's claim is something similar to the ideas expressed by more structurally deterministic authors like C. Wright Mills or Karl Marx, who would look at the theater outings and civic groups and museum trips I was brought up with, along with the wealth and family history I was born into, and see social entrepreneurialism and status reproduced and granted unto myself as a bourgeois youth<sup>10</sup>. While deterministic models explain the general aspects of cultural reproduction, they neither account for its individual representations in everyday life, nor any observed variance between one's structural-opportunities and consequent actions. We employed Bourdieu's model of the habitus to explain such reproduction, and saw that it accounted for the “mutual

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<sup>10</sup> See *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills

confrontation of structure and accident” in a way that grants importance to the various components of life that may make the doing of oneself an act of doing leader.

Looking into the details of my own life, I can see how the status of leader and the political vocation can take place in some instances more than others. Indeed, for the same reasons we rely on Bourdieu (i.e. to account for variation and complexity), context is important. It may be that one’s environment structurally promotes leadership in one instance, but in another, due to a structural change of some magnitude, leadership opportunities may be absent altogether. There’s certainly an element of chance in leadership.

In the home schooling group my mother established with other secular home schooling mothers, for example, there were many weekly activities where interacting with other children occurred. As it turned out, many of the activities were largely with the same families, most of whom were family friends of my parents, or other family connections; therefore, many of the children became my friends as well. An important contextual factor in this regard was that a majority of these families had children near my age, but in most cases one or two years younger. Older children also tended to be one to three years older, but because I had an older brother, he and they would usually socialize separately from my crew of young friends.

In my group, as I mentioned, I was usually the oldest child by one or more years, and I was also recognized as the group’s leader<sup>11</sup> – even “innerly called leader” for that matter. Given that when we interacted, or “played,” there was a clear and expected intersection of the general attitudes and social norms that each child brought to the group,

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<sup>11</sup> This reflection has been related to me in more recent times by several of the parents involved in the home school group.

it is imaginable that one of these norms was that which grants older people more authority and control over younger folks<sup>12</sup>. If this is the case, then norms and structures interacted with the chance that I was the oldest child, and clearly identified me as “leader,” which then demanded that I convincingly reproduce the leadership role to maintain this status in the group.

As convenient as a structurally-given factor such as age may be as an explanation for my leadership, it may be wise to analyze this example of leadership a bit further. It is difficult to imagine that if I had, for whatever reason, socialized more closely with my older brother, and therefore his group of friends, I would have frequently found myself in the appropriate environment for acting as a leader. But looking at things in a different light, we still must imagine that there could have been a combination other of norms, skills, or structures from which I could have emerged as “leader,” even as a younger child. An extreme example of how the age norm could be suspended would be if I were a child movie star, for instance. Using that example, one can easily imagine leadership emerging despite an issue of age. It is also probable that a in a group of people between the ages of 47 and 50, rather than 7 and 10, a leader would emerge for many reasons other than age. What was the real reason, then, that I was leader? It is still likely that it was age, but there’s obviously something missing from our discussion. Let’s move on and consider the possibilities in a broader context.

Indeed, home schooling provided many other such conditions that put me in the position of leader. For instance, for several years as a pre-teen, my older brother and I

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<sup>12</sup> We certainly see this norm in the routine ways social structures of family, formal education, and community deal with age difference. While there may be exceptions, age can be seen as a symbolic power that confers dominance.

volunteered at the Cincinnati Museum Center, which housed the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History. I do not recall how exactly we came to start this position, however I do recall that it could not have easily happened at our age if it wasn't for the fact that home schooling structurally allowed it – the holes in our home schooling week's schedule made volunteering an opportunity that students with fixed school days did not possess. We worked one to two days a week, during “school hours,” and were the youngest people they had in the museum volunteer corps (which they called “Lab Rats”). In our volunteer work, we had the opportunity to design museum demonstrations (Gabe and I developed an exhibition showing the harmful effects of tobacco smoke), teach school groups about the gory details of sheep hearts and owl pellets, and lead visiting school groups around certain sections of the museum that required extra explanation or assistance.

What became the powerful aspect of this experience was not necessarily the learning of natural history, anatomy, or even the skill of being a museum curator, but the relationships that resulted from *leading* school age tour groups through the museum or through demonstrations. Because of the figurative and literal badge of authority we wore, as Lab Rats, entire school groups (including teachers), comprised of people our own age and often times several years older, were subject to being among our followership. We operated in explicit and structured roles: leaders and led. Gabe's and my leadership roles occurred because of an interest of learning and volunteering, our availability as home schooled children, as well as the multitude of other factors that gave us the opportunity (and hence motive) to be volunteers.

However, might we ask for a specific reason Gabe and I ended up possessing positions essentially of leadership? From the leaders' perspectives, in this case Gabe's

and mine, there was no reasonable evidence of conscious “orchestration.” Again, we merely volunteered because we could, and because working at the museum looked like a fun place to volunteer. Yet leadership happened anyway, and happened in very clear and explicit manner. This clarity and explicitness (in regards to the “Lab Rat” experience) is due to the fact that the instances of leadership appeared upon a specific confrontation: on our first day of work, we “wore” the badge and occupation that granted the power of leader, and upon our exit from the museum, and upon moving on from the volunteer job all together, the honors and honor of the job vanished. Indeed, in Goffman’s terms, the role of Lab Rat emerged from a well-developed and recognized *front* – it was a front proprietary of a place and a time – and it made a (rather convincing) claim: “Here we are. We are of authority.” But when we left the museum, and took off our badges, the front dissolved, and only the skills and experience acquired during the experience stuck with us in any measurable way.

Defining and containing the leadership example of being Lab Rat seems easy or clear – it was in essence a form of bureaucratic leadership – but the first example, where I was “leader” in a loose social group of other children, provides for some complexities still worth considering further. While I was a leader of the playgroup, there was not a singular structure on which my status relied. Also, although I can humbly say that most of the time “leader” was a status I had (and even one that I had occasionally when I was explicitly not the oldest, or perhaps even the youngest), I was likely not a leader in *all* circumstances pertaining to the arena discussed (the social network of kids in the home school group). The disassociation of reality and what seems like firm structure – structure similar to what we enjoyed as Lab Rats – begs that we ask what, then, must be considered

to better understand my first example of leadership, *as a pervasive and reoccurring condition of leadership, not linked to any specific structure, badge, or otherwise single objective factor.*

Let's review this example of leadership more closely: If the first time our group met, the concurrence of norms and motives conferred upon me a "badge" of leadership, we must note that at the time, in its moment, such a confrontation of structures constituted leadership; meanwhile, we have to recognize that the constitution of leadership was fragile, and potentially changeable with the variance of any of the factors that went into the initial granting of leadership. Said differently, in a reassessment of my leadership in that group, we must consider what effect the home school group's frequent meetings and activities (and hence varied attendance) could have had on leadership statuses.

Remembering again that my leadership status seemed to remain constant from gathering to gathering, and that many of the gatherings involved a similar bunch of kids, we may conclude that some form of *routinization of leadership* occurred. It's not exactly apparent how such an routinization or institutionalization of leader/led relationships were established; nonetheless, we may imagine that if such relationships were maintained with enough people, and over enough time, I could have consistently found myself in social situations where either enough people were established as "followers," or if they weren't already, they recognized that others saw me as "leader," and therefore respected me for being *a leader*, if not theirs. Goffman would note that as my interactions with children in my group became routinized over time, I was able to increase how everybody perceived the authenticity of my leadership role performance.

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*One day in the fall of my senior year, I stood outside of the Brandeis University Main Library alone and waiting for a friend. We were going to head to the office of Brandeis Television (a group we were both highly embedded in), which was located in the university campus center. Atypical of this friend, she was running a few minutes behind. So, as I waited for her, I noticed the people as they whisked by, going off to class, or going home, or going swiftly because they too were late for someone or somewhere. Standing there, my thoughts wandered, and after waiting for a minute or so, I began to drift into a daydream, as I often do.*

*“Hey Nate!” a friend said, as he approached me.*

*I was jolted from my daydream, but was not been too surprised or distracted from it to be befuddled.*

*I nodded back, said, “Hey, what’s up?” and nodded.*

*After shaking hands and exchanging the usual, “How are your classes going?” “What’s new?” or, “Great day, huh?” this friend went on his way, down the hill toward the campus center. Still there outside the library, waiting for my friend, and now awoken from my day dream, I began to think about the person who had passed: I knew him; I remembered some things he cared about, especially from his work with “Trisk,” the GLBTQ support and awareness organization on campus; we had worked together before on several projects and had, over the years together on campus, shared friends and become friends ourselves; when in need of support or help, he was there and someone I could rely on; when in need, he was certainly someone I could trust for information. He was a good friend to have.*

*After thinking about my first friend for a minute or so, I was again interrupted, this time not so abruptly, by another friend passing by. This time, instead of being a friend who I had been to parties with or known through other friends, the girl was someone I knew from working within the Student Union Government. She, two years prior, had been the senator for students in the “Transitional Year Program<sup>13</sup>”; at the same time I was also a fellow Student Union official, and by the end of the year we had worked together on several occasions and tasks. Nonetheless, as she walked by me outside of the library we did not talk about the Student Union but about the day, and how nice it was, and shared an exchange equally as mundane yet satisfying as with the first friend. Likewise, with her moving on, I was brought into a similar thought process of what transpired after my first friend had walked away and down the hill.*

*During the next three minutes, as I continued waiting for my now more-than-just-late friend, two more fellow students walked by and said “hello” – and each I knew from some realm of life, or social network I operated within on campus. In fact, as the fourth friend walked away, I thought about this last point for a moment, and came to a realization: Not only did I know each greeted student from some realm of campus life I operated in over the previous several years – that, to me, was obvious, and common place – but, it was also true that all four people who*

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<sup>13</sup> From the program’s website: “The Brandeis University Transitional Year Program (TYP) is the longest-continuing program of its kind in the United States. Since 1968, the program has provided talented but underprepared women and men the opportunity to pursue and acquire an undergraduate college education.”  
[http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/typ/about\\_us.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/typ/about_us.html)

*walked by were from very different realms of my life, representing a diversity of networks and types of relationships. With further thought, I also noticed that the four interactions illustrated how complex the individual networks and relationships I operated within and constructed over the past several years had become; and in all actuality, more than complex, I was surprised at how strategically constructed they were, as it seemed that each person either represented a group that could potentially want to deal with another one of the groups I knew, or was in, or was a person whose friendship and association helped me in some manner with my own faction (or club), or in the development of my identity as a campus leader.*

*As I waited for my friend, I realized this, and when she came, I realized that she, with her membership to the cheerleading club and Delta Phi Epsilon sorority, formed an arm of my optimized network as well. Now walking together towards the campus center, I was not mad. Waiting, and engaging in so many exchanges, had been time well spent. As I walked, saluting another friend on the way, I concluded my reflection of the occurrence. Seeing how my network was optimized and what I could do from filling real structural holes, I saw that my opportunities, and hence actions and status, were defined by my network: I was a student leader.*

The occurrence I just recounted, specifically in regards to the development of interactions and exchanges that led to my conclusion, is too complex to break down and assess in fragments or great detail. Nonetheless, the power of the strategic network I was able to develop is too great to ignore. How did this happen? Ronald Burt would notice that I had become a person “with a network optimally structured” to provide information and control benefits. He would also remember that I would continue to gain such benefits and continue optimizing my network, if I continued to fill the hole I occupied and structural vantage point I worked from. In everyday life at Brandeis, this means that I somehow recognized holes in the Brandeisian social structure, and enacted my leadership by actively filling those holes. My circumstance was not one of a gregarious youth meeting many people on a small campus. In my four years at Brandeis, I developed relationships in groups that were structurally separate. Indeed, my heavy involvement in the Student Union Government (SUG) as well as the Intercultural Center (ICC) filled a hole that, at the time, was rarely filled by anyone. My network centrality, therefore, allowed me to understand the specific needs and wants of one network, and coordinate them with the resources and information of another. At the end of my sophomore year,

for instance, several students involved in the SUG, and *not connected* with the ICC, were running for President and higher offices of the student body. These candidates both saw the ICC as a high-yielding source of votes, and saw *my privileged position* between the SUG network and the ICC. In this manner, I emerged as the *tertius gaudens*. From my position I coordinated relationships between candidates and the ICC, and was able to extract political control over those candidates.

The information and control benefits I enjoyed from my position between the ICC and SUG are only one example of how my overall network became optimized at Brandeis University. One could equally look to my position between SUG and campus media groups, or between BTV and the Brandeis Administration, and see in the very same effect occurring again and again throughout my last three years in the social arena called “Brandeis University.” But this was not the only thing that was happening. As my relationships and activities became increasingly defined by my increasing network centrality, an identity and status of “student leader” emerged; and unlike the status of Lab Rat, which I gained from the minute I walked into the museum with my official turquoise shirt, the status of student leader was not worn from the day I stepped foot on the university campus – merely the status of “student” was. Something about my identity at Brandeis changed in three years.

Where did the leader come from?

In the midst of doing life on campus – doing student life – I formed an optimal social network and managed to pick up an addendum of “leader” to my identity of student. As leadership became increasingly a part of my everyday life at school, it was no longer a matter of choices I had and made, but choices I no longer had and could no

longer make. As “student leader,” there were considerable expectations – a front that had to be maintained and an objective that had to govern exchanges; and to do so, everything in my personal repertoire – my life’s treasury – was needed to for the pressing into service for the act of doing leader.

Indeed, in my four years at Brandeis I became aware not only of an identity of student leader, but of leader, standing on its own. As I became more and more aware of how I led at school – in clubs, social groups, or in general – I became equally aware of how I led outside of school; and as I assessed the reasons I was pulled to lead at school, I found that truly I was “leader” for reasons outside of school, and for reasons that came from life, more generally. Something about life made me see: “I can do no other.”

It was a call to leadership existential to my life – that is the answer to why, in retrospect, my social network had developed in an optimal fashion, and that is the answer to so much more. Leadership was found by doing life, as if it was I was assigned to finding it.

What, then, assigns it?

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **LEADERSHIP'S FRONT:**

### **SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND**

#### **IMPROVISATION**

*One can say that three pre-eminent qualities are decisive for the politician [or leader]: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion.*

*This means passion in the sense of matter-of-factness, of passionate devotion to a 'cause,' to the god or demon who is its overlord. It is not passion in the sense of that inner bearing which... Georg Simmel used to designate as 'sterile excitation'... It is an excitation that plays so great a part with our intellectuals in this carnival we decorate with the proud name of 'revolution.' It is a 'romanticism of the intellectually interesting,' running into emptiness devoid of all feeling of objective responsibility.*

*To be sure, mere passion, however genuinely felt, is not enough. It does not make a politician, unless passion as devotion to a 'cause' also makes responsibility to this cause the guiding star of action. And for this, a sense of proportion is needed. This is the decisive psychological quality of the politician: his ability to let realities work upon him with inner concentration and calmness.*

*- Max Weber in "Politics as a Vocation"*

***They let me see signs (and play with them too)***

Looking out of the kitchen window in the farmhouse that I grew up in, one sees a usually tranquil sight. The yard, which we cut in the spring and summer, reaches out and flexes into the fields; the fields run a few hundred yards more and soften the woods' edge. The only breaks in this landscape are the few outbuildings and trees stationed in relative proximity to the house, and of course the small pond that lies in front of the house. The pond – dug next to the one row of grape vines that remains (from what used to be a field-width's vineyard) – beckons from the first 80-degree summer day to be dove and bathed in. The woods ask to be explored. There is something about life on a farm. There is calmness.

With life on a farm, there is also realness, a genuine sword of knighting that graces every action and movement. In my opinion, there's something about the truth of life on a farm that grounds those who live on one. This reality is expressed through normality, but not norms; graveness, but not sorrow; and parameters, but not perimeters. When a chicken grows old and cannot lay eggs anymore, the chicken must be killed, and buried. When you don't close the chicken coop at night, and you're awoken and reminded of it at three in the morning, you must go out and close it. If you do not plant your tomato seeds before the first week in March, you will not have beefy red tomatoes in the summer. There are consequences for every action, for every action there is a purpose. If you take an extra day in the spring and weed and thin your corn, the corn will be easier to harvest and healthier in the fall.

Despite the apparent dependence on reason and purpose on a farm, the labor, tranquility, and openness have a counterbalancing effect on the farm's seriousness. Hoisting loads and loads of hay and field-grass onto a hay-cart for days and days a summer makes the young mind wander to the woods, and start daydreaming of running off, down to the end of the trail that runs by the foot of the hay field, and into the cool, gurgling creek.

But even before I was old enough to pitch hay or mow the grass in the summers, my big brother and I would explore the woods and fields and creek of Perelandra Farm.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes we would go out exploring for long enough that we could think we were lost, only to find a familiar landmark – a barkless tree or a fork in the creek – that would

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<sup>14</sup> The farm I grew up on was named “Perelandra Farm” by my father, when he bought the farm out of college in 1976. The name comes from the title of the C.S. Lewis book, *Perelandra*, which is a novel about a utopia.

reorient us and challenge us to explore a little further that day. Sometimes we would be out playing until past dark. Then, without the common landmarks, we would navigate with our senses – we’d hear the noises of cars on a nearby road and of toads croaking and courting pond-side near the house; when close enough, we’d sometimes smell the cooking of my father or mother wafting out of the screened-in porch, through the midsummer’s night air. In a clearing, on a clear night, we could see the North Star, which oriented us towards home.

The life and education of a young person on a farm is meaningful in a lot of ways – it brings a calming sense of purpose to everything: the purpose, a sense of responsibility; the responsibility, a sense of life; and, the sense of life, a sense of proportion. On a farm, there is sense.

But we were no ordinary farmers.

My father bought our farm in 1976, a year after graduating from a New England university. The sellers, a Mr. and Ms. Dunbar, had received several other offers to sell the farm, some at prices higher than what my young father proposed; nonetheless, they sold the fifty acre plot of land knowing that the man to whom they were selling the place would keep good care of things, and not permit it to be developed. My father named it “Perelandra.”

As he was a public school teacher in Cincinnati, my father did not use the land for income, although he did keep a small garden off to the side of the house. Though the fields brought no profit, my father and mother found a fruitful use of the land. It was a perfect place to raise children. The place was so attractive for childrearing, that my parents cite it as a primary reason they pulled Gabe and I from school in 1988 to home

school us. Indeed, where could be a better place to grow and learn than on a farm so rich with purpose, with reality, with responsibility, and with proportion? The boundaries of education and learning that belonged to school were stripped away, and the liberty of inquiry and exploration became enhanced by the home and land beneath it. My parents saw the farm as a place to live, relatively free from the norms of society. They saw the farm as a place for nourishment and nurturing, and knew that there was much to be learned from the woods, the fields, the plants, and animals that were all around. They knew a lot, but they had no idea the consequences.

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The farm, the home schooling, and the non-traditional life: these are very important elements of one's life – of my life. And there's much more to mention. But given these elements, where do we go from here? How do we go from the simple and peaceful farm and the privileged and sort-of-hippie parents to “doing leader?” In previous chapters, when we introduced the concept of “doing,” we worked with the idea of “bricolage.” Bricolage – the art of making value from the devalued – is seen as an essential skill, or manner of operation, because it is the act of the pressing into service the resources and demands around, to create a viable product; for our purposes, bricolage fuels the production of the “valued goods” essential for leadership. In other words, the process of bricolage can effectively allow someone to perform and develop the identity of “leader” with success. Knowing this, seeing and using the signs and symbols of life in a productive manner can be an important element of becoming leader. “Doing leader” must first rely on one's relationship with and mastery of the symbols and goods of leadership.

In *The Work of Nations*, former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich describes people he calls “symbolic-analysts” as those who do “problem-solving, problem-identifying, and strategic-brokering activities...” These symbolic-analysts are producers of valued things – similar to the routine producers that he claims dominate society – but they are not known for producing standardized things for the commercial marketplace. “Traded instead are the manipulations of symbols – data, words, oral and visual representations” (177). They are the engines of the post-industrial economy, the managers, directors and entertainers, policy makers, fashion designers, and university professors.

Where Reich most productively adds to the analysis and model of “doing leader,” however, is not his identification of such persons in modern life, but his analysis of the origins of the symbolic-analyst’s mastery of symbols: her socialization. In his chapter “The Education of the Symbolic Analyst (I),” Reich identifies the ability to productively manipulate symbols as one that’s closely linked to the pedagogy used in institutions of education. He says, “The formal education of an incipient symbolic analyst entails refining four basic skills: *abstraction*, *system thinking*, *experimentation*, and *collaboration*” (229). Of these four identified skills, we can see the work of the bricoleur described in each component. Abstraction, which Reich identifies as the “the very essence of symbolic analysis,” is essential for the generation of new ideas, of rearranging and reinterpreting things, and generally confronting “the chaos of data that are already swirling around us” (229). It brings meaningful form to what may have merely been a meaningless blob. Stepping past abstraction, Reich formulizes the need to give shape to the form gained from abstraction, and be “capable of seeing the whole, and of

understanding the processes by which parts of reality are linked together.” This is the skill of system thinking.

As I continue to describe the four components of symbolic analysis, it is increasingly evident that Reich, when speaking of the symbolic analyst, is indeed speaking of something like the bricoleur. *Experimentation* (the third element), or willingness to learn from experience, is certainly essential to bricolage, as is *collaboration* (the fourth), which speaks acutely of the bricoleur, as she employs and collaborates with *all capital* that may be available to her – human, material, social, cultural, political, etc.

Robert Reich takes a critical look at the pedagogy of schools and universities across America and eyes the difference of capacity and pedagogy between those who “produce” successful symbolic analysts, and those who do not. Ironically, Reich finds that the formal institutions that most effectively imbue “incipient symbolic analyst(s)” are those which operate the least formally. In other words, those schools that stray the farthest from structured imposition of meaning will have the students who are most capable of abstraction; schools that institutionally permit and promote broad approaches to learning and exploration – deviation from the normalized methodology of a routine production of solutions – help their students develop the skill of “system thinking.” Experimentation and collaboration are, beyond essential activities in the formation of a symbolic mastery, a loosening of the institutional tendency for determination, control, and hegemonic orthodoxy. Resource saturated elite institutions create symbolic analysts by acting un-like traditional institutions.

But this is not all about schools and universities. We know from our understanding of socialization that many institutions, social and otherwise, form the arsenal of influence in the development of one's sense of self as well as one's abilities. Reich, a noted politician, focuses on the area he feels the government can most make change: the nation's schools. However, Reich is concerned with the general issue of how this mastery of symbols can originate, arguing:

That our best schools and universities are providing a small subset of America's youth with excellent basic training in the techniques essential to symbolic analysis. When supplemented by interested and engaged parents, good health care, visits to museums and symphonies, occasional foreign travel, home computers, books, and all the other cultural and educational paraphernalia that symbolic-analytic parents are delighted to show on their progeny, the education of this fortunate minority is an exceptionally good preparation for the world that awaits. (233)

The symbolic analyst will tend to be drawn from those who are socialized by the institutions and constitutions of society that provide the environment for symbolic mastery. The symbolic analyst is the product of the privileged and elite. By being inundated with opportunity and materials, the symbolic analyst is created and socialized to innovate freely.

And here is where the symbolic analyst's similarities with the bricoleur seem to split. The bricoleur traditionally operates because of a lack of normative solutions, rather than an ambition to surpass them. This is a difference worth noting, but for now, we move forward with a conception of the symbolic analyst who is imbued with the skills of innovation by this social environment of innovation.

And this was my parents' mission. If I became skilled with symbols and symbolic productions, it was from the total lack of educational institutions in my early life, the environment – social and physical – that I grew and developed in, and the parental ideologies that guided my and my siblings' upbringing. The complete lack of a written or

arranged pedagogy in home schooling translated into a pedagogy of exploration, critical thought, and ingenuity; this is the opportunity of being symbolic analyst. But the omnipresence of resources – material, cultural, *organic*, and symbolic – of my farm and family made emerging as a symbolically competent person highly probable. What makes even closer sense about my home schooling experience, though, is Reich’s valuation that “Most important, students are taught to accept responsibility for their own continuing learning<sup>15</sup>” (232). Central to the life in my house on Perelandra Farm was the sense of responsibility that matched with the proportion that came with the freedom, nourishment, and abundance of symbols to play with without restraint.

This, in essence, is what home schooling on my farm – growing up around the old farm house; working in the gardens and fields; daydreaming of the creek; exploring the woods in the day and discussing ideas at night; caring for the chickens, rabbits and goats; fixing tractors; planting flowers in the yard; being brother to two brothers and two sisters, and son to two loving parents – was all about: they let me see the signs and symbols of life, and play with them too. It was the privilege of my life.

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### ***Doing Leadership, Doing Life: A Relative Improvisation***

*Standing by the mirror, we slicked our hair back, running our fingers through our brownish hair. Is this what we were supposed to look like? I can’t remember where we got the idea from, but for some reason, Gabe and I thought we should doing something with our hair, minutes before we left to the Museum Center of Cincinnati, to volunteer as “Lab Rats.”*

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<sup>15</sup> An important note to add to this is the fact that I decided to stop home schooling after the “eighth grade,” and to attend high school. This was a decision I was free to make at any time while home schooling, and I made my decision to enter school mostly to experience the benefits of conforming to social norms of education. Of course, my experience in free and unstructured education greatly affected my experience in the greatly structured learning environments of Seven Hills High School and Batavia High School.

*We never had much of an idea as to what and how cosmetics could be used. Conditioner was something, obviously, that was used for hair, so naturally we would use it. Gel was out of the question, since we would have had none in the house, as it's even odd for me to think that we had the conditioner to begin with.*

*My family wasn't, at the time, at all in touch with current trends: how people looked, were supposed to look, etc. My parents demanded a certain level of "appropriateness" when we would go out, but that tended towards "handsome" rather than "stylish" or "cool." Expectations of cool would come later (and not from them). At the time, "new" clothes would come mostly as hand me downs or Salvation Army apparel. Only at times would something new come in from Lands End or L.L. Bean.*

*We were actually looked down on, in a way, for caring too much about appearance, so it's not surprising that when we tried putting conditioner in our hair, we did so without asking our parents about the purpose of it. In fact, when I think about the episode, I'm thinking we intentionally kept the door closed, as to not draw attention to this outlandish attention to appearance.*

*As we ran our fingers through our hair with the conditioner sticking to them, we started to realize that conditioner might not give us a desired effect. Indeed, the white cream made our hair look like, well, white cream was in it; and we at least had the understanding that this was not a desired effect. Seeing that our curiosity had gotten the best of us, we quickly thought to rinse our hair out as best as possible before leaving. "What did we do all that for?" I'm sure I asked myself. But likely I knew the answer.*

*Although I had no daily references to style, and none were made in my life, I did have at least an idea of what I would look like, if I were "cool" or good looking: this week, it was with that sense, I foolishly explored the possibility of conditioner making my do work.*

*But this was fluke, it was a time when I didn't know what I was doing, sensed what I was could do, but failed. In so doing, I quickly covered my mistake up, and moved on with a lesson. I'm sure I laughed to myself – at myself – pretty heartily. But this instinct and tendency should not be ignored. I don't think I've every really known what I was "supposed" to do, but every day I must do what I can, learn a bit, and fill a void of explicit expectation.*

*This void is important. The void is a space that is known to exist, but is not filled in. This can be as simple as knowing that there may be benefits to modifying one's hair, but not knowing how, or not having the right things to do it; but the essence of filling this void is improvisation, and I, the person, am turned into a bricoleur: taking the resources and materials around me, and creating something previously unknown.*

*And this brings me to my wardrobe.*

*I pride myself on never having bought or owned "Abercrombie & Fitch." For a young man who concerns himself on representing himself well, even materialistically, things can be difficult without this type of attire, which seemingly was standard apparel for folks "like me" in school. So what could I do? It is here that I turned to improvisational individuality, where I had to fill a void of "style" with my own imagination and resources around me.*

*As I think about it more and more, this was a process of change. At first, likely in my years before high school, "A&F" clothes weren't even the issue. I didn't know what "cool"*

*looked like, but I could imagine what it did. One great example of this was when I went to summer camp, very oblivious to mainstream style requirements. There, I remember wearing “Samba” Addidas sneakers, funky shorts, an oversized Cincinnati Reds t-shirt, and a black Star Trek beret, which was something I got as a “Lab Rat,” at the Cincinnati Museum Center. With this general style, if you can imagine for a second what it looked like, I certainly did not look like anyone else around me. Even when other kids didn’t have the coolest, they usually had normal. Normal was not what I was.*

*Amazingly, I didn’t look half bad, though. I feel I can say this, as I nostalgically look back and think about the big dance the camp held, where guys and girls were supposed to go as dates. That year, I found something out I never knew, which was that I could be desired. My ability to react to this is attention is something I admittedly needed work on, but the point is this: even with my off-style, there was a certain level of cool achieved. I had to turn down dates! How did this phenomenon exist? Why wasn’t I, with marginalized style, marginalized?*

*The answer here is found in the bricolage “that works,” perhaps. Because there was no rhyme or reason to my compilation of clothing – no way to classify my look, there was no way to pigeonhole me in a margin. As the form and manner of my style came apparent to people, it emerged as palatable and unique, and not for one reason or another. People didn’t know what they saw, but they saw that I was relatively free (compared with them), and they liked it.*

*Yet even with this apparent independence, indifference, and uniqueness, it’s hard for me to claim truth in all of it. Was a wearing a dress? No. Did I blatantly clash? Not really. Was I speaking a different language, or wearing two different shoes, or acting so out of bounds that I would be stigmatized? Again, no.*

*I harmonized. In my improvisation of the materials around me, and the treasury of knowledge that I had, I found myself playing in key, but in a different register, playing other notes than those around me, but usually notes that worked. The harmony I created was nothing more than a play off of what others were doing, linked in fact, to what I saw around me, or to voids I knew existed and could be filled – it was a harmony of opportunity. A mix of intuition, perceptiveness, and general understanding for the valued goods and values (expectations and norms) around me pointed me in the direction that kept me from the true margins. It would be, then, that the bricolage put me not to the side, but almost on top: the “coolness” of me came out and existed not for the path I walked on, but place I occupied. I was free, an individual, and unique: yes. But I was lassoed to the norm still, only because I had to jive with it, groove with it, and harmonize with it. That harmonization, I would find later, would be music to people’s ears. At the time, I had little idea it was going on.*

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What was going on, however, was summation of life’s structures and accidents that gave me an opportunity to innovate and present myself as fashionable. There were resources with which I created my product, a structural vantage point from which I presented it, and an innovative manner with which I created it. In the end, my presentation said, “Here I am. I am fashionable. Treat me as if it is so.” And for whatever

reason, from the presentation of self – in this case the clothes I wore – people complied, and it *was* so. I deviated from norms, and led people – led them to believe that I was something I previously was not.

In that action, I was a bricoleur: I took clothes, devalued clothes (literally from the Salvation Army), and gave them value by making them belong to the structure of fashion. But this was not a rational or calculated production. As I said in Chapter 2, “Since bricolage is a manner of going about everyday business – not itself intended orchestration – the structuring of structures occurs from individuals acting as leaders, or performing in the only way they know how, by deviating, exchanging, and consequently bringing people along that deviation.” In this sense, what I described above has semblance of leadership. It shows how instead of complying with norms, utilizing prescribed sets, I created compliance by deviating – deviating because in the realm of fashion, a teenager with clothes from Salvation Army has little to lose.

And here lies a fault in our discourse on leadership thus far. Until now, we have approached leadership only as a production, and measured it as such. We’ve seen leadership discussed by Weber in terms of creating legitimate dominance, Goffman in terms of creating a front, Sahlins in terms of creating a faction, Burns in terms of creating conflict, Blau in terms of creating compliance, Burt in terms of creating optimized networks and opportunity, Bourdieu in terms of creating symbolic power, and Lèvi-Strauss in the universal terms of creating things using deviant and, therefore, innovative methods. For all of this creation, we have even found a framework of “doing,” set forth by West and Zimmerman, in which we came to know all performances of life as potential

performances of leadership, when the demands on a person's identity were demands of "doing leader."

However, we have not been able to find a definable source of demands on the identity of leader; we are still left without knowing the origin and content of the leadership socialization process, and we have not come closer to understanding what "doing leader" really means. The fact is that life may be comprised of any number of stories such as the ones above – I could go on for pages and pages about how my family's connections have optimized and influenced my social network, how the stories I've heard growing up have determined a certain political consciousness, or how my grandmother's introduction of me to a co-worker, saying, "Nate is going to be the President one day," affected the creation of an identity of "leader" – but with every story there is an indistinguishable and indiscriminate amount of factors that could have indistinguishable and indiscriminate effects in the life of potential leader. The model of "doing leader," while an outstanding method of describing the process of routine social accomplishments, including those that leaders may engage in from *structured positions*, cannot compensate for the identity's reliance on innovation and the "sovereign break with all traditional or rational norms" that Weber and others find so essential to the leadership process. Indeed, how could social norms explicitly demand the production of leadership, when leadership in its essential and revolutionary forms explicitly break from this very set of norms? After all, we found in Chapter 1 this important distinction in Max Weber's work: the inspiration of "leadership" is founded not in the routine performance of a role – which we know as bureaucratic execution, and know as important nonetheless – but on the

passionate and charismatic “*sovereign*” action<sup>16</sup>. For that matter, the social construction of a “leader” cannot be purely the product of the rational enactment of some set of norms. It occurs from the *sensible*<sup>17</sup> deviance from them. Taking Blau’s structural exchange theory into account, we can further our concentration on “sovereign” actions by recognizing that since “compliance” is a quality necessary for leadership, it cannot be exchanged for a like good with the same quality (namely, compliance); therefore a developing leader cannot routinely grant *his compliance* to social norms when those norms in question relate to leadership. Instead, he must make non-compliance a quality of the goods he contributes to social exchanges.

While focusing on the production of leadership, of performing and producing leadership activities, scholars of leadership studies, including myself, have focused longingly on the “social magic that works” and tried to decipher the origin of its genius by explaining its influences. What we have not done, however, is inquire how the harmonious notes of innovation relate to the normative chords that play before, during, and after. We do not look critically or attentively at the *interaction* of norms and innovation past Pierre Bourdieu’s insightful recognition of “structural variation” as an act constrained by the habitus. In fact, the discussion of Bourdieu’s habitus is where I observed that, “We are dealing with one act of leadership, not two,” and proposed a singular framework to assess leadership which solely valued the production of “social magic,” and thus bricolage and “doing.” But this is where the inquiry has stopped. Even

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<sup>16</sup> Max Weber reminds us that the bureaucrat “shall not do precisely what the politician, the leader as well as his following, must always and necessarily do, namely, *fight*” (1946: 95).

<sup>17</sup> Lèvi-Strauss referred to science of the concrete, or bricolage, as the “exploitation of the sensible world on sensible terms” (16).

in asking (in Chapter 2) if charisma was merely a structural variation with the right “tempo,” I failed to follow through with a careful analysis of structural variation and to address the *relationship between structure and variation*, as it occurs in the act of deviation. Bourdieu, speaking on the issue of variance in formal discourse and exchange, sees this relationship defined by its “tension.”

Variation in the *form* of discourse, and more precisely the degree to which it is controlled, monitored and refined in form (*formal*), thus depend, on the one hand, on the *objective tension* of the market, that is, on the degree of formality of the social distance in the case of an interaction, on the extent of the social distance (in the structure of the distribution of linguistic and other kinds of capital) between the sender and the receiver, or the respective groups to which they belong; and, on the other hand, on the ‘sensitivity’ of the speaker to this tension and the censorship it implies, as well as the closely related aptitude to respond to a high degree of tension with an expression which is highly controlled, and therefore strongly euphemized. In other words, the form and the content of a discourse depend on the relation between a habitus (which is itself the product of sanctions on a market with a given level of tension), and a market defined by a level of tension which is more or less heightened, hence by the severity of the sanctions it inflicts on those who pay insufficient attention to ‘correctness’ and to the ‘imposition of form’ which formal usage presupposes. (1991: 79)

Bourdieu’s point here directly addresses the issue of deviation in ways we have not. Now, the deviation essential to leadership can be qualified by the “severity of sanctions” society places on the (market specific) act of non-conformity and the relationship such an act’s market has with the habitus. In practical terms, the tension Bourdieu has identified is the tension between the potential costs of deviation and the structural conditions a potential leader must work with and from. It’s a tension that very well may be the same tension (or conflict) identified by Burns, Sahlins, Roche and Sachs, Blau, Burt as the “life-giving dialectical process” essential to leadership.

While the products and performances (or *content* and *form*) of leadership exchanges can be masterfully deviant works – bricolage works that depend largely on the aptitude and sensitivity one performs with in a market – we now see that the *potential* for leadership comes neither from that content nor that form. Leadership may be born instead

from the tension between the potential cost of deviating and the structural position of the person deviating, in relation to those who she interacts with. Thinking back on the experiences I have previously illustrated, I remember the experience I had improvising with physical presentation and how, after trial and error, I came to capitalize on my improvising. Before, I made a comment that has proven to be accurate. I said, “A teenager with clothes from Salvation Army has little to lose.” This means that given my relationship with others, and the exchanges I had with them in the marketplace of physical presentation, there were few sanctions possible for me. My insulation from sanctions here was a product of my marginalization from the production of orthodox goods in the marketplace. Indeed I was far enough from an able producer of the normative products of appearance, that any further deviation from the normative standards could only be punished ever so slightly. Specifically from this marginalized position, I was able to improvise, and improvise freely, until I found a front which, through the established process of bricolage, was convincing enough that it conferred all of the rights and privileges the front deserved, given its supposed, rather assumed, structural position. Additionally, there were compelling influences on my *chances of success* in improvising and creating that convincing front. Although I did not have the normative materials to create a valued front, like Reich’s symbolic analysts, my privileged social and cultural background provided an optimal structural position from which I could direct efforts to innovatively create one.

Now we have an effective way of seeing the difference between innovations born in the margins of a marketplace or network, and those that occur from its optimal center. Ronald Burt’s conception of social networks and structural holes has described the

strategic brokering of social relationships that work with the objective of optimizing one's returns on social investments. With Burt's guidance, we can see that while the highly marginalized actor has little to lose on investments in the arenas he's marginalized in, the central and optimally-positioned person will have high chances of success with investments, therefore giving him little worry that sensibly deviant actions will turn investments into costs<sup>18</sup>. In short, one's optimal position can overcome the potential costs of leadership, just as the lack of imposed costs can encourage improvisation. It is in this same sense that Robert Reich describes a process by which resource saturated structures produce people who are willing and able to innovate as "symbolic analysts," and Claude Lèvi-Strauss describes a process by which people work with restricted means and materials to develop valued sets (or fronts); this is the leadership producing tension between structural opportunity and costs.

There is one last point to address, one that may reveal an interesting dimension of our exploration. Although Ronald Burt's structural hole argument focuses on social capital, we have dealt with, throughout this thesis, conceptions of "valued goods" that go beyond the social arena, and into the cultural, political, human, etc. It has not been difficult to imagine, therefore, that Burt's structural holes theory might show how cultural capital has its own marketplace (Burt calls them arenas) in which players can be marginalized or centralized, as does every other conceivable kind of capital. To extend this point, if we are capable of placing cultural capital in a structured marketplace, we should also be capable of encountering its "holes," which, when filled in, provide

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<sup>18</sup> Given this, might we be able to conclude that risky investments are similar to deviations, in that they seek a return on exchanges that go beyond the normative practice? Thus, "cost" is the failure of such deviance, and the sanctions on not making an appropriately informed investment.

culturally optimized conditions for providing returns on investments. It is therefore true that – either by insularly innovating from the center, or freely bricolaging from the margins – successful sovereign actions will produce market specific products which formulate a convincing front and create a newly defined order (a “structured structure” for that matter).

Within this newly defined order, we must again realize that neither the successful product (front) nor the manner in which the product was made speak definitively of how the deviance achieved its goal of “being something” (fashionable in one case, a leader in any other). We must also realize that any action, deviant or not, from this new point must take into account the assumed and actual position one operates from in the structured (social, cultural, material, etc.) structure. If a deviant action has itself put someone in a more normatively sanctioned/less marginalized position, he must recognize the increased severity of, and hence vulnerability to sanctions by those more structurally dominant. An actor in his new position must be willing situate all new actions around the combination of structural opportunities and potential sanctions of the new position. If further change in the structured structure is in order, the structuring can only happen through the dynamic process of re-reflecting the actual structures, sanctions, and tensions.

And so it is vocation. We have quoted Ronald Burt as saying, “If all you know is entrepreneurial relationships, the motivation question is a nonissue. Being willing and able to act entrepreneurially is how you understand social life” (36). Similarly, to be a leader, one must have to understand social life as an experience either rich with structural opportunities that reward deviation, or so significantly marginalized that any deviation is not heavily sanctioned. As this dynamic plays out in every marketplace and with every

conceivable good, the elements and qualities of leadership may emerge, depending on the varying degrees of tension experienced in the various marketplaces. When there is no tension experienced, however – when one’s life is caught in the middle of the neglected margin and the privileged center – opportunities to deviate shrink as the required investment and likely sanction of deviating seem to increase. Not likely to consider the sovereign action essential to leadership, the person owned by this struggle operates as a bureaucrat, in life and vocation.

However, when a person stands in the stark margins or insulating center of a punitive and rewarding social structure, and makes herself “leader” to those around her, she does so by defiantly and innovatively creating a front composed of the variable goods of life – material, cultural, social, symbolic, political, and otherwise – consigned by her market specific structural position. Working with that capital, and by the filling the social-structural, political, and cultural holes, the prospective leader “gives an account of [her] personality and life by the choices [she] makes between the limited possibilities” (Lèvi-Strauss 21). This is how she shows her strength as a truly charismatic leader. Eventually, as a personality and life-story emerge from the tensions of everyday life, the leader’s front may be taken as real, and thus magically begins to confer all the signs of leadership.

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