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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

Smart Capital: The Social Networks of University Presidents

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

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2011

The Dissertation of Scott M. Gross is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form

for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

DEDICATION

To my life partner, Jay Franklin, a relationship that is all about love.

And, to my family, the gentle giants upon whose shoulders
I have been lucky enough to stand.

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Finally, to my study group, I would never have made it without you.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Smart Capital: The Social Networks of University Presidents

by

Scott Gross

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2011
California State University, San Marcos, 2011

Professor Lorri Santamaría, Chair

Public higher education is in crisis and is begging for strong, effective leadership to ensure a sustainable future. This dissertation provides a brief history of public higher education, specifically in California, and reveals the desperate need for transformational changes in the way public higher education is offered. Such change will likely be initiated by leaders, both existing and emerging. As a variety of leadership types may be helpful for higher education, this paper unpacks the meaning of different styles and their relevance to higher education. With the knowledge that relationships are at the heart of

leadership, a review of social networks and an extensive study of social capital follows. After identifying a gap in the literature relative to the intersection of leadership and social networks, particularly within the context of higher education, this paper studied that phenomenon. Using a qualitative, phenomenological method, this study interviewed eight presidents from a public, state university system in California to reveal the intersection of their social networks with their leadership. The findings from the interviews and document analysis revealed six strategies these presidents use in building relationships. Considering the six strategies as themes, the relationship between the presidents' social networks and their leadership behavior emerged in the form of the Leadership-Network Reciprocation (LNR) model. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of the LNR model and the implications for current and future presidents as well as other leaders in general.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"President" is synonymous with "power." Presidents, of any organization, are the responsible party, have ultimate authority and, as a result, are powerful. "Power is essential to leadership . . . However, although power is necessary for leadership, it is insufficient by itself for leadership" (Munduate & Medina, 2004, p. 1). One assumption about leadership is that leaders need to be powerful and strong in order to save the day. Senge (1990) asserts that we look to leaders to be heroes and saviors. While strong leadership is required to manage the barrage of issues that come at any leader, the strength and power actually come from the relationships a leader has with members of the organization. "Power . . . does not reside in the person, but rather resides in the relationship between people in any given situation" (Munduate & Medina, 2004, p. 2). There is something mysterious that happens in these relationships.

Context / Background

University presidents are a unique group of leaders. According to the United States Department of Education, there are 4,861 colleges and universities throughout the United States (Chronicle of Higher Ed, 2009). In a study conducted by the American Council on Education (2007), the typical university president is a white male, in his 60s and ascended into the position from the position of chief academic officer or provost. About 23 percent of university presidents are women, which is up from 10 percent in 1986. In the same 20 years, the number of university presidents who are people of color rose from eight to 13.6 percent. Sixty percent of current presidents came to that role from

a senior executive position within higher education and 31 percent were most recently the chief academic officer or provost.

University presidents have many duties with which to contend. Depending on the day, they must provide the roadmap for the future of the institution by regularly articulating the vision and strategic plan of the university. The university president is consistently called upon to attend community gatherings as well as events on campus. In this role, presidents become the figurehead and the public face of the university. In consultation with the faculty and the academic senate, the president decides the academic plan for the university. This can be as significant as adding new degree programs or as mundane as providing updates on minor policy edits. Presidents are increasingly more involved in initiatives to improve campus climate and a sense of belonging by intentionally diversifying students, faculty, and staff or providing opportunities for the existing diversity to interact more frequently and tap into the wealth that exists in each other. Student graduation rates and prospective enrollment also concern university presidents, who will frequently receive updates and work with other leaders on campus to ensure that progress on both fronts is positive. While not an exhaustive list, these topics provide some insight into any one of the items that may require attention from a president on a given day.

Public university presidents, especially in California, are mitigating a variety of issues, some of which are even considered crises. The most prominent of these issues in California is the budget. The state continues to fall into debt as it spends more than it collects. These expenses are based on promises like the California Master Plan for Higher Education, which offers each citizen in the state a pathway to higher education.

In 1960, the legislature in the State of California, voted to implement an organizational structure in the state-run system of higher education, which enacted a three-tiered system including the Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California. One tier was designed to end where the next began and, with each step, the next level became increasingly more advanced in the level of education. Theoretically, community colleges would provide students the opportunity to complete general education requirements at a reduced rate, thus increasing access to higher education. The California State University would provide a bachelor's level education and the University of California a master's or doctorate level education. The Master Plan, currently the model for higher education in California, is not sustainable because of the lack of funding.

When these complex issues of budget, diversity and shared governance are considered against the backdrop of the demographic data, one begins to wonder if the current university presidents, or those in the pipeline ready to take their places, have the innovation and creativity to retool public higher education. There are a variety of impending crises calling for a transformation of higher education, and these will require significant leadership. Yet, while the performance required by a university president continues to evolve, presidential search committees continue to look for leaders by using stagnant criteria, with prior experience in senior executive roles in higher education being the determining factor. "This approach limits not only opportunities for young leaders, women and people of color, but also access to new ideas, new viewpoints and innovative ways of addressing new challenges" (Kirwan, 2008, p. 4). Fresh perspective and creative solutions are not going to come from one individual who occupies the president's office.

University presidents, in order to be successful, need to exert leadership at multiple levels, which inherently means working with and relying on others in the organization (Tierney, 1999). The content of relationships will be a critical factor for university presidents.

Statement of the Problem

Public higher education is in crisis. As communities look to educational leaders to address the problems facing public institutions of higher education, there is a veil over the nature of university presidencies. Understandably, for reasons like safety and confidential decisions, the position of president must be shielded from the public. Yet, in other ways, it would be helpful to make the invisible visible. Who knows what one could discover? How does a university president lead? Answering these questions will bring transparency to university presidencies.

Much research has been done on leadership within the context of business and, while there is a growing body of literature regarding leadership within K-12 schools, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to examining leadership within universities, specifically university presidents, and how they move their universities forward.

Purpose of the Study

Revealing the mystery of public university presidencies not only helps communities better understand the evolution of universities, it also potentially uncovers some revolutionary ways of leading and provides examples of leadership that could be replicated. As an employee at a public university in California, I am curious about how the president of the institution leads. Presidents have incredible influence in guiding the institution in a particular direction. Sometimes presidents employ a strategy that works

well and appeals to all the constituencies. Other times, an approach backfires creating leadership nightmares. I am interested in learning more about the relationships at the heart of leading. I want to understand the nature of these relationships and, most important, how leaders use them.

"Strategies, tactics, skills and practices are empty unless we understand the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders and their constituents. "If there is no underlying need for the relationship, then there is no need for leaders" (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p.1). Relationships are fundamental for leadership; without them, leadership becomes dictatorial and directive. Only through relationships can leaders develop trust with others in an organization, thus making it possible to establish open and honest communication, learn from one another, make decisions together and ensure the success of the organization. Relationships give leaders the credibility and power they need to lead.

Theoretical Framework

While university presidents could be studied from a variety of angles, this study is positioned to use social network and social capital theories to consider the relationships of university presidents and examine those relationships.

Social network theory. Relationships are the basic building block of social networks (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999; Bono and Anderson, 2005; Lin, 1999). A social network is a set of people and a set of connections between those people representing interpersonal relationships (Brass and Krackhardt, 1999; Burt, 1992; Mehra, Dixon, Brass and Robertson, 2006).

Social networks and leadership. Leaders find the information provided by social networks to be extraordinarily valuable in their work. Social networks provide a roadmap to the dynamics within an organization and the relationships between the players, ultimately helping leaders connect with those around them. Rather than seeing leadership as the attributes and characteristics of the leader, social network research sees leadership in terms of the complexity of the network, where actors exchange information and resources (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006).

Leaders are brokers of human resources, carefully and deliberately building and managing their ties, or their connections to others, to enhance the performance of the people around them and, ultimately, the organization (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006; Brass and Krackhardt, 1999; Mehra, et al., 2006). "If a leader wants to use social network ties to lead others, the leader must be able to perceive the existence, nature and structure of these ties – not just the ties surrounding the leader, but the ties connecting others in the organization both near and far" (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006, p. 424). Good leaders will recognize that every interaction has a purpose and is invariably connected to the other interactions throughout the network. By acknowledging this reality, leaders begin to see how ties with certain people inherently mean they are connected to all the people with whom the original people are linked.

Social Networks and Social Capital

The relationship between social networks and social capital is still not entirely clear. There are a variety of theories postulating the relationship. Some would argue that the additional resources associated with a connection to another only come with a direct link to that individual (Lin, 1999). Others would say access to resources can be

transferred through a link to someone, meaning a direct link is not necessary (Burt, 1992). Regardless of the exact answer, one fact agreed upon by researchers is that ties, the connections between individuals, indeed carry social capital. Understanding social capital specific to leadership in higher education will illuminate information about relationships and the way individuals interact with one another.

These theoretical frameworks provide a relevant structure in which to examine university presidents, the relationships they develop, and how they use those relationships in their leadership.

Research Questions

1. Which strategies have proven most successful for university presidents in building relationships?

2. In what ways do the social networks of university presidents impact their leadership?

Methodology

In a qualitative, phenomenological study, this research examines university presidents within a public, state university system in California. Eight presidents were interviewed. The interviews examined, from a variety of perspectives, how each president's working relationships impact their leadership. Other data were collected and analyzed using document analysis and media analysis.

The lenses through which I am conducting this research include critical pedagogy and a variety of leadership styles such as adaptive leadership, transformational leadership and applied critical leadership. These lenses serve as reference points and will inform the way data are interpreted during the analysis.

Significance of the Study

This research will provide insights about public university presidents and how they lead their respective universities. Whether considering the State budget crisis, the recalibration of the California Master Plan or the future reputation of the university, presidents have significant influence and power in shaping the direction in which their university evolves. Power and influence certainly help university presidents do their jobs, yet the source of that power and influence is relationships. Discovering how these presidents use their relationships to achieve the strategic goals of the university will provide valuable information to those who will one day become university presidents as well as to those who work closely with university presidents.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides insight into the leadership and social networks of eight presidents within a public, state university system. While this particular system is – because of its student demographics, myriad degree programs, various physical campuses and diverse faculty – a microcosm of higher education throughout the nation, this study is not generalizable. It is not intended to make broad statements about all university presidents; rather it will provide, through the eyes of eight presidents, an in-depth, personal, lived account of leading a public institution of higher education.

Another boundary to this study is the ability of the researcher to access the honesty and candor of the participants. University presidents are accustomed to presenting their institution and, by extension, their own performance in a particular light. This dynamic could be a limitation for the data collected.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Public higher education is in crisis. Each day a new headline in the newspaper proclaims how higher education is in trouble. Some articles cite the source of the problem as privatization and competition within the "industry" of public higher education, others highlight state budget cuts, and others yet claim that universities are not evolving fast enough to meet the needs of today's students. Specifically in the State of California, budget cuts to public higher education recently have forced universities and community colleges to endure furloughs, lay off faculty and staff, cut enrollments, and scramble to discover ways of remaining innovative and competitive in a quickly evolving marketplace. Imagine what it takes to be an effective leader in such an environment.

In 1960, the legislature in the State of California voted to implement a specific structure in the state-run system of higher education. Neil Smelser (1993) outlines the history and explains the details of the bill passed to create the Master Plan for Higher Education. The plan organized a three-tiered system which begins with the state's community colleges. As outlined, community colleges were to be the primary point of entry for students interested in higher education. As a result, community colleges today are mandated to maintain "open enrollment," allowing any citizen to apply, be accepted, and enroll in classes. The intention of this mandate was to ensure equal access to higher education for every citizen who showed interest. The second tier of the Master Plan is the California State University (CSU). This system, now comprised of 23 campuses, is charged with providing bachelor's level education to every citizen in California. The

third tier is the University of California (UC), a 10-campus system which focusing primarily on research, therefore making these schools ideal for master's and doctoral level education. Ultimately, the intent behind the Master Plan was to create a well-respected, comprehensive system of higher education with specific tiers that specialize in a particular segment of the mission, and – at the same time – contain the costs associated with providing such education (Smelser, 1993).

This current model of higher education in California, the Master Plan, is not sustainable because of the lack of funding. Some say the Master Plan is dead. Relative to the current economic times and state funding, while many believe California public colleges and universities can simply "wait it out," little hope exists for state funding to be returned to public higher education. In testimony to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan, CSU Chancellor Charles Reed (2009) said, "The Master Plan is not broken – the framework and its core principles are the right ones. What has been lost is the commitment and the will to support higher education . . . funding is critical for the Master Plan to work."

During the same testimony to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan, UC President Mark Yudof, after stating it is not his preference, suggested that the UC is being forced to adopt a privatized model of education in order to sustain the same offerings to students. "We don't want to partially privatize (the UC) by raising fees. And yet that is the direction we seem to be heading" (Yudof, 2009). Some say that during the time of crisis such as this, a perfect opportunity exists for the state to retire from running the educational system so that education can become more entrepreneurial and conform to a business model (Duderstadt, 2000; Gumport, 2000). Others are convinced colleges

and universities will soon feel a renewed support from the general public – either via state funding or some other model of revenue – allowing the institutions to maintain their primary purpose of being the public square, where free-thinkers can openly debate a variety of ideas (Cameron, 1984; Duderstadt, 2000; Giroux, 1997; Gumport, 2000; Smelser, 1993). Regardless of the route, the impending transformation of higher education will require significant leadership.

Special considerations for higher education. Unlike the corporate model, colleges and universities do not have one singular authority, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), leading the organization. Originally, universities were born as a collective body of independent faculty where students chose to study with a professor based on a particular area of interest. In this early model of the university, the faculty would elect a provost, or head faculty, to manage the administrative aspects of the university, while the faculty maintained ultimate control over the learning. As universities have grown and evolved, so has the volume of administrative work. As a result, administrators on university campuses are more plentiful, in part, to allow faculty to maintain their focus on learning and research.

While some things have changed with time, one aspect of the historical university that remains today is the decision-making power of the faculty. Accordingly, while universities and colleges may have a president with certain authority, the faculty senate (or academic senate) also has authority, especially when it comes to academic programs and curricula. This model of governing is referred to as collegial governance or shared governance. To make matters even more complicated, in recent history a board of trustees has been added to the mix; now, three entities are responsible for decision-

making at colleges and universities (Eckel, 2000). In efforts to improve efficiency, higher education has worked to clearly delineate the roles of each entity. Unfortunately, as Eckel (2000) points out, not all decisions fit neatly into the responsibility of one of the three groups. Such dynamics easily lead to disagreement, conflict, and contention in decision-making, often paralyzing already slow-moving bureaucracies.

While there is a significant amount of research on shared governance, particularly from the perspective of the faculty and academic senate, there is lack of research on university presidents and their leadership. As an employee at a public university in California, I am intrigued by ways in which leaders of the institution – specifically presidents – lead. These leaders persuade people toward a certain vision, influence momentum around an initiative, and make decisions. In these processes, I have observed the strength that comes from relationships and the troubles that emerge when decisions appear to be made in isolation. I have watched how building consensus around ideas can work successfully in accomplishing major goals, and I have seen initiatives fail simply because of the way an idea was unveiled. As such, I am particularly interested in learning more about the impact of these relationships at the heart of leading. I am curious about how these relationships function and, most importantly, how leaders use them.

Given the interests outlined above, database searches were conducted in three major areas: higher education, leadership, and social capital. During the process of reviewing, reading, and synthesizing the literature, it was discovered that another concept, social network theory, was closely related to the original interests. Consequently, the topic of social networks was added to this review.

With a context of the current climate in higher education now established, this paper will move on to explain critical pedagogy and demonstrate how this concept is related to leadership. A variety of leadership angles consistent with the principles and values of higher education will be explored. The leadership styles give rise to the importance of relationships, which bridges to an examination of social networks and, then subsequently, to an extensive exploration of the social capital, which is at the core of social networks.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a complex concept to define. It is more a philosophy and a way of interacting with the world, best defined through its practice (Wink, 2005; Giroux, 1997). However, there are some criteria that define critical pedagogy. Wink (2005) initially approaches the definition by separating the two words and defining each independently. Pedagogy, simply put, is the interaction between teaching and learning. The word "critical" does not mean "to critique;" rather it means to dig deeper and see beyond what is known (Wink, 2005). It is suggested that in order to approach the world critically, one must unlearn. Unlearning is to unpack what is known and begin learning and relearning (Wink, 2005). This continual process of learning, unlearning, and relearning is what Wink (2005) calls the great cycle of pedagogy. Therefore, critical pedagogy is to examine and analyze one's experiences while simultaneously questioning systems along with what has been learned in the context of those systems or, in other words, unlearning. Giroux (1997) refers to this process as knowledge production and transmission and suggests that critical pedagogy is to see knowledge production through a politically transformative frame. Education is a powerful experience that shapes one's

life. As such, the process of educating must be critically examined for how the dominate groups in society perpetuate myths and maintain the status quo, thus keeping marginalized groups in an ostracized place (McLaren, 1989).

While critical pedagogy can become overly theoretical, Wink (2005) grounds the theory with one of its most well-known definitions: "to name, reflect critically and act" (p. 22). Applied to leadership, critical pedagogy requires that leaders name the issue, reflect critically on the potential responses or solutions for the issue and then act on the issue (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Consistent with Giroux's (1997) urging that critical pedagogy must be "vitally concerned with the complex ways in which race, class, and gender identities of student and teacher are constructed" (p. xii), Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) propose applied critical leadership takes into account particular educational context, social justice, equity, power differentials, and leadership redistribution. Some might think that social justice has little to do with leadership. Leadership is about making wise, strategic decisions so that an organization is strong and sustainable for the future; how, exactly, does that relate to social justice?

Two studies highlight the direct connection between leadership and social justice. These studies find that the longevity of an organization correlates with a leader's choice to address issues of social justice. However, as the articles conclude, the decision to consider and address issues of social justice is ultimately the choice of the leader.

The first study was a case study of an urban middle school with a predominately African American student population. The purpose of the study was to observe the actions and relationships among teachers and administrators that contribute to either an environment of failure or success for the students (Beachum, Dentith, McCray & Boyle,

2008). The second study, conducted by Macalpine and Marsh (2005), considered the responses of workshop participants during an extended period of meetings to help them gain a better understanding of the construction of "whiteness" in organizations. Both studies suggest that leaders have a choice, they can stay silent about issues regarding social justice and maintain the status quo or they can speak up, name the issue, and use their authority in a productive and positive way to work for change (Beachum, et al., 2008; Macalpine & Marsh, 2005).

Critical pedagogy tends to be very personal. Most educators who practice critical pedagogy can identify the time when they realized how the concept manifested itself in their respective lives. I began to understand critical pedagogy during a semester abroad in the Dominican Republic. As a White, English-speaking man from the United States placed in a context of Afro-Caribbean people who speak Spanish, I eventually realized that much of the knowledge I had acquired throughout my life was dissonant with my experiences abroad. I chose to engage in a process of unlearning in order to realign my knowledge with my experiences. While this process may sound easy on paper, it was a foreign concept and extraordinarily challenging. Not only had I never experienced the process of unlearning and relearning, I had not previously witnessed anyone else engage in such a process. In the end, critical pedagogy becomes a way of being. As with anything, practice sharpens the skills. While I have not perfected my practice of critical pedagogy, I cannot imagine engaging the world in any other way. This is a common outcome for practitioners of critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy and Leadership

Imagine the principles of critical pedagogy – looking beyond what is commonly known, critically questioning existing paradigms, and choosing to unlearn and relearn – applied to leadership. Leaders are regularly called upon to identify, or name, the challenges an organization is facing. Groups look to their leaders to set a vision and reflect on whether proposed solutions support that vision. Leaders are expected to produce results through action.

Viewed in this way, it becomes apparent that general leadership principles compliment those of critical pedagogy. Both philosophies, when practiced, can result in a particular mind-set or way of thinking. Those who live out these philosophies often internalize the principles associated with the concepts in such a way that they become a part of their being. As with leadership, critical pedagogy is contextual. There is no formula to arrive at the outcome. For this reason, Giroux (1997) refuses to offer teachers a blueprint for critical pedagogy and instead focuses on the process so that the philosophy can be adapted to any context and practiced accordingly. Bass (1985), an expert in transformational leadership research, also would say there is no formula for transformational leadership. These authors would describe leadership as a process, which may look different from case to case, of developing the people, which ultimately enhances the organization, with whom the leader is working. Most important, while there will be similar characteristics of the leadership, this process will manifest differently from case to case (Bass, Avolio & Jung, 1999). Heifitz (1994) similarly describes adaptive leadership by explaining there is no series of steps to follow, rather principles

preserve the spirit of the theory which, when put into practice, may look quite different. Ultimately, both leadership and critical pedagogy are processes.

By outlining the similarities of leadership and critical pedagogy, it is evident that the two theories are complementary and, if integrated into a single theory, would support one another. When theories of leadership are combined with critical pedagogy, the basis for applied critical leadership is formed.

Applied critical leadership. In groundbreaking literature, Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) explain the meaning of what they call applied critical leadership (ACL). "We are in an educational crisis and thus need to respond appropriately; reconsidering everything we think we know, pushing forward and expanding our knowledge to consider new ways of thinking about old ideas." In education, to address issues of social justice is to wrestle with power, access, and academic achievement. One of the hallmarks of applied critical leadership is choosing change, as opposed to choosing to change (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). *Choosing change* means to elect to work for change on a societal level because the issues are rooted in institutions. In contrast, *choosing to change* means that individuals conform or assimilate to match the majority because it is either the path of least resistance or because they are altogether unaware that issues even exist.

Naming a theory is one step; it is yet another to understand that theory in practice. However, ACL is unique because it is defined by action. One cannot espouse to be a critical leader simply by reciting the theory; behavior must follow accordingly. Three behaviors indicative of ACL are identified by Santamaría and Santamaría (2012): (1) recognize and fully understand critical issues, (2) convince others that issues are in fact

issues (a significant challenge given blind spots); and (3) create and sustain a safe space for conversations, reflections, and actions to occur (p. 7). While these behaviors are useful in practicing critical leadership, to best understand the theory it is helpful to explore its roots. Critical leadership is a leadership approach born from the premise of critical pedagogy. Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between critical pedagogy and applied critical leadership, which is then juxtaposed with the two well-known leadership practices explained later. This figure further describes my own theoretical epistemological underpinnings informing the literature review.
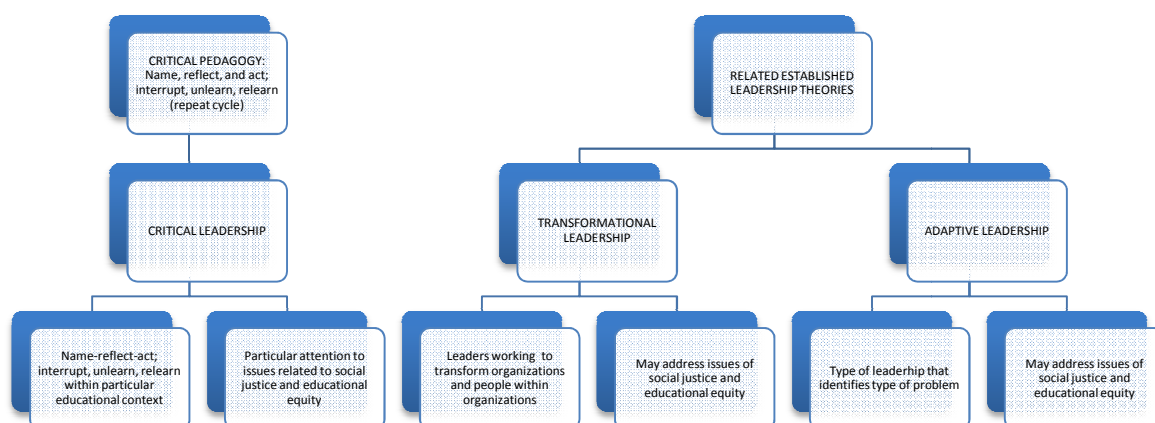
Figure 1. Epistemology

Transformational leadership. Within the last decade, transformational leadership has become synonymous with good leadership. While it can be difficult to extract a simple definition from the vast amount of literature on transformational

leadership, readers certainly will encounter the essence of this leadership style from the research. For this reason, to best understand transformational leadership it is often compared to transactional leadership. Transactional leadership, like a purchase at a store, necessitates an exchange. At the store, the exchange is money for a product. In transactional leadership, the exchange is a problem for a fix. An employee brings the leader a problem in exchange for the leader's brilliant solution to that problem. Transformational leadership, similar to its name, involves transformation, yet it is less about transforming circumstances or problems. Transformational leadership, at the core, is about people being transformed by working together in particular ways which, in turn, transforms organizations (Bass, 2003).

The concept of transformational leadership was borne out of the words of James McGregor Burns (1978). Burns published work on political leaders and made a distinction between ordinary (transactional) leaders and extraordinary, adaptive (transformational) leaders. Bernard Bass, who has written the seminal work on transformational leadership, built upon Burns' work to enhance the understanding of the two types of leadership. Ultimately, Bass (1985) named these ordinary leaders as transactional and the extraordinary as transformational. However, Bass was concerned that Burns set transactional and transformational as opposite ends and argued that transformational leadership enhances the effects of transactional leadership and that all leaders display both styles (Bryant, 2003). Indeed, in a study of military leadership, Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson (2003) concluded that both active transactional and transformational leadership are required to be successful in a performance context.

Because transactional leadership is regularly practiced and seems rather straightforward, Bass (1985) suggested four components of transformational leadership which were reexamined and enhanced as a result of a study by Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999). The first of these components is *idealized influence*. A transformational leader shares risks with followers and is consistent in conduct with regard to ethics, principles, and values. In return, followers identify with their leaders and want to emulate them. The second component is *inspirational motivation*. Transformational leaders behave in a way that motivates those around them by making meaning and providing challenge in their work. The leader helps followers forecast future states and encourages them to envision their role in that future state, which followers can then do for themselves. *Intellectual stimulation* is the third component. Followers are included in developing creative solutions to problems. Transformational leaders encourage innovation by questioning assumptions and challenging old ways, which results in followers being more engaged and invested. The last component is *individualized consideration*. A transformational leader cares about the growth of each follower and will create new learning opportunities specific to the follower's individual needs.

These four components help clarify the essence of transformational leadership. "Whereas transactional leaders manage organizations by satisfying followers' self-interest, transformational leaders inspire and stimulate followers to set aside those interests (to some degree), replacing them with the collective or team purpose (Hay, 2003).

Adaptive leadership. Based on its name, one might initially think adaptive leadership describes a style of leadership in which leaders adapt to a variety of situations.

After all, transformational leadership refers to leaders who work to transform organizations and the people within those organizations (Bass, 2003). However, adaptive leadership has little to do with the adjective describing the ability to adjust to situational circumstances. Adaptive leadership refers to the type of problem and the particular kind of leadership for which it calls.

Ronald Heifitz (1994) identifies two types of challenges in today's workplace and, more generally, in the world: technical challenges and adaptive challenges. Technical problems are those hiccups which have a routine response (Heifitz, 1994). If the toilet is leaking, a plumber is called to fix it. If a form does not account for certain information, administrative staff revise the form. These examples require leadership. Someone needs to identify the problem correctly and then respond with the appropriate corrective action. Nonetheless, with basic training technical challenges are met with a known, often predetermined solution (Heifitz, 1994). Adaptive challenges are the opposite because they do not have a known solution. Adaptive challenges, by their nature, have not been encountered before and, generally, require creativity and patience to discover and learn solutions (Heifitz, 1994). One example of an adaptive challenge is a once-successful academic program in a college that continues to face declining enrollment. Another example could be the production costs of a product that has steadily been increasing during the past six months. These examples display the characteristics of adaptive challenges because they are complex, with many contributing factors, and have no prescribed common solution. Leaders can be tempted to "fix the problem" and approach all challenges as technical. According to Heifitz (1994), leaders must first identify whether the presenting problem is a technical or adaptive challenge. Once this

information is determined, then the leader can proceed with an appropriate course of action.

Heifitz and Laurie (2004) warn not to accept the notion that leaders have all the answers. Leaders can be lured by followers' desire to have solutions. This is a trap. Leaders cannot possibly have the right answer every time and will inevitably end up disappointing those around them. As a new approach, adaptive leadership involves others in the discovery of the solution, so the process of problem-solving shifts from knowledge-based to a learning strategy (Heifitz & Laurie, 2004).

Adaptive leadership is an organic process, analogous to a plant growing. The leader's role is to create an environment in which the plant can flourish and grow safely. Heifitz (1994) is honest about the frustrations with the process and explains that adaptive change often happens as a result of sustained periods of disequilibrium. Despite times of disequilibrium, the benefits of adaptive leadership are worth it. "Since adaptive leadership focuses on process, not person, this model employs the knowledge of all who have a vested interest in moving the organization to a higher level" (Randall & Coakley, 2007, p. 327). An added benefit of this process is that the outcome is generally a positive change that is non-threatening to those creating or implementing the change (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

This consultative style of leadership is complimentary to the nature of decision-making in higher education. Given the challenges faced by the three entities (administration, faculty, and board of trustees), adaptive leadership is a great fit to ensure that voices are heard and the expertise that each stakeholder brings to the table is relied upon.

Leadership in Higher Education

Many of the leadership principles already shared are transferrable to an institution of public higher education. However, the organizational culture of academia – for example, shared governance – is certainly distinct, and as a result calls for unique leaders. "Academic institutions vitally need leaders who are able to disengage their egos, pride and prerogatives from the office itself and instead think of themselves as designers who create ownership on the part of the organizations constituents" (Tierney, 1999, p. 74).

Because of the distinctive nature of higher education, there is a delicate balance of meeting the needs of incoming students while simultaneously preparing them for a world that also has particular expectations. One might argue that businesses have a similar struggle – to meet the needs of their employees so that they can most efficiently meet the expectations of their customers. However, a major difference is that higher education is not simply providing a product or a service to the public. Higher education is developing human beings to be critical thinkers who can problem-solve and innovate. The anticipated outcome of higher education is much different than that of a business. In higher education, how are leaders to find the balance between what Tierney (1999) calls organizational attention deficit disorder, critiquing colleges and universities for having a short attention span and the inability to stay focused on values and principles of higher education, and the insistent cries from Duderstadt (2000) that colleges and universities must become nimble and adapt more quickly if they are to survive in a future comprised of rapidly evolving, dynamic students and constantly changing expectations?

Adrianna Kezar (2001), using diversity initiatives as a case for leadership in higher education, found that the trajectory of presidential leadership research suggests the

need for a more expansive understanding of the leadership strategies associated with leading campus-wide diversity efforts. These include strategies that focus on relationship-building, meaning making, and interpretation, as well as power and influence. To this end, Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin and Quaye (2008) offer the suggestion of applying the multi-lens conceptual framework developed by Bolman and Deal (1991).

The multi-lens conceptual framework involves four frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. Leaders who rely on the structural frame tend to implement policies, focus on mission and vision, and revert to organizational structures to solve leadership challenges. Those who focus on a human resources frame see people as the core of the organization and tend to be relational in their style and in their approach to addressing issues. The political frame includes leaders who are strategic, focus on power dynamics, develop agendas, mediate conflict between interest groups, and address issues through coalition building. Leaders who rely on the symbolic frame understand that organizations are systems of shared meaning, so their work focuses on rituals, traditions, ceremonies, and storytelling to inspire and create better organizational functioning. In their work, Kezar, et al. (2008) concurred with Bolman and Deal (1991) that the most successful work accomplished by university presidents happened when they focused not on just one frame, but shifted among multiple frames to best adapt to the context.

In studies about shared governance, Middlehurst and Elton (1992) and Slaughter (1993) demonstrated that effective governance is not solely about policy or structure, but rather relationships and trust. Leadership is not synonymous with procedure; however, successful leadership is determinant on the quality of established relationships and,

perhaps simultaneously, trust. Kezar (2004) argues that people – and not policies or structures – are the "heart of an organization" (p. 39). Policies, procedures, and structures must often be altered. Times change, the needs of students change, and the pressures surrounding decision-making change. Therefore, if the success of a college or university is dependent on historically rigid and static structures and the ability of those structures to keep changing, the higher education environment will not prevail. However, if the focus is on the members of the organization and not the rules of the organization, the organization will be more nimble and, therefore, successful when weathering the storms of change. Creating structure may seem more efficient, cleaner, and arguably offer more stability for future problems that may arise; however, establishing relationships proves to be more effective. While developing relationships and trust can be a longer, more arduous process, the transformational power of this energy investment outweighs the transactional results of structural concentration.

Leadership and relationships. Applied critical leadership, as an extension of critical pedagogy, along with transformational leadership and adaptive leadership, all rely on relationships. The leadership approaches place a high value on people and share a respect for the contributions of those people. However, the involvement of relationships is not intended to imply an easy-going, touchy-feely sentiment. Practicing leadership, whether adaptive, transformational or applied critical, means there will be a diversity of voices and not all will agree. From time to time, when everyone is in agreement, it is the leader's job to be a dissenting voice to challenge the status quo. Individuals who speak up to disrupt the oppressive nature of the status quo may be practicing applied critical leadership. Because of the nature of "critical" work, which challenges belief systems and

wrestles with new paradigms, rapport and trust between people become incredibly important. Thus, it is essential to consider the complexities of human interaction. One way to develop a structure for these interactions and begin understanding them better is using social network theory. Figure 2 below illustrates ways in which relational leadership in higher education promotes social network theory and therefore social capital.

SOCIAL CAPITAL
The Heart of
Social Capital

Deconstructing
Relationships

Power and Social
Capitals

Drawbacks of
Social Capital

SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY

Social Networks
and Leadership

Social Networks
and Social Capital

LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION
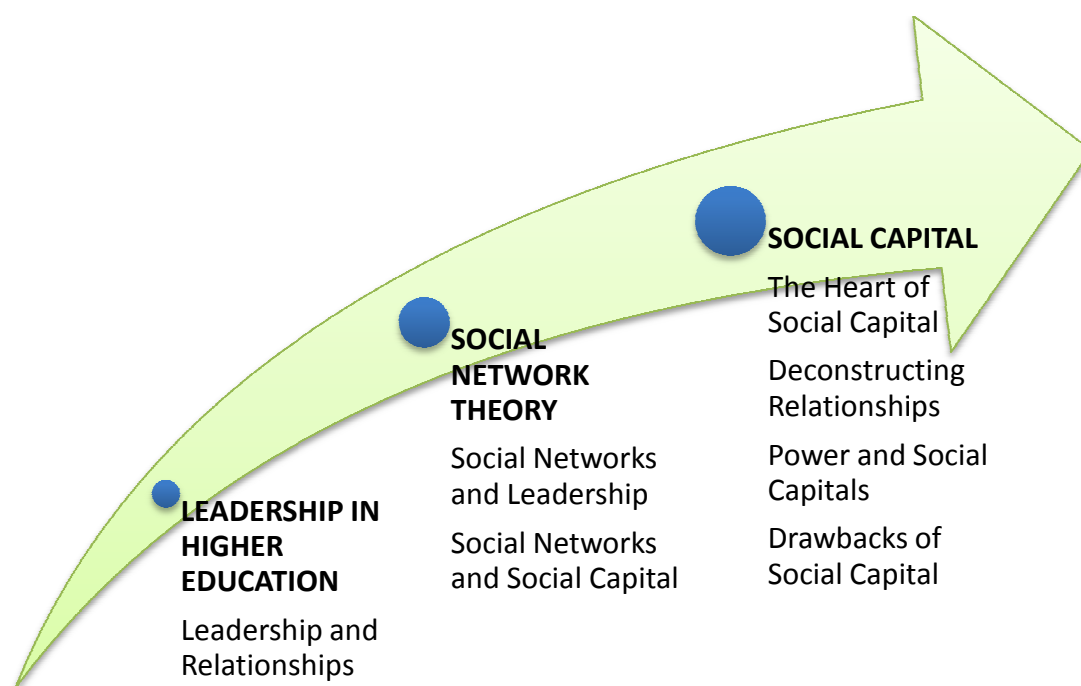
Leadership and
Relationships

Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

Social Network Theory

Relationships are the basic building block of social networks (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999; Bono & Anderson, 2005; Lin, 1999). A social network is a set of people and a set of connections between those people representing interpersonal

relationships (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999; Burt, 1992; Mehra, Dixon, Brass & Robertson, 2006).

Social networks and leadership. Social networks can provide a roadmap to the dynamics within an organization and for the relationships between the players, which can be valuable information for leaders. Rather than seeing leadership as the attributes and characteristics of the leader, social network research sees leadership in terms of the complexity of the network, where actors exchange information and resources (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006).

Cohesion, or how closely tied individuals are, is the subject of two studies that arrived at the same conclusion. One study examined a special subunit at an Italian computer manufacturing company (Gargiulo & Benassi, 2000), and the second analyzed students during the Organization Game (developed specifically for the study) in which the students simulated working in subunits within an organization and were assigned projects (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988). The conclusion for both studies suggested that the more cohesive a subunit's network, the less likely those individuals are to be creative or innovative, resulting from a lack of collaborative relationships with other units or different organizations (Gargiulo & Benassi, 2000; Krackhardt & Stern, 1988). This is powerful information for leaders as they work maximize the potential of the organization.

Leaders are brokers of human resources, carefully and deliberately building and managing their ties to enhance the performance of the people around them and the organization (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006; Brass & Krackhardt, 1999; Mehra, et.al., 2006). "If a leader wants to use social network ties to lead others, the leader must be able to perceive the existence, nature and structure of these ties – not just the ties surrounding the

leader, but the ties connecting others in the organization both near and far" (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006, p. 424). Good leaders will recognize that every interaction has a purpose and is invariably connected to the other interactions throughout the network. By acknowledging this reality, leaders begin to see how ties with certain people inherently mean they are connected to all the people with whom the original people are linked. Leaders can use this information to be more purposeful and intentional about the interactions they have and with whom.

Social networks and social capital. Learning more about interactions themselves is to explore the idea of social capital. The exact nature of the connection between social networks and social capital is still debated, however there are two theories regarding the link.

One theory, suggests that the location of individuals in the network is the key to determining social capital (Burt, 1992). For example, A is connected to B, C, and D, but not connected to X, Y, or Z. If A has social capital, Burt's theory would suggest that B, C, and D would have social capital simply because of their location in the network (connected to A). However, X, Y, and Z, because of their location (not connected to A), would not have social capital. Following this network location idea, social network connections, or ties, constitute social capital (Burt, 1992).

Lin (1999) introduces the concept of embedded resources, explaining that individuals who interact with one another gain access to each others' embedded resources, which constitutes social capital. "If it is assumed that social capital attempts to capture valued resources in social relations, network locations should facilitate, but not necessarily determine, access to better embedded resources" (Lin, 1999, p. 36).

While the exact correlation between social networks and social capital is debated, the existence of a link between the two is undeniable. There is merit in exploring the interactions between members of a network, specifically the exchange that takes place between people as they discuss ideas, offer support and accomplish tasks for one another. One way to quantify this intangible exchange is through social capital.

Social Capital

At first glance, social capital seems like a simple concept. Yet, authors who study social capital have a difficult time agreeing on the same definition. Other types of capital, like economic and human, are defined using a transaction model, where a product is exchanged for currency. Using the same model, one might think social capital is a product that could be exchanged for another product. However, a major difference making this parallel problematic is that the products in economic and human capital are tangible, whereas the product with social capital is intangible. The use of intangible products in the transaction model means social capital has come to be known as a favor in return for another favor.

In a seminal piece of literature on the topic, Coleman (1988) argues social capital is defined by its function. He says social capital is not one entity, but many entities with "two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure" (p. 98). With this definition, he elevates the importance of the social structure, which has implications for the common understanding of social capital. This definition infers that social capital requires a specific environment or a condition in order to exist. Another author, who studied disciplinary data at a middle school, referred to social

capital as "individual and group capacity to negotiate social borders and institutional barriers" (Arriaza, 2003, p. 72). In this explanation, the focus of social capital is its ability to bridge divides between individuals and groups. Consistent with the theme of bridging and connecting, Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2008) describe social capital as "formal and informal networks and relationships within and beyond the institution" (p. 366). This definition highlights the importance of connections within the context of leading an institution of higher education. While there is not one specific definition widely accepted, Portes (1998) acknowledges that the literature broadly agrees that "social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (p. 6).

These definitions only begin to show the complexity of social capital. Because it is situated in a social structure, social capital will always be a moving target. In an effort to better understand the nature of social capital, I will deconstruct the concept by considering what the literature says about the ingredients that go into a recipe for social capital.

The heart of social capital. At the heart of social capital is the relationship. Social capital can only exist within the structure of relations between actors and among actors (Coleman, 1988). This salient, and seemingly obvious, point is easy to forget and is critical to the analysis of social capital. If we were to consider a senior level administrator responsible for building partnerships at a small, public university in California, we would see that, by herself, the administrator cannot create or build social capital. She must develop a relationship with community partners by interacting, networking, and developing a rapport with them. In this example, to reiterate Coleman's

point, without the relationship as a container for the capital, she would be left with nothing.

This same dynamic can be extended to relationships between organizations. In reference to Coleman's (1988) definition of social capital, he uses the term "actor," which he later explains can be used to refer to "corporate actors," who, along with individual actors, also develop and maintain social capital. While it is generally an individual acting on behalf of an organization who helps to build social capital, we have seen examples of the social capital maintained even after someone leaves an organization. For example, Steven Spielberg founded and managed the motion picture animation company, Dreamworks, for years. When he started the organization, he brought with him the social capital he had developed in the motion picture industry. That social capital was used to do business and create more social capital on behalf of Dreamworks. Now that Spielberg no longer works for Dreamworks, the social capital still exists because the capital resides between the organizations, not the individuals.

Deconstructing relationships. A relationship can be deconstructed into many components. Two components of a relationship that were addressed in the literature are trust and identity. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) explore a variety of definitions for trust and determine that the common theme among them is vulnerability. The connection between trust and social capital becomes clear with the hints of vulnerability that are also seen in the process of creating social capital. The other lesson the authors derive from their conceptual and empirical analysis of trust is ". . . it appears that trust requires a direct connection between actors: Indirect influence of trust is tenuous at best" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, p. 349). For trust to be present and provide the

opportunity for a relationship, there must be a direct connection between the actors. Applying this finding in the context of social capital, the direct connection could be between individual actors or corporate actors.

While dependent upon trust, relationships are also heavily influenced by the identities of those involved. Whether based in race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, political party, or geography, identity serves as a lens through which an individual sees the world.

This lens not only has the ability to change one's perception, it also can change the way a person interacts with others. Arriaza (2003) considered how a teacher's lens can impact a student's learning in the classroom. During his study, the author examined discipline records and observed the behavior associated with discipline from both teachers and students. His conclusions, specific to students of color, were that teachers reproduced the status quo by pushing the students into subordinate roles. He went on to say that "children of color may fail to build social capital that allows them to engage the larger social and economic structures preventing them from increasing their life chances" (p. 92). This study shows that identity will determine the types of relationships children form as well as the capital developed through those relationships.

Because a relationship is a prerequisite for social capital and identity has an impact on the types of relationships individuals form, identity must play some role in social capital. There are still those who suggest identity is irrelevant in relationships. In one experiment, 341 undergraduate students reacted to hypothetical leadership scenarios on paper (Romero, 2005). Participants were measured for job readiness to control for employability and were assessed for how strongly they identified with a particular

ethnicity. The results show that, "Hispanic ethnicity does not seem to have a negative effect on perceived satisfaction with supervision or perceived effectiveness" (Romero, 2005, p. 38). These results might lead one to believe that identity is irrelevant when it comes to how one is perceived.

In contrast, Lee, Pillutla, and Law (2000), who studied the effects of power-distance and gender on perceptions of injustice, concluded that individual differences and cultural values are important to consider in examining individuals' reactions. Another study done by Primeaux, Karri and Caldwell (2003) concludes that its contribution to research was to "highlight the importance of recognizing the role of individual beliefs, cultural attributes and demographic characteristics in individual perceptions of justice" (p. 196). The individual differences and beliefs, as well as the cultural values and demographic characteristics referenced in the articles, are all components of identity. In other words, it is necessary to acknowledge identity because it colors the lenses through which one sees anything, specifically, in these cases, perceptions of justice.

Just as identity can bring barriers to building social capital, identity also can be used to contribute to its development. In one study, Johnson (2002) examines how the experiences of 6 White teachers contributed to their understanding of race and how those views might influence their teaching. After analyzing narrative interviews, the author identified three themes, one of which is relevant to this topic. Perceived marginalization, the third theme identified from the research, refers to the empathy these teachers developed for non-Whites because of their own experiences on the fringe (Johnson, 2002). Using one's identity to find a connection with another and empathize is one

example of how to develop a relationship, which is necessary in the process of creating social capital.

One study examined the interactions of individuals within a rural community to examine the nature of the changes that occur in those relationships (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). The authors found that social capital is simultaneously used and built through the exchange of knowledge resources and identity resources (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). Falk and Kilpatrick (2000), based on their findings, also suggest that "whether or not social capital is built depends both on the quality and quantity of interactions" (p. 101). This is a significant contribution to the understanding of how social capital is developed.

Another suggestion for using identity to build social capital comes from an article written by Haslam, Platow, Turner, Reynolds, McGarty, Oakes, Johnson, Ryan, and Veenstra (2001) in which they analyzed the reactions of college students to a "leader." They concluded that followers must believe that leaders are "doing it for us," which can be signaled in a variety of ways. Ultimately, the authors suggest, the success of "leadership – as judged by followers – hinges upon an ability to turn 'me' and 'you' into 'us' by defining a social project which gives that sense of 'us-ness' meaning and purpose" (Haslam et al., 2001, p. 194). This sense of building team is how one can use identity to connect and bond with another, which can eventually lead to social capital.

Identity and trust are delicate components of social capital. Used correctly, they can build social capital. Used incorrectly, they can, at the least, prevent social capital from forming and, at worst, destroy any existing capital. In an effort to work for social justice and equity, it is important to ask how one works to ensure identity does not hinder the possibilities of creating social capital. Leaders need to ask what systems must be

changed so that every identity – not regardless of, but out of respect for – is granted equal access to build and develop social capital.

Power and social capital. Identity and trust are critical elements for relationships. Relationships are necessary for social capital. Another way to think about social capital is that it bestows power on those involved in the relationship. "Power is defined as the capacity to act possessed by social agents in virtue of the enduring relations in which they participate" (Kogan, 2005, p. 12). Kogan (2005) goes on to explain that power can be gained with knowledge, but he concludes that the type of knowledge is a determining factor in the credibility of the power gained. For example, power gained through a "hard" science has more credibility and is farther-reaching than power gained through "social robustness" or a softer form of knowledge.

Power is still acquired with both types of knowledge, but the credibility and influence of the power is different. Since social capital bestows power on those in a relationship and there are different degrees of power, thinking about Kogan's conclusion in terms of social capital causes one to wonder if there are various types of social capital. Are some types of social capital more stable, more credible, or longer-lasting than others? Or, is social capital simply social capital, without variations or gradation?

While it is important to consider the existence of varying degrees of social capital, such exploration points to a larger question regarding the relationship between power and social capital. If, as discussed earlier, a relationship is a container for social capital, what is the analogy for power? Is social capital the container for power? Is power the container for social capital? Is social capital the same as power, just appearing in different forms, like ice and steam are to water?

The drawbacks of social capital. Social capital involves poignant issues, like relationships, trust, identity, and power, making it tempting to only consider the benefits and positive attributes of social capital. However, good researchers will explain that any topic must be analyzed from all angles and have its flaws exposed. Then, and only then, the literature will be able to accurately address the phenomena around a topic. This role was fulfilled by Alejandro Portes (1998) who specifically writes about the negative consequences of social capital. He seems to be motivated by a belief that social capital would not be completely valued by the academic community unless equal attention was given to both the positive and negative aspects of the topic.

Portes (1998) names the negative consequences of social capital: "exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms and downward leveling norms" (p. 15). "Exclusion of outsiders" refers to social capital creating an insular group of individuals who belong, making it difficult or impossible for others to break into the group. Once individuals are part of the group that has social capital, they lean on one another regularly. This reliance becoming burdensome on those in the group is the explanation for "excess claims on the group members." "Restrictions on individual freedom" describes the result of strong norms being developed within a network where social capital is strong which can drive members to conform, thus reducing autonomy and privacy. Last, "downward leveling norms" refers to the experience of one crab trying to escape the bucket full of crabs. As soon as the crab gets to the top and almost over the edge, the other crabs pull it back down into the bucket. An expectation can be created within a group's membership that one behaves (or does not behave) in a certain way or accomplishes (or does not accomplish) certain things. These

norms actually can keep a community, which has social capital among itself, from growing or evolving.

The most critical ingredient for social capital is a relationship. Without it, social capital would not exist. Within a relationship are the factors of trust and identity, which influence social capital, how the capital gets used, and whether it is used justly. Because the majority of the literature highlights the benefits of social capital, an opposing perspective was considered to balance the understanding of social capital. The relationship between power and social capital is still uncertain and specific questions were posed about the inferences that could be made from the research.

Summary

Social capital is a theory full of intricacies. Identity, trust, and power each play an important part in relationships, which are at the heart of social capital. Social capital is a way of discussing the embedded resources that individuals can access from one another through a relationship (Lin, 1999). The exchanges of these embedded resources become interactions. Social networks capture the structure of social interactions (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999; Burt, 1992; Mehra, Dixon, Brass & Robertson, 2006). Social networks and social capital are, at the least, connected in this way.

Applied critical leadership (ACL) involves using social capital to ask challenging questions and create an environment where honest conversations can be had. Rooted in critical pedagogy, ACL seeks to name issues, reflect critically on issues and then act on those issues (Wink, 2005; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Principles such as correctly identifying and naming the root of the problem, involving others in decision-making, and

creating a safe environment for honest conversations, demonstrate how ACL is related to adaptive leadership.

Adaptive leadership refers to the leadership required to address adaptive challenges. Distinguished by Heifetz (1994), adaptive challenges have not been previously encountered and, generally, require creativity and patience to discover and learn the solutions, whereas technical challenges are routine problems that have prescribed solutions. Adaptive leadership involves creating a space in which leaders can mobilize those involved to discover the solution. Adaptive leadership and ACL are good matches for higher education. Both encourage collaborative decision-making and rely heavily upon critical thinking, attributes that are highly valued in the context of colleges and universities.

Public higher education is at a crossroads. The current funding model from state government is not sustainable. The organizational model is archaic and carries infrastructure built when independent universities were isolated from one another. Now, students, faculty, staff, and society expect these same universities to operate as networks. This is one example of the types of adaptive challenges that exist in public higher education. There is a need for strong, effective leadership to transform institutions of public higher education so that they can serve the current students and be prepared to welcome students of future generations.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I remember being fascinated with interviews since I was in high school, specifically those done by news reporters. I was in awe of the magic that happened when just the right question was asked and successfully uncovered a deeply profound and meaningful answer. I was, and still am, intrigued when the answers are related to a personal story because of the powerful nature of hearing one's lived experience. It is through these answers that we, as a society, share wisdom, wrestle with our values, and create traditions.

Just as a news reporter uses interviews to reveal valuable information about current events, researchers use interviews to discover valuable information about their research questions. Typically, based on style and the nature of the content, a researcher selects a specific method used in gathering data. For this dissertation, a phenomenological methodology will help examine the ways in which the relationships of university presidents influence their leadership practice.

This chapter will identify the perspective from which the author is writing. Then, it will go on to explain the importance of using qualitative research for this study and provide more specific detail about phenomenology. The design of the study is outlined, including the selection of participants, as well as how the data will be collected and analyzed. Finally, the issue of positionality will be addressed.

Epistemology / Perspective

The information gathered will be viewed through two lenses. One lens is that of critical pedagogy. This author assumes that leaders want their organizations to evolve.

In that case, challenging the status quo and reflecting upon habitual behaviors is required. Critical pedagogy, a frame for viewing schooling and education, is preoccupied with the objectives and outcomes of education. Critical pedagogy demands that educational leaders "reconstruct what it means to 'be schooled' by committing to forms of learning and action undertaken in solidarity with subordinated and marginalized groups" (McLaren, 1989, p. 162). McLaren (1989) draws a parallel between critical pedagogy and the Hebrew word "tikkun" which, loosely translated, means to heal, repair, and transform, arguing that challenging the status quo of schooling can ultimately help to repair the ills of the world. While McLaren (1989) focuses his definitions on the essence of critical pedagogy, Wink (2005) is more practical in explaining the theory. Wink (2005) believes critical pedagogy in action follows this process: name the issues, critically reflect on them, and then take action.

In addition, this author assumes that every organization is doing something well. Therefore, another lens through which information will be considered is that of appreciative inquiry. Leaders must begin to recognize that not everything in their organization is broken. Accepting this premise means that leaders can begin to acknowledge the good things happening in their organization and build on them. Beneficial side effects from this appreciative approach include enhanced morale among staff and increased motivation (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006). Both critical pedagogy and appreciative inquiry will inform the analysis of information collected in this study.

Qualitative Research

Very little is known about university presidents, and even less is known about how their work relationships influence their leadership. Qualitative research is ideal for studying university presidents and their leadership because "in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2008, p 213).

Qualitative research focuses on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p 10). This allows the researcher to gather data and learn about the participants in an honest and realistic way. Qualitative research allows the researcher to learn the essence of one's experience. When studying university presidents who work in extraordinarily confidential, fast-paced, high-pressure, and ultra-politicized settings, one must be sensitive to the reality that their experiences are private and sometimes inaccessible. A qualitative approach provides the opportunity to discover a genuine account of a university president's experiences. Yet, along with this opportunity there are challenges. University presidents are accustomed to revealing information only when they are ready, regularly shielding outsiders from their true sentiments with polished talking points and carefully constructed strategy. If that facade is to be penetrated in an effort to reveal a university president's genuine experiences, qualitative research is best suited for such a task because it is focused on locating the meaning in one's life (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is examining lived experiences of the same concept or phenomenon, as seen through the participants' perspective (Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989; van Manen, 1990;). van Manen (2001) explains

that "phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (p. 9). This approach complements and clarifies qualitative research in that it focuses on describing a particularity rather than explaining or analyzing. "Descriptions retain, as close as possible, the original texture of things, their phenomenal qualities and material properties" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58). For these reasons, phenomenology will be helpful in the aim to better understand the leadership of university presidents as it relates to their social networks.

The broad question phenomenologists want answered is "What is the meaning of one's lived experience?" The only place to find the answer is the person who lived the experience. The extent to which university presidents rely on their relationships to lead their respective institutions is a phenomenon. To discover the intricacies of this dynamic, it is necessary to learn how these presidents make meaning of their leadership experiences. Therefore, using a phenomenological approach, this study will uncover the meaning of those leadership experiences and examine the role of social networks, more specifically, relationships in those experiences.

Research Design

The design of this study was built around answering these research questions:

1. Which strategies have proven most successful for university presidents in building relationships?

2. In what ways do the social networks of university presidents impact their leadership?

To best answer these questions, the study was designed to account for a variety of factors. The next section will provide insights about the context of the study, who participated, how the data was collected, and how the data was analyzed.

Context of the study. This study was conducted specifically within a large, public, state university system in California. Because of the system's size and diversity, the system is a microcosm of public universities around the country, making it an ideal environment in which to study university presidents. Eight presidents in particular were selected for interviews.

Participants. Initially, snowball sampling was considered as a possible approach for identifying participants for this study. Snowball sampling involves asking existing participants to identify others to become part of the sample, usually by forwarding a survey or asking someone to attend a focus group (Creswell, 2008). However, given the caliber of presidents and the additional levels of organization and professional acumen required to work with these elite individuals, snowball sampling seemed rather clumsy, tenuous, and unpredictable. Therefore, this study utilized an adaptation of snowball sampling referred to in this study as "sponsorship sampling." Similar to snowball sampling in that it relies on recommendations from an existing participant to find other participants, sponsorship sampling is borne out of the literature relevant to interviewing high-level leaders. When trying to conduct interviews with elite individuals, in this case public officials, it is recommended to find a "sponsor" who is a part of the exclusive group to be interviewed. Marshall and Rossman suggest, especially when the study involves high-level leaders, it is common to rely "on sponsorship, recommendations, and introductions for assistance in making appointments with elite individuals" (1995, p. 83).

In this case, one president, who agreed to participate in the study, also offered to provide assistance in gaining access to other university presidents within the system. Additionally, because this participant understood the objectives of the study, the individual was helpful in identifying participants.

As with any sampling method, sponsorship sampling has benefits and drawbacks. One of the obvious benefits to sponsorship sampling is the access that one would not normally achieve. At the end of the interviews, upon the researcher thanking participants for their time, three presidents in particular admitted they never accept request for these types of interviews and the only reason they granted permission for this interview was because the sponsor had requested it. One of the major drawbacks of the sponsorship sampling method is the bias injected from the sponsor. Not only does the sponsor have a lens through which that individual sees the world, (which influences who they recommend), that bias is relatively unknown and there is little chance of counteracting that bias. Yet, this dynamic also exists in snowball sampling and can even be compounded by the biases of multiple recommenders being introduced. Ultimately, as with many sampling methods, the benefits overshadow the drawbacks, and the access to an elite group of individuals provides an opportunity that is not negated by the drawback of sponsor bias.

Data collection. Data was collected from one-on-one interviews, document analysis, and media analysis. With the understanding that gathering information from university presidents is delicate at best, the type of interview was a critical choice in the success of the study. Phenomenological interviews were used to uncover "the essence, the invariant structure, and the meaning of one's experience" (Merriam, 2002, p. 93).

Presidents are an elite group of professionals who can provide confidential information as a result of their position and authority within the institution (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This, combined with the phenomenological nature of this study, makes elite interviews ideal.

Another way of collecting data for this study was by researching information through a method called document analysis; a combination of document analysis and media analysis was used. This entailed selecting official and popular culture documentation relevant to both the universities and the presidents being studied. Examples of official documents included those outlining strategic priorities or institutional goals, transcripts of public speeches, videos of speeches or public appearances, and memos. Popular culture documents included newspaper articles, advertisements and marketing materials, blogs, emails, and videos aired on television or newscasts (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Elite interviews. Elite interviews are characterized by the person being interviewed. Contrasted by a standard interview, which attempts to seek a truth about a topic, elite individuals are typically difficult to access and have limited time; therefore, their answers may be more subjective and specific to their own experience (Richards, 1996). While this dynamic may be problematic for other interviews, elite interviews are a solid match for a phenomenological study.

There are disadvantages to elite interviews. One is that the time is limited. Interviewers do not want to use the time to ask questions about basic historical information that can be discovered with research. Also, interviewers should use caution when asking questions about topics that have already been covered in other interviews in

which the interviewee has participated. In an effort to use the time most wisely when interviewing the university presidents, this researcher employed a semi-structured interview. This format provided the flexibility necessary to follow a "lead" that could be explored, while also providing enough structure to keep the conversation moving and make the best use of the time (Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994).

The other complication with elite interviews is the tendency for participants to hesitate in sharing information that might cause them or their institution to be viewed poorly. A remedy for this involved the researcher being prepared with background information to challenge any omissions or misinformation. The collection of data for document and video analysis provided a mechanism for gathering this background information.

Interview logistics. Interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the presidents. Four interviews took place in a conference room at the system headquarters while all presidents were gathered for a system-wide meeting. The other four interviews occurred in the respective offices of those presidents. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately one hour with each president.

The interview questions ultimately helped answer the research questions. The focus of the questions was the president's leadership strategies, including both those that have been successful and those that have not. Questions also inquired about who each president turns to for advice and seeks out to help accomplish difficult tasks. Additionally, through the lens of appreciative inquiry, questions were asked about the nature of the relationships with those to whom presidents turn and what exactly it is that works so well with those particular relationships. Interview questions were fielded with a

senior level administrator from a public university to ensure clarity of meaning and to give the researcher a sense of the flow of the interview.

"The interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret" their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 93). To ensure their own words were captured accurately, all interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. van Manen (1990) goes further and offers that a distinction is usually made between gathering experiential material and analyzing the material; however, when conducting an iterative qualitative interview, there can be a blending of gathering and analyzing, where the interviewee is invited to "dialogue about the ongoing record of the interview transcripts" (van Manen, 1990, p 66). What some would call member checking (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1998), van Manen would say is an opportunity to continue the conversation and advance the original intent of the interview by uncovering the real meaning of an experience. As such, once transcripts were completed, the researcher did member checking with all participants. While some participants declined to be involved, admitting they trusted the researcher, others reviewed the transcripts and offered clarification about a few items.

Data analysis. Qualitative research findings vary based on the mode of analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The data in this study were considered through interpretive analysis. This type of analysis used an inductive approach to research, meaning that themes were derived from the narratives and data rather than deconstructed from existing theory and then applied to this case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2002).

The first stage of analysis involved the documents and media materials. The materials were reviewed. This review served as background information in preparation for the interviews. Additionally, the process of analyzing the documents and videos provided additional questions or points for clarification during the interviews. During the review of the materials, traditional qualitative coding was used to assign tags to the documents or videos (Creswell, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Later, these codes were compared and, when appropriate, integrated into the analysis of interview transcripts.

The second stage of analysis happened once the interviews were completed. The audio recordings were transcribed and then those transcripts were reviewed, both individually and collectively. van Kaam provides a solid outline of the steps involved for analyzing data from interview transcripts (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 120). Moustakas (1994) adapted van Kaam's methods to specifically address the analysis of data for a phenomenological study:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
2. Reduction and Elimination
3. Clustering and Thematizing Invariant Constituents
4. Final Identification of Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application
5. Construct Individual Textural Description
6. Construct Individual Structural Description
7. Construct Individual Textural-Structural Description
8. Develop a Composite Description

These steps were used to analyze the interviews with the presidents. Once the interviews were transcribed, each experience described by presidents was listed along with data from document analysis, and grouped preliminarily, also known as horizonalization. Horizonalization is important because, during this initial stage of

analysis, each piece of data, whether spoken by the presidents or found in university documents, "holds equal value and contributes to an understanding of the nature and meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 123) about their social networks and how those networks impact their leadership.

The reduction and elimination began with determining the invariant constituents, which can be determined by applying certain criteria to the list of experiences. If the experiences were necessary for understanding the phenomenon, or the experiences could be abstracted and labeled, then they were retained as invariant constituents. Repetitive or overlapping groups were eliminated. Vague expressions were either eliminated or articulated in more specific terms. Those expressions that remain at the end of this process are the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994).

Next, similar or related invariant constituents were clustered and labeled with a theme. These themes became the core themes of the relationship between social networking and leadership. In a final identification of the invariant constituents, the core themes were compared to the original transcripts. There was evidence that the core themes were either explicitly expressed or compatible to what was explicitly expressed. If neither, the theme was deleted, however this was not the case in this study. The remaining themes were validated and relevant (Moustakas, 1994).

Using the validated themes, the researcher constructed Individual Textural Descriptions. The descriptions were vivid accounts, with direct quotes from transcripts of the individuals' experiences related to the phenomenon being studied. Next, the researcher constructed Individual Structural Descriptions. The structural description elaborates on the underlying dynamics of the experiences. It is the description of "how"

the textural description was allowed. In developing a structural description, researchers rely on a strategy called Imaginative Variation, which encourages reflecting and analyzing beyond the appearance and forecasting about the real meanings or essences of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Using the Individual Textural Descriptions, the researcher considered all the presidents as one group and developed a Composite Textural Description. The same was done with Individual Structural Descriptions, developing a Composite Structural Description, again using Imaginative Variation. The last step was to construct a Composite Textural-Structural Description. This final description synthesizes the "what" and the "how" of the phenomenon which resulted in an integrated description of the meanings and essences of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The analysis of this study, while having employed individual descriptions, both textural and structural, will result in a Composite Textural Description, a Composite Structural Description, both presented in Chapter 4. Ultimately, the final synthesis of the Composite Textural-Structural Description will serve as the discussion starter for Chapter 5.

Positionality

It is important for researchers to acknowledge any bias they bring to a study. Denzin and Lincoln identify this bias as an interpretive paradigm, explaining that "all research is interpretive and it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (2005, p. 22).

I am extraordinarily passionate about public higher education. I believe that public higher education assists in leveling the playing field and provides opportunities to

individuals who may not otherwise have them. This positive regard for public higher education is a bias. Additionally, as an employee at a state university, my livelihood is currently dependent upon the success of a particular campus and the system as a whole. As a result, this may sway the way I interpret information. In some instances, I may be more critical of the system in hope that naming problem areas will lead to resolutions. In other instances, I may not want the system or the campus at which I work to have a poor reputation. Either of these outcomes demonstrates bias and will require attention and awareness on my part.

As an employee at a university, I have two roles. First, I work to build relationships with community partners. In this role, my immediate supervisor reports directly to the university president. I am also the campus climate advocate. This appointed position reports directly to the university president. In both cases, the university president is my supervisor and is one of the presidents interviewed. For obvious reasons, there may be a bias to please or impress this president.

One way to balance these biases and interpretations is to name them and consistently work to be aware of them. Some researchers go so far as implementing mechanisms in the design of their study to mitigate problems that might arise as a result of the biases or interpretations. In my case, I will employ the strategies of member checks to corroborate the information collected and analyzed.

Considerations for Human Subjects

In considering the use of human participants in this study, this section outlines the potential risks for participating in the study and how the researcher will mitigate those risks when possible.

The participants were informed of their rights and the potential risks and the benefits of participating in this study before the interviews began, both via email weeks prior to the interview and again verbally at the beginning of the interview. Consistent with the recommendation for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, participants signed a consent form which explained the purpose of the study and outlined how the data collected was kept confidential (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Specific to this study, because the participants are public figures, there may have been additional layers of risk associated with participating in the study. For example, presidents could have feared participating because the study will be accessible by the public. They may have concerns the researcher will misrepresent them, or they ultimately may not agree with the findings of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) make a distinction between privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Privacy refers to the participant's ability to control others' access to personal information. Confidentiality refers to an agreement between the researcher and the participant regarding what will be done and what will not be done with information and data attained from the participant's involvement in the study. Anonymity refers to the lack of identifiers or other information that would indicate which individual provided which data. These distinctions are helpful for researchers as they adequately address the complex questions that surround privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

In this study, generic identifiers for the participants and their institutions were used so that their personal information can remain anonymous. Another precaution taken to help ensure confidentiality and privacy was the use of member checking. This entailed submitting samples of the interview transcripts and the study's findings to the participants

for their review. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest this approach results in higher quality data because the participants trust their interests and identities are protected and thus are more authentic and open in what they share and it proved successful. Member checking did help to protect confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. Additionally, member checking confirmed the participants' comfort levels with the presentation of the findings, a matter of even greater importance given the high profile of these particular participants.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter is organized by the research questions that guided the study. First, to offer context about who was interviewed, a brief description of the participants is provided. Then, overarching themes, as determined from the categories and codes assigned to interview transcripts and through document analysis, are presented as responses to the research questions. Finally, a summary of the findings will close this chapter.

Participants

Eleven presidents were invited to participate in the study through a sponsored sampling of all presidents from the same state university system in California. Ultimately, eight presidents agreed to participate in the study. Two declined without reason and the third cited scheduling conflicts as an inability to participate. Interestingly, the three who chose not to participate are all individuals of historically underserved and underrepresented groups in the U.S.; also considered people of color in educational research literature. Of the eight presidents who participated, seven are White and one Latino. Two of the eight presidents are female.

Table 1. Presidential and Institutional Demographics

	Gender	Ethnicity	Institution Enrollment	Current Tenure Began	Number of Presidencies
President A	Male	White	15,000	2004	1
President B	Male	White	24,000	1991	2
President C	Male	White	26,000	1996	2
President D	Male	White	5,000	2001	2
President E	Male	Latino	16,000	2003	1
President F	Female	White	35,000	2000	1
President G	Female	White	15,000	2004	2
President H	Male	White	35,000	2006	2

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data included the coding of interview transcripts and documents from each president and their institution (mission statements, strategic priorities, speeches, blogs). After initial coding, those codes were collapsed into a total of 20 categories. A frequency report showed three particular categories with high frequencies. The quotations from those high frequency categories were analyzed again to arrive at six themes.

Research Question #1

President B shares a philosophy about the role of relationships in a university president's work,

> There is no question that as a president you have certain authority, but the reality is that your effectiveness is dependent upon your ability to build relationships. If you can build strong relationships – build trusting relationships – people are going to want to work harder for you and accomplish whatever the task. They will be more engaged in what you are doing. It becomes more than just a job, it is in fact something they will believe in as well (personal communication, May 2011).

This quote encapsulates the importance of relationships relevant to the work of a university president. President B names relationships as the centerpiece of a successful president's leadership. Because relationships are so crucial, it seems only natural to wonder how a president goes about the task of building and maintaining those relationships. The first research question helped convert that wonderment into data:

1. What strategies have proven most successful for university presidents in building relationships?

Relevant to the first research question, six themes emerged from the data which identify strategies presidents use in building relationships. The six themes are: (1) *being present/visible*, (2) *serving as a central actor*, (3) *listening*, (4) *building trust*, (5) *creating community*, and (6) *differentiating the position from the person*. Of the six themes, four (*being present/visible*, *serving as central actor*, *listening*, and *differentiating the position from the person*) were discussed by all eight presidents and two (*creating community* and *building trust*) were mentioned by six presidents. Congruent with the spirit of phenomenological methodology in which the researcher aims to understand a participant's lived experience through that person's own words, quoted below, each theme is discussed and supported with the presidents' own words.

Being present/visible. All eight presidents talked about the importance of being present and visible both on campus and in the community. Two presidents spoke specifically about the importance of being present because it sends the message that the institution cares. "It's critical that you are visible and are at certain places, certain functions, certain activities which lets groups at the institution know you care," stated President B. In a rather raw characterization of the same sentiment, President C

suggested, "At the president's level, you are an institutional hood ornament. A lot of this is symbolic, showing that you care about different groups by your presence."

Despite the suggestion that the behavior is only symbolic, other presidents confirmed the importance of being visible as they discussed attending events, walking the campus and connecting with students, faculty and staff. President G articulated intentions specifically related to being present with faculty:

> I try, deliberately, to be at some of the faculty events, whether it be a research colloquium or another event. It's a good way to interact with faculty around what is a core of their being, and I go so they know I respect them and their work (personal communication, May 2011).

In an effort to connect specifically with staff, President F described, "I'm out and about on campus a lot. I walk the floors. I go to every department office once a semester just to see people; I keep track so that I know when I've done them all." While some presidents employed a tailored approach to connecting differently with faculty, staff, and students, other presidents had a single overarching strategy for connecting with the campus. Highlighted in a more general strategy, President D shared one of the outcomes of being visible: "I go around and see what they are doing and they can see that I'm a real human being."

This visibility did not stop with a physical presence. An examination of the respective university websites indicates that all eight presidents have constant visibility via that medium as well. In fact, there are convenient links from university homepages to presidential websites where users can send messages directly to presidents and find contact information for presidential staff.

Being present/visible is an important way all eight university presidents show they care about specific groups, both on campus and in the community. Additionally, their visibility reassures those who frequently look to them for answers that they are indeed human and sends a message that they are not untouchable; rather they are accessible.

Serving as a central actor. Using terminology from social network theory, a "central actor" is someone in the social network who has the most ties with other actors in the organization. Central actors serve as hubs for information, knowledge, and communication with others around the organization (Daly, 2010). This means the individual is well-connected to others in the network and information flows through this individual. Some presidents spoke specifically about their role as a central actor as it relates to their interaction with the off-campus community. President C explained, "Modern universities have bridges and the bridges are a two-way street. The president is often the intermediary between the community and the university to keep the bridges strong." Emphasizing the point, the same president reiterated, "It's the university president that often serves as a node through which the university relates to the rest of the community and the world." President G added, "Part of a president's role is to be the university's best ambassador, particularly to external constituencies." President B, sharing the same opinion as Presidents C and G, expanded upon the concept to show how the dynamic might unfold:

> We are in a region that is a collection of cities and small communities, all of which were fighting with each other for limited resources. Most of them had not figured out yet there's an advantage to coming together to collaborate. So, a lot of our effort initially was bringing the region together, describing the region, describing the power of the region, and once that was done, we got involved in much more intimate partnerships (personal communication, May 2011).

Presidents B, C, and G all agreed that presidents play a pivotal role in connecting the external community to the university. By illustrating that a president's social network expands beyond the boundaries of their university campus, these presidents underscore their function in linking different people within their network, thus making them a central actor.

These presidents set strategic plans that position them and their universities as central actors in the region. With access to seven of the eight strategic plans for the universities represented by these presidents, all seven had set goals regarding the university's role in the region. All plans highlighted each state university's obligation to their region to be a significant thread in the fabric of their respective community. Most went on to describe how the university would be a knowledge and cultural center for the cities in which they resided. This data not only confirms that presidents serve as central actors, it also indicates they had set out to do so intentionally.

While a few of the presidents' answers initially focused on interactions with the external community, when asked the types of strategies used to build relationships specifically with students, faculty, and staff, presidents turned their attention to relationships on campus. In the context of working with groups on campus, President B commented:

> I essentially try to bring people together. [I] take a look at issues, get the right people working together and then try to step back to let them work toward a solution . . . have them discuss a direction and a strategic plan, adopt that plan and then my role [as president] is to go out and articulate what that plan is (personal communication, May 2011).

President D describes using employment as a mechanism by which to connect people within a network:

> I really believe that I'm here in the service of the people of this state and of the students who come to this university. One way I do that is to try to hire the very best people and give them enough space so that they can do their jobs (personal communication, May 2011).

Ultimately, this president highlights how he serves as a central actor in his network by increasing the size of the network with a new hire. Presumably, this president brings new people into the network based on existing knowledge gaps as well as a prediction that the new person will connect well with others in the organization.

Through their comments, presidents acknowledged that *serving as a central actor*, whether focused on external or internal constituencies, is an example of their role as a connecter. In this role, common approaches that emerged for the presidents included linking those best suited to work together, providing inertia for the task, and letting the experts do their job.

Listening. All of the presidents interviewed emphasized the importance of *listening*. "The strategy of making sure there are opportunities for people to have input and to have dialogue – for people to tell you their stories and their wishes – has proven to be a smart strategy," commented President G. This same president went on to say that ultimately, "It is much easier for people to accept a decision, even one they don't like, if they were listened to and had the opportunity for input." This perspective was shared by the majority of the other presidents interviewed.

President F talked about listening in the context of working together with others and the negotiation that happens when trying to move an initiative forward. "Persuasion

happens not by hitting somebody over the head with the fact that I'm right and they are wrong, but allowing them to have an expression of a point of view, listening to them, which a lot of presidents don't do." Counter intuitively, this quote highlights the importance of listening as a strategy for leading.

In the context of the arrival of a new president, President C offered this advice:

> You really need to understand the institution [and] listen to it well. The whole university is going to be talking to you. You'll learn a lot from that conversation. Now, the instant you say something, you'll start shutting down that conversation. The longer you can keep the conversation going, the more you'll learn and the longer you keep those relationships in positive territory (personal communication, May 2011).

President A agreed:

> Spend a lot of time asking questions, and spend even more time listening to the answers. Be careful not to assume that you'll ever know everything about your campus. Be alert to the possibility that you are going to learn something new every day. The worst thing you can do is act like you've got it all figured out (personal communication, May 2011).

Listening, as described by all eight presidents, is at the core of their activities. As key elements to *listening*, the presidents named asking questions, gathering input from constituencies, and being open to learning.

Building trust. Six of the presidents interviewed referenced trust as they discussed strategies for building relationships. With trust being a reciprocal endeavor, some of the presidents focused on how they trust others. President H explained:

> Some presidents get into trouble because they keep information close to the vest. I actually think that we've got a whole bunch of very well-educated people on our campus and when explained the circumstances, I've had a lot of success in them understanding. I believe that if you lay out the options and you give educated people the same amount of information, nine times out of 10, you are going to come to the same decisions (personal communication, May 2011).

President C echoed the same perspective:

> If you put a couple thousand people together for a year to sort out the mission, how likely is it that it's going to be stupid? It's not. In fact, 20 of us could have sat down some weekend and come up with the same thing, but it wouldn't have been owned by everybody else. So, you have to have a certain level of trust to do that (personal communication, May 2011).

A leader extending trust to followers helps motivate and empower them to stay committed to their work. Additionally, staff who are involved in decision-making processes tend to be more invested in the outcome and, as a result, are ultimately more dedicated to the institution.

In addition to workers feeling like they are trusted by their leader, presidents also seem to have an interest in who trusts them. President D, focused attention to how others trust him:

> They trust that even if I say no, as people have told me, both staff and faculty in the past, they know that I've heard them and that I've thought about what they had to say and if I make a decision that is not consistent with what they have said to me, I'll tell them why and they usually understand. They may not agree, but they'll understand. I do believe that it is that trust relationship that binds us, have the best interest of the university at heart (personal communication, May 2011).

Confidence that followers trust a leader helps propel the leader forward and allows the leader to continue the journey with reassurance that those whom they lead do believe in them.

President F outlines what trust looks like in action:

> Collaboration doesn't occur until you have trust. Trust is always a relational development, a relational consequence. It occurs because I said I would do something, and I did it when I said I would do it and the way in which I did it. Trust happens when I pick up the phone and call you and say, "that was a really stupid email I wrote." Trust occurs when it would be possible for me to argue that my part of the university has control over

a giant project and I say, "look, why don't you take this. We'll work with you, you can be our guide." Um, trust comes from recognizing that if a new practice has to be implemented in a business process, but that it's gonna cause – it may save my part of the university a lot of money, but it's gonna cost your part of the university a lot of money, I say to you, "hey, I recognize that this is going to happen. What kind of a timeline is going to work best for you? What can we do to help you?" (personal communication, May 2011).

Many of the presidents interviewed are able to articulate what trust looks like in practice, as described above. Also, as demonstrated in other comments from this section, they advocate for trust among all levels of the university. And, when asked the question "Which groups of people do you rely on most for major decision-making?," all eight presidents quickly answered it is their vice presidents upon whom they rely. Most went on to discuss strategies they use to develop trust among their vice presidents, which are similar strategies described in this section, also used to develop trust among other groups.

Building trust is a strategy that six presidents articulated in answering questions about how to build relationships. The reciprocal dynamic of trust makes it a complex strategy for building relationships. From one angle, it is important that university presidents trust faculty and staff, as it will keep the campus motivated and invested. Yet, from a different angle, the presidents also must be considering how others trust them, as that will provide reassurance and confidence about the direction of leadership. As is evidenced by the many different angles described above, there are multiple layers to the strategy of *building trust*.

Creating community. Many of the presidents talked about the importance of creating community as a strategy for building relationships. Using a personal approach to community building, President E explained:

The reason I spend a lot of time building community is because I think if you have community, then the people in that community take ownership of whatever you are doing. I create ownership by making sure that people feel a part of this institution. I'm very collaborative. I attempt to be very transparent. There are a number of things I've done since I've arrived that exemplify that (personal communication, May 2011).

While President E spends time visiting individual faculty and staff, getting to know them on a personal level and encouraging their involvement around campus through conversation, President A described a different approach to building community:

We are a campus where we attract folks whose individual values connect to those of the institution. Folks need to know what the institutional values are in order to be able to assess the likelihood of their agreement, and hopefully happiness, with a place that values those things (personal communication, May 2011).

By aligning values on the front end of one's employment process, the benefit is a common foundation upon which the campus can build. A critique of this strategy is the absence of dissenting voices and therefore the potential of group think and perpetual status quo.

President C outlines a specific example of how community was built at the university:

The first job I saw was to get ownership. So, we started with a thing called shared vision and we spent over a year in a campus-wide dialogue about what our mission was. What was important there was not so much the vision as that it was theirs. Rather than my coming in and saying, "OK, let's do X, Y, or Z" – of course I wouldn't have begun to know the institution as well as the people who had been here – I preferred to let them figure out X, Y, and Z and for me to then try to move towards those goals (personal communication, May 2011).

President D remarked about building community and the benefits that can follow:

My leadership style has to do with the notion of working together with others so that there is an investment – in the university and in the decisions – by everyone involved. I try to build a culture and a community such that

the university can release the potential of not only the students, but also the faculty, staff and administrators (personal communication, May 2011).

Presidents C and D both explained a collective and inclusive approach to creating community. By involving others in decision-making processes and highlighting the impact of said decisions or initiatives, those working and studying on campus feel more invested in the institution.

President H framed community building in terms of focusing the university community around a common goal:

> I tell them, "We are going to graduate 8900 students . . . you'll get your time on the stage and I'll shake your hand." I'll shake 8900 hands in three days. It'll take me three days, but I'll do it because they deserve it (personal communication, May 2011).

At President H's campus, the message of graduation was everywhere from lightpole banners to posters in the hallways. Additionally, this president said anyone on campus – faculty, staff, or student – would be able to articulate that the reason everyone is there is to help students graduate. This kind of singular focus was named as an effective strategy in creating community.

In a different approach to create community, President F offered two pieces of advice. First, her advice is:

> I never surprise them. If there's a change in a VP or if I want to deviate from a policy, I bring them in and say, "I want to do this differently than our policies say; this is why, I wanted to tell you in person and I'd like your support" (personal communication, May 2011).

Not surprising anyone is an approach to creating community on the personal and individual level, which deviates from the pattern established by the other presidents in building a sense of community collectively and collaboratively with larger groups.

Nonetheless, President F also acknowledges the power of the collective in her second piece of advice about the importance of recognizing achievements:

> People don't want to hear that they are bad. Find what's good. Find a way to celebrate it. Yeah, there are things that can be improved, but if you celebrate what's there, you will have a better chance of moving forward (personal communication, May 2011).

This same president, who has obviously exhibited a mixed approach – both individual and collective – to creating community, advised, "You have to get people so that they care." With that assertion, President F seems to suggest that "caring" is a seed for creating community.

Consistent with this concept of caring and celebrating the achievements of the campus community, President H commented on the work of the faculty and staff during his annual Convocation speech. Convocation is a university's annual event to begin the academic year during which presidents customarily offer remarks about the year ahead. He highlighted the work the faculty and staff had done to attract over 70,000 applications, cited them as the reason the university ranked well nationally, and took pride in their efforts to increase the educational attainment of low income students. This kind of public acknowledgement with all the campus community present ultimately makes the community stronger as they work toward the same goals.

As described by presidents, *creating community* can be accomplished by working individually or collectively. A brief summary of specific strategies for *creating community* includes instilling ownership in the institution, leveraging the collective through relationships and celebrating contributions so people see where they have an impact.

Differentiating the position from the person. Each of the presidents reflected

upon a unique dynamic in which their professional life overshadows and, to some extent,

consumes and limits the personal aspects of their lives. As the head of an institution, they

represent that institution with every move. Yet, they are also individual humans, with

families, friends, and their own identity. For each president, distinguishing between their

position and their own person emerged from the data as being important. Because of the

need to differentiate between their position and their person, presidents reported a

common result of feeling isolated. President B noted:

> It's a pretty lonely role because you have to be very careful of building
> relationships that are not viewed as friendships. Everybody wants to lead
> others to believe they are the closest friend in the world to the president,
> so you don't want to build any tight friendships or it can have a negative
> impact on your ability to influence (personal communication, May 2011).

> President E elaborated on how presidents end up in this predicament:

> I live in the middle of campus with 300 students living in the residence
> hall next door to me, but no neighbors. As a president, I can't spend a lot
> of time with the vice presidents because if I don't spend equal time with
> each, then they think I'm showing favoritism. I can't spend time with any
> of the deans because the Provost may think I'm usurping his authority and
> working around him. Everybody in the community, with whom I get
> along great, sees me as trying to get my hand in their pocket so they'll
> contribute money to the university. I have no neighbors to go out and say,
> "let's grab a beer and watch the game." It gets very lonely. I really enjoy
> spending time with my wife, but as far as other friends, it's only the
> people that you knew before you were president, not people you've met
> since you've become president (personal communication, May 2011).

With such a pervasive feeling of isolation, there must be some way in which

presidents can develop friendships. Yet, one president described a situation in which he

became good friends with a faculty member on campus. Below, President D explains the

consequences of getting close to someone who works on campus:

Personal relationships…it is very difficult for the president to have friends on campus. Before I became a president the first time, a very senior president called me and said, as a president, you will be lonely. You'll have people around, you won't be alone, but you will get lonely. In another presidency, I had some faculty members that became friends of mine and what I found was that they were being disadvantaged by being my friend, the president's pet, the president's favorite. So, I said to them, while I still want to be your friend, I am going to separate myself from you because you are being hurt as a result of our friendship (personal communication, May 2011).

Not only does this dynamic impact those who could potentially get close to a president and deprive them of the opportunity to have a meaningful friendship, it also continues a president's isolation in terms of not being able to develop new friendships. It is likely that for this reason three presidents admitted in their interviews that the only group of people they felt comfortable having as friends were other presidents. They explained that limiting their friendships to other presidents eliminated the concern about agendas, stigma, and assumptive perceptions.

In addition to coping with a rather isolated personal social life, presidents must also navigate living in a fishbowl. President F explained:

You know, being the president is not always about behaving the way you want to behave, but behaving the way you should behave. It's not a role, from my perspective, for impulsiveness, impetuousness, non-strategic, unmanaged responses. Everybody is watching a president all of the time, (personal communication, May 2011).

President G also addressed presidential behavior:

I have to remind myself when there are times that my behavior ought to be more serious and make sure that it is respectful of the position I hold. I also think it is healthy for a president to remind themselves fairly often – or have a spouse, as I do, that will remind me – that other peoples' behavior is about the position, not the person. I don't walk in a room and everybody wants to talk to me, everybody wants to talk to the president. If I were not president tomorrow, people wouldn't want to talk to me, or at least not as many. The position is sometimes what gets presidents in

trouble because they think they can be someplace else and they are a private person, but in fact they are not. You almost never take the role off (personal communication, May 2011),

When hired as a university president, the individual agrees to "wear" the position. For illustrative purposes, a king's or queen's crown is used to represent the presidency. The crown embodies the campus: the thousands of faculty and staff, the tens of thousands of students, the relationships with the community, and the philosophical ideals of the institution. When presidents agree to wear the crown, the expectation is that their personal behavior is consistent with all that the crown symbolizes. However, after time, presidents become accustomed to wearing the crown. In fact, presidents who find themselves in trouble have become so accustomed to the position, they have almost forgotten they are wearing the crown. As such, the presidents interviewed describe the need for constant awareness of the crown and the responsibility that comes with wearing it.

When an individual president leaves, the crown is passed along to the next president. Helping to further illustrate the permanency of the position, President F eloquently summarizes this phenomenon that exists between the person and the position:

> Yes, there's a difference between the person and the role even though what you bring to the presidency shapes how you do the role, but you are not the role. You know, the old phrase, "the king is dead, long live the king." That's very much the case for how presidents go (personal communication, May 2011).

As demonstrated with these reflections, differentiating between the position and the person can be challenging. President G offered this suggestion for how to more easily manage the dual identities:

Authenticity. I don't think somebody could do this role for a long time if they felt they were not operating from a pretty authentic set of values. It keeps the resiliency in a president and a presidency if you're not trying to act in some other role (personal communication, May 2011).

Differentiating the position from the person encapsulates the concept that presidents are never alone, yet frequently lonely. As presidents, these individuals rarely, if ever, are able to separate their role from their personal identity and must regularly remind themselves to look at the world through the lens of the presidency. While being a university president is both exciting and exhausting, this phenomenon of *differentiating the position from the person* is distinctive.

Research Question #2

2. In what ways do the social networks of university presidents impact their leadership?

Social networks influence leadership. Three of the previously identified themes, *being present/visible*, *listening*, and *serving as a central actor*, help to answer the question of how the networks of university presidents impact their leadership. The fact that *being present/visible* is a theme which emerged from the data implies that presidents are persuaded by the power of constituent groups. Consequently, this is one way presidents might adapt their leadership to be accountable to said groups. By genuinely listening, hearing input from a variety of constituent groups, and engaging in dialogue with those constituencies, *listening* leads one to believe presidents might adapt their leadership to address the hopes and concerns of those affected by the organization. *Serving as a central actor*, when considered through a transactional leadership frame, indicates presidents are able to filter and funnel the information they receive to those best

suited to respond. This notion of being a node, viewed through a transformational and applied critical leadership frame, shows how presidents could adjust their leadership to meet the different needs of the different groups with whom they work.

In responding to a question about strategies to work with faculty, staff, and students, the majority of the presidents responded by saying each group requires a specific approach. President F confirms, "I think my leadership strategy varies so much with the people I'm working with. Some people need a certain kind of leadership and others don't respond well to that." The same president elaborated on the evolution of relationships with constituent groups "I think relationships are absolutely critical. And, I think that understanding that you're constantly remaking, redefining, recreating a relationship, it's never the same from one set of problems to the next." This adjustment of leadership, whether adapting to different people or to different sets of problems, is another example of how a president's social networks directly influence their leadership.

Through the process of outlining the influence a president's social networks have on their leadership, it became apparent that presidential leadership, conversely, has an influence on a president's social networks. Ultimately, there is a reciprocal relationship between a president's social networks and the president's leadership behavior, which is visually demonstrated by Figure 3 below:
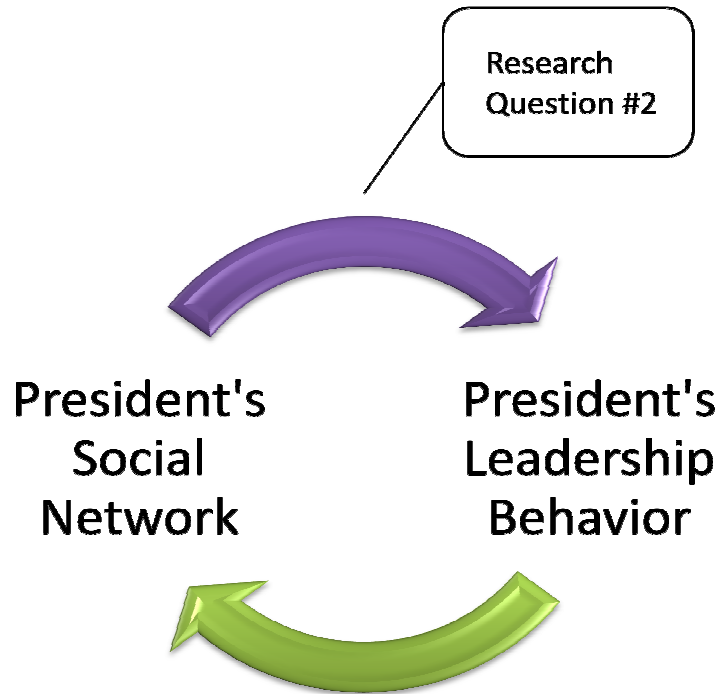
Figure 3. Reciprocal Nature of Networks and Leadership

Leadership influences social networks. Just as the data supports that social networks influence leadership, the converse is also true. Presidents' leadership behavior also influences presidents' social networks by *creating community*, *building trust*, and *serving as a central actor*. *Creating community* is an element of a president's leadership behavior that, when done effectively, can broaden and diversify social networks by spurring new ties and helping existing nodes become even more connected. Another element of a president's leadership is *building trust*. Like *creating community*, *building trust* can lead to the genesis of additional ties, but more uniquely, it will reinforce and strengthen already existing ties. *Serving as a central actor* ensures that a president is a hub for information and communication. From a leadership perspective, this allows presidents to influence social networks by determining appropriate communication

mechanisms for certain information (ie: individual, departmental, university-wide) and providing presidents the opportunity to intentionally connect the right people with the right tasks.

Overlaying the six themes, relative to their direction of influence, on the reciprocal nature of networks and leadership constructs a conceptual model referred to as the Leadership-Network Reciprocation (LNR) model, pictured in Figure 4.
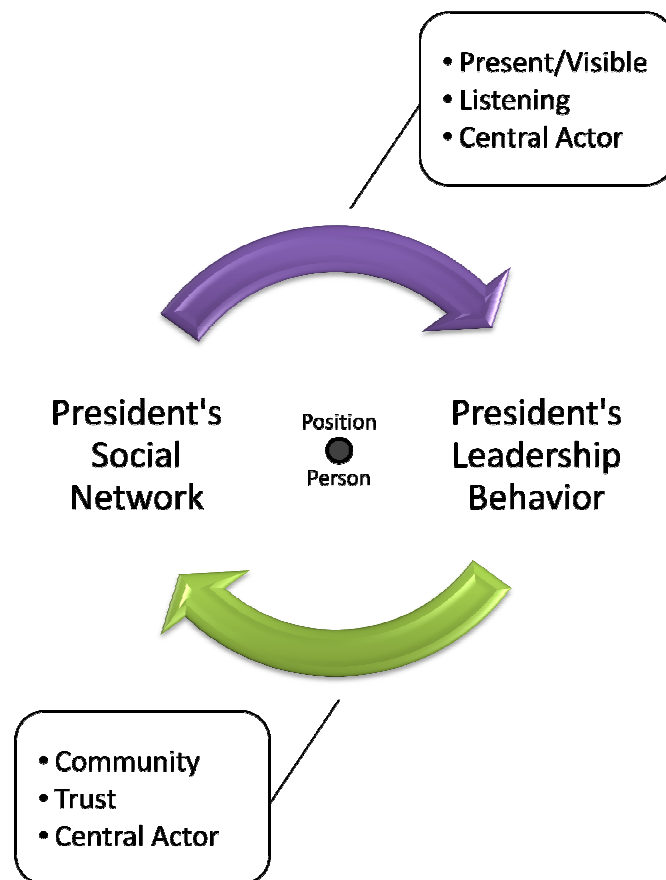

Figure 4. Leadership-Network Reciprocation Model

Illustrated above, *being present/visible*, *listening*, and *serving as a central actor*, drive how social networks influence leadership. Presidents respond to their social networks by *being present/visible* at certain events and particular meetings. By *listening*, presidents allow their social networks to potentially influence their leadership behavior. Similar to *listening*, *serving as a central actor* means presidents are in a position to gather feedback from their networks about their role and their performance, which could impact their leadership behavior.

Completing the reciprocal cycle, leadership influences social networks by *creating community*, *building trust*, and *serving as a central actor*. By *creating community*, leaders expand and strengthen their networks. *Building trust* helps leaders strengthen the ties within the social network. *Serving as a central actor* allows leaders the opportunity to add ties to people and ties to certain parts of a network or simply maintain and strengthen what already exists.

Central actor. *Serving as a central actor* is common to both directions of influence. *Serving as a central actor* affords presidents a feedback mechanism so they can regularly learn from their social networks the perception of their leadership behavior. This feedback mechanism allows presidents to adapt their leadership accordingly, if they so desire. Additionally, the dynamic of s*erving as a central actor* includes the agency presidents possess to affect change when necessary. Presidents can use their agency to influence their social networks, thus affecting change in a substantial way. The combination of a feedback mechanism along with the agency to impact their networks is a unique finding.

The position and the person. *Differentiating the position from the person* does not cleanly fit into the model in Figure 4. The position of the president is a driving force for how the social networks impact the leadership because members of the social network have expectations for what they desire from a president. Those expectations shape feedback and, therefore, impact leadership behaviors. Yet, the personal identity of the president is a driving force for how leadership impacts the social networks. Any president brings a set of skills and perspectives which have been shaped by their personal experiences and personal identity. The skills and experiences inform leadership behavior which, in turn, has an impact on the social networks. Additionally, *differentiating the position from the person*, as referenced by the presidents in this study – while obviously influential in their lives – is a private negotiation few others observe, much less even know exists. Because this theme describes a major consideration in presidents' lives, it merits a place in the model. And, because it is all-encompassing, it is best placed in the center of the cycle.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of eight individual interviews with current presidents, as well as document analysis of institutional and presidential documents relevant to those eight presidents and their respective institutions, produced six themes. These themes answer the first research question: "What strategies have proven most successful for presidents in building relationships?" The themes are (1) *being present/visible*, (2) *serving as a central actor*, (3) *listening*, (4) *building trust*, (5) *creating community*, and (6) *differentiating the position from the person*. These six themes also are helpful in answering the second research question: "In what ways do the social networks of presidents impact their

leadership?" The data reveals that there is a reciprocal relationship between presidents' social networks and presidents' leadership behavior. Additionally, the data shows the six themes act as driving forces for the reciprocity.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to better understand the role of relationships in the leadership of public university presidents. The findings of this study were presented relative to the research questions, which yielded the Leadership-Network Reciprocation (LNR) model. This model will serve as the focus for this discussion of the findings. As the model is examined, the findings will be considered in the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The discussion will continue with implications for both leadership and for social justice. Finally, this chapter will identify limitations for this study and suggest areas for future research.

Summary of Findings

Six themes were distilled from the data. These themes answered research question 1: "What strategies have proven most successful for university presidents in building relationships?" The six themes, which are strategies, include: (1) *being present/visible*, (2) *serving as a central actor*, (3) *listening*, (4) *building trust*, (5) *creating community*, and (6) *differentiating the position from the person*. These strong and consistent themes emerged from interviews with eight university presidents as well as document analysis of university and presidential documents, speeches, and websites.

In answering research question 2, "In what ways do the social networks of presidents impact their leadership?," the six themes gave way to the Leadership-Network Reciprocation (LNR) model pictured again in Figure 5 below. The LNR model shows the relationship between the themes and how they impact the social networks and the leadership behavior of university presidents.
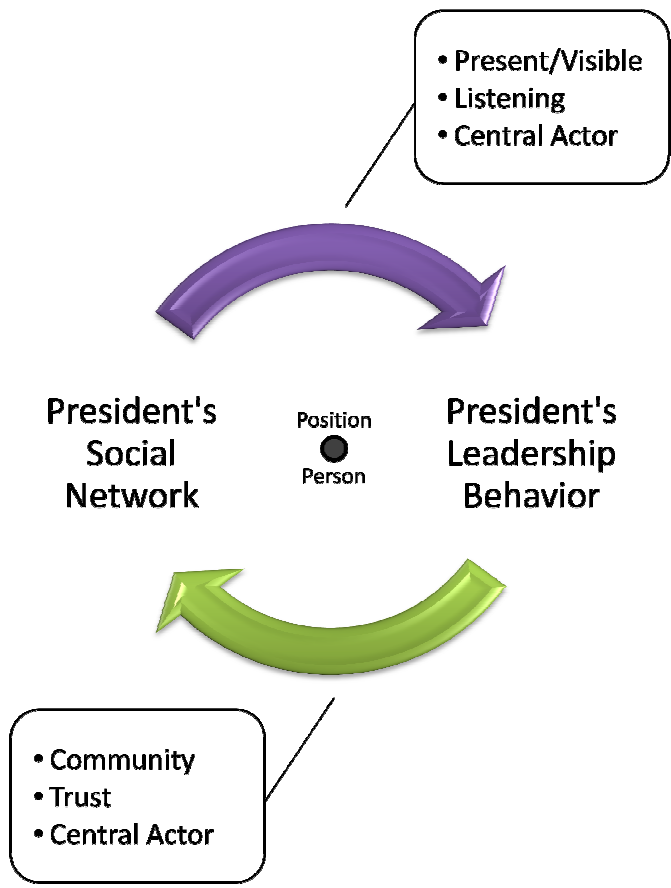

Figure 5. Leadership-Network Reciprocation Model

Discussion of Findings

Because the LNR model incorporates all the findings from this study, it serves as a solid structure for the discussion.

Social networks influence leadership.

Being present/visible. The presidents interviewed would have us believe that their presence or visibility at events, meetings, and ceremonies carries certain significance. They cited their presence and visibility as a way of building relationships, yet this leaves us wondering exactly how it might work. And, does it imply that the opposite is also true: if they are *not* present, does that damage existing relationships or their ability to build new relationships?

The symbolic gesture of *being present/visible* is referenced in the literature. Bolman and Deal (1991) identified a multi-lens conceptual framework comprised of four frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. In describing the symbolic frame, Bolman and Deal (1991) acknowledge that leaders intentionally use shared meaning developed from rituals, traditions, ceremonies, and storytelling to help their organization function better. *Being present/visible* is a prime example of this symbolic frame.

Seeing a president more frequently challenges the idea that, as one president suggested, the president is simply an institutional hood ornament. In fact, a president's presence offers onlookers the opportunity to interact or, at the least, to observe that president's demeanor and behavior. With the experience of being in the presence of a president, those onlookers now have a reference point for that particular president, which could be helpful at a later date when reading an email about a campus-wide decision the president has made or balancing a rumor about the president. In these instances, visibility does have a lasting impact.

In considering the contrary, a president's absence can be, and often is, perceived as though that specific event, that group of people, or that cause is not important enough for the president's time. Unfortunately, this interpretation is not necessarily connected to facts. If presidents cannot attend a function, it could be because of scheduling conflicts or it could be that the president deliberately decided not to attend. Regardless of why, the general interpretation frequently assigns significance to the absence, again confirming that presidential presence does have meaning.

Listening.   Of all the findings, this seems to be the strategy for building relationships that presidents genuinely enjoy. They went on to describe how conflicting input from listening can lead to tougher situations of decision-making, which is not as enjoyable. However, the actual listening – finding opportunities to hear people's stories, wants, concerns, and hopes – is at the core of what they enjoy about being president.

Initially, as a novice researcher looking for the profound, this result seemed trite. Of course presidents listen. And, even if they do not, they are likely to say they do. Yet, given the number of times it was observed in the data, it was clearly more than posturing or lip service. Evidently, *listening* is an essential building block of everything the presidents do. The literature helps identify why.

Many of the authors who write about leadership could say plenty about the relevance and importance of listening. Likely, they would explain listening is a prerequisite to the successful implementation of any leadership style. However, listening is even more substantial.

Listening is a way people connect. These connections lead to relationships. Relationships are at the heart of social capital. Social capital can only exist within the

structure of relations between actors (Coleman, 1988). Listening is a seed that forms the relation between two actors. "Whether or not social capital is built depends both on the quality and quantity of interactions" (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 101). Therefore, *listening* and how positively one feels about being heard are indicators of creating social capital. The presidents interviewed confirmed the benefits of *listening* are indeed profound.

Serving as a central actor. A common perception of university presidents is that they are connecters. As presidents, they are not necessarily involved in the technical work, but rather fulfill the role of bringing the right people together for the task. The data confirms this.

Serving as a central actor, specific to the external community is unique. Historically, universities were more inwardly focused, on scholarship, research and teaching. In fact, universities intentionally "built moats" to protect the intellectual capital of the institution. It is only recently, within the past 40-50 years, that universities became interested in how their educational programming impacted the surrounding community. Now, universities consistently look for ways to build bridges and strengthen partnerships, resulting in a more symbiotic relationship between the university and the surrounding community.

Serving as a central actor is also unique within the campus because presidents were historically perceived as inaccessible decision-makers. In present day, however, university presidents are expected to assume the role of the university's best ambassador, propelling them into the position of *serving as a central actor*.

In the context of social networks influencing leadership, *serving as a central actor* has relevance to both social capital and social networks. Obstfeld (2005) writes about a *tertius iungens* orientation referring to a person who has individual ties with two other people and introduces the two of them, resulting in a new tie between the two acquaintances. This is contrasted with a *tertius gaudens* orientation meaning the person with the original ties, as a broker, purposefully keeps the two acquaintances from meeting in order to maintain control of the capital. The results of Obstfeld's (2005) study show that a *tertius iungens* orientation is one of three predictors of an organization's involvement in innovation.

The significance of a *tertius iungens* orientation in higher education is evidenced in the data from the university presidents. While presidents appear to be moving in this direction, citing regional collaborations borne out of the university and interdepartmental projects based on the increasing density of faculty and staff social networks, there is certainly more of this to be done. Universities have taken the right steps by leaving the days of the moat in the past and moving toward building bridges. Now, institutions of higher education have an opportunity to link otherwise disconnected entities to inspire innovation and create environments where evidence-based research can be put into practice for the benefit of everyone in the community. And, university presidents can and should continue leading the charge.

Because in the LNR model *serving as a central actor* influences in both directions, this strategy will be revisited in a later section to consider the influence in the opposite direction.

Leadership influences social networks.

Creating community. As presidents discussed their strategies for *creating community*, the approaches appeared to be relative to their respective leadership styles. From walking the campus to celebrating accomplishments to setting a tone with certain values, on the surface, this strategy seemed like a stylistic consideration. Yet, the activities described by the presidents are not at the core of this strategy. The activities are the means to an end. In a study during which researchers analyzed college student reactions to a group "leader," the authors found that "leadership – as judged by followers – hinges upon an ability to turn 'me' and 'you' into 'us'" (Haslam et.al., 2001, p. 194). The "us-ness" created by the activities is at the core of *creating community*. The "us-ness" serves as an indicator that the president has built a team that will take the organization to the next level and arguably have a significant impact in the region.

While a leader certainly has the ability to create an environment and the conditions to move toward a cohesive team, *creating community* is not solely reliant on the leader. For a strong community to exist, the members of that community must be invested and agree to participate. This begs the question of how much influence any leader can really have in *creating community*? Can the motivation, inspiration and tone set by a university president honestly congeal an entire campus community, or even an entire region? Or, is this something university presidents talk about to insinuate they have influence over community in order to make it more likely to happen, a large scale version of acting "as if" will make it so.

In their book, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power*, Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2010) discuss the power of group identity and the role

leaders play in creating that shared understanding of "us." While the formation of group identity is not solely dependent upon the leader, leaders do have incredible influence in setting a tone and embedding that group identity throughout the organization. By reinforcing the "we" through speeches, mantras, and visual cues, (i.e. mascots, flags and other college spirit wear) university presidents advance their effort to create and maintain a group identity. Once achieved, the collective sense of togetherness can be harnessed to accomplish extraordinary work.

     Building trust. The reciprocal nature of trust makes it rather tentative. A formula for trust could look like: a president trusts those on campus and those on campus trust the president. Yet, the trust must exist in both directions; otherwise, there is no trust. In a dynamic environment like a college campus, there naturally will be ups and downs, meaning trust may not always exist.

     Trust, as it relates to social networks and social capital, "requires a direct connection between actors: Indirect influence of trust is tenuous at best" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, p. 349). This notion of direct connection is not consistent with the way the presidents talked about trust. The presidents interviewed talked about trust in terms of large groups of constituencies like the business community or the campus community or smaller subgroups like faculty, staff, and students. Presidents said building and maintaining trust throughout the campus and the community is important. Yet, presidents rarely have the opportunity with such large groups to establish a direct connection. However, it is possible when presidents are *being present/visible*. The requirement of a direct connection to build trust also helps to support another of the six

themes, *being present/visible*. Through that strategy, presidents are able to establish a direct connection with larger groups of people at any one given time.

One result which is of particular interest is that all eight presidents turn to their vice presidents for major decision-making. At a time when pressure is high and presidents rely on those they trust the most, these eight presidents quickly named their vice presidents. This contradicts their own comments about building trust among everyone in the organization, particularly the philosophy of listening to the input from all levels of the university. The reliance on the vice presidents could be interpreted that presidents do not trust everyone in the organization, which then causes one to wonder why those on campuses would trust their presidents.

This dynamic is explained by results from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998). Of all those on campus, the presidents have the most direct connection with the vice presidents. If trust requires the direct connection, it seems natural that those individuals with the strongest, most direct connection would be those trusted the most. Another factor to consider is the role of the vice presidents. Vice presidents are hired to advise and support the president. As a requisite and byproduct of the job, vice presidents have a level of trust with the president that others would not have.

While understandable that presidents aim to build trust with everyone on campus as well as partners in the community, it is problematic to believe the same level of trust will exist among everyone on campus as does with the vice presidents. The theory of a direct connection to build trust rings true. Perhaps making a distinction about the nuances of trust could help clarify the presidents' comments about trust.

Serving as a central actor. While *serving as a central actor* has been discussed in a previous section, it was within a different context. In the context of leadership influencing social networks, *serving as a central actor* is related to transformational leadership. Contrary to what some believe, transformational leadership is not about transforming circumstances or problems, rather it is about transforming people by the ways they work together which will, in turn, transform organizations (Bass, 2003). *Serving as a central actor* positions university presidents at the core of transformational leadership. There are four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio et.al., 1999). If a university president were to incorporate these four components into their role when connecting different entities to work together, the potential of transformation could be realized, both on their campus and regionally.

"Whereas transactional leaders manage organizations by satisfying followers' self-interest, transformational leaders inspire and stimulate followers to set aside those interests, replacing them with the collective or team purpose" (Hay, 2003). University presidents who choose to engage in transformational leadership practices reinforce the LNR model because their leadership behavior will enhance and strengthen their social network.

Differentiating the position from the person. *Differentiating the position from the person* has an overarching impact on both leadership and networks. As one of the more intriguing findings, it was unexpected to learn that this phenomenon was so pervasive with all eight presidents. Presidents described the loneliness that accompanies the position, referencing either potential friends having an agenda or a perception from

the general public of favoritism toward the potential friend. A president's behavior is never that president's own. Presidents always represent their institution no matter what time of day, nor their location. The added stress of living in a fishbowl was described as constant and exhausting. Overall, the presidents cited a number of challenges when it came to negotiating personal identity relative to the role of the president.

Constantly negotiating the dynamic of a president's own identity alongside their institutional identity is unique. In terms of social capital, Coleman (1988) argues social capital behaves for institutions just as it does for individuals. Consequently, agents, acting on behalf of their institution, create social capital for the institution, which then resides with the institution. When the agent leaves said institution, the social capital stays with the institution. Coleman, in supporting this theory, would argue that university presidents work to create social capital on behalf of their institution, and when they leave that institution the social capital does not travel with them. However, based on the brief interviews with these presidents, they would likely argue that some of the social capital does follow them. This poses an interesting question about where the social capital resides, with the institution or with the agent. Does social capital behave differently in institutions of higher education than in other institutions?

The answer to this question about social capital would provide more information in terms of the benefits and the drawbacks of the presidency. Affiliated with the theme of *differentiating the position from the person*, presidents have clearly articulated some of the drawbacks of the presidency. There must be benefits. One benefit is the salary and benefits package, although when compared to presidents around the country, public university presidents earn much less than other university presidents. Nonetheless, salary

and benefits are a draw to the presidency. Additionally, presidents likely receive some satisfaction for altruistically working to improve the quality of public higher education. Another benefit is the obvious fact that being president brings with it power and authority. One would imagine that the ego would enjoy that kind of attention and influence. But, could the nourishment of the ego really be enough to compensate for the challenges associated with the presidency? Do the benefits outweigh the costs (literally and figuratively)? At the end of this study, these questions remain unanswered.

Reciprocal nature of model. The cyclical, reciprocal nature of the LNR model inherently means it is dynamic, not static. Because of the constant movement associated with this dynamic cycle, the model has parallels to adaptive leadership. Contrary to its name, adaptive leadership is not adapting to circumstances. The hallmark of adaptive leadership is adaptive challenges, as they are called by Heifitz (1994), which are problems that have not been encountered previously and have no known solutions. Because the challenges met by presidents are frequently new and unique, particularly those specific to the LNR model, adaptive leadership is a solid fit. Adaptive leadership is not focused on the person, so it is not the president's job to discover the new solutions to the unique problems. Rather, adaptive leadership is a collaborative, learning-model approach in which those affected discover a solution together (Heifitz & Laurie, 2004). Because of this approach, the outcome is generally a positive change that is non-threatening to those creating or implementing the change (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

Implications for Leadership

Leadership styles. The literature highlighted a variety of leadership styles and approaches. The data from the presidents suggest presidents are not monolithic in their

leadership style. The president who refers to himself as an institutional hood ornament would say his leadership style is largely symbolic. Another president described his leadership style as participatory, meaning he seeks input and wants the right people at the table to assist in decision-making. Yet another president called himself a servant leader, referring to leadership as an act of service to others and to the greater good.

Additionally, individual presidents may not exclusively rely on one style; rather each president utilizes principles from multiple approaches. One president explained that when items are related to public relations, she described behavior that would clearly be categorized as transactional. Yet, in most of her other interactions, she would be considered an adaptive leader.

The lesson that comes from the various applications of the many leadership styles is that leaders should draw on many sources for their leadership. Leadership styles are tools and presidents require many different tools to do their jobs. There is no one silver bullet to solve the challenges of leadership in higher education. The context is complex and requires a complex solution. It is a powerful notion for leadership to challenge the status quo to ensure issues are being resolved at the core. Because leadership is stylistic and relative to the personality and identity of the specific leader, presidents are encouraged to "try on" leadership strategies and adopt those that resonate with their values and their identity.

Leadership-network reciprocation model. In reference to the LNR model, the impact for leadership is two-fold. First, and more obvious, leaders will benefit from recognizing the reciprocal nature between leadership behavior and social networks. Once this relationship is acknowledged, leaders can begin to act and adjust accordingly. The

second implication for leadership is the realization about what fuels the reciprocity between leadership behavior and social networks. When leaders know the fuel that propels the cycle, they will be less likely to get stuck in one spot of the cycle. Inherent in the model's construction, consistent movement through the cycle is ideal. Leaders will want to be cautious of spending too much time with any one particular strategy because it will stall the movement. Additionally, the awareness of the strategies and their impact on the cycle will help leaders continue their movement on the cycle. The key to keeping the reciprocity alive is in balancing the time and effort invested in both directions of influence.

Implications for Social Justice

Social networks. Social networks, if too insulated, can lead to a skewed perspective of one's organization. One president describes hiring someone based on recommendations from friends and colleagues with excellent credentials. This president admitted, "So coming in, before I ever had day one of working with Jamie, I already have a huge amount of confidence in her because I know the people that are suggesting her and they're really strong." In this case, the people who were suggesting the hire were making strong recommendations, not necessarily meaning the candidate is strong nor well-qualified. Yet, because of the strength of the ties within the network, the president was invested in the recommendation. While there are benefits to the trust embedded in the ties of social networks, an over-reliance on existing ties creates blind spots for all leaders, including these presidents.

The implication for social justice as related to social networks is to intentionally work for diversity in one's social network ties. Homophily is the idea that interaction

between people who are alike occurs at a higher rate than people who are not alike (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). Applied to social networks, people who are similar to one another are more likely to be connected to one another in their networks. To avoid an organization comprised of individuals who think similarly and look at the world similarly, which inevitably results in maintaining the status quo, leaders will have to intentionally work to counterbalance the natural tendency to connect with people who are like them. Furthermore, McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001) found that ties between dissimilar people dissolve at a higher rate than ties between similar individuals. Not only will leaders need to be more diligent about creating the ties with people different from them, but they will need to be deliberate about sustaining those ties.

Applied critical leadership. Applied critical leadership (ACL) combines principles from transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory, arriving at a leadership style that entails addressing issues through a critical race perspective and implementing context-specific solutions. Table 2 below outlines nine characteristics of ACL and links those characteristics to the theories upon which ACL draws.

Table 2. Characteristics of Applied Critical Leadership

		Transfor-mational Leadership	*Critical Pedagogy*	*Critical Race Theory*
1	Willingness to initiate and engage in critical conversations--often regarding race, language, culture, difference, access, and/or educational equity	X	X	X
2	Ability to choose or the assumption of a CRT lens for decision making		X	X
3	Use consensus as the preferred strategy for decision-making	X	X	
4	Particularly conscious of "stereotype threat" or fulfillment of negative stereotypes associated with historically marginalized individuals in the U.S.		X	X
5	Make empirical or research-based contributions to educational contexts, adding authentic research based information to academic discourse regarding educational equity issues		X	
6	Feel the need to honor all members of their constituencies	X	X	
7	Lead by example to meet unresolved educational needs or challenges	X	X	
8	Feel the need to build trust when working with mainstream constituents or partners or others who do not share an affinity toward issues related to educational equity		X	X
9	Describe themselves as transformative, servant leaders who work ultimately to serve the greater good	X	X	

Three of the nine characteristics were observed in this study. The presidents who participated in this study exhibited characteristics 6, 8, and 9. Characteristic 6, feeling the need to honor all members of their constituencies, was visible in the *creating community* theme. Presidents spoke of the need to celebrate the accomplishments of those at the university, consistent with this ACL characteristic. Also, community was defined by the presidents to include not only faculty, staff, and students on the university campus, but also the surrounding community, thus including all their constituencies in the strategy of *creating community*.

Characteristic 8, the need to build trust when working with mainstream constituents or partners who do not share an affinity toward issues related to educational equity, was observed in the theme *building trust*. While this study did not specifically identify building trust with "partners who do not share an affinity toward issues related to educational equity," the data showed the theme *building trust* indeed extended beyond campus into the community when presidents are working with donors and other community partners. Inevitably, during the course of their work persuading donors to support the university or partners to engage with the university, presidents are likely explaining the benefits of educational equity and the important role the university plays in such a function. Therefore, elements of *building trust* are in support of ACL characteristic 8.

The last characteristic exhibited was characteristic 9, in which presidents describe themselves as transformative, servant leaders who ultimately work to serve the greater good. This sentiment was visible in *serving as a central actor*. Many of the presidents referred to their work of connecting industry with the university or connecting two

community partners to work together is driven by their desire to see the region improve. Moreover, presidents regularly cited the benefits of providing a quality education and achieving higher graduation rates as benefits to their region and the state. These ideas certainly support the notion of serving the greater good.

While the presidents in this study displayed some of the characteristics of ACL, incorporating additional characteristics into presidential leadership will have an impact on educational equity at an institution of higher education. The resources many universities dedicate to helping underrepresented students gain access to higher education would be aided, and perhaps used more efficiently, if presidents – and other leaders at universities – employ the characteristics of ACL.

Limitations of the Study

This study provided excellent insights about the relationship between the leadership behavior and the social networks of eight public university presidents. One limitation of the study is that the data was provided through self-report from the presidents. As a result, each president may have presented the information to convey both themselves and their institution in a more positive light than is actually the case.

Another limitation to this study is that it focused on only one aspect of the presidency, the role of relationships, in the experience of eight public university presidents. While this allowed for in-depth analysis about these particular presidents and about that aspect of presidencies, this study is not generalizable to other presidents nor to the university presidency.

A third limitation is the potential bias from the sponsor. Because this study employed sponsorship sampling and relied on a sponsor to gain access to the participants,

any biases the sponsor has could have skewed the types of presidents interviewed. This bias is unknown and therefore difficult to mitigate.

Finally, the last potential bias is the positionality of the researcher. Because the researcher is an administrator at a public university who reports to that university's president, there are inherently potential biases like trying to please presidents and gain their satisfaction, as well as the inclination to have public higher education, and its leaders, be successful in their endeavors.

Areas for Future Research

Many questions still linger around the theme *differentiating the position from the person*. Of all the themes that emerged from this study, *differentiating the position from the person* was the most unexpected. Perhaps this is the case because of the personal and private nature of the topics discussed in this theme. Or, it might be the mysteriousness that prevails regarding how presidents actually navigate the overlap and conflict between the presidential identity and their own identity. Such intrigue makes this theme is a prime opportunity for further research.

Current and future presidents, along with all leaders, could benefit from expanding the understanding of the interplay between presidents' personal identity and their institutional role. For example, what is the role of the presidential spouse and what impact does that have on the president's leadership? Does a president lead differently if the individual lives in a presidential house on campus versus off campus? What is the role of presidents previous work and their prior professional identity? If they were a faculty member, does their discipline have an impact? Is there a difference in their leadership depending on other pieces of their identity like race, gender, sexual

orientation, religion, etc? These questions related to a president's identity were not explored in this study, but would help us better understand the dynamic between their personal identity and their role as the head of an institution.

Another area for continued study is the role of power in the presidency. For this study, power was framed in terms of a relationship. While this provided some insight about the power that comes from increased ties and trust, there are still unanswered questions about the benefits and costs of being a president. Examining the costs and benefits of the position through the lens of power potentially could be meaningful as there are other definitions of power that could uncover more about the presidential experience.

One last area for future research lies in the diversity of one's network. With the results from McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001), like attracting like is real. This reality begs the question about how people, particularly leaders, work against the natural tendency to be connected to those who are similar. There is an opportunity to explore strategies that can be used to create and sustain ties with people who are different. With exploration, a discovery could show how to create robust organizations with a variety of perspectives, lively discussion, spirited debate, and dissenting thought, where all would be appreciated rather than admonished. Arguably, insights about such an organization would be interesting to many presidents and other leaders alike.

Conclusion

This study provided clarity about the reciprocal relationship between the leadership behavior and the social networks of eight public university presidents. As a result of this inquiry, other leaders can benefit from the awareness that a delicate balance

is required to keep the reciprocity between leadership and networks alive. Also, six themes, or strategies, were identified for how these presidents have successfully built relationships, which can now be replicated by others. With this knowledge, existing and future university presidents, along with other leaders, have these additional resources to assist them in their leadership journey.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. From your point of view, how would you describe the role of a university president?

2. What is your vision for your campus? What are your priorities?
    a. At this point in the lifecycle of your campus, what are the next natural steps for how your university will evolve?

3. Talk a little about your leadership style.
    a. Which leadership strategies have proven most successful in achieving your vision?
    b. Which leadership strategies have you tried that didn't work so well?

4. In terms of your leadership practice, what role do relationships play?
    a. In a typical week, how much time is devoted to maintaining and building those relationships?
    b. Share an example of a relationship that has contributed to your success as a leader and how it did so.

5. In terms of decision-making, how do you approach decisions that are critical to putting your university more on the map?

6. Which groups of people do you rely on most for major decision making?
    a. Which constituency groups do you rely on in order to accomplish your priorities and achieve your vision?
    b. In what ways do you build relationships with those people?
    c. What is it about those relationships that work so well?
    d. What is it about those relationships that make the work challenging?

7. What strategies have you used to keep good relationships with faculty, staff, and students? Are those strategies different and, if so, how?   Can you give some specific examples?

8. In five years, what would you like your legacy to be? What mark do you want to leave?

9. What piece of info that you know now do you wish you would have known before?

10. If you were asked to mentor a brand new university president, what advice – in terms of important relationships – would you give the new president?

11. We have covered a lot of ground. Are there any questions I should have asked you that I didn't in getting a "feel" for being a president of a CSU?

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