An Alternative Approach in Hospitality

Exploring the Leadership Philosophy of a Successful Restauranteur Family

— Scott Linklater and Kem Gambrell

Hospitality in the United States has come a long way since the first recorded "inn" was established in 1607 by Spaniards in what is now modern-day Santa Fe, New Mexico (http://traveltips.usatoday.com/history-hotel-restaurant-management-54946.html). Since then, hotels and restaurants have popped up throughout the United States along trade routes and waterways, serving bourgeoning metropolitan centers such as New York City and locations along the Mississippi River.

Today, hospitality is an enormous industry in the United States. According to the Select USA website (https://www.selectusa.gov/travel-tourism-and-hospitality-industry-united-states) "the U.S. travel and tourism industry generated over $1.5 trillion in economic output in 2016, supporting 7.6 million U.S. jobs." In addition, "one out of every 18 Americans is employed, either directly or indirectly, in a travel or tourism-related industry" (https://www.selectusa.gov/travel-tourism-and-hospitality-industry-united-states). With the vast expansion of the industry,

hospitality establishments work to differentiate themselves based on unique characteristics, niche concepts, or alternative approaches. One of these areas includes distinctive leadership approaches.

Leadership theory as it relates to the hospitality industry is a relatively new topic of study (Boyne, 2010). To date, much of the published and readily available leadership knowledge tends to be anecdotally-oriented rather than rooted in research (Allio, 2012). Furthermore, previous research in hospitality includes attention to certain leadership models such as contingency theory, leadership-member exchange, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership (Boyne, 2010). Studies that have been done traditionally focus primarily on the impact of leadership on various hospitality metrics that include financial and non-financial performance (Patiar & Mia, 2009; Stylos & Vassiliadis, 2015) employee engagement, satisfaction, recruitment and retention (Chiang & Jang, 2008; Hughes & Rog, 2008), and organizational sustainability (Barreda, Kageyama, Singh, & Zubieta, 2017). Additionally, a handful of studies have explored things such as empowerment, which has been seen as a successful mechanism for increasing employee involvement and commitment (Lawler, 1986) and has allowed organizations to be more competitive and responsive to competitive climates (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Furthermore, leadership scholars who study high performing leaders and managers tend to focus primarily on either the interpersonal skills (Boyatzis, 1982; Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005) or upon the leader's decision-making or problem-solving skills (Connelly

et al., 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000). Generally, what little research on leadership and hospitality that is available has tended to point toward transformational leadership as the preferred approach to achieve the most effective results (Boyne, 2010). Interestingly, servant-leadership, as it relates to hospitality, has had little research coverage (Brownell, 2010).

Thus, the hospitality industry continues to pose a unique opportunity for exploring leadership and leadership dynamics. This could be due to the mere nature of the industry itself, the backbone of which is comprised of customer service, a characteristic shared by all segments of the industry (Reynolds, 2017). Most organizations, however, seem to operate under the assumption that purely technical skills are the necessity for leaders to be effective (i.e. Hill, 2003; Rosen, Billings & Turney, 1976; Stumpf & London, 1981).

To increase understanding regarding the potential impact of leadership in hospitality settings, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the leadership philosophy and characteristics of a successful restauranteur family in the US Pacific Northwest. Our intent was to explore the leadership philosophy and dynamics through the hospitality industry, specifically a three-generation organization, to determine if established leadership models and research could be applied. In addition, current literature suggests that the most effective leadership styles may be affected by geographic location and predominate national culture surrounding the hotel (Boyne, 2010; El Masry, Kattara, & El Demerdash, 2004; Rothfelder,

Ottenbacher, & Harrington, 2012; Worsfold, 1989). We believe that findings from a qualitative case study can provide additional insights into the hospitality field, and how leadership philosophy is portrayed in one historically viable restaurant setting.

LEADERSHIP THEORY FOUNDATIONS

To understand the impacts, it is helpful to first understand some of the theoretical underpinnings regarding leadership. Transactional and transformational leadership theories originated with Burns (1978) in his groundbreaking book *Leadership* which sets the table for what is now a much expanded field of study surrounding leadership in general. Burns (1978) viewed leadership itself as a moral undertaking and defined it as "inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both the leaders and the followers" (p. 19).

Burns' (1978) work was then expanded on by Bass (1999) who furthered the duel concept of transactional and transformational leadership and delineated it into what he referred to as Full Range Leadership. According to Bass' (1999) research, the prior definitions of transactional and transformational did not dive deep enough into the behavioral aspects. His model expanded on Burns (1978) transactional and transformational leadership paradigm and established several subcategories for each, and added a new category of non-leadership which Bass (1999) coined "laissez-faire" leadership.

Bass (1999) was able to significantly expand the prior definitions of transactional and transformational leadership by utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, or MLQ, developed by him and his associates (Avolio & Bass, 2001). This tool allowed for significant expansion of leadership knowledge, including breaking both transactional and transformational leadership down into smaller quantifiable parts (Bass, 1999).

Contrasting Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transactional leadership theory describes a type of leadership that functions on the basic understanding of exchanging reward or punishment for performance (Burns, 1978). Bass (1999) later expanded the definition to include several sub-categories. Underneath the facet of transactional leadership Bass (1999) identified three distinct versions: 1) management-by-exception passive: waits for mistakes and then acts; 2) management-by-exception active: looks for mistakes to address; and 3) contingent reward: reinforces and rewards success.

Though all three fall into the category of transactional leadership, they also all have distinctly different approaches to how the leader interacts with followers (Bass, 1999). The impact of these three sub-categories of transactional leadership have proved to vary greatly in effect, ranging from a positive effect on employee satisfaction due to utilizing a contingent reward approach, to distinctly negative results amongst employee populations who experience both active and passive

management-by-exception from their leader (Rothfelder et al., 2012).

Conversely, transformational leadership has proven to be quite effective in comparison to transactional leadership in a variety of organizations (Bass, 1999). Transformational leadership goes beyond the "this-for-that" approach of transactional leadership and engages the follower on multiple levels to a degree that it can actually increase the employee's quality of life (Kara, Uysal, Sirgy, & Lee, 2013). Bass (1999) suggests this increased engagement by the transformational leader happens in four distinct ways. These four facets include: idealized influence, leaders acting as a prototype or role model to followers; inspirational motivation, the ability of a leader to communicate the mission or vision in an inspirational fashion; intellectual stimulation, is a leader who values learning, growing, and innovation; and, individualized consideration, a leader who engages followers as individuals and not just as a group (Bass, 1999).

In describing the contrast between these two leadership approaches, transactional and transformational, Stewart (2006) posits that "the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership is very close to the distinction made between management and leadership" (p. 14). A transactional leader oversees, with varying degrees of engagement, the reward and discipline of employees based upon their performance, whereas a transformational leader inspires followers to buy-in to the organization's "values, goals, and aspirations" (Rothfelder et al., 2012, p. 202).

Transactional and Transformational in Hospitality

According to research, transformational leadership tends to yield better performance in hotels in a variety of ways which include improved guest service (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994), financial and non-financial performance (Patiar & Mia, 2009), increased trust (Chiang & Jang, 2008), and lower job stress (Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership, particularly as it pertains to both active and passive management-by-exception, generally leads to results which include a more disorganized learning process (Bernsen, Segers, & Tillema, 2009), decreased job satisfaction (Rothfelder et al., 2012) and a view of management that includes terms such as "incompetent" (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994, p. 22).

Patiar and Mia (2009) describe transformational leadership as being specifically able to "motivate subordinates and develop high levels of job commitment among employees" (p. 260). These motivated employees would then provide increased guest service and, through this elevated service due to quality leadership, gain an advantage over competing hotels (Patiar & Mia, 2009).

Company and Geographic Cultural Considerations

Leadership research as it relates to hospitality is a relatively new subject with limited research and understanding. Taking into consideration the various leadership theories outlined by White (1973), Burns (1978), Worsfold (1989), Bass and Avolio (1993), and then applied specifically to hospitality in the United States by Tracey and Hinkin (1994, 1996, 2008),

transformational leadership produces superior results. Nevertheless, there are variations based upon geographic location, and this should be a leadership consideration regardless of location due to a culturally diverse workforce.

For example, El Masry et al.'s (2004) study investigating leadership effectiveness in Egypt in which results were not impacted by leadership style. Additionally, Nicolaides' (2008) findings in South Africa point out that leadership style may need to change according to specific position or department. Rothfelder's et al. (2012) results from Germany also indicated a lower general value for transformational leadership amongst German employees. In the United Kingdom, Worsfold's (1989) research suggested a more autocratic style is preferred. Though not confounding to Tracey and Hinkin's (1994, 1996, 2008) research establishing transformational leadership as the preferred leadership theory in the US hospitality industry, these studies certainly encourage pause, and the need to take into account cultural considerations when pursing leadership paths.

In addition to the effects of transformational leadership, metrics such as financial performance (Patiar & Mia, 2009) can also significantly impact other long-term considerations such as company culture, as well as predict the ethics of such leaders (Ofori, 2009). In particular, Ofori (2009) found that a specific aspect of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation, showed a positive correlation with ethical leadership and could successfully predict the ethics of a leader. Ofori's (2009) research also showed a connection between Contingent Reward leadership and ethical leadership. These connections prove to

be very important because ethics has a strong connection to overall company culture (Ofori, 2009) which is particularly important in hospitality (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994).

Servant-Leadership

Though the theory is traced back to Greenleaf's (1970) writings, many have expanded on its understanding and philosophy, and have distinguished servant-leadership from other theories (Parolini, Patterson, & Winston, 2009). Brownell (2010) posits that "the next step in leadership evolution is servant leadership, in which the leader seeks to support and empower the followers" (p. 363). To date, however, limited studies in the hospitality industry have placed servant-leadership at the center of their focus (Brownell, 2010). Carter and Baghurst (2014) define it as "a leadership philosophy, which addresses the concerns, ethics, customer experience, and employee engagement while creating a unique organizational culture, where both leaders and followers unite to reach organizational goals without positional or authoritative power" (p. 454). Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser (2014) point to the ability to balance both the needs and priorities of the business and the associates, while Brownell (2010) highlights the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection as hallmarks of this approach. "The essence of servant leadership is that the leader is motivated by a desire to serve and empower followers; influence is achieved through the act of service itself" (Brownell, 2010, p. 366). Patterson (2003) maybe sums it up

best when describing servant-leadership as “doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons” (p. 3).

Spears (2010), has been key in shaping servant-leadership and has described ten key characteristics of a servant-leader based from Greenleaf’s writings. These include; Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community (Spears, 2010).

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) have found a number of correlations between servant-leadership and follower needs. These include putting followers’ interests first, encouraging followers to grow intelligently and be creative and serve people. Although abundant literature has been dedicated to capture the essence of servant-leadership (e.g. Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Spears, 1998; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), there are also many studies that have dedicated their efforts to study the effects of servant-leadership that show the positive outcomes on the organization and the leader-follower relationship (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang, & Workman, 2010).

For instance, Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006) found that servant-leadership, trust and team commitment were related. In addition, creativity in organizations has been shown to be promoted by servant-leaders (Linuesa-Langreo, Ruiz-Palomino & Elche, 2016). Moreover, as this leadership is usually participative, encouraging followers to grow intelligently, be creative and serve people (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Servant-

leadership, when successfully implemented, appears to have a myriad of positive impacts ranging from increased employee commitment and decreased turnover to fostering better company environments over all (Awee et. al, 2014; Brownell, 2010; Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Koyuncu, Burke, Astakhova, Eren, & Cetin, 2014; Liden et. al, 2014). Ehrhart (2004) links servant-leadership and the increased levels of trust, which then trickles into the character and culture of an organization and Brownell (2010) suggests that "that servant leadership holds particular promise for restoring public trust and employee engagement" (p. 364).

According to Stone, Russel, and Patterson (2004), servant-leadership's unique contribution is that it focuses on humility, authenticity, and interpersonal acceptance. In addition, servant-leaders focus more on the concern for their followers "by creating conditions that enhance followers' well-being and functioning . . . servant leaders do what is necessary for the organization" (van Dierndonck, 2011, p. 1235).

METHODOLOGY

Due to the unique industry and the continued need for deeper understanding, the purpose of this study was to explore through a qualitative case study, the leadership philosophy of a three-generation family of restauranteurs. The case for this research was *Canlis* restaurant in Seattle, WA. The Canlis family has been restaurateurs since 1950 (Dahlstrom, 2015). "Seattle's longest-running fine dining restaurant Canlis captures the beauty of the northwest by balancing fancy with

family" (Dahlstrom, 2015). Thus, the Canlis restaurant posed a unique leadership case due to the length of time the Canlis family has been in hospitality, the quality of dining the restaurant offers, and the perceived influence of multi-generations on the leadership philosophy of the Canlis brothers.

Case study methodology is defined as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system . . . over time, through details, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information . . . and reports a case description and base based themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Using this study design, the central question for this research was "How would you describe your family's (or Canlis') leadership philosophy? This question was asked of the co-owners and third generation proprietors of Canlis restaurant, brothers Mark and Brian Canlis. In addition, interviews were done with several employees, asking their perception of the Canlis leadership philosophy, and how well they believed it was articulated and displayed within the culture of the restaurant and business. The interviews with the Canlis's lasted an average of 45 minutes. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, coded and themed per qualitative research methodology (Creswell, 2014).

RESULTS

Four themes were revealed from the interviews and observations: *Making Room, Trustworthy, High Standards* and *Generous.* (Please see Figure 1 for theme relationships) In

addition to the four themes, a common thread was also observed that ran through the interviews. Both of the co-owners, Brian and Mark, as well as the employees, are deeply committed to not just the relationships in which they see themselves a part, but also "who we're becoming", as leaders, colleagues, and as a family owned restaurant. This core narrative is encapsulated by Mark's statement— "we are motivated in the direction of our hope . . . who we're becoming." As the website claims, "Here, we've made a habit of breaking our own traditions for the sake of someone else's" (https://canlis.com/story). This is further explained by the Canlis restaurant webpage page:

> Please come over for dinner:
>
> Sometimes all it takes is a real invitation, and our family would really like you to come over for dinner. The opportunity to meet and serve you is one we don't take lightly. Not for the past three generations at least. Come spend an evening. Our favorite thing in the world is taking care of others, and few places can do it quite like Canlis. (https://canlis.com/)

In addition to the common narrative, the four themes further explained the Canlis family leadership philosophy.

These four themes are not only woven together by the thread of "becoming," but are also generally discussed by the majority of the participants in a specific understanding. Brian and Mark, as well as the employees, conveyed an understanding that to continue on the path to "becoming", focus and attention in developing relationships is a must. Thus,

developing trust and being generous creates “room” for each other- which in turn allows for an environment where high standards are not just expected, but rather continuously strived for and improved upon. Consequently, while a specific order/occurrence of the themes is not required, the understanding that one often depends on the development of others is key.

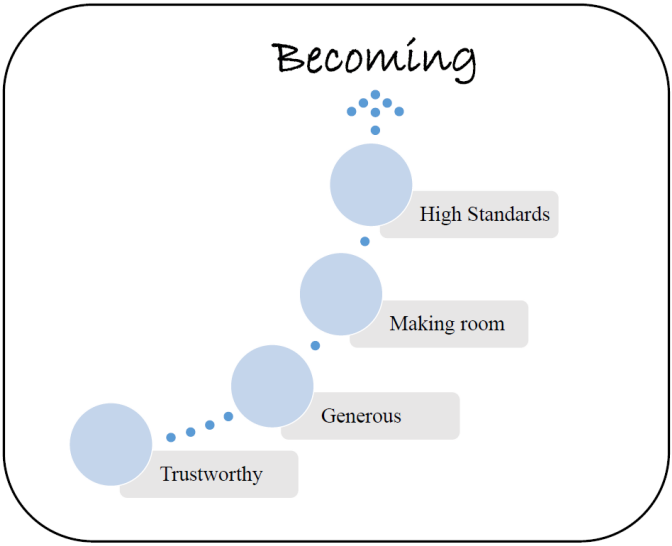

Figure 1. Theme relationships.

Trustworthy

The first theme, Trustworthy, was explained by all of the participants as a core value of Canlis. This was seen not just in the desire to have a trusting atmosphere and relationships, but also the belief that having a deep trust in one another created a more proficient and productive work environment. All of the

participants mentioned being trustworthy as the first pivotal value of Canlis, often proclaiming as one employee did, “we all know that...it’s be trustworthy, generous and others centered, TGO.” Brian commented that in the restaurant, if there is not trust between the employees or the management, then things can’t be efficient. “If you look at four cooks on the hot line, if there isn’t trust between them, then they are inefficient. In order to get trust . . . I think trust comes from intimacy, and I think intimacy comes from vulnerability.”

Brian claimed, “it’s this idea that you can talk about intimacy and trust and its touchy feely.... all this kumbaya stuff . . . how efficient trust and intimacy is, and what you can accomplish together. If there isn’t trust, then we are inefficient.” Mark furthered this thought by saying, “Trustworthy, . . . we think that trust is the currency of relationship, um, and to go further I would say the vulnerability is the currency of trust.”

This understanding was expanded on by both Brian and Mark in their discussion of being vulnerable. For the Canlis’, creating a safe environment was essential to being a good leader in the industry. For example, Mark discussed at length what matters most to the company, is that Canlis desires to be trustworthy and a safe place. He said:

> If you drive past, the emotion I want you to feel is that’s [Canlis restaurant] a safe place. Interesting words maybe for a restaurant, but that it’s absolutely safety driven . . . that trustworthy and safety are not synonyms, but they are words getting after the same concept.

Mark continued this thought by commenting, “I think that you’re not a safe place, you’re not a trusted person until you have the ability to let somebody else in.”

Mark also discussed the need to be trustworthy in an example he provided of an early leadership lesson he experienced in the military with another soldier. Mark reflected “I think in order for him to trust me I had to have a backbone.” He went on to say “I think in a certain sense, I had a job to do which was to give him something to stand on, and I don’t think I had done that yet.” This led Mark to understand the need to clarify who he was, and what he believed in. “I had to stand for something . . . and otherwise . . . I wasn’t a safe place for him, otherwise it would be dangerous for him to back me up if he doesn’t know what I stand for, right?”

For both Mark and Brian, being vulnerable and letting someone in not only created trust between themselves and their employees, but they believed it expanded to their customers as well. Dialogue from the participants showed that they believed this was one of the major reasons the Canlis family had been in the restaurant business in the Seattle area for over 65 years.

Generous

The second theme discussed by all of the participants was “Generous.” This theme can be described as being willing to spend time and energy to create quality relationships with each other as colleagues, but also with the restaurant guests. As Mark explained, “Generosity . . . it’s not a financial word to us, um, generosity is a statement of character, so when we say

we’re asking our staff we’re saying being generous with themselves.” For Mark and Brian, this includes things like benefits for their employees and a “family meal” where all of the staff comes together each day for relationship building and a quality meal. It also means walking the talk of being generous with time and energy. Brian reflected:

> Just last week I have an employee who’s been here a few years and he’s leaving to go start his own little private practice. So he’s leaving and he asked for time with me, in the middle of my day, a couple of hours to sit down and chat. We talked about his life and his marriage and his family, and I shared about mine. I actually got emotional . . . it was great. And we had a big hug at the end of it.

This wasn’t just a goal of the Canlis’s, but it also resonated with the employees as well. For example, one employee commented, “they are family and their businesses are so intertwined, they are one and so they are giving, like that’s the example of investment, that’s the precedent they set of working really long, really hard hours with us.” Another employee said “they take better care than any restaurant I’ve ever seen of their employees, 401k, um . . . full medical, dental, vision . . . profit sharing annually, and competitive wages.” This was further explained by “you’re not just welcomed in, you don’t just belong, it’s a family.” Additionally, the employees posited that Canlis is a carefully “thought through business whose job it is, as they see it, is blessing people. That starts with the employees, because if the employees feel loved and taken care

of then the guest surely will be loved and taken care of."

Brian commented that without generosity, "that you either think people matter or you don't think they matter, so if you just care when it's convenient, um, I think it rings false." He continued, "if everyone around you is always putting others first, then as much as you're putting others first people are putting you first, it's awesome . . . to serve and be served."

Thus, generosity to the Canlis's includes caring for others on a deeper level then just as owner-employee relationships. As Brian commented, it means "to work in a place where people care about each other and they want to be the best . . . I don't think profitability is a metric of success, I think longevity is." Generosity encompasses a commitment to self and others, and a desire to help each other and the restaurant grow into its "becoming in a way that is attractive."

Making Room

The third theme, "Making Room," can be described as taking time and creating the environment of reception and warmth to develop deep relationships with those around you. While others might call this a version of hospitality, all of the participants went to great length to describe a philosophy of bringing others into the fold and working to not just to be welcoming, but to create a space of belonging and community. The participants talked about the level of engagement both Brian and Mark have with the employees, and how this relationship is extended and encouraged with the guest-employee rapport in the restaurant. Not only was this making

room for others seen in examples such as taking time for others, even when it is inconvenient, but also in illustrations such as the Canlis restaurant sponsored “mudder” and softball teams, as well as putting a pull up bar by the back door. One employee commented, “the other night Mark was standing back there waiting for people to come up from the changing room saying ‘alright before you leave you’ve got to do a pull up, how many can you do?’” All of these examples are the Canlis’ desire to create an organizational community, creating space and making room for genuine and lasting relationships.

In another example, the “family dinner” was described by an employee as “Canlis is great about providing the space and time for us to sit down and laugh and talk and eat.” Brian furthered this sentiment by saying, “spending a half an hour each day talking about nothing with my employees around a table is valuable . . . it’s only when you spend the time with people that you actually get to know them . . . its actual relationship.”

Both Mark and Brian believe this value was instilled in them from their parents. Mark provided an example of when he and Brian were growing up, commenting, “I think I got doses of it [hospitality] as we grew up . . . the way we entertained in our home. I remember having 50, 60, 70 people over, the whole staff would come over to the house.” He went on, “To watch them, doing yard work all day, vacuuming the house and getting ready-even welcoming the guests, hanging up their coats and getting them a drink . . . I think that is the hospitality piece.”

As both Brian and Mark talked, there was a deep belief in the desire to make room for people, not just a superficial level of hospitality, but rather "making room for someone else, making space." Mark posit, "I think anytime we are face to face with another person, we have the choice to either leave them out or let them in . . . those who let others in are practicing hospitality. Those that leave others out, not so much." Mark further reflected on an old tradition of letting strangers into one's home, and the responsibility that came with this act. "In Scotland if someone knocks on your door and you let him in . . . because you had taken him in it was a commitment to care for, feed, provide for and defend him . . . it's really beautiful in a lot of ways."

High Standards

The last theme discussed by all of the participants was "High Standards." This theme can be described by the level and attention to details that being at Canlis requires. Both co-owners talked about the degree of care and regard they ask their employees to have when working with their restaurant guests. For example, Brian stated "that's what it takes . . . that level of precision. Like, you know those little things you stab the tickets with . . . when we stab tickets, it has to be stabbed in exactly the same place." He went on to say, "every time one of my employees stabs a ticket, they are reminded that the tiniest thing matters . . . if that ticket matters and I can trust them with the ticket, then I can trust them with every details of the restaurant." In addition, a high expectation of their employees

is demanding both professionally and personally. “Fine dining at our level takes is an enormous effort, it’s a big ask. I think we are a little but that’s what it takes, that level of precision.” Both co-owners and employees talked about the degree of meticulousness that Canlis requires. One of the employees commented, “There’s a level of fun and joking around and a level of professionalism and expectation, and they meet a nice balance.” Another said, “everything we do with a guest is honest and real, but it’s also highly choreographed . . . I’ve been critiqued for my posture at a table or using a certain word verses another word.”

Mark went on to tell a story about learning from his dad, not just the nature of how to serve others in the restaurant, but also how to have high standards:

> When dad put his hand on my head and said “look here” and he kind of wanted to direct where you were looking. “What do you see here?” When you read a table, there are different depths you can read it at. There’s the empty water glass, and even more so, what’s happening at the table right now, what’s about to happen, the next course is coming and they don’t have wine...so that would be like looking ahead to the table, but then he wants you to understand dynamics, relationally the dynamic going on, so what’s happening with their posture, what’s happening with their tone, why are they whispering, why are they gregarious,...wow...they look nervous, they look sad. And so that’s what you’re trying to, from the distance, read the entire thing.

An employee also discussed how close attention is paid to the small details at Canlis, such as how the plate is being placed on the table, to the rhetoric the waiters and waitresses use. For example, “we don’t say we, because it implies an us-versus-them. You want everybody at the table to feel included at Canlis, so we watch language that doesn’t work.”

Both Mark and Brian also discussed their belief in being more interpersonal, and how in doing so, the expectations of people were also raised. As Brian stated, “I think you can hold higher standards with the relational culture.” But he also recognized that “I think to do it the relational model way is a lot more work. I think it’s a higher cost, but ultimately a higher reward.” Not just the brothers, but also the employees believed that this high standard of service and care was what made Canlis restaurant distinctive.

DISCUSSION

Of the four themes discussed here, there seems to be an implied relationship between the leadership philosophy of the Canlis brothers and servant-leadership. While further research is needed to verify these potential correlations, findings here show some interesting connections. For example, the theme “Trustworthy” shows parallels to other research on the topic of trust. A substantial number of studies have been done on the antecedents of trust. Ferres (2001) summarized the results of a number of studies by discussing that “openness of communication, perceived organizational support, and justice are typical determinants of trust” (as cited in Dannhauser,

2006, p. 3). Greenleaf (1970) also stated that trust is at the core of servant-leadership while Dannhauser (2006) views trust as the cornerstone. Finally, McGee-Cooper (2003) states, “the most precious and intangible quality of (servant) leadership is trust” (p.13). In addition, Allen and authors (2016) emphasize an alignment between transformational leadership and trust.

The theme Generous can also be connected to servant-leadership through several of its ten characteristics (Spears, 2010). One possible connection is with the characteristic stewardship, which Block (1993) has defined as “holding something in trust for another” (p. xx). Spears (2010) continues this thought by stating “stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others” (p. 29). Barbuto and Wheeler (2002) describe stewardship as preparing the organization and its members for great contributions to society. In addition, the Malawi of Africa have a sophisticated understanding of life and personhood. *Umunthu* is similar to the South African premise of *Umbutu*, and is very expansive. Three of its major aspects—those that have direct implications for leadership include spirituality, communality, and generosity (Kwiyani, 2013). To have umunthu is to be a good- hearted, generous person who gives of him or herself to help those that are in need. “In this generosity, the community intends to humanize others through the acts of hospitality, inclusivity, and generosity, listening, etc. (Kwiyani, 2013, p, 49).

Last, the construct of “Making Room” has a number of servant-leadership implications. While the participants viewed this as creating space for others, there was an energy behind

this philosophy that included not just being in relationship with others, but also helping them into their "becoming." This seemingly parallels Greenleaf's (1970) premise that servant-leaders are called to serve others. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) term this "the natural desire to serve others, which was fundamental to servant leadership in the early writings of Greenleaf" (p. 304). Furthermore, the desire to serve has been embedded in many of the conceptualizations of servant-leadership (e.g., Akuchie, 1993; Graham, 1991; Polleys, 2002; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Another potential connection with the theme Making Room, specifically as it was described by the participants, is with the transformational leadership characteristic of Individualized Consideration. As Allen et al. (2016) describe this characteristic, the needs of the follower are considered by creating a supportive environment that is focused on the follower's achievement and growth. Furthermore, as Zaleznik (1992) suggests, managers view goals impersonally, as opposed to leaders who develop goals that reflect a deeper meaning based on beliefs. This follows with both the transformational and servant-leadership philosophies which discuss follower growth and development.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Due to the specialized nature of the sample for this research, generalizability may be limited. Furthermore, several limitations of this study may include the geographic location, the restaurant type (fine dining), as well as the ownership structure of this family owned restaurant. Future research

should take into consideration the general culture of the Pacific Northwest and how this may influence not only the employee's viewpoints on leadership, the general culture of and understanding of relationships, but also how these are practiced. As servant-leadership literature suggests, the longer an individual is in a particular position, the more likely they are to practice servant-leadership characteristics. In addition, long-term employees may have a different view of leadership due to their longevity with the organization. Finally, the management structure being based on family potentially provides top leadership with more autonomy, which then may impact leadership outcomes.

With all of these potential limitations, this research does demonstrate a number of interesting aspects that helps shed light on hospitality leadership. Thus, further research could explore other restaurant owner's leadership philosophies, and compare the results of this study. In addition, investigation into how these four themes influence employee and customer satisfaction, employee retention as well as financial implications could shed additional understanding.

CONCLUSION

At the heart of the hospitality industry is service. Brownell (2010) suggests that "servant leader philosophy is directly aligned with the mission of hospitality organizations" (p. 368). Furthermore, "the implications are considerable for the hospitality industry, since it is based on the concept of leadership through service" (Brownell, 2010, p. 368). When

emulating employees of servant-leaders reach a critical mass, they create what Liden et al. (2014) call a "serving culture" (p. 1435) which they posit has positive outcomes, both for the group as a whole and the individual. Liden et al. (2014) also suggest that servant-leadership spurs "committed workers who strive to deliver a memorable customer experience" (p. 462), which seemingly benefits all of the stakeholders. Studies have also found that increased levels of servant-leadership amongst management has impacts on employees' confidence, commitment to organization, and subsequently can drive customer service to higher levels, all results that appeared to be independent of gender, age, and education level (Koyuncu et al., 2014).

As the Canlis brothers have shown, embodying characteristics of servant-leadership has seemingly positively influenced the culture of their family's organization. While neither brother or any of the employees interviewed used the specific terms "servant-leader," or "servant-leadership," there is strong evidence to support an alignment of the Canlis leadership philosophy with servant-leadership characteristics (e.g. Liden et al., 2014), as well as similarities to the transformational leadership characteristic of individualized consideration (Allen et al., 2016). The Canlis brothers stand as embodied examples of servant-leaders as a lived practice without having been exposed to the theoretical definitions or language, and without having set out with the intention of becoming servant-leaders. Thus, in many ways, the Canlis brother's organic path to landing in an approach to leading and

restaurant management resembles much of what Greenleaf and Spears have succinctly defined is inspiring and validating to Servant-Leadership, this being a naturally progressive state of a "thoughtful leader" (Greenleaf, 1970).

Servant-leaders tend to be imitated by employees, which increases the individual's identification with the leader and organization. It is inferred that when this supportive and serving culture is developed in hospitality that the customers not only benefit from this ethos, they can even recognize this culture and environment. It is imperative, however, that for a service culture to be established, servant-leadership must first be adopted at the highest level. "A serving culture provides members of a collective with the understanding that the focus is on behaviors that provide benefits for others" (Liden et al., 2014, p. 1438).

Additionally, servant-leadership may be a way for organizations in the hospitality industry to distinguish themselves from others. What is unique about this leadership approach is that the servant-leader's focus is on the followers, while the achievement of organizational objectives is a subordinate outcome (Sahat, Siti, Mochammad, Djamhur & Kusdi, 2018). While the focus on organizational outcomes may be secondary, research still shows a number of favorable effects on both the organization and the employees within. Mertel and Brill (2015) suggest that there is a key to reframing how leaders view soft intangibles, which includes considering how supporting and encouraging employees transcends their personal and corporate values.

As shown, current understanding and research comparing

the hospitality industry and leadership is limited, and even more so when considering a specific subgroup of the industry such as restaurateurs. In addition, established theory regarding the effects of leadership in hospitality leaves gaps as limited attention has been given to servant-leadership and applying its characteristics and philosophy (Boyne, 2010). This research attempted to address this disparity by looking in-depth at one organization and its leader's philosophy and behaviors. In doing so this study helps forward understanding of the impact that leaders can have within their organization. As the findings depict, the brother co-owners of Canlis restaurant have a unique leadership and relational philosophy with their employees and guests. Seemingly, as restaurateurs having been in business as a family for over 65 years, this mindset of "other-centered" has served them well.

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Scott Linklater is a Ph.D. candidate (May 2019) in the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. Scott earned an M.Ed in adult education from the University of Idaho, and a BA in business administration from Washington State University. Scott is a learning and development practitioner with extensive experience directing training efforts at Monte Carlo Resort & Casino in Las Vegas and Red Lion Hotels Corporation, and is currently directing learning design at Northwest Farm Credit Services.

Dr. Kem Gambrell is an Associate Professor and faculty member in the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. She has spent the last eighteen years teaching a variety of leadership, organizational change, sociology and psychology classes. Kem holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from Concordia College (Seward, Nebraska), a Masters degree in Leadership Studies, and a Ph.D. in Human Sciences (Leadership Studies) from the University of Nebraska. Kem's research has centered around exploring minority group and women's leadership, social justice and leadership, employee engagement and commitment, and constructive development/sense-making and leadership. In addition, Kem has consulted for and not-for-profit business and medical organizations on a variety of leadership and organizational change over the past fourteen years.