2006

A Quest for a Grand Theory of Leadership

J. Thomas Wren
University of Richmond, twren@richmond.edu

Recommended Citation

1.   A quest for a grand theory of leadership

J. Thomas Wren

What happens when a collection of scholars from differing disciplines comes together to create a grand theory of leadership? This is the question philosopher Joanne B. Ciulla came to identify as particularly intriguing as a group of academics assembled to attempt precisely that. Although the substantive challenges of creating a grand theory of leadership had always been the group's focus, it gradually dawned on the participants that *how* they were going about the task of coming together across disciplines to create an integrated product was as significant as *what* they were creating. Political scientist Georgia Sorenson noted that 'there is a *process* and a *product* here. We need to write about the reflective process' as well.[1] Similarly, in the throes of a particularly difficult debate over foundational assumptions, Joanne Ciulla commented: 'Perhaps we could show what it's like to be in a group of people trying to do this and what it is like to do it: to watch people struggling with this intellectual [challenge].'[2] Or, as Ciulla later phrased it, 'A paper on what happened when leadership scholars tried to create a unified theory might be more interesting and useful to the field than one on [the] unified theory [itself].'[3] The substantive output of the academics engaged in this initiative is an important contribution, and is presented in this volume. This opening chapter, however, purports to trace the challenges and achievements of the process itself. In doing so, it also illustrates the pitfalls and potential of a multidisciplinary field such as leadership studies.

BEGINNINGS: CALL AND RESPONSE

In November, 2001, Pulitzer Prize-winning leadership scholar James MacGregor Burns convened an interdisciplinary group of leadership scholars at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, Virginia. The academics hailed from three universities with established leadership programs: the University of Richmond, the University of Maryland at College Park, and Williams College. Disciplines represented included political science, psychology, philosophy, communications studies, history, public administration, anthropology,

and religion. Since that beginning the group has expanded significantly, and currently numbers 25 scholars and practitioners from a dozen institutions.[4]

At that November meeting, Burns outlined his vision. In the description provided by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in a later article on the venture, Burns expressed his desire to 'provide people studying or practicing leadership with a general guide or orientation – a set of principles that are universal which can be then adapted to different situations.'[5] In short, Burns desired, in his term, a 'general theory of leadership.' He also articulated a related objective, which was to 'legitimize a field that some skeptics still dismiss as lightweight and ill-defined... . We are intent,' said Burns, 'on making [leadership studies] an intellectually responsible discipline.'[6]

Two fellow scholars joined Burns in launching the project: George 'Al' Goethals of Williams College and Georgia Sorenson of the University of Maryland and the Jepson School. These three became the governing 'troika' of the group, and project leaders. Their first task was to establish the parameters of the project. Sorenson expanded upon both the need for the project and the proposed approach the group should take. 'I believe we urgently need to understand and to communicate what we know about leadership,' she began. She cited leadership scholar Jerry Hunt, who stated: 'What is missing, in addition to quantity of theoretical formulations or models is a "grand" or generalized theory of leader–subordinate relationships – if such a theoretical development is possible.' Likewise, Sorenson quoted Ralph Stodgill's assertion that 'the endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership.'[7] Sorenson remarked with confidence that 'in time, there will be a general theory of leadership,' citing the successful examples of the general theory of relativity and successes in the fields of economics and criminology. 'But whether this is possible or not,' she concluded her charge to the assembled scholars, 'it is certainly incumbent upon us to better integrate what we already know.'[8]

Sorenson coupled her call for a general theory with a vision as to how the scholars might go about achieving it. 'A General Theory of Leadership Project,' she elaborated, 'would have, for me, features of the Genome Project – a "hot group" whose task is a careful construction of what is known, an identification of what is not known and needs to be known, an accounting of ideas/variables that are in dispute or contradictory, and some hard thinking about how it all hangs together. In short, we would be building a leadership DNA.' Sorenson also called for a second group to conduct meta-analyses of existing literature to feed to the Leadership Genome Group.[9] In the tradition of the 'hot group,' she envisioned the creation of 'a group that will hole up in a place for a long time until we come up with a general theory.'[10]

With Burns, Goethals, and Sorenson having given the call for the construction of a general theory of leadership, the next several months were given over to

the responses of the scholars, in the form of an exchange of papers. As might be predicted from a group of academics, particularly one as multidisciplinary as this, the rejoinders were widely disparate and sometimes contradictory, but each represented a reasoned response to this notion of a general theory that was to extend beyond disciplines to structure an entire field of academic endeavor. Approaching these position papers with analytical care, it is possible to identify several key issues that would continue to engage the group over the coming months and years. These initial debates among group members reveal both the challenges and the possibilities of such multidisciplinary undertakings.

To be sure, the very idea of a general theory met with some skepticism. 'I find the idea of a general theory of leadership Quixotic,' wrote philosopher Ciulla. 'I have no inclination to work on developing one, but I am curious about why some of my distinguished colleagues think we should.'[11] All the scholars who had reservations, however – including Ciulla – presented cogent reasoning to buttress their concerns, often with specific recommendations for ways to circumvent the perceived difficulty. The ensuing debate energized the initiative. It is worthwhile, then, to parse out the issues upon which the academics seemed to divide.

One of the foundational issues was the very idea of an integrative theory. Although by their very participation in the project all members were committed to the possibility of integration at some level, there was debate among those who favored integration along the lines of the Burns/Goethals/Sorenson vision and those who advocated the advantages of retaining the 'let a thousand flowers bloom' approach more characteristic of the current multidisciplinary field of leadership studies. This tension between an integrated, unitary articulation of leadership and an approach that argued for a more diverse conceptualization would become one of the permanent fault lines of the project, and presaged what could very roughly be labeled a divide between the approaches of the humanities and the social sciences. The remarkable thing was not that there were such divisions, which were predictable and perhaps inevitable, but that the scholars determined to persevere despite the differences. That is part of this tale. First, however, it is important to stake out the concerns.

Douglas A. Hicks, a scholar whose work spans the disciplines of religious studies and economics, made the case for a more inclusive approach by citing the experiences of those two disciplines. In the field of economics 'there exists one predominant general theory of economic systems and behavior,' posited Hicks. That general theory is 'the standard neo-classical model ... [that] largely corresponds to the practice of free-market capitalism.' This unitary capitalistic paradigm excludes all competing conceptualizations. In contrast to the '"true way" in economics,' continued Hicks, 'there is no one clear methodology or general theory in the study of religion.... . Approaches vary widely; sometimes they are complementary and sometimes contradictory.' Hicks then made a spe-

cific application of his argument to the matter at hand: 'It should be clear by now,' he wrote, 'that debates about the meaning of prevailing methodologies, or general theories of a field are not exclusive to leadership studies.' Given the present state of the field of leadership studies, he concluded, 'it does not seem either possible or preferable to design a general theory of leadership that determines who is out and who is within a discipline – as has happened in economics. Rather, the religious studies model of emphasizing disciplinary approaches – and how they can be incorporated in a boundary-crossing conversation – seems the more promising way to go.' Hicks went on to propose a better approach: 'I recommend that we consider proceeding in terms of mapping parallel disciplinary approaches to leadership... . This does not require denying that common elements of leadership processes exist across contexts,' he conceded, 'but it does not settle the question before we start. It also takes an inclusive view of who can fit in the tent of leadership studies and it invites us to move beyond the definitional questions to substantive matters.'[12]

As Hicks's final comments made clear, there was nothing in this criticism that implied that the efforts of the group were of little worth; quite the contrary. Joanne Ciulla took a similar tack, and elaborated upon the rationale for a more inclusive and diverse approach. Drawing upon her knowledge of the philosophy of science, she cited the writings of Inre Lakatos, who had opposed Thomas Kuhn's rather linear conceptualization of scientific revolutions. According to Lakatos, 'a field of knowledge does not need everyone working under one paradigm to advance... . There is nothing wrong with a field has a number of research projects going on that work from differing paradigms.'[13] Somewhat similar to Hicks, Ciulla proposed a different approach. 'I don't think we should be developing a theory, but rather looking at what we already have and thinking about how to put the pieces together.' What is needed is 'a serious discussion of the state of the field and how we might help pull it together, not under one theory, but as a web of approaches and perspectives and problems that constitute leadership studies.'[14]

Other scholars evinced concern for anything that tended to reinforce the dispersed state of the field. James MacGregor Burns lamented the fact that 'the study of leadership has become fragmented and some would say even trivialized.' The proposal to create a general theory of leadership is 'an attempt to bring some sort of order to the field.'[15] Others applauded the effort to achieve some sort of synthesis. Richard A. Couto agreed that 'as the field of leadership studies develops, some scholarship will have to devote effort to a synthesis of theories,'[16] while Burns suggested that 'for some time now students of leadership have been working toward a theory of leadership that is more integrated and inclusive and yet applicable and "practical," without sacrificing rigor and depth.'[17] The 'General Theory of Leadership Project' [GTOL], as it came to be called, was merely an extension of this salutary development.

In reflecting upon this series of exchanges, the ultimate tension was not a matter of clear-cut support or opposition to a general theory of leadership so much as it was a debate over the impact of setting boundaries. As anthropologist Elizabeth A. Faier phrased it, 'We have some boundary issues [that involve the question] "what counts as leadership?"' In making integrative decisions, some ideas and approaches will inevitably be excluded. 'What are we going to exclude?' was, to Faier, the troubling question.[18] Philosopher Terry L. Price expanded upon the essence of the concern. In his initial reaction to the project, Price thought 'that an integrated theory of leadership was an interesting, but, ultimately doomed project. Because particular disciplines are not themselves integrated,' he continued, 'any effort to integrate work on leadership from the various disciplines would involve assuming away important substantive questions... . Accordingly, parties to the project would be at risk of sacrificing the intellectual value of truth to the intellectual value of integration.'[19]

This did not mean that a resolution of the tension was not possible. Price, who had posed perhaps the most cogent rationale against integration, eventually converted to a more optimistic stance. 'I begin with a confession,' he wrote in the second round of papers. 'Since writing for the last set of papers, I've changed my basic view of the endeavor.' His earlier concerns about the dangers of integration had not disappeared, but 'although I still think this risk exists, our discussions have led me to believe that it is significantly less threatening than I originally thought.' Price thought that it might indeed be possible to integrate the insights of multiple disciplines, although the result could be 'we might end up with more than one reasonable, internally consistent theory of leadership.' But 'this need not strike us as a problematic outcome.'[20] Price, in essence, was able to perceive a result that allowed integration yet still respected differences. Douglas A. Hicks reached his own truce with the issue by envisioning a broad model of leadership. 'Leadership is richest when we create space, instead of setting boundaries,' he said. '[We] need a theory that allows for conflict; that creates space for it.'[21] Thus, out of this foundational conflict came what would become one of the strengths of the project: a theoretical conceptualization that aspired to embrace a multitude of approaches to leadership. Although these tensions remain and have not been fully resolved, progress has been made.

A somewhat parallel foundational discussion centered on the nature of theory, a discussion that elucidated some of the contrasting disciplinary approaches and assumptions of social scientists and humanists. Indeed, the term 'theory,' and in particular the term 'general theory' – even though that became a part of the moniker of the group – occasioned no little debate and even some consternation. From the very outset, then, there was some ambiguity regarding the nature of the ultimate product of the group.

In her opening presentation to the group, project leader Georgia Sorenson posed the challenge in traditional theoretical terms. In a section entitled 'A Brief

Reminder of the Parameters of Theory,' Sorenson, quoting social scientists Chester Schriesheim and Steven Kerr, noted that, 'at least from a social science perspective, "a theory should first have internal consistency; that is, its propositions should be free from contradiction. Second, a theory should have external consistency; that is, it should be consistent with observations. Third, it must be ... stated so that its predictions can be verified. Finally a practical theory should have the attribute of scientific parsimony."' Elaborating further, Sorenson defined a 'general theory' as 'a metaview – one in which theories and their parts are imbedded.'[22]

On the other hand, James MacGregor Burns, although he selected the term 'general theory of leadership' as the group's objective, made statements that appeared to belie a strict reading of the term. In his opening communication to the scholars, he expressed interest in exploring 'the analytical possibilities of the study of leadership that could [at] least provide "principles of leadership" for a leadership 101 class, just as one expects to learn the principles of physics or chemistry in an introductory course.' He appeared to acknowledge that the efforts of the group might 'only be a preface to more integrated theories of leadership. As we work toward that goal,' he continued, 'we can at least try to work out some generalizations on leadership.'[23]

This ambiguity as to desired outcome continued through the ensuing discussions. For their part, the academic participants differed concerning what the term 'theory' might mean for purposes of this project. In an early discussion, this notion of theory engendered uncertainty as to whether it meant, for the group, a traditional social science perspective, or some more 'Proustian' approach. As the philosopher Terry Price pointed out, 'This raises a deeper question to begin with: in the end, we come from our own disciplines. The question of *what is theory* is determined by this.'[24] Political scientist Richard Couto added, 'the importance of theory varies among the disciplines that contribute to the study of leadership, and the nature of theory varies among the disciplines that hold it to be important.'[25] And so it proved.

Predictably perhaps, social scientists and humanists viewed both the nature of theory and its value differently. Couto outlined the essential nature of the social science approach when he wrote that 'in general, the social sciences hold steadfastly to hopes of theories that, like those of the natural sciences, will explain phenomena and enable social scientists to predict them as well.'[26] And Frederic M. Jablin, a scholar in communication studies, was close to his social scientific roots when he urged the group to be precise in its approach. 'Although I am hopeful as to our ability to develop an integrative theory,' he wrote, 'I do have concerns ... about our work. First, I am still unsure as to whether or not we have a common understanding of "theory" (e.g., axiomatic theory, grounded theory, mid-range theories)... .'[27] Jablin went so far as to suggest that if the group was serious about constructing a legitimate theory, it should hire a con-

sultant to 'present a primer on theory building to help frame what theory looks like.'[28]

Others in the group, primarily humanists, resisted the social science perspective. Joanne B. Ciulla, a philosopher, remarked: 'Perhaps I have been misinterpreting the phrase "general theory of leadership." To my ears it sounds restrictive and unrealistic, given the nature of leadership as a phenomena.... . Leadership, unlike physics, is about human behavior, which does not lend itself to deductions from a theoretical system.'[29] Another suggested in the initial discussion that 'solutions may come from other than traditional ways of looking at theory.'[30]

Again, the challenge the group faced was how to reconcile a difference in perspective. And again, the members of the group demonstrated a willingness to make the attempt. Social scientist Frederic M. Jablin, for instance, had initially questioned 'whether or not what we are shooting for as an outcome is a "theory" or something else.' However, he also went on to say 'I'm OK with "something else," but I would like for us all to have a common understanding of that outcome.'[31] Unfortunately, Jablin's call for a specific resolution of the nature of theory for purposes of the group's work was not heeded. Subsequent group activities suggest, however, that the resolution has been in favor of a broader, more humanistic approach.

The discussion of the nature of theory generated also a critique by some members of the group of the assumptions that apparently underlay the project. Specifically, these scholars questioned the validity of the assumption of linearity that seemed to undergird the theoretical discussion. This line of criticism seemed to stem from two distinct rationales. The first simply argued that the process of leadership was too complex to capture in any sort of linear model or theory. This usually took the form of advocacy for some sort of systems approach. Joanne Ciulla was one who championed this sort of approach. Early on, she posed the question: 'Can we look at it from a systems perspective?' This might capture subtleties that 'theories exclude.' 'If we look at it from systems theory,' she reasoned, 'we can learn a great deal about how to make connections and inferences.'[32] This criticism of traditional theoretical approaches, it would seem, was not particularly devastating to the project. As Frederic Jablin noted, while a systems approach is nonlinear, it remains a process model of leadership.[33] In any event, James MacGregor Burns seemed amenable to proceeding along these lines, if it suited the will of the group. 'Leadership,' he said, 'lends itself to a systems approach.'[34]

Other members of the group posed a more fundamental critique of traditional notions of theory as framing an understanding of the world, one that struck at the heart of the idea of an *a priori* theoretical framework. Anthropologist Elizabeth Faier articulated this position most forcefully. To Faier, the very idea of some universal theory of leadership was problematic. To begin with, there was a difficulty with any conceptualization of universalism. While admitting 'we

[must] seek out ways to "make sense" ... ,' nevertheless 'to fully understand the ways in which leadership unfolds means that we have to recognize the limitations and positionality of "making sense."' Moreover, in addition to the fallacy that there is only one, unitary, perspective to be had, Faier also rejected the notion that the leadership relation could ever be conceived of as static. To Faier, 'leadership ... is a process wholly dependent on human action, local problems, social structures, history, and systems of beliefs, values, and symbols... . [E]mbracing static models obscures the changes that occur within cultural systems, individual acts of agency, and social practices of leadership... .' Finally, Faier argued, traditional theory does not allow for the dynamics of identity formation. 'Leadership,' she suggested, 'stems from and plays into identity formation. ... Bypassing the impact of the multiple, overlapping, and competing levels of leader and follower identities (age, gender, race, nation, community, etc.) ignores fundamental elements of the human tradition.'[35]

Richard Couto also depicted a postmodern conceptualization of theory. Having explained the rational and scientific approaches of social scientists, he described other scholars who 'distance themselves from an effort to "reduce" human events to science altogether or to outdated paradigms of the natural sciences. Among the latter group of post-modern [scholars],' Couto asserted, 'the effort to find a general theory of leadership smacks of a quixotic Enlightenment-era quest promoted by a Newtonian scientific view of a mechanical universe. Some members of this group,' he continued, 'would assert that if there is a general theory of leadership, it will flow from new post-Newtonian natural scenarios, which emphasize systems and probability.' Even that may be asking too much of some, for 'the group divides along the line of whether or not general theories are possible.'[36]

For his part, Couto set about the task of suggesting how such an approach might look. He began with a traditional 'Analytical Framework of Leadership,' complete with matrix. But this was clearly insufficient. 'If only the study and conduct of leadership were as easy or neat as a set of straight lines and boxes!' Couto wrote. He then transformed it into a 'Dynamic Model of Leadership,' but, as he explained it, 'moving leadership from the straight lines of the printed page to actual day to day experience means moving to a dynamic system of interrelated parts and subsystems of constant change without clear boundaries – a fractal, not a chart... .' Thus, 'all the elements of leadership and their components swirl in interrelated activity and in ever-changing patterns of all the factors of the framework, analogous to the activity at the subatomic level of matter.' This model was sufficiently complex that it 'unfortunately cannot be placed on paper,' although the reader was given a link to 'An Animated Model of Quantum Leadership.'[37]

Clearly, the above critiques of linearity in thinking about leadership, if accepted, have varying degrees of impact upon the group's output. As suggested

above, systems thinking, while an important departure, can still be more or less incorporated into traditional ways of thinking about leadership. The epistemic and constructivist criticisms, and certainly the quantum view of leadership theory, are less easy to reconcile. Ultimately, the GTOL group has not passed judgment one way or the other; one will find elements of the competing views in subsequent chapters of this volume. Tensions such as this have generated some argument for substituting multiple narratives of leadership for an integrated approach. The nature of this debate within the group will be addressed later in this chapter.

Although the above analysis has identified the most serious challenges to a general theory of leadership that the responding academics posed, it does not exhaust the cautions and concerns that various scholars expressed. These can be treated more briefly.

Related to the earlier discussion of integration is the 'is/ought' paradox; that is, the tension between descriptive approaches to theory and prescriptive or normative ones. Philosopher Terry Price identified this concern. According to Price, 'pure descriptivists of the empiricist ilk might claim that there is nothing on the other side of the divide.' On the other hand, while 'pure prescriptivists will hardly deny the place of the descriptive enterprise, ... they might fail to acknowledge its relevance to the task they have set for themselves, viz., discovering how leaders and followers should behave.' It is possible, argued Price, that the 'is/ought gap' is just too great for a general theory to straddle. 'Unfortunately,' he went on, 'what we understand to be the nature of their interaction may ultimately depend on our pre-theoretical assumptions ... about the interface of descriptive and prescriptive considerations.' If true, this could have serious consequences for the project. 'My guess, then,' continued Price, 'is that the nature of interplay between the prescriptive and descriptive components of leadership is significantly more complex than much of the literature lets on. This does not bode particularly well for a general theory of leadership,' because 'insofar as the project of coming up with a general theory of leadership takes for granted that real integration is warranted, it unjustifiably privileges some pre-theoretical options over others.' Price saw only one solution. 'To do justice to important intellectual values in addition to the value of integration, our general theory will have to make room for the full range of pre-theoretical positions with respect to the interface between the descriptive and ... prescriptive sides of the subject of inquiry.'[38]

While Price concerned himself with pre-theoretical assumptions, Frederic Jablin weighed in with concerns about the levels of analysis to be employed. 'I hope that as we proceed we consider the applicability of our work in terms of "micro" (e.g., dyadic, interactional) as well as "macro" (e.g., culture and structures) levels of analysis and in terms of everyday/mundane as well as extraordinary contexts and processes. ... I fear we lean toward the macro and

the extraordinary in our discussions of leadership and do not fully consider that our ideas need to translate to lower levels of analysis (dyads, groups) as well as to "ordinary"/mundane leadership contexts.'[39]

Still others had more general cautions to convey. Elizabeth Faier, an anthropologist, was concerned that non-Western perspectives might get short shrift.[40] She urged the group members to 'move ... beyond simplistic categorical and definitive notions of leadership that are not applicable to non-Western contexts.' Similarly, Faier cautioned that 'Leadership theorized within different cultural and historical venues must take difference and change into account; I have doubts,' she concluded, 'as to whether an integrative theory could make room not only for group variance but such changes in cultural systems.'[41] In another vein, Price urged the group to recognize also that its theorizing about leadership would inevitably 'raise important ethical questions.' Creating a leadership theory will necessarily involve a prescriptive aspect, Price argued, and this 'focus on moral leadership, and its analysis, will tell us something about not only what ends ought to be pursued but also what constitutes their ethical pursuit.'[42]

There were, then, a number of important concerns. caveats, and cautions voiced by the scholars in response to Burns, Goethals, and Sorenson's call for an integrated theory of leadership. In the ensuing months and years (as we shall see), some were addressed and resolved, others rejected, and still others simply ignored. But before we continue the narration of this quest for a general theory of leadership, it is important to acknowledge that the response to the initial call for such a theory yielded more than skepticism. Several scholars embraced the challenge, and produced initial papers that sought to move the enterprise forward. A summary of these, and their implications for the project, is in order.

Not surprisingly, several of the scholars looked to their own disciplines for insight. Social psychologist Zachary Green sought to explain leadership as a part of a group phenomenon. 'Leadership,' he argued, 'is a function of the group. Beyond person or process, leadership is an expression of the actions or intentions of a human collective. Without the group, leadership remains in the realm of the potential... .'[43] Another psychologist, Al Goethals, asserted that 'perhaps the most important argument is to place more focus on the emotional and psychological bonds between leaders and followers, and to understand how these dynamics combine with other factors, especially cognitive factors, to produce leadership.'[44] He proceeded to cite classic psychological studies such as those by Sigmund Freud and by French and Raven, as well as studies of the persuasion process and cognitive dissonance theory.

Elizabeth Faier also turned to her home discipline of anthropology for insight, but with considerable caution. She acknowledged that traditional anthropological studies had much to offer the understanding of leadership. 'Anthropology studies leadership,' she wrote, 'as social structure, social practice, and a component of culturally specific phenomena such as kinship, authority and power,

prestige, legal and economic systems, symbols, culture change, and identity formation.' But there were also significant difficulties posed by the anthropological approach. For one thing, 'one characteristic of anthropological research is that data drive theory rather than data prove a hypothesis – this obviously poses a great challenge to the incorporation of anthropology into an integrative theory.' Moreover, as was discussed earlier in Faier's challenge to a linear theory of leadership, modern anthropology tends to take a constructivist approach to knowledge. As Faier put it, 'anthropologists are not only intimately involved with the collection of data but also with its construction.' Still and all, Faier argued that an anthropological approach holds out great hopes for the better understanding of leadership. 'I would like to suggest,' she concluded, 'that anthropology's contribution extends beyond case studies into ways we can theorize the relationship among leadership, social practice, and cultural logic. Moreover, linking leadership to broader questions of how people negotiate structure and agency or to the relationship between the individual and society would enable a "thicker" examination of leadership processes... .'[45]

It is useful to pause here and consider the implications of these disciplinary references. By grounding their papers in their respective disciplines, these scholars implicitly adopted the stance of advocating the development of leadership theory from a multidisciplinary perspective. It was, in a sense, a reprise of the earlier debate about the risks of attempting to achieve an integrative theory. There, it will be recalled, some group members argued that too much would be lost by integration or, as some phrased it, drawing boundaries. Douglas A. Hicks, whose arguments were cited in the earlier analysis, made the strongest statement for this multidisciplinary approach. Drawing upon his specialty of religious studies, Hicks noted that 'the field of religious studies is divided [much like leadership studies] along methodological, even disciplinary lines. The phenomena of religion are studied via anthropological, historical, sociological, philosophical, theological, and even literary-critical methodologies.' Given this state of affairs, Hicks reflected upon his probable response if just such an integrative task were presented to his home academic field. 'If I, as a scholar of religion,' he wrote, 'were called upon to produce a General Theory of Religion, I would think first in terms of these disciplinary approaches. I would refuse to prioritize some universal theory.... While there are points of tension and possible contradiction among such views, they illuminate different dimensions... .'[46]

Yet despite the strong arguments of those among the group who supported a multidisciplinary approach, there proved to be undoubted complications arising from the fact that scholars from many disciplines were involved. Because this became a reality with which the group would consistently struggle, it is worthy of brief mention here. As Richard Couto put it, 'the problem is not with inclusiveness but with the conflicting nature of disciplines in interdisciplinary study and of clashing paradigms within disciplines.'[47] Although it

oversimplifies the matter, it is useful to think of the problem in terms of two camps: the social scientists and the humanists. Joanne Ciulla framed this debate well. She cited C.P. Snow's comment that there are 'two cultures' of scholars. 'In Snow's day,' Ciulla explained, 'they were the humanities and the natural sciences. Today the split is between the humanities and the social sciences.' Returning to Snow's remarks, he noted that these two categories of scholars represented 'two groups – comparable in intelligence, identical in race ... who had ceased to communicate.'[48] Ciulla went on to cite also 'the philosopher Carl Hempel [who] offers insight into why it is so difficult to fit together research from different disciplines.' Hempel focused not on methodology so much as he did the differing contributions provided by the scholarly camps. Hempel 'argues that the role of empirical science is to describe the world, but we also need to explain and understand it.' Ciulla then provided her own typology of the scholarly world: 'Description is generally done by social scientists, explanation by historians, anthropologists, religious scholars, etc., and critical analysis by philosophers.'[49]

The collection of insights set out above reveals the Gordian knot set out before the assembled scholars. As Ciulla makes clear, all the tribes of the scholarly community have something important to offer this bold attempt to portray leadership. On the other hand, as Snow and several of the debates outlined above suggest, there are real and substantive differences among scholars in terms of assumptions, focus, and methodology. Fortunately, the GTOL group never reached the stage of non-communication perceived by Snow. Indeed, the entire process has been marked by remarkable openness among the participants. Nonetheless, the differences among the disciplines have remained among the most intractable of the challenges facing those seeking a general theory of leadership.

Finally, in our analytical tour of the responses by the academicians to the call for a general theory of leadership, some of the group members responded to the initial charge by submitting proposed models or narratives of leadership intended to serve as the first step toward the creation of a grand theory. These scholars accepted the call for a general theory as a valid – albeit intimidating – task for a group of interdisciplinary scholars to undertake.

J. Thomas Wren, for example, first created a 'Periodic Table of Leadership,' in which he attempted to locate and classify 'as many approaches to leadership,' said Wren, 'as I could recollect.' (See Figure 1.1 as an example of this integrative approach).This typology, he wrote, 'goes beyond ... leadership theory per se, and seeks to include what might be called the "liberal arts" approaches to leadership, as well as some of the more recent qualitative models.' Having attempted to portray the universe of leadership studies in an organized way, Wren proceeded to outline what he called a 'Process Model' of leadership that began with an 'initiating event,' followed by 'constituent response,' and so on through

I CONTEXTUAL

Hi Historical Approaches
Cu Cultural Approaches
Cc Cross-cultural
Di Diversity Approaches
Od Organizational Design
Gr Gender Approaches

II INDIVIDUAL

	Tt Trait Theory	Ps Personality Approaches		Mo Motivation Theory	Py Psychological Approaches		St Self Leadership
A. Trait	Bv Behavior Theory	Ob Organizational Behavior					
B. Behavioral	Im Implicit Theory	At Attribution Theory		Ch Charismatic Theory	Ld Leader Development		
C. Cognitive	F Follower Approaches	Ro Role Theory					

III PROCESS

	Cy Contingency Theory	Si Situational Theory	De Decision Theory	Pg Path-Goal Theory		Cr Conflict Resolution	Au Authority Issues
A. Contingency	Ic Idiosyncasy Credits	Lm Leader/Member Exchange	Tr Transactional Leadership				
B. Transactional	Po Power Approaches	Co Communication Theory	In Influence Approaches	Gp Group Process	De Democratic Theory	Pr Participatory Approaches	Aw Adaptive Work
	Ls Leader Substitutes	St Strategic Approaches	Tm Team LDSF	Vi Vision Approaches	Sy Systems Theory		

IV NORMATIVE

Ci Citizen Leader	Il Instrumental Approaches
Sr Servant Leader	Tl Transformational Leadership
E Ethical Theory	Tg Transforming Leadership
Va Values Approaches	Cg Change Theory
Rv Revolutionary Approaches	

V METHOD

Qu Quantitative Method
Ql Qualitative Method
Pb Problem-Based
Ar Action Research

Figure 1.1   Periodic table of leadership studies

13

leader emergence, policy debate, outcome, implementation, and feedback loop. Wren then placed upon a diagram of his model 'the abbreviations from the Periodic Table to suggest some of the approaches to leadership that might be most relevant to each particular stage of the model.' Whether the model itself was valid was less important to Wren than the fact that he had attempted to create 'a model of the leadership process demonstrating how the disparate approaches to leadership might be integrated into a coherent intellectual structure.' From that, believed Wren, could come a coherent theory of leadership.[50]

Gill Robinson Hickman, a scholar of public administration, similarly articulated a model of the leadership process that began with a need for action, followed by a recognition of purpose, communication, concurrence and willingness to participate, and, finally, collective action.[51] So, too, did political scientist Richard Couto propose a model of leadership. 'The field of leadership studies,' he asserted, 'has work to do to create models of direct and deliberate democratic leadership. This paper explains how this might be done within a synthesis of recent leadership scholarship that amounts to a general theory of leadership.' Then, drawing from the works of James MacGregor Burns, Howard Gardner, and Ronald Heifetz, Couto discussed the role of narratives in leadership, the range of values in democratic discourse, and the concept of adaptive work.[52]

Finally, James MacGregor Burns himself contributed an elegant narrative of leadership 'As a process leadership begins, in my view, with palpable human wants and needs that can be broadly generalized. Potential leaders ... respond to these wants and legitimize them as *needs* deserving of recognition and response... . Conflict arises out of the competition of people for economic and psychological satisfactions.' Then, 'as basic needs for food and shelter are met, people develop hope for the satisfaction of "higher" needs.' As Burns summed it up, 'the clues to the mystery of leadership lie ... in a powerful equation: embattled values grounded in real wants, invigorated by conflict, empower leaders and activated followers to fashion deep and comprehensive change in the lives of people.' To this process 'leaders bring their own resources, including their skills, into play as they reflect the underlying forces. They recognize and articulate the wants and needs, mobilize supporters, sharpen conflict, fashion new agreements among participants, innovate creative outcomes that transcend the original parameters of conflict and – always – strengthen and elevate the whole process by bringing to bear the most exacting moral criteria.'[53]

Faced with such a plethora of responses to the call for the creation of a general theory of leadership, the group considered several possible alternatives. The first and most obvious one was to throw in the towel, write the experience off as a 'learning' one, and proclaim that the time was not yet ripe – if ever it would be – for the creation of a general theory of leadership. It is a testament to the group's goodwill and dedication to the mutual endeavor that no one seriously put this possibility forward. A second alternative, one quite familiar to academics, was

to continue to argue over the issues, imitating Grant, who once said 'I am prepared to fight along this line if it takes all summer.' This would have led to many fascinating discussions, but would, in all probability, have proved fruitless. The General Theory of Leadership group chose a third alternative, one suggested by project leader Georgia Sorenson. Referring to her observations of university politics, Sorenson noted that members of academe often adopt a fiction. 'Some universities operate as ... an "as if" organization. As faculty, we participate *as if* students and learning are paramount, *as if* faculty had a voice, and *as if* administrators are not judged by capital campaigns.'[54] This became known to the group as the *as if condition*. As Terry Price articulated it, 'Our modus operandi [should] be one of acting "as if." That is to say that we should act as if it were possible to integrate what the various disciplines have to say about leadership.'[55] In sum, the assembled scholars agreed to put aside their quite real reservations and differences on some of the fundamental issues, and to move forward together in a continuing discussion of leadership, with open minds and willing attitudes. And so the work on a general theory of leadership continued.

A considerable amount of space has been devoted to a portrayal of the amalgam of skepticism, fundamental differences in approach, and positive proposals for going forward that greeted the initial proposal that a group of scholars from multiple disciplines should create a general theory of leadership. This level of detail appears justified in a chapter which seeks to portray the intellectual challenges of the creation of such a grand theory. The analysis of the ensuing stages of the work of the GTOL group can be somewhat more condensed, as the scholars, for the most part, adhered to the *as if condition* and suppressed the sort of fundamental criticisms that characterized the first stage of the process. Still and all, the group's continuing efforts revealed both remarkable progress toward a unified understanding of leadership and underlying tensions in the process which threatened the ultimate success of the undertaking. It is to the narration of that story that this analysis now turns.

The collection of academicians that had come to be known as the GTOL group continued to meet and exchange papers on a regular basis. For purposes of analytical coherence, the remainder of this chapter will be divided into segments linked to the gatherings of the group that produced key moments or turning points in the process.

RICHMOND: DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Following the initial meeting with James MacGregor Burns, Al Goethals, and Georgia Sorenson in November 2001 and an exchange of papers in early 2002, the participants in the General Theory of Leadership project met again at the

Jepson School of Leadership Studies in Richmond for three days in March. This represented their first face-to-face, substantive meeting of the participating scholars. As might be anticipated from a gathering of a dozen scholars from multiple disciplines who had been called together to address such a complex and amorphous topic, the ensuing discussion was freewheeling and somewhat undisciplined [at one point in the midst of a rambling exchange, James Mac-Gregor Burns, in near despair, reminded the group of the 'need to re-focus'].[56] For purposes of coherence in the narration, if not perfect chronological accuracy, the following analysis will impose more order upon the discourse than was apparent at the time. For example, many of the reservations and differences of opinion regarding the notion of a general theory of leadership discussed in the preceding section of this chapter were addressed in the March meeting, but for purposes of this chapter, the relevant commentary has been folded into the earlier discussion, *supra*. With this caveat regarding editorial license, we can turn to the insights of the Richmond meeting.

Because this is a chapter dedicated to exploring the intellectual challenges posed by the attempt to create a multidisciplinary general theory of leadership more than it is a report on substantive outcomes, a detailed report on the content of the Richmond deliberations is unnecessary here. However, one of the things that made the Richmond meeting important to the ongoing process was the general tenor and scope of those substantive discussions. That is to say, as the assembled scholars undertook the consideration of one topic after another, there emerged a consistent pattern regarding the group's level of analysis and what it found to be important. More specifically, this particular gathering of scholars, drawn from both the humanities and the social sciences, chose to discuss the phenomenon of leadership at a rather high level of abstraction, usually in 'macro' terms, and with a perceptible concern for the normative consequences of the leadership relation. Thus this initial discussion, although many of its precise conclusions would not have a large impact upon later deliberations, nevertheless was an important stage in the group's progress toward its intended goal. In sum, the Richmond meeting helped to frame the general outlines of the group's approach to a general theory of leadership.

Upon convening in Richmond, one of the first orders of business was to consider how to begin the discussions in an organized fashion. Al Goethals, who with Burns and Sorenson formed the troika who managed the project, suggested that 'a problem-oriented approach may be useful.' He went on to propose that the group look to specific cases, such as '9/11' or school shootings, and attempt to deduce insights into leadership. From such analysis could come insights into such leadership issues as the role of leaders, decision-making, sense-making, and organizational structures.[57] In the end, however, it was the agenda offered by James MacGregor Burns that carried the day. Burns proposed that the group could begin to move toward an integrated understanding of leadership by dis-

cussing what he considered to be the key 'elements' of leadership: power, motivation, leader–follower relations, and values. Once the scholars had parsed these constructs from the perspectives of their respective areas of expertise, thought Burns, the group could then begin the ultimate task of attempting some sort of integration. The scholars acceded to this proposal, and the effort toward constructing a general theory of leadership began in earnest.[58]

The group's examination of the construct of 'power' provides a good example of the expansive parameters of the approach taken toward leadership. The discussion began in a rather traditional fashion. Acknowledging that 'power is one thing that distinguishes the leadership relation,' it was suggested that one way to pursue the analysis would be to consider (a) a definition of power, (b) the sources of power, (c) the use of power, and (d) the ethics of its use. Beginning along this path, the initial definitions of power tracked traditional social science conceptualizations such as 'the capacity to influence.' At this point, however, the discussion took a turn. The definition of power moved into a postmodernist conceptualization. Citing Foucault's notion that 'power is in the system; ... it is imbedded in social relations and institutions,' some argued that 'power is a relationship,' often an unequal one. In another metaphor, power was depicted as a 'conversation' which 'is always going on – it is fluid.' This soon morphed into a consideration of the consequences of power, particularly for notions of human agency and capacity.[59]

This willingness to consider one of the central constructs of leadership in its broadest reaches would become typical for the group. Moreover, this was joined by an attempt to make linkages to a wide range of related constructs. This latter tendency of the group became manifest in the discussion when Gill Robinson Hickman and Douglas Hicks proposed consideration of an extreme case – that of slavery, with its seeming exercise of absolute power by one side and the total denial of human agency to the other. From that limiting case, Hickman and Hicks derived separate portrayals of the dynamics of the operation of power.

Hickman explained her depiction: 'One way to elucidate the workings of power in leadership,' she said, 'is to look at three related continua, involving power, motivation, and action.' Power, when applied in an individual situation such as slavery, is characterized by individual power-wielding and inequality. At the other end of the spectrum is power-sharing among a collective, which is more egalitarian. Motivation in the case of slavery is mere desperation, while in the collaborative case there is trust and the possibility of sustainability. Likewise, when one looks to action, unequal power-wielding results in no individual agency, while the sharing of power yields full agency. Hickman's model, in the words of one observer, represents a 'move from parsimony to complexity,' and George Goethals suggested that 'leadership' may be the transitioning from the limiting ends of the continua to that of a more collective, egalitarian allocation of power and full agency on the part of the participants.[60]

Doug Hicks, building upon Hickman's initial insight and Goethal's comment, constructed his own continuum, characterized as 'Domination' at one extreme and 'Leadership' at the other. At the 'Domination' end, one finds 'power wielded by individuals or systems, coercion, desperation, no agency, and unequals'; under 'Leadership,' there is 'power distributed fairly amongst persons and systems, freedom, sustainability, full agency and human potential, and moral equals.'[61]

The discussion of power, then, began with traditional views of the construct, moved to more relational and postmodern conceptions, and ended with a deep discussion of human agency and the role of leadership in unleashing it. This was typical of the group's discussion, and of the richness of pursuing a multi-disciplinary approach to the topic.

A similar pattern can be detected in the discussions of the other constructs postulated by Burns. The consideration of motivation, for example, began with a rather prosaic discussion of the social science approach, with mention of process theories, modeling, and intrinsic motivation. This quickly moved – in a development typical of that richness created by having multiple disciplines in the room – to a more fundamental discussion of the human condition, and its implications for motivation. The scholars cited Kant, Mill, Smith, and Aristotle, and notions of *homo oeconomicus, homo individualus,* and *homo politicus*. This, in turn, led to an erudite discussion of the term 'happiness' as the essential motivation of humans, and a consideration of the conceptions of that term from the ancient Greeks through the Enlightenment. Other scholars brought in differing cultural interpretations of the term, including non-Western ones.[62]

When discussion turned to the dynamics of leader–follower relations, the group's predilections again surfaced. After desultory initial conversation, attention, as was the group's wont, turned to a discussion of a fundamental underlying issue. As the initial conversation progressed, some of the humanists in the room proclaimed their sense that the mainstream approaches to leader–follower relations in the leadership literature were too mundane. What was needed, they proclaimed, was a careful look at the 'initiating conditions of leader–follower relations, which is, after all, an exploration of the human condition.' Philosopher Terry Price framed the issue. The only way to really understand the nature of the leader–follower relation is to investigate its roots: 'What is there about the human condition that makes us need leadership?' he asked. 'This leads us,' he continued, 'to notions of justice, of agency. It leads to questions about the universal human condition [is it collaborative?]; also to questions of what motivates us [an unmet need?]; and it also brings up the sense of self.' Only the consideration of such deep and complex matters could bring real understanding to this issue.[63]

The final construct on the group's agenda – values – was in actuality a continuing topic throughout the three-day conference. As Joanne Ciulla noted,

'values should not be ghettoized; they are a subset of every part of leadership.' This was demonstrated in the discussion of J. Thomas Wren's 'Process Model' of leadership. Although the model as portrayed by Wren (and then applied to the case study of Franklin Delano Roosevelt by James MacGregor Burns) appeared straightforward enough, observers noted that 'values surround the Process Model [such as assumptions of linearity] that some do not share.'[64] The same universality was true for the ethics of leadership. As Ciulla said, 'Ethics is the set of all human relationships. Leadership is a subset of human relationships.' Ergo, it is 'really impossible to separate issues of ethics out as independent; we are *always* talking about ethics when we talk about leadership.' This led to a discussion, spreading across two days, of the role of values – and ethics – in leadership.[65] The precise arguments presented in the ensuing debate need not detain us here; suffice it to say that there were debates over everything from definitions to applications. What is important to take from the discussion, however, was the group's commitment to engage in an affirmative and overt consideration of these matters as the discussions of a grand theory progressed.

In all of these examples, the assembled scholars chose to focus upon the larger, humanistic approach to leadership, in opposition to the more circumscribed approach demanded by traditional notions of theory. Thus the Richmond meeting was as important for its seeming resolution of the question of scope and focus of the project as it was for any of its substantive conclusions regarding the specific elements of leadership. The General Theory of Leadership group was to build upon this at its next important gathering.

MOUNT HOPE: FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

The next scheduled meeting of the GTOL group – and the next major intellectual turning point for its deliberations – was a three-day retreat in June, 2002, at an estate owned by Williams College and located in the countryside outside of Williamstown, Massachusetts. Appropriately or inappropriately for the future of the project, this estate is known as Mount Hope. In any event, it was at Mount Hope that the project's eventual product began to take form. In addition to an illuminating session with special guest scholar Gary Yukl, the group got down to the real business of considering a general theory. In terms of the intellectual process we are detailing in this paper, Mount Hope is important for two things: First, it represented a confirmation that the approach of the group was to be largely humanistic in nature; namely, to be an exploration of leadership as part and parcel of the human condition in the broadest sense. Second, the multiple narrations of leadership that emerged from the Mount Hope deliberations helped to pose the issue that was to shape all subsequent interactions of the group; that is, whether a truly integrative approach was possible, or whether it is best to

acknowledge 'multiple truths' in the characterization and understanding of leadership.

Prior to the Mount Hope meeting, participants engaged in another exchange of papers, designed both to reflect upon the outcomes of the Richmond session and to look ahead to the retreat in Williamstown. Not surprisingly, the subject matter of those papers ranged over most of the myriad issues discussed in Richmond. Their content, to the extent it became central to the group's deliberations, will be included elsewhere in this chapter. One noteworthy development that emerged from this round of papers, however, involved the ongoing dynamic of expectations among members of the group. In something of an ironic twist, these expectations appeared to be somewhat fluid. Terry L. Price had initially 'thought ... that an integrated theory of leadership was an interesting but, ultimately, doomed project,' but opened his paper thusly: 'I begin with a confession. Since writing for the last set of papers, I've changed my basic view of this endeavor.... [O]ur discussions have led me to believe that it is [more achievable] ... than I originally thought.'[66] J. Thomas Wren, on the other hand, who had initially embraced the possibility of an integrated theory, was now more circumspect. 'The challenges to our endeavor that were suggested by our individual papers,' he wrote, 'were confirmed by our discussions.' After detailing the principal points of contention, Wren noted that they were 'sufficient to create [a] cloud of foreboding' concerning the future of the project.[67] For his part, James MacGregor Burns, the inspiration for the project, was unwavering in his belief in ultimate success. 'Based on our early meetings and exchanges, and on the recent submissions,' he said, 'I am all the more confidant that we have the intellectual resources and determination to tackle our great objective, of a general or at least integrated theory of leadership,' albeit 'we are all also well aware of the problems and difficulties and are approaching the project, I think, in a realistic way.'[68] These underlying expectations would become crucial when the group later confronted strategic issues concerning the ultimate product of its work.

One of the intriguing dynamics of the gathering at Mount Hope involved how the membership of the group re-shaped the initial agenda proposed by the project directors to conform more closely to the thrust of the Richmond meeting. A pre-conference communication by host Al Goethals had proposed 'a possible schedule for the meetings. We wanted to observe the principles of having smaller groups work on the topics we identified in March.... . We propose having each subgroup discuss the three topics that were agreed in March, and the fourth that was discussed but not agreed on. These are values, leader/follower dynamics, motivation and power, and culture and context.'[69] Equally important, at least to James MacGregor Burns, was the need for creating some kind of work product. 'We have,' he informed the group, 'our three-day Mt Hope conference where it is vitally important, in my view, that we develop written materials.... . It will be

imperative for us to produce actual *drafts*, in whatever form, at the Mt. Hope meeting. We will never have such a great opportunity both to discuss our subject further but also to break down into group or individual activities where we produce written documents.'[70]

The academicians who assembled at Mount Hope in June had no objections to Burns's call for written product, but they did question a return to a discussion of the 'elements' of leadership that had been the focus of the Richmond meeting. Elizabeth Faier, for example, observed that 'categories … of leadership … might not encapsulate its essence … . Some of March's frustrating moments stem [from] containing our conversation to a discussion of parts when leadership itself is a process, … something greater than the aggregate of its parts… .'[71] Similarly, Joanne Ciulla chafed at the division of the discussion according to the discrete elements of leadership. 'This looks nice and neat,' she admitted, 'but we also noticed in our discussions that these areas all tended to spill over into each other. It seemed that every boundary bled into the next area. I have come to the conclusion that discussing the parts in isolation from each other [e.g., power, motivation, ethics, leader–follower] would not be useful… . From our last discussion the variety came, not from the elements of leadership itself, but how people put these elements together.'[72]

'So where does this leave us in terms of Mt. Hope discussions?' Faier appropriately asked. Several participants came up with similar answers. Faier herself responded: 'I hope we can expand our discussion … [in such a way as to] free us from over-defining components, fitting them into a mosaic-like model, and thus limiting ourselves to a theory that combines highly bounded pieces rather than focuses … on process.'[73] Ciulla was more specific. 'Here is what I propose we do at Mt. Hope … . [We should] give each group the basic pieces of the leadership puzzle and see how they put it together. Then we can get together as a whole and see what the pictures look like.'[74] J. Thomas Wren proposed a similar idea, and suggested how it could contribute to the group's objectives. 'Because I believe that we are neither ready (or in some cases, willing) to proceed with traditional theory-building activities, I propose an alternative approach… .' This charged each group with the task of 'constructing a narrative of how leadership works… . When we reconvene with our three separate narratives, we can look for any commonalities or "family resemblances." From these might come some generalizations, and ultimately, some propositions that might someday form the basis for a general theory.'[75]

It remained, however, to determine how to frame the narrative task of the respective groups. It was here that other members of the group harked back to the larger themes about the human condition that had consistently drawn the interest of the scholars in Richmond. It was Terry Price who put it best. Thinking back to Richmond, he observed that 'on the first day of the last set of meetings, [Al Goethals] made a claim to the effect that we have to understand the human

condition in order to understand the nature of leadership. The humanist in me finds this a very attractive way of framing our enterprise. It roots the study of leadership in the liberal arts and sees it as a broader feature of the human experience.' Price was not naïve, however. 'Of course, the downside is that a general theory of leadership that takes this framing as its starting point has its work cut out for it. The theory must glean insights from a few thousand years of literature, philosophy, and history and couple them with the findings of a hundred or so years of social science research.'[76]

Fortunately for the sanity of the group, Price posed another possibility. 'An alternative interpretation of the claim that we have to understand the human condition in order to understand leadership takes it to mean that we have to think about what makes leadership necessary and what makes it possible if we are to understand the phenomena itself... .' Price elaborated: To build on this ... , we might consider the preconditions for leadership. First, what is it about the human condition that makes leadership necessary? Is it, say, that social, political and organizational life brings with it problems that can only be solved or, at least, best be solved by leadership? Second, what must be true of humans if we are to exercise leadership as a viable response to these problems?' Price suggested that 'if we could answer these two main questions, our answers would go a long way toward an understanding of the ends of leadership [as] well as the means for achieving these ends. Put simply,' he concluded, 'on this approach to theory building, the current stage of intellectual endeavor in which we are engaged would be understood as articulating the foundations of the study of leadership.'[77]

Taking its cue from Price and the others, each team was sent away to its caucus site with the following questions in hand: (1) *What is it about the human condition that makes leadership necessary?* (2) *What makes it possible?* Finally, once those foundational questions were answered, the groups were directed to turn to a third: (3) *What processes or conditions characterize the emergence, maintenance, or transformation of leadership?*

The teams were formed in such a way as to balance disciplinary approaches and the demographics of the group, and named, respectively, Red, Purple, and Gold (after the school colors of founding institutions Williams College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Richmond).[78] Following several intensive discussion and drafting sessions, each produced a document that contained at least the beginnings of a response to the designated questions. A detailed portrayal of the content of each can be found in the next chapter of this volume, an attempt at synthesis by Michael Harvey, who joined the group at the Mount Hope meeting.[79] For purposes of this analysis, it is sufficient to sketch in broad outline the contents of the resulting papers. Of more importance to this analysis are the consequences of these multiple narrations of the foundations of leadership.

The Red team responded to the question of *What is it about the human condition that makes leadership necessary and possible?* by creating what they called a 'leadership creation parable.' In that parable, they made several assertions about the human condition and the environment in which leadership initially came into being. The Red team painted a rather bleak portrait of surrounding conditions. It was a world of perceived disorder and entropy, where there was material scarcity, a lack of knowledge, and a sense of insecurity. The nature of the human condition that confronted that world was one of inequality: there was considerable variability in individuals' abilities, desires, and needs. Then, too, there was an 'inner tension' between 'the individual's desire for both self-sufficiency and dependency.' Humans also are torn between a desire for order and an attraction to mystery. In sum, says the Red team, 'These are the original conditions – disorder, variability, the tensions of our desires for sociability and self-sufficiency. Out of this comes a need for leadership.'[80]

The Purple team's narrative of the foundational conditions for leadership tended to track that of the Red team. Purple, too, envisioned a world of 'perceived challenges and shortcomings,' which call forth leadership in response. Moreover, 'the assumption of the Purple team is that inequality and dependence are an inherent part of the leadership relation. Variability in competence and access to power leads to differentiated roles and dependencies among the actors, a relationship which [under normal conditions] must be negotiated.... As a result of such negotiations,' Purple argued, 'the leadership relation can be seen to be a product of "consent,"' although 'this notion of consent has an ethical overlay.' Once the leadership relation is in place, 'leaders initiate narratives and framings to help the group understand the world, themselves, and other groups, as well as suggest solutions to external problems.... In addition, followers contribute elements in an evolving, negotiated narrative about group roles, group identity, group history, and the world.'[81]

The Gold team created a different sort of narrative, one that appeared to take a more positive and more constructivist approach. Gold acknowledged that humans differ in their capabilities, and that 'leadership arises from physiological and social needs and the human desire for expression.' That being said, Gold, more than Red or Purple, championed leadership as the act of constructing meaning. 'Being human involves having imagination and creative capacity, ability to be self-reflective, and ability to use language to create and communicate meaning with each other.' Moreover, 'being human involves social interaction through which humans construct reality.' This notion of 'constructing reality' was the nub of leadership. Indeed, 'leadership ... helps to construct or create ... human needs and wants.... Leadership is a creative act – literally bringing new realities into being.' For Gold, being human, and leadership, and even power are 'a matter of social relationships. Leadership must not be analyzed in terms of individual actors alone. Actors come into leadership

relationships in the context of larger social terrains of meaning,' and is a result of both constructing reality and negotiating roles within that reality.[82]

With the production of the Red, Purple, and Gold papers, the General Theory of Leadership group finally had what James MacGregor Burns had been seeking: some written product from the group's efforts, however tentative and preliminary. Moreover, that product was consistent with the priorities of a group that had chosen to focus upon the larger, humanistic aspects of leadership. It must be noted, however, that these three preliminary essays essentially begged the question of what would come next; i.e., whether the same type of narrative would be extended to such matters as leader emergence and group processes, or whether there would be any attempt to derive from these prose accounts of leadership any propositions that could form the basis of a theory satisfactory to the social scientists.

In the meantime, a more foundational issue came to occupy the GTOL project: the question of the extent to which some form of true integration is possible. This issue was brought front-and-center by the three Mount Hope papers. Some preliminary discussions occurred during and immediately after the Mount Hope sessions, and the matter received more substantial attention subsequently.

The debate revolved around the question of whether the group should create one integrated document from the Mount Hope papers, or be content with multiple narratives of the leadership relation, each differing in both its foundational assumptions and in its particulars. From the beginning, there were supporters of both schools, and, as the ensuing chapters in this volume indicate, the group has been content to move along parallel tracks, keeping open the possibility of either, or both, options.

The possibility – or probability – of conflicting analyses was manifest as soon as the decision was made to work in multiple small groups at Mount Hope. In a memorandum prior to the meeting, Burns wrote: 'What I am more concerned about – and this is simply to get this on the agenda for the planning conference the first day at Mt. Hope – is how we will plan to put together what I expect will be a multiplicity of drafts on specific aspects of the subject dealt with in small groups.'[83] Terry Price had anticipated something similar. 'Admittedly,' he wrote in a pre-conference submission, 'at the end of our meetings, we might wind up with more than one reasonable, internally consistent theory of leadership.'[84]

So, too, were the two possible responses to this reality previewed prior to the meeting. Burns demonstrated his unwavering commitment to an integrated product. 'It was agreed,' he acknowledged, 'as I recall, at the March meeting that we would break down into smaller groups [at Mt. Hope], because of the obvious likelihood that the larger group could not do any drafting.... . I agreed with this, but then the question is ... through what process do we integrate these findings into a group-endorsed document. I could imagine the different sub-

groups coming up with totally or considerably different drafts, which would make the integration quite fruitful but also very difficult.' And, in a separate communication, Burns urged the group to consider 'how these discussions can … be transformed into an overall agreed-upon document.'[85] Price, on the other hand, while envisioning multiple, conflicting documents, did not fear that result. 'This,' he said, 'need not strike us as a problematic outcome.' If the group did decide to prioritize one interpretation over another, Price simply advocated that the group make this decision consciously, and be transparent in its rationale.[86]

The resolution of the integration/multiple perspectives debate was postponed pending further reflection and exchanges among the scholars. In the meantime, a few of the participants suggested that an appropriate first step would be to isolate and identify the central assumptions underpinning each narrative. Such an analysis could form the basis for further consideration of the likelihood and desirability of creating an integrated theory. In the concluding discussions at Mount Hope, Elizabeth Faier observed that 'different cosmological views will lead to different reasons for leadership,' and suggested as examples assumptions about the nature of man, the role of inequality, and the extent to which the leadership process itself is negotiated or proceeds along some more predictable pattern.[87] Others contributed additional potential points of contention, but it was left to J. Thomas Wren to address the issue most thoroughly.

In a paper entitled 'The Mt. Hope Disaccords: Reflections on Varying Assumptions,' Wren set forth his task. 'Given our aspirations to create a unified depiction (I will not call it theory) of the leadership process,' he argued, 'first among our remaining challenges is to identify and address the underlying assumptions.… . If we do not lay out our differing starting points, in order to debate them and to make necessary linkages between our premises and our conclusions, we can never hope to create a product (or products) worthy of taking forward to a jury of our peers, and certainly never harbor aspirations of constructing a unified approach to leadership.'[88] Wren proceeded to analyze the Red and Gold papers from Mount Hope.

His first focus was on epistemology. 'The various approaches to leadership theory raise important epistemological issues,' he argued. 'Theoretical approaches with differing understandings of how one comes to know and relate to perceived reality can yield dramatically contrasting views of the leadership relation.' Turning to the Gold and Red papers, he found 'a discrepancy that … requires illumination. The Gold team,' he went on, 'quite explicitly takes a stand concerning how they perceive the acquisition of knowledge in the world,' which is 'constructed.' This 'approach to making sense of the world,' observes Wren, has important theoretical consequences. 'On the positive side, the Gold approach appears well suited to a complex and interdependent world. On the other hand, it promises to set us adrift in a postmodern sea of uncertainty and immobility … . This does not mean that one adopting the Gold team's perspective can say

nothing about leadership; indeed, a rather elegant description of how leaders and followers interact (e.g., the utility of storytelling, etc.) can be set forth. However, aspirations to propose any causative relationships become suspect.' The Red paper, on the other hand, 'takes a more linear approach' regarding cause and effect, 'to include a defined and accepted beginning point [to leadership] that leads (seemingly inevitably) to a predictable response.' In sum, Wren concludes on this point, 'each perspective is likely to yield a substantially differing depiction of the leadership process.'[89]

Likewise, says Wren, the groups differ in their perception of the nature of man. 'Gold places a stress upon the fact that "humans are social beings." Much of Gold's depiction of group behavior and meaning-making is premised upon a shared experience among members of the group. For Red,' on the other hand, 'the assumptions about the social nature of man appear to be … different… . Red appears to view man in more individualistic terms.' To illustrate Wren cites the Red treatment of trust: "'one cannot easily depend upon others when it is not clear what one has in common with them."' Again, these 'differing assumptions regarding the role of the individual vis-à-vis society' are 'profound and difficult to bridge.'[90]

So, too, is the perception of the leadership challenge different for the two groups. This flows naturally from their earlier assumptions. As Wren put it, 'The two groups' conceptualization of the external world and the challenges it poses are predictably different, given their epistemological distinctions. If men, according to Gold, "construct many aspects of their reality," the Gold view of the world and the challenges it poses are likewise socially constructed.' In contrast, 'the Red approach has quite a different view of the world and the leadership challenges it poses.' Red's narration of a world characterized by disorder and entropy 'has the air of universality; a sense that leadership always emerges in response to perceived threats to survival. The Gold approach appears more fluid and open.'[91]

If the perceived leadership challenge is different, so too is the response, or as Wren phrased it, 'the underlying assumption about what it is that the leadership relation is trying to accomplish,' or to put it yet another way, the differing assumptions about the purpose of leadership. Given Red's portrayal of a disorderly world, the goal of leadership is *'control… .* For Gold, on the other hand, leadership is less about control than the mutual management of meaning. Again, Wren concludes, 'the Red approach appears more linear, while the Gold version is more fluid and open.'[92]

Finally, Wren turned to an issue that was less obvious. 'Imbedded in the respective accounts of the two groups,' he argued, 'but nowhere adequately articulated for purposes of challenge and discussion, is an implicit hierarchy of values.' The value that received most of his attention was that of *'equality… .* The Gold Team … values equality as both the means and end of leadership.' In

contrast, 'for the Red Team, inequality is at the heart of leadership.' Wren paused to consider the implications. 'The implications for leadership are profound,' Wren intimated. 'At the most obvious level, a theory grounded in assumptions of inequality ... is quite distinct from one that sees inequality as an evil to be superseded, with the inequalities themselves subject to negotiation and definition.' For Red, then, 'the actual process of leadership is portrayed as "compliance-gaining processes," rather than Gold's more egalitarian "negotiations."' 'More subtly,' he continued, 'the matter goes to the heart of the leadership relation.' For Red, 'inequality is not only real, but good and necessary. Perhaps some people (leaders) *are* better able to perceive and act than others. The Red group appears to be open to this possibility; the Gold group, with its embrace of "group social construction," seems to reject this notion. At the least' concluded Wren, 'this seems a central matter as we approach a theory of leadership. Indeed, I suspect that our attempts at synthesis may founder on the shoals of inequality before anything else.'[93]

In his conclusion, Wren did not reject the idea of an integrated theory, but asserted that 'it is important that we confront and debate our assumptions.' He acknowledged that, 'in the end, the fundamental differences in our premises [may] make it impossible to come up with an acceptable synthesis.' This did not daunt him. 'If so, we should accept this,' he reasoned, 'and do our best to move forward with multiple "narrations" of the leadership process, each buttressed by a clear account of its founding assumptions.'[94] Wren's analysis of the output of the Mount Hope meeting has received no little attention here, but this seems justified, in light of the fact that such matters prefigured the next stage of the General Theory of Leadership group's process.

GUADALAJARA: INTEGRATED THEORY VS. ALTERNATIVE OUTCOMES

The final segment of the GTOL group's work that will be the focus of our attention is not as chronologically defined as were the earlier sections of this chapter. The developments chronicled here extended across an 18-month period from June 2002 to November 2003, and included a session with fellow scholars and practitioners at the International Leadership Association meeting in Seattle in November, 2002, and another session at the Jepson School in April, 2003. The focal point, however – because it was the moment when the next stage of the process crystallized – is a presentation and discussion conducted at the International Leadership Association meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico, in November, 2003.

During that 18-month span, the GTOL project added several new participants. A consequence of having the new contributors was that the group perforce re-

visited some of the issues detailed earlier in this analysis. Although there was at times a sense of drift, the return to the fundamental issues that inevitably surround an attempt to create a general theory of leadership ultimately spurred the group out of its brief doldrums and gave the project fresh energy.

Although many issues were addressed, the most important developments were undoubtedly a re-invigorated discussion concerning the ultimate product of the group's efforts, together with more sophisticated attempts at a synthesis of the group's work. Certainly the most important matter that remained under discussion was the long-standing one of whether (and how) to create an integrated result, as opposed to pursuing some other, more constrained, product of the group's efforts. The scholars, rather than coming to final conclusions regarding this essential issue, were content to pursue both tracks. That is to say, they continued to experiment with various formulations of an integrated depiction of leadership, while at the same time contemplating various alternative formulations that recognize the difficulties inherent in an integrated approach.

Certainly one of the two parallel tracks the GTOL group has followed since Mount Hope has been one toward some sort of integration. The most important of these was a paper by James MacGregor Burns, the most forceful proponent of integration throughout. Burns drafted his paper following a session at the International Leadership Association conference in Seattle, held in November, 2002. At that session, the members of the group presented a status report on their deliberations, and then engaged in a productive dialogue among the panelists and an audience of scholars and practitioners. Later, drawing upon his initial essay on leadership created in February as a starting point and interpolating insights from the Mount Hope and Seattle discussions, Burns crafted a statement of leadership.

He began with 'a definition of leadership that appeared to emerge from the Seattle conference,' which was 'leadership as an influence process, both visible and invisible, in a society inherited, constructed, and perceived as the interaction of persons in ... conditions of inequality – an interaction measured by ethical and moral values and by the degrees of realization of intended, comprehensive and durable change.'[95] Burns then proceeded to outline the dynamics of this process.

He turned first to 'the human conditions of wants and needs among masses of people.' Unfortunately, 'they lack ... knowledge as to how to gain these things.' This creates the need for leadership. 'It is the job of leadership,' he explained, 'not only to legitimate certain wants ... but to educate and instruct and guide the victims toward solutions. This creates a leader–follower relationship.'[96] 'In the emerging leader–follower relationship,' Burns continued, 'the first – but by no means the only – task of leadership is interaction with followership in meeting the priority of order. But,' he went on to note, 'order in itself is hopelessly inadequate unless it is employed to protect high values, such as

freedom, justice, ... equality of opportunity or condition, or ultimately happiness.'[97]

Burns went on to explore the dynamics of the leadership process, in particular the 'functions of values and conflict.' These are inseparable. 'Values are not just static or [integrated] entities;' he argued, 'they are very much in conflict.' Thus 'conflict is ... [a] crucial aspect or element of leadership; ... strong leadership ... does not reject conflict – it thrives on it.' In turn, 'the functions of values and conflict cannot be separated from the causal role of *power*.' 'Power,' according to Burns, 'is complex, despite all the simplistic accounts that impute vast and permanent authority and supremacy to various leaders and rulers. Power is not only quantitative, measured by dollars or guns or votes.' In addition, power is 'qualitative and subjective, measured by leaders' and followers' wants and feelings and attitudes.' These dynamics culminate in the real purpose of leadership. To Burns, 'all of the above ultimately leads to the transcending question of grand change – change that is intended, comprehensive, durable, and grounded in values.'[98]

Having created his own effort toward an integrated depiction of leadership, Burns ended his paper with a plea to his fellow members of the GTOL group. Having cited historical examples of FDR and the Montgomery bus boycott to demonstrate his points, he used them to encourage the group to coalesce behind this effort at an integrated approach to leadership. 'If those activists could integrate the complex processes and elements of leadership in *practice*, in *reality*,' he reasoned, 'should we not be able to do so in *theory*?'[99]

Meanwhile, other dynamics within the GTOL group militated against this. Consequently, at the same time that efforts at integration continued, there was also energy devoted to the other of the parallel tracks; that is, toward acknowledging the fundamental divisions among the members of the group, and developing a product that recognized and honored these differences. This effort gained traction as a result of yet another meeting of the group, at the Jepson School in Richmond in April, 2003.

There, the group welcomed several new members to the conversation: scholars Bruce Avolio from the University of Nebraska, Sonia Ospina from the Wagner School at NYU, Ron Riggio from Claremont McKenna, and Mark Walker from American University, plus Deborah Meehan representing the Leadership Learning Community and practitioner John L. Johnson. The addition of the new voices occasioned another of the group's long tradition of insightful discussions. At the same time, these newcomers inevitably posed many of the same issues that had been raised by the initial call for a general theory of leadership, concerns that had been placed aside by the *as if condition*.

For example, social psychologist Ron Riggio articulated many of the same concerns as had been voiced by social scientist Fred Jablin at the outset of the process: the need for rigor in definitions, and for a theoretical design that can

become the basis for replicable research. Sonia Ospina, on the other hand, presented a cogent argument for taking a constructivist position, drawing upon arguments that had previously been voiced by anthropologist Elizabeth Faier. She questioned the value of positivist theory, suggesting that meaning is jointly constructed by participants, and that theories, at best, provide only partial views of their objects, since it is impossible to capture a single reality. These differences in premises and approach, so evident in the group's early debates but put to the side by the 'as if condition' [that is, the willingness of the participants to ignore their differences for the moment, and to proceed *as if* a successful resolution could be achieved], now could no longer be ignored.

In response to this development, the group turned to its next great initiative. Group members were given a rather formidable task to complete prior to the group's next meeting at the International Leadership Association's conference in Guadalajara, Mexico, in November, 2003. The details of this assignment are relatively important, since they structured the ensuing discussion.

In a communication drafted by Mark Walker and J. Thomas Wren, the coordinators of this phase of the project, the authors began by acknowledging that 'we continue to confront two fundamental challenges to our aspirations of producing some form of integrated view of leadership.'[100] These are worth quoting in their entirety:

1. First, there continues to exist real skepticism about the entire endeavor. In part, this is due to a discomfort with the notion of creating a 'general theory.' Scholars disagree as to what is meant by, and what is encompassed within, the term. Much of the disagreement appears to stem from the differing perspectives taken by social scientists and humanists, or by positivists and constructivists (etc.). Recognizing that the entire endeavor could run aground upon these shoals at the very outset, participants agreed to set aside their respective concerns, and to proceed 'as if' the endeavor could succeed. Now, as we push toward the creation of some publishable output, such concerns can no longer be ignored.
2. Second, although each meeting of the group has resulted in hours of intellectually stimulating debate over a plethora of critical issues relating to leadership, our attempts to integrate these insights into a coherent whole have not advanced far. Our closest approximation has been the Mt. Hope narratives of the Red, Gold, and Purple teams. If this project is going to be successful (at some level), we need to consider how, if at all, we might create some way of bringing together our disparate insights.[101]

Given the dual challenges of divergent premises and difficulties in integration, the assignment given the group was two-fold, each part designed to address one of the identified issues.

The first assignment was to 'create a matrix of fundamental issues and perspectives.' It was 'designed to address the "as if" problem above,' by asking the scholars to identify with some precision the divisions or differences among the members. More specifically, group members were asked 'to create your own

analytical matrix of leadership studies.' The top (horizontal part) of the matrix should consist of 'the differing perspectives that you believe are most central to our understanding of leadership.' Thus, this portion of the matrix might list the differing disciplines, or perhaps 'epistemological approaches' such as 'social scientific/humanistic' or 'positivist/constructivist.' Once having identified the source of the disagreements, the side (vertical aspect) of the matrix should 'identify the central issues upon which those perspectives tend to disagree.' With the matrix thus organized, the process of 'fill[ing] in the cells ... provides a comparison of the differing conclusions from each perspective.'[102]

Although seemingly complex at first blush, the assignment had the serious objective of identifying the various points of contention. 'Our goal,' wrote Walker and Wren, 'is to utilize these matrices ... to begin to address in a substantive fashion the very real concerns and disputes among us. We should not expect to resolve those disputes' – at least in the near term, and, 'in some ways that might be detrimental' – 'but ... to create a framework that allows us to perceive where we differ and how.'[103] Only with the group's differences out in the open could there be hope of addressing them productively.

The second assignment given to the group was less structured, and was 'designed to help us with our challenge of integration.' As Walker and Wren explained it, 'During our discussions, we often noted how we needed to bring things together (probably in some format far short of a "theory").' Thus, 'the second, unstructured part of your assignment is to create your own metaphor, model, narration, or ... theory ... that identifies what are, for you, the central aspects of leadership and how they fit together.' Walker and Wren concluded: 'Hopefully, at our next session, our consideration of the various responses to this assignment may generate some insights as to how we might ultimately present our conclusions in a way that is inclusive of our differences, yet integrative in terms of our understanding of leadership.'[104]

The sharing and presentation of the responses to this assignment was to take place the following November (2003) in Guadalajara. In point of fact, only a few of the group members actually contributed either a matrix, model, or metaphor, but the submissions that were received were sufficient to form the foundations for an important dialogue. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that the smattering of contributions was so diverse as to encompass most of the central issues attendant to the process of creating a general theory of leadership. Four individuals submitted matrices, one submitted a proposed integrative model of leadership, and yet another proposed a metaphor intended to bring insight to the leadership studies community without forcing upon it any unjustifiable integration of dissimilar approaches. A brief summary of this varied body of work is therefore justified.

The first matrix was by Mark Clarence Walker, entitled 'Schools of Thought in the Study of Leadership' (see Table 3.2). Its purport was to delineate the dif-

ferences in assumptions among several of the key theories of leadership. Walker thus identified on his horizontal axis Great man theory, behavioral theory, contingency theory, cognitive theory, moral leadership theories, and strategic leadership theory as the primary theoretical approaches. He distinguished them (vertical axis) according to their 'key component; relative role of leader and followers; related theories and concepts; and theorists.' In creating a matrix of this nature, Walker carefully denoted some key distinctions among the mainstream (primarily social science) approaches to leadership.[105]

J. Thomas Wren took a broader approach with his matrix. Labeling it a 'theoretical matrix,' Wren created three essential divisions among those who approach the task of creating a theory of leadership: social scientists (or 'positivists'), humanists, whom he labels 'interpretavists,' and postmodernists, also called 'constructivists.' Each of these categories of scholars differs, Wren suggested, in their answers to five key questions: How is the problem defined? What type of information/data is used in seeking an answer? What method is used? How does one judge the validity of the outcome? How should the outcome be applied? By 'filling in the cells' with the answers to those questions for each group, Wren created a way to readily identify some central differences in premises that have hampered the efforts of the group to come to some integrated result.[106] (See Table 3.3 as an example of this 'matrix' approach to identifying areas of tension).

Gill Robinson Hickman took a somewhat similar approach with her matrix. Her horizontal row identified the 'Leadership Perspectives' of humanism, essentialism (positivism), social constructivism, environmentalism, feminism, and pluralism (see Table 3.4). The matrix's vertical column contained a listing of issues upon which those perspectives differ. The issues included human nature, mobilizing forces, the purpose of leadership, ethics, context, participants, power, and level of action and analysis. The scope of her matrix, then, was broader than Wren's, but it, too, provided important insights into the source of differences among those addressing the phenomenon of leadership.[107]

A final matrix, by Terry Price, was devoted not so much to differences in approach but more to underlying similarities across seemingly disparate approaches. In a somewhat more complex approach, Price created two categories of 'fields' or 'disciplines,' the first of which he called 'descriptive/explanatory,' such as organizational leadership (see Table 3.5). The second he labeled 'prescriptive/justificatory,' which embraced such approaches as social and political philosophy. The two categories of 'field' or 'discipline' – and Price invited the inclusion of others – he suggested, address similar questions, albeit in differing ways. Price identified four characterizations of leadership (across the top of his matrix), and indicated how the two identified categories of scholarship approach each by providing examples in his cells. Thus, under 'leadership as personal characteristics,' organizational leadership draws upon 'trait theories,' while

social and political philosophy look to such sources as Plato's *Republic*. Price went on to provide a similar analysis for the characterizations of leadership as 'situational response', as 'transaction', and as 'transformation'. With his matrix, Price revealed the extent to which broadly differing approaches often seek answers to identical questions.[108]

Joining the four matrices submitted was one integrative model of leadership. This was the work of Gill Robinson Hickman. Her complex model depicted four 'dimensions' of leadership: 'mobilizing forces, levels of leadership action and analysis, perspective, and effect or outcome' (see Figure 3.1). Across those dimensions, Hickman arrayed the 'perspectives on leadership' from her matrix; i.e., humanism, essentialism, social constructivism, environmentalism, feminism, and pluralism. The dynamics of her model were displayed by means of arrows depicting 'participant, process, conflict, change, ethics, and power.' Further sophistication was added by including levels of analysis such as individuals, dyads, groups, and collectives. Hickman admitted that her two-dimensional portrayal really needed to be more of a three-dimensional holograph in order to capture adequately its complexity. Nevertheless, she succeeded in including in one all-encompassing representation most of the matters of contention that had occupied the GTOL group during the two years of its existence.[109]

Finally, Joanne Ciulla contributed a metaphor that might productively occupy the group's next stage of deliberations. Ciulla advocated that the group 'map the territory'; that is, create an intellectual (perhaps even literal) cartographic representation of the various approaches to leadership. This, argued Ciulla, might be the most feasible possible outcome of the group's effort, and at the same time would prove quite useful.[110]

The discussion surrounding these contributions in the open session at the Guadalajara conference, occurring before a standing-room-only congregation of fellow scholars and practitioners, was remarkably rich and varied. Indeed, Georgia Sorenson, who had been unable to attend, but had received considerable feedback from members of the audience, later wrote: 'It sounded like it was a fantastic session... . I have had so many people tell me it was by far the best session they ever attended on leadership.'[111] The reason for such kudos was almost certainly not the innate brilliance of the contributions, but more due to the fact that those in attendance had the rare opportunity to witness scholars struggling with such intractable issues, and had a chance to offer constructive ideas and criticisms. That has also been the objective of this chapter, and volume. In this sense, just as in many ways the Guadalajara session marked a high water mark of the GTOL process, it also caused the group to contemplate its final product.

WASHINGTON: EPILOGUE AS PROLOGUE

In two meetings following the Guadalajara conference, one at the Jepson School in Richmond, and one at the International Leadership Association conference in Washington, DC in November 2004, the GTOL group considered the next steps. In those meetings, the member scholars determined that the results of three full years of dialogue concerning the development of a 'general theory' had advanced sufficiently to publish the various resulting insights. The lingering issues of the tensions among approaches to leadership, temporarily masked by the 'as if condition,' were to be left unresolved. So, too, did the group decline to take a final stand on the issue of the possibility and advisability of the ultimate creation of an integrated theory, as opposed to taking some more diverse and inclusive approach. Instead, the members of the group decided that the most productive way to proceed was to create a volume of essays designed to capture, to the best of our ability, the nuances of three years of scholarly debate and discussion. This volume is the result.

The determination not to finally resolve the fundamental tensions that had been an inherent part of the project was not (or, at least, not wholly) a consequence of despair over the possibility of success. Rather, it was seen as an appropriate scholarly outcome. In the tradition of the best scholarship, the contents of this volume are presented not so much as conclusions as they are invitations to further debate. Thus this, while the epilogue to the efforts of the GTOL group, is merely intended as the prologue for a continuing discourse concerning the integration of the varied understandings of leadership.

The challenges persist; the quest for a grand theory of leadership continues.

As the initial chapter of this collection, this piece has attempted to provide the reader with a glimpse into the dynamics of a fascinating experiment into multidisciplinary discussion and collaboration in the emerging field of leadership studies. As suggested in the introductory paragraphs, this process may prove as interesting to our fellow scholars in the field as our ultimate substantive conclusions. The remaining chapters, beginning with one by Michael Harvey addressing the nature of the human condition, provide more of the substance of the deliberations over the creation of a General Theory of Leadership.

NOTES

1. Georgia Sorenson, from J. Thomas Wren's informal notes of Mount Hope meeting, June 22, 2002. Note that the bulk of the citations in this paper will be to unpublished papers circulated among group members in several rounds of exchanges. On occasion, reference will be made to informal notes of group meetings, which will be identified as such. In the interests of a coherent narrative, some chronological liberties have been taken with respect to the timing of when points were made in the discussions.

2. Joanne B. Ciulla, ibid.
3. Joanne B. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the Mount Hope Meeting,' (unpub. ms., ca. May, 2002), p. 5.
4. Founding members were: James MacGregor Burns, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond; Georgia Sorenson, Jepson School and the University of Maryland; George Goethals, Williams College; Joanne Ciulla, Jepson School; Richard Couto, Jepson School; Elizabeth Faier, Jepson School; Zachary Green, Alexander Institute; Gill Robinson Hickman, Jepson School; Douglas A. Hicks, Jepson School; Frederic Jablin, Jepson School; Terry L. Price, Jepson School; and J. Thomas Wren, Jepson School. The current roster also includes: Bruce Avolio, University of Nebraska; Michael Harvey, Washington College; Ed Hollander, Baruch Center; Robert E. Kelley, Carnegie-Mellon; Jean Lipman-Blumen, Claremont; Deborah Meehan, Leadership Learning Community; Sonia Ospina, Wagner School, New York University; Ron Riggio, Claremont McKenna; Mark Clarence Walker, American University; Ron Walters, University of Maryland; and John L. Johnson, University of the District of Columbia.
5. Katherine Managan, 'Leading the Way in Leadership: The Unending Quest of the Discipline's Founding Father, James MacGregor Burns,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 31, 2002, p. 1.
6. Ibid.
7. Georgia Sorenson, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Dec., 2001), p. 1, citing James Hunt and Lars Larsen, eds., *Leadership, the Cutting Edge* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), and Ralph Stogdill, *Handbook of Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1974), p. vii.
8. Sorenson, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 1.
9. Ibid., p. 3.
10. Georgia Sorenson, quoted in Managan, 'Leading the Way in Leadership,' p. 1.
11. Joanne B. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the General Theory of Leadership Project,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
12. Douglas A. Hicks, '"But Is It Leadership?": On Disciplinary Identity and a General Theory of Leadership' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb. 2002), pp. 1–4.
13. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the General Theory of Leadership Project,' p. 3.
14. Ibid.
15. James MacGregor Burns, quoted in Managan, 'Leading the Way in Leadership,' p. 1.
16. Richard A. Couto, 'Towards A General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. March, 2002), p. 11. *See also* J. Thomas Wren, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
17. James MacGregor Burns, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership?' (unpub. ms., ca. Mar., 2002), p. 1.
18. Elizabeth A. Faier, comments made in meeting, Richmond, Virginia, March, 2002, from J. Thomas Wren's informal discussion notes.
19. Terry L. Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,' (unpub. ms., ca. June, 2002), p. 1
20. Ibid., pp. 1, 3.
21. Douglas A. Hicks, comment made in meeting, Richmond, Virginia, March, 2002, from J. Thomas Wren's informal discussion notes.
22. Sorenson, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 2.
23. Burns, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership?' pp. 2, 3.
24. Terry Price, comment made in group discussion, Richmond, Virginia, March, 2002, from J. Thomas Wren's discussion notes.
25. Richard Couto, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
26. Ibid.
27. Frederic Jablin, 'Thoughts on Richmond and Mt. Hope,' (unpub. ms., ca. June, 2002), p. 2.
28. Jablin, from Carmen Foster's discussion notes of meeting at Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002, p. 8.
29. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the General Theory of Leadership Project,' pp. 3, 1.

30.   Commentator not identified. From Carmen Foster's discussion notes of meeting at Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
31.   Jablin, 'Thoughts on Richmond and Mt. Hope,' p. 2.
32.   Joanne Ciulla, from informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
33.   Frederic Jablin, from informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren, Richmond, Virginia, March 24, 2002.
34.   James MacGregor Burns, from informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
35.   Elizabeth A. Faier, 'What Anthropology Contributes to Leadership Studies,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), pp. 3–4.
36.   Couto, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 1.
37.   Ibid., pp. 2, 5, 7.
38.   Terry L. Price, 'Preliminary Ideas on a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), pp. 2–3.
39.   Jablin, 'Thoughts on Richmond and Mt. Hope,' p. 2.
40.   See Managan, 'Leading the Way in Leadership,' p. 2.
41.   Faier, 'What Anthropology Contributes to Leadership Studies,' p. 4.
42.   Price, 'Preliminary Ideas on a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 2.
43.   Zachary Gabriel Green, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
44.   George R. Goethals, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
45.   Faier, 'What Anthropology Contributes to Leadership Studies,' pp. 1, 3.
46.   Hicks, '"But Is It Leadership?": On Disciplinary Identity and a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 3.
47.   Couto, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 2.
48.   Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the General Theory of Leadership Project,' p. 2.
49.   Ibid., pp. 1–2.
50.   Wren, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 1.
51.   Gill Robinson Hickman, 'General Theory of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., ca. Feb., 2002), p. 1.
52.   Couto, 'Towards a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 1.
53.   Burns, 'Toward a General Theory of Leadership,' pp. 1, 3, 6.
54.   Sorenson, 'Preliminary Ideas about a General Theory of Leadership,' p. 1.
55.   Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,' p. 2.
56.   James MacGregor Burns, informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren from meeting at Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
57.   George Goethals, from informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren, Richmond, Virginia, March 22, 2002.
58.   Burns, in ibid.
59.   From J. Thomas Wren's informal notes of general discussion, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
60.   Hickman, from J. Thomas Wren's informal notes of general discussion, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002. See also Carmen Foster, 'Flip Chart Notes from General Theory of Leadership Session, March 23, 2002,' p. 4.
61.   Hicks, from Wren's informal notes of general discussion, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
62.   From Wren's general discussion notes, March 23, 2002; Foster 'Flip Chart Notes,' pp. 6–7.
63.   General discussion notes by J. Thomas Wren, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2002.
64.   Ibid.
65.   Ibid., March 24, 2002.
66.   Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,' p. 1.
67.   J. Thomas Wren, 'The Mount Hope Accords,' (unpub. ms., ca. June, 2002), p 1.

68. James MacGregor Burns to GTOL group, 'Supplement to Earlier Statement,' ca. June, 2002, p. 1.
69. George Goethals to GTOL group, 'Planning Suggestion,' June 6, 2002, p. 1.
70. James MacGregor Burns to GTOL group, 'Pre-Mt. Hope Conference Notes,' ca. June, 2002, p. 1; Burns, 'Supplement to Earlier Statement,' p. 1.
71. Elizabeth Faier, 'Is Leadership Greater than the Sum of Its Parts?' (unpub. ms., ca. June, 2002), p. 1.
72. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the Mt. Hope Meeting,' pp. 4–5.
73. Faier, 'Is Leadership Greater than the Sum of Its Parts?', p. 4.
74. Ciulla, 'Some Thoughts on the Mt. Hope Meeting,' pp. 4–5.
75. Wren, 'The Mt. Hope Accords,' p. 3.
76. Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,', p. 1
77. Ibid., pp. 1–2.
78. Red Team members were Georgia Sorenson, Joanne Ciulla, Fred Jablin, and Michael Harvey, a new addition to the GTOL process; Purple Team members were Carmen Foster, George Goethals, Terry Price, and J. Thomas Wren; Gold Team members were Richard Couto, Elizabeth Faier, Gill Hickman, and Douglas Hicks.
79. Michael Harvey, 'Leadership and the Human Condition,' (unpub. ms., Jan., 2004).
80. Sorenson, Ciulla, Jablin, and Harvey, 'The Leadership Creation Parable' (Red Team report, June 22, 2002).
81. Foster, Goethals, Price, and Wren, 'What Makes Leadership Necessary? What Makes Leadership Possible?' (Purple Team report, June 22, 2002).
82. Couto, Faier, Hickman, Hicks, 'The Integrated Leadership Report,' (Gold Team report, June 22, 2002).
83. Burns, 'Supplement to Earlier Statement,' p. 1.
84. Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,' p. 3.
85. Burns, 'Pre-Mt. Hope Conference Notes,' p. 1; Burns, 'Supplement to Earlier Statement,' p. 1.
86. Price, 'Reflections toward the Mt. Hope Meeting,' p. 3.
87. Faier, informal discussion notes by J. Thomas Wren, Williamstown, Massachusetts, June 22, 2002.
88. J. Thomas Wren, 'The Mt. Hope Disaccords: Reflections on Varying Assumptions,' (unpub. ms., ca. Sept., 2002), p. 1.
89. Ibid., pp. 1–2.
90. Ibid., pp. 2–3.
91. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
92. Ibid., p. 4.
93. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
94. Ibid., pp. 5–6.
95. James MacGregor Burns, 'Mount Hope and Seattle Follow-up,' (unpub. ms., Nov., 2002), p. 1.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., p. 2.
98. Ibid., pp. 2–3.
99. Ibid., p. 6.
100. Mark Clarence Walker and J. Thomas Wren to GTOL group, 'General Theory of Leadership Group May–September 2003 Work Plan,' (unpub. ms., ca. May, 2003), p. 1.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid., pp. 1–3.
103. Ibid., pp. 2–4.
104. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
105. Mark Clarence Walker, 'Schools of Thought in the Study of Leadership,' from Walker, 'Reconciling Morality and Strategy in the Study of Leadership,' (unpub. ms., 2003).
106. J. Thomas Wren, 'Theoretical Matrix' (September, 2003).
107. Gill Robinson Hickman, 'Leadership Perspectives' (November, 2003).
108. Terry L. Price, untitled matrix (November, 2003).

109. Gill Robinson Hickman, 'Concepts in Leadership Studies' (November, 2003).
110. Joanne Ciulla, from informal discussion notes of J. Thomas Wren, November, 2003.
111. Georgia Sorenson to GTOL group, November 23, 2003.