1. Introduction

Jeffrey A. Raffel, Peter Leisink and Anthony E. Middlebrooks

The need for public sector leadership is greater than ever before. There are many substantive and process challenges today and they are new, complex and dynamic. Challenges – such as those posed by global warming, the credit crisis in the world’s financial system and threats to public health and security – span and interconnect boundaries, crossing levels of government, sectors, communities and nations. As a result the importance of effective public sector leadership is multiplied, impacting millions of people. Thus there is both a broader recognition of the need and higher expectations for effective public sector leadership.

Will we have the public sector leadership we need for the twenty-first century? This book examines the changing nature of public sector leadership, drawing on a diversity of perspectives that enhance our understanding of the new facets embedded in the challenges as well as the potential visions of excellence. The insightful chapters in this volume offer perspectives as a means of changing the way we conceptualize leadership, the conditions for both effective leadership within the public sector and collaboration among public, private and civic organizations, and most importantly the way we envision training the next generation of leaders. The challenges are many. This work provides the scholarly foundation to appreciate these challenges and hopes to contribute to meeting them.

Noted author and educator Michael Dickmann would often start strategic planning with an organization by posing the question, ‘What would we be doing if what we were doing made sense?’ In the USA failures in the reconstruction of Iraq, the response to the threat of Hurricane Katrina and the recovery of New Orleans, and the failure of the Federal Reserve to avoid the sub-prime mortgage financial crisis are seen as examples of public sector leadership failure. Indeed such failures are the butt of jokes and cartoons, a mocking of the capacity of the public sector to do its job. The images of the banner ‘Mission Accomplished’ behind President Bush on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and of his telling Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator Michael Brown,
‘Brownie you’re doing a heck of a job,’ are symbols of the failure of not only his political leadership but the bureaucratic efforts behind him. In Europe criticism of failing public sector leadership is based upon the lack of a general sense of how to adapt to immigration and to openly discuss the conditions of sustainable cultural diversity as well as the lack of a balanced response to globalization that offers ‘flexicurity’1 and supports the employability of workers who lose their jobs. In addition criticism also results from the lack of interest in a critical assessment of new public management-inspired ideas about financial performance juxtaposed against recognition of the public values and services that public, non-profit and voluntary organizations (should) uphold.

Clearly leadership, effective or ineffective, plays a key role in addressing societal challenges. Ingraham (2006a, p. 361) observes ‘Events of the past few years have highlighted leadership’s centrality to effective organization and good government. The complexity of problems confronted by organizations and their leaders in all sectors has increased exponentially.’ Good government requires good leaders. These problems are not limited to one nation and are often global in scope. The common issues underlying these problems can be examined in terms of either substance or process.

Substance

- Global threats The challenges of terrorism and security issues; concerns about the environment, global warming and public health threats, such as avian flu
- Financial issues Infrastructure, healthcare and social assistance needs juxtaposed against the anti-tax movement; resource constraints and fiscal imbalance, for example, the size of the US debt
- Demographic challenges The large-scale ageing and subsequent retiring of a generation of government and nonprofit leaders; immigration-based issues of acculturation, discrimination, and economic dislocation

Process

- Widespread cynicism and alienation Governmental and contracting scandals; the low trust in government and large institutions in general (Morse and Buss 2008); the demand for transparency and higher ethical standards; calls for higher governmental performance and better measurement of performance
- Maintaining principles of accountability while learning to engage in networks and partnerships and more generally the movement from
hierarchical government to collaborative governance, for example, public-private partnerships

- Speed of modern communications and closeness of media coverage Reducing the time for considering alternatives and decisions (Ingraham and Van Slyke 2006, p. 392) and making the public more cynical and skeptical about leaders

Distinguishing between substance and process is one of the many perspectives that comprise a deeper understanding, and thus approach, to issues. The next section briefly lays out a number of additional distinctions that emerge from past directions in public sector leadership scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP OF PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Public sector leadership scholarship, despite its ubiquitous need and application in the real world, has been surprisingly limited. Leadership literature is vast, but until recently it adopted what Rainey (2003) calls 'a generic approach' while focusing on the private sector. At a May 2008 symposium on Public Sector Competencies and Curricula hosted by the James McGregor Burns Academy for Leadership at the University of Maryland, one participant noted facetiously, ‘The New York Public Library has a million volumes on leadership but not one book on public sector leadership.’ Van Wart (2003) in his review of public sector leadership offered a more analytical conclusion, ‘. . . [The] literature on leadership with a public-sector focus is a fraction of that in the private sector’ (p. 17). Morse and Buss (2008, p. 3) have even measured the dominance of the private sector over the public sector leadership literature, counting over 27,000 Google hits on ‘leadership’ books but only 148 in the subcategory of ‘public affairs and administration’ (see also Van Wart 2003). ‘Traditionally, both the public and nonprofit sectors have looked to private sector models for leadership ideas and solutions to leadership problems. The private sector has always had its own problems, however, and certainly does now’ (Ingraham 2006b, p. 380). The challenge is to develop leadership models and research appropriate for the public sector.²

Much of the limited public sector literature that does exist focuses on the political leadership of great men who are or have been political leaders and on their traits or individual characteristics. The public sector leadership literature has focused on presidents and to some extent Congress as witnessed by Encyclopedia of Leadership entries (Goethals et al. 2004) which include FDR, JFK, and ‘political leadership’ along with Adolf Hitler, Mother Theresa, Gandhi and Genghis Khan but not ‘public sector leadership’ or ‘governmental leadership.’
Public sector leadership is more specific than general leadership and is more expansive than political leadership, as several recent publications argue. Van Wart and Dicke (2007) outline several types of public sector leadership: organizational (which they indicate has been neglected and is their focus), political, and movement (such as the role of Martin Luther King in the civil rights movement). Morse et al.’s (2007) categorization includes political leadership (elected or high appointees, top governmental leaders); organizational leadership (formal leadership within public organizations, from ‘line supervisors up’); and public value leadership – beyond government into governance, focusing on ‘solving public problems’ and including ‘on-the-ground leadership.’

The public sector leadership literature has been focused on political leaders and not surprisingly, this focus overlooks the distinction (critical in the public sector) between the leader as an individual and leadership as process. Lawler (2008, p. 23) concludes ‘. . . the focus of much of the leadership literature individualizes leadership, that is, implies leadership as resting with one individual who is expected to influence other individuals/groups. . . Leaders are seen variously as visionary, heroic, transformational, transactional, charismatic, inspirational, flexible, sensitive, innovative, but the enduring theme is that leadership is individualized’ (p. 27). Van Wart and Dicke list some of the requisite leadership characteristics in terms of 

Skills: technical, communications, social, influence and negotiation, analytic, continual learning skills (p. 170); 

Traits (p. 173); and 

Styles: ‘task-oriented transactional managers’ versus ‘transformational leaders who change technical systems radically’ and are ‘entrepreneurial leaders’ (p. 230); and 

Functional techniques of leaders (p. 276).

Leadership theory and practice have advanced considerably in the past few decades, far beyond (but still inclusive of) individual leader characteristics. As Crosby and Kiedrowski (2006, p. 1) state in their review of the literature, ‘In general, the field of leadership has moved from a focus on leadership – that is, from individuals as leaders to the relationship between leaders and followers (or constituents, colleagues, collaborators).’ Related to this changing conceptualization is the recognition that the potential for leadership is broader than has been thought and, indeed, the need is also greater. The single, authoritarian strong leader, while an image found frequently in our culture, is not well suited to modern demands for leadership and change (Holzer 2008).

In addition to the distinction between leader and leadership, public sector leadership scholarship has only recently embraced the distinction between management and leadership. John Kotter (1990) effectively explains the differences between management (‘producing order and efficiency’) and leadership (‘producing change and movement’). This distinction is often stated in
more colorful terms: managers make sure the trains run on time and that no tracks cross, while leaders determine where the train is going and inspire it to get there. While understanding the differences in skills and processes is critical, effective public sector leadership requires good management and leadership (Yukl and Lepsinger 2004). In public administration scholarship, Denhardt and Denhardt (2006) view leadership as ‘about change, moving people in new directions, realizing a new vision, or simply doing things differently or better’ (p. 8). Management is ‘concerned with rational processes. . . . Management works within a world of order and regulation, while leadership works within a world of openness and change’ (pp. 9–10). As public sector leaders consider the various challenges they face, they will need to know and perform as both managers and leaders if they are effectively to address both substance and process facets of those issues.

In the European public administration literature the interest in public management rather than in leadership has been manifest in recent years. Public management reform processes (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000) stimulated interest in management (for instance Clarke and Newman 1997; Ferlie et al. 1996; Noordegraaf 2000; Noordegraaf and Abma 2003). Simultaneously some researchers studied organizational leadership and the role of leaders in protecting the mission and values of the organization (Boin 1998; ’t Hart 1999). The new global challenges requiring leadership beyond the boundaries of public organizations have attracted only limited interest from European public administration researchers until now (Boin and ’t Hart 2003; Boin et al. 2005). Their analysis brings an important message to students of public leadership action concerning the complex challenges that occupy us here. Leadership action dealing with the immediate dangers of a public safety crisis aims at containment, at reassuring the public that everything is under control and at restoring the familiar situation before the crisis emerged. This is very different from the skills and actions required for learning lessons from such a crisis, which require public leadership to take an open attitude towards other parties and to debate together on what went wrong in order to instigate reform that helps to tackle future challenges more effectively. While these latter studies offer relevant insights, they restrict themselves to leaders in the sense of people in senior positions in government and public organizations. This internal government perspective offers little when collaborative leadership across public, non-profit and profit organizations is required.

Current Directions

This century has witnessed a burst of scholarship on public sector leadership. The new work includes literature reviews and analyses, collections of
papers and several new perspectives on public sector leadership. But as we point out below, there are several boundaries to the literature that need to be extended.

Given the emphasis in the leadership literature on the private sector, it is not surprising that several of the reviews raise questions about how public sector leadership differs from private sector leadership. Van Slyke and Alexander (2006) ask, for example, how significant are the differences for public (and nonprofit) sector leadership? They note examples of public sector differences:

- differences in performance measures – from profit margins and stock prices to more ambiguous measures linked to multiple goals
- sectoral authority mechanisms including ‘transparency, accountability, and legal constraints relating to administrative controls, due process, and rule making; human capital differences in terms of rewards and discretion’
- accountability to stakeholders from ‘shareholders, boards, networked partners customers, financial analysts, and regulatory bodies’ versus ‘citizens, interest groups, elected officials, courts, direct service clients, and media across levels of government, organizations, and even political boundaries’ (pp. 367–8)

Van Wart and Dicke (2008) view these constraints as different from those faced by the private sector. Van Slyke and Alexander (2006, p. 368) conclude that while many of the leadership skills needed are similar across the public and private sectors, ‘we infer that public sector leaders require a different packaging of these skills to lead and manage the unique nature of public sector organizations.’

Public sector leadership with an emphasis on organizational leadership and a public administration perspective is just beginning to emerge as a field, and there have been a flurry of recent books on the topic. They all indicate the dearth of work on public sector leadership. A recent stimulus has been the work of Montgomery Van Wart, in his article in Public Administration Review (PAR) (Van Wart 2003) and his comprehensive book, Dynamics of Leadership in Public Service: Theory and Practice (2005). An early review of this book indicated, ‘. . . a significant achievement. This is an important addition to the meager literature on leadership in the public sector . . . it will be nice having a text actually written for the purpose of public sector leadership’.

The book focuses on organizational leadership in the public and nonprofit sectors. While Van Wart utilizes ‘ancient, folk, and literary wisdom’ (p. xiv) in his text and does reference historical leaders outside the USA
such as Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte and Catherine the Great, the book is American-centric with few, if any, references outside the USA.

Van Wart has followed up this work with two others of note. With Lisa Dicke, Van Wart edited *Administrative Leadership in the Public Sector* (2007) for the American Society for Public Administration Classics series. This volume has nine sections organized around Van Wart’s framework as provided in his text, that is, goal setting, personal traits and situational leadership. Almost all are presented as questions: ‘What are the proper goals and priorities of administrative leaders? What are the best traits and skills for leaders in the public service? What are the best styles for public sector leaders to use? What are the best techniques for administrative leaders to use? How do you evaluate leadership in the public sector? How do you develop leaders?’ Van Wart (with Suino, 2008) also shortened his *Dynamics* book into a 300-page text.

The National Academy of Public Administration initiated an effort that has led to the publication of Morse et al. *Transforming Public Leadership for the 21st Century* (2007) which explores what the shift [from hierarchy and command and control to collaboration and networks] looks like and also offers guidance on what it should look like. Specifically, the book focuses on the role of career leaders – those in public service – who are agents of change not only in their own organizations, but also in their communities and policy domains. These leaders work in network settings, making connections and collaborating to create public value and advance the common good . . .

This book begins with a 15-page introduction stressing the lack of work in public leadership, and the editors rightly argue that much that does exist focuses on political and not administrative leadership. The editors lament the lack of scholarship on leadership dilemmas of ‘the new governance’ and the book’s essays focus on the changing landscape of public leadership. Morse and Buss’s major conclusion defines a problem in the literature, ‘yet there is too little scholarship, in our view, on the leadership dimensions of the new governance . . . The language of leadership is still by and large dominated by a hierarchical, organizational positional paradigm and has not caught up with new notions of governance, networks, and collaborations’ (p. 6).

In 2008 Morse and Buss published the companion book, *Innovations in Public Leadership Development*, noting that there are only a handful of works on the public sector management level as opposed to political and military leadership. Despite the fact that this is a ‘vastly understudied field’ (p. 3), there are numerous training programs in leadership development
offered by federal and state governments, professional associations such as ICMA and universities. Their introduction notes ‘Top-down, hierarchical models in management and leadership are giving way to models of collaboration and networks’ (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004 cited in Morse and Buss 2008, p. 5). They argue that this is a critical time for leadership development. The breakdown of the policy/administration dichotomy, implying that ‘political principals lead, administrative agents manage’ (p. 8), has led to a recognition that leadership is also a responsibility of public managers. They describe the ‘quiet crisis’ in government, ‘including lack of leader preparation, lack of public confidence in government, the “age bubble”, and the ascendancy of political leadership over civil service’ (p. 9). Finally public leadership is being transformed from traditional ‘command-and-control conceptions toward partnerships and networks’ (p. 11).

The papers from the November 2005 Maxwell Symposium on the Path Ahead for Public Service Leadership were edited by Patricia Ingraham and published as a journal symposium in the *American Review of Public Administration* a year later. The symposium centered on the views of distinguished leaders about contemporary leadership challenges and problems. Ingraham (2006b, p. 379) found there is a ‘very rich literature on case study analysis of leadership’ but little systematic work linking leadership to effectiveness. She asks, ‘When does leadership matter? How does leadership matter?’ In their conclusions Ingraham and Van Slyke (2006, p. 394) summarized the symposium implications, ‘The critical talents that emerge from this symposium are not “leading people” and “communicating effectively.” Rather they are talents for devising and understanding new frames for integrated leadership – leadership across boundaries, organizations, and cultures. . . . Last, and certainly not least, they include the capacity for ethical leadership.’ Indeed the Humphrey School at the University of Minnesota recently launched a Center for Integrative Leadership to ‘conduct multidisciplinary leadership research, formal classroom education, public education and leadership development’ based on the premise that leaders need to ‘integrate knowledge and talent from individuals, units, and organizations in the business, nonprofit, and governmental sectors’ (Crosby and Kiedrowski 2007, p. 3).

A number of new perspectives significant for public sector leadership have recently been put forward. Robert and Janet Denhardt (2006) have written a provocative book, *The Dance of Leadership*. Beginning with the premise that leadership is as much an art as a science and has a large affective component, they studied artists to better understand the parallels between artists on the stage and those who have mastered the art of leadership in each of the three sectors. Using a quite different approach, Wallis et al. (2007) have generated a series of propositions about public
sector leadership based on public choice theory. Finally King (1997, p. 336) discusses a number of books on political leadership using the concept of servant leadership, those leaders ‘who do what needs to be done . . . to ensure followers have what they need to do their work.’ Unlike leaders following a command-and-control style, servant leaders empower their followers.

Our review of the current literature on public sector leadership leads us to call for pushing the boundaries in a number of areas:

- Given the continued emphasis on cases and individual traits, especially of presidents and political leaders, more systematic research examining organizational leadership as process would provide a more detailed perspective of how effective leadership functions.
- Although recent literature has focused on organizational leadership in the public sector, there is an extensive body of leadership scholarship in other sectors that needs interpretation and verification for use in the public sector.
- Leadership in the public sector emphasizes internal efforts; we need to consider a more extensive view of public sector leadership aimed at external, multi-party collaboration dedicated to serving collective interests.
- Few international/comparative works on public sector leadership are included in recent textbooks or anthologies; we need to take a more global view of leadership.³

One significant point is that the nature of organizational leadership within the broader field of public sector leadership is changing. The recognition of the complex substance and process challenges noted above stimulates the movement from hierarchical, authority-based public institutions to collaborative external as well as internal and emergent leadership. Not even Van Wart recognizes this change, as illustrated in the Preface to his book which indicates ‘This book is about organizational leadership . . . Most obvious is the difference between the heavy emphasis on an external approach to leadership exhibited by policy-oriented leaders and the internal emphasis of organizational leaders’ (2005, p. xv). However, the threats to public organizations and governments require a different view of leadership, one that transcends formal boundaries and looks beyond the individual jurisdiction and even public sector lines than is implied by an internal focus, as several of the chapters herein demonstrate. Thus we require a broader view of organizational leadership if public sector leadership is to have meaning in today’s world, and models that move beyond those based on hierarchical views of public organizations (see Nye 2008
Public sector leadership is no longer bounded by public sector organizations. Nor is it bounded by nations. While the field of leadership is ‘still dominated by U.S. scholars . . . increasingly academics and practitioners from around the world are writing about leadership from diverse cultural and organizational perspectives’ (Crosby and Kiedrowski 2006, p. 1). Yet, as the review of the US literature suggests above, few publications build on the international array of research.

In addition, the call for studying leadership in a governance or network context specifically requires an understanding of the characteristics of and conditions for (collaborative) leadership. In fact both US (for instance Mandell 2001) and European (for instance Kickert et al. 1997; Klijn and Koppenjan 2000) public administration scholars have published on networks and the management of networks, but little attention has been paid to collaborative leadership in situations in which interdependency prevails and the assumption of a state-centered approach to governance cannot hold.

On the other hand this new interest in collaborative public leadership can benefit from the insights that have been produced by authors studying collaborative leadership from a generic perspective, such as Balkundi and Kilduff (2005), Grint (1997), Reicher et al. (2005) and Schruijer and Vansina (2002), all in Europe. They agree that leadership is a dynamic influence process between two or more parties. This emphasis on leadership processes does not mean that leaders are absent – indeed, they are identified as those who make especially salient contributions (Hosking 1997, p. 300), but leadership is not identified with the characteristics of exceptional persons. At a general level of analysis two characteristics make up the core of leadership processes, namely creating a shared sense of purpose and making things happen. This notion of creating a shared sense of purpose recognizes that leadership is a process in which social order is negotiated and that participants do not necessarily share the same values (Hosking 1997, p. 298). In a setting of collaborative leadership, the process of agreeing upon common goals can be extremely difficult, as Huxham and Vangen (2000, p. 1160) point out, because different organizations and their representatives bring a variety of goals and constraints to the process. The suggestion that leadership involves co-creating a sense of purpose recognizes that ‘different participants may seek to further different, sometimes conflicting, values and interests’ and that in the end ‘some values and interests are likely to be promoted at the expense of others’ which makes leadership a political process (Hosking 1997, p. 302).

For the study of collaborative public leadership the nature of the dependency relationships among the parties involved is a very relevant
topic. Huxham and Vangen (2000; also Keast et al. 2004) observe that studies of leadership in organizations presume that there is a formal leader with authority, and a hierarchical relationship, and that this presumption is problematic in a collaborative setting because the individuals involved come from different organizations or groups. However this feature of dependency relations is seldom elaborated when the relationships between state and other organizations in governance situations are discussed, as political science authors (for instance Pierre and Peters 2000) tend to adopt a state-centric approach to governance related to the principle of political primacy.

Current Questions

The review of the status of the field of public sector leadership leads to the following sets of questions, each set matched to a part of this book.

Part I: New public management and the challenge of change
How is the nature of public sector leadership changing as leaders address substantive issues of terrorism, natural disasters and global warming, demographic change including ageing and immigration, and process issues from hierarchical to collaborative leadership, that is, government to governance? How do leaders address demands for transparency, public-private partnerships and new public management (NPM) more generally?

Part II: Frontiers of political-administrative relations
How is the relationship between political and administrative leadership changing? What is the effect of political and public management reforms on the frontier of political-administrative relations? What do the changes imply for the accomplishment of accountability?

Part III: Leadership processes in interorganizational networks
What are the characteristics of public sector leadership in various types of networks? How can public sector leadership support collaboration with private and nonprofit organizations to achieve public goals? What factors influence leadership processes in a network context?

Part IV: Ethics, values and diversity
What are the implicit and explicit ethical issues facing public sector leaders in this new environment? What values must public sector leaders hold and how do these values mesh with the NPM? What does diversity really entail, and how does the value of diversity play a role in the new environment for public sector leaders?
Part V: Leadership training and development

How can more effective public sector leaders be developed? What challenges exist today in these processes, for example, defining the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) needed in collaborative governance? What are the appropriate skills and competencies for public sector leaders of today and tomorrow? How do these differ from leadership skills taught for other sectors? Are these recommended competencies common across nations? Are they universal or culture-bound?

PURPOSE AND ORIGINS OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is to define the issues facing public authorities and organizations in a range of developed nations as they address the challenges of the twenty-first century and to examine an array of ways in which leaders across these nations are addressing these challenges. The overriding question addressed by this volume is how public leadership across the globe addresses new challenges (for example, security, financial, demographic), new expectations of leaders (for example, new public management, inter-organizational collaboration in providing services and dealing with public issues), and what leadership means in the new public sector.

Concerns about globalization and more interest in international work have led to a need to internationalize the curriculum of public administration and leadership in the USA. Many programs are now trying to become more globalized, but textbooks tend to be quite US-focused. In Europe and throughout the world, for example, China, there has been an expansion of public administration programs, which, of course, seek a more international perspective than US textbooks provide. In addition there is a greater interest in leadership within the public sector, perhaps because of disappointment with current leaders or the increase in challenges they face, such as in security, finance, racial and ethnic conflict. This volume explicitly brings together the fields of leadership and public administration and is truly international in scope. The trends toward the integration of these fields and the increasing need for a broader perspective will continue as the proposed National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) accreditation standards change, opening accreditation to non-US programs, increasing the spread of public administration programs throughout the world, and increasing interest in leadership and the public sector.

Leadership scholars are increasingly concluding that leadership is much more than a set of traits or activities; rather it has many players, processes and contextual facets; that is, the circumstances affect the success of the
leader. Even within a general definition of leadership such as Northouse’s (2007, p. 3): ‘a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal,’ one finds many perspectives embedded in leadership: leadership as person and process, various means (and ethics) of influence, working with (diverse) others versus over them, and determining the specific common goal. We need to conceptualize leadership as more than a set of individual traits or actions, rather as a process, which can be manifested as relationships, creative structures and systems, culture at various levels, and specific goals addressing both substance and process. This volume allows the reader to view a large number of situations across the globe to better understand the relation between context and leadership. The astute instructor aiming to help students develop their leadership skills could use this book to ask how the leadership theories that students have learned would apply within the contexts described herein, and what results might follow. New contexts, collaborations, and challenges will require new leadership models, some of which are outlined in the chapters below.

Van Wart’s (2005) book on public sector leadership has taken a significant step in moving to integrate leadership and public administration, and this volume should complement his work. It provides the empirical context, across a wide variety of circumstances and specific leadership issues, within which to consider the theories and concepts in his single-authored text. Table 1.1 provides the reader with an outline guide to the individual chapters; further information is also provided below.

Finally several of the chapters in this book transcend state-centered analysis and address issues of collaboration across sectors, changing roles in the new public management paradigm, and corresponding new visions of leadership. As one participant in a Maxwell School symposium on leadership asked: ‘How do I lead an employee who neither works for me nor has ownership in my organization’s ethos?’ (Ingraham and Van Slyke 2006, p. 392). We need to transcend state-centered (hierarchical) perspectives by including new developments such as governance and public-private sector collaboration while retaining a public focus by concentrating on the public values involved.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

As indicated above, this book is organized into five parts: Part I, New Public Management and the Challenge of Change; Part II, Frontiers of Political-Administrative Relations; Part III, Leadership Processes in Interorganizational Networks; Part IV, Ethics, Values and Diversity; Part V, Leadership Training and Development.
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Part I  New Public Management and the Challenge of Change

The adoption of the new public management (NPM) philosophy and associated policy instruments presents challenges for public sector leadership and requires new perspectives for success. NPM ‘refers to a cluster of ideas and practices . . . that seek, at their core, to use private-sector and business approaches in the public sector’ (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000, p. 550). NPM ‘emphasizes customer focus, worker empowerment, work streamlining, cross-sector collaborating, and performance management’ (Van Wart 2005, p. 462). Under the NPM model, ‘rowing,’ the bureaucracy-centered production of governmental services, is replaced by ‘steering’ using techniques such as privatization and contracting-out, public-private partnerships and various accountability and performance measures.

Administrative reforms, through processes and structures inspired by NPM, are now widespread and commonly used. Berry’s chapter (Chapter 2) looks at the values we want to promote through government and the styles of leadership that managers use to implement those reforms, and assesses whether the NPM reforms are promoting the values most desired in a democratic government. Her conclusions suggest that many NPM reforms are not consistent with broader values than efficiency and thus may be falling short of our aspirations and the values citizens want from government. Berry argues that decisions about choosing appropriate managerial leadership styles to endorse and teach are needed, as NPM reforms encourage private sector practices that probably need tempering for the public sector.

Sætren’s contribution (Chapter 3) analyzes the attempt to reform several European governmental processes. The efficiency scrutinies program was among the very first initiated by Margaret Thatcher when she took office as Prime Minister in the UK in 1979. The program represented a new strategy to improve performance in the public sector. A fairly large number of scrutinies were carried out over the next few years and impressive results followed. To say that this program set in motion a process that eventually revolutionized the whole UK Civil Service system is no exaggeration. At approximately the same time, efficiency programs with similar objectives were launched in Denmark and Norway. Contrary to the UK experience, the Scandinavian programs were fairly clear-cut failures. The purpose of Sætren’s investigation is to account for these divergent reform experiences and in particular to explain the British success. Sætren finds that the fortuitous confluence of favorable enabling and precipitating factors, including unusual entrepreneurial political leadership, provides the best explanation.

In Chapter 4 Marcussen focuses his attention on the pressures that NPM brought to central banking in Europe. Central bank reform has
been omnipresent, pointing in the same direction towards more transparency, outcome performance and committee decision-making. However in Europe the reforms differ in terms of time, timing and tempo. By investigating leadership strategies in the Swedish Riksbank, the Danish Nationalbank, the Banca d’Italia and the European Central Bank these differences become clearly distinct. Marcussen analyzes factors at the micro-, meso- and macro-level to explain these differences.

In Chapter 5 Steen and Van der Meer discuss how NPM pressures on the senior civil service have impacted the original dual role of bureaucratic leadership encompassing both a management aspect (process) and a policy appraisal function (content). A comparative and historical analysis of the contexts of alternative civil service leadership models is discussed. The authors examine the case of the Netherlands. They discuss to what extent the development of the Algemene Bestuursdienst (ABD, the Dutch Senior Civil Service) goes hand in hand with a management orientation that is increasingly dominating in administrative leadership. The authors discuss the danger of creating a vicious management cycle that neglects the generalist policy expert and advisory role of public sector leaders and that leads to a new impetus for top-down politicization. Thus like the other authors in this part of the book, Steen and Van der Meer analyze dilemmas in the changing roles of public sector leaders generated by NPM.

Part II Frontiers of Political-administrative Relations

While most leadership and management research tends to adopt a generic approach, Rainey (2003) and Van Wart (2005) accept the view that leadership in a public setting is distinctive in certain respects, among others because of the frontiers of political-administrative relations that both political and administrative leadership have to manage.

The classic politics-bureaucracy dichotomy has been the object of critical reflection over the past quarter century (see for instance Du Gay 2005; Svara 2001). Empirical research has shown that bureaucrats are more involved in political decision-making than the traditional understanding of the political-administrative division allows for, while some analysts suggest that the shift may lead to a complete blurring of roles (for instance Aberbach et al. 1981; Aberbach and Rockman 2006). Everyday life may feature the accommodation of politicians and bureaucrats, but at times of reform the frontier becomes contested. Such reforms have been a common phenomenon at all levels of governments, partly because of similar political and public management reform ideas, partly because of specific local circumstances. The chapters in Part II examine how the relationship between
political and administrative leaders is changing and what these changes imply for the accomplishment of accountability. They present a global picture, ranging from local government in the USA through the European Commission to the Russian bureaucracy.

The classic political-administrative frontier lies at the heart of debates over differences in approach to accountability improvement in US local government. The USA has a long history of two forms of government, a council-manager form in which the manager can be removed by the council, and a mayor-council form in which a strong mayor and the council may get caught in ongoing conflict and which can impede accountability. Therefore Svara (Chapter 6) is surprised that in a number of council-manager cities a call for the mayor-council form is made based on the argument of accountability improvement.

The concept of accountability is mapped by distinguishing between accountability for the policy agenda and for administrative performance and between short-term and long-term time horizons. Drawing on available empirical evidence, Svara concludes that no necessary linkage between one form of government and heightened accountability can be established. The claims about accountability improvement appear to be related to different approaches to the concept of accountability. The one, favored by mayor-council cities with an elected executive, characterizes accountability improvement as compelled by superiors and regards this as unidirectional and short-term oriented. In this approach the political leader asserts control over the bureaucracy. The other approach to accountability improvement, favored by council-manager cities with facilitative visionary mayors, emphasizes the multi-directional and long-term characteristics. In cities that take this approach, there is a shared responsibility, and the political authority to hold bureaucratic officials accountable is supplemented by a shared commitment to common values and norms. The two forms of local government essentially provide two different approaches to promoting accountability and performance. However, according to Svara, the mayor-council form that some present as the superior form when it comes to accountability improvement cannot sustain its claim to superior results.

Wille (Chapter 7) looks at how the significant reforms that the European Commission has undergone recently have changed the roles and relationships of the political and bureaucratic leaders. A decade ago the line between politics and administration was blurred, but this has changed as a result of the reform program that was carried out. Wille tracks these changes by focusing on selection patterns and role definitions of political leaders (Commissioners) and senior officials (directors-general, heads of cabinet). The selection procedure and background of Commissioners appears to have
become more political while the appointment of top officials has become less politicized and more dependent on merit. In addition the new working systems of the Commission have framed the roles held by Commissioners in terms of political leadership while these same systems have oriented top officials on performance according to politically established targets and on accountability. Wille concludes that the reforms have resulted in a growing disconnection between the political and bureaucratic leadership. The perspectives of Commissioners, heads of cabinets and directors-general are clearly different regarding their function, their core values and their orientation to their counterparts. However all acknowledge also the virtue of complementarity and collaboration.

Holzer and Illiash (Chapter 8) note that the popular antigovernment sentiment in the USA and Europe underscores a collective desire for more effective leadership through ‘the “strong leader” who will set things right.’ They argue that this is a good reason to study the long autocratic leadership tradition in Russia and raise the question whether this might validate US desires for strong leadership. Another question is whether more complex leadership models proposed by Western literature would better serve Russian citizens? The authors’ historical analysis shows that Russian bureaucracy – a type that is very different from Weber’s type – has played an essential role in Russia’s state system. Rather than the bureaucracy serving the administration it acted as a vehicle for bureaucrats’ self-aggrandizement and as a path to political positions. Under the Communist Party the party-state bureaucracy grew increasingly powerful and decisions by ministers and department heads, free of control and accountability, were often arbitrary and autocratic. Poor civic rights and public services were the consequence. With the end of the Communist Party’s hegemony, political power shifted partly to the president and his administration and partly to regional leaders, business entrepreneurs and criminal groups, but the old-style bureaucracy remains in place. Holzer and Illiash conclude that the autocratic model is not to be emulated by the West because of its excessive long-term costs. They also conclude that Russian bureaucracy, despite its support for autocratic leadership, may yet serve an important function in providing a certain measure of stability in Russia that, in combination with the pressures of globalization and information, may nurture democracy and more subtle approaches to leadership.

Part III Leadership Processes in Interorganizational Networks

Designating the ‘new’ public sector leadership perspective as cross-organizational, interorganizational or network leadership neglects the different types of networks and the related relevant differences in leadership.
This point is illustrated by the chapters in this section which enrich our insight in the characteristics of public sector leadership and the conditions that influence leadership processes.

Drawing on the networks and leadership literature, Mandell and Keast (Chapter 9) distinguish between cooperative, coordinative and collaborative networks. They suggest on the basis of the literature review that the characteristics of collaborative networks include the interdependence of the organizations involved, the related absence of a ‘leader’ in charge of the network, and the networks’ purpose of creating new infrastructures and environments needed to deal with complex problems (rather than the efficient delivery of services). They present the findings of two case studies in which participants were interviewed about the leadership skills required in collaborative networks. The requisite skills essentially have to do with initiating, facilitating and minding the processes for collaboration. A key skill involves driving the collective action toward better or more innovative outcomes, and Mandell and Keast therefore coin the notion of ‘process catalyst’ to distinguish this type of leadership in collaborative networks.

Chapter 10 by Gil-Garcia, Pardo and Burke provides an exemplary case of a pressing public health crisis that requires multi-sector information sharing, involving federal and state agencies, local governments and a mix of public and private healthcare organizations. Focusing on the role of government executives, the authors develop a grounded model of the mechanisms through which three leadership variables – executive involvement, formal authority and informal leadership – influence collaboration across organizational boundaries. The authors develop a set of propositions about these mechanisms, which include for instance the influence of executive authority through demonstration of respect for the autonomy of participating organizations. Thus it appears that leadership variables can have an impact on the collaborative skills that are singled out by Mandell and Keast, as well as on a number of other factors (such as resources) that may foster collaboration.

An interesting case of organizing collective public action is presented by Justice and Skelcher in Chapter 11. The locus of their study of governance arrangements is urban areas in need of regeneration. Their interest is in the question of how the institutional design of business improvement districts, either as a self-governing or as an externally governed design, frames the attitudes and activities of local business leaders. Their four case studies show that city governments have a large impact on collective public action through the governance design they promote. The self-governance design appears to elicit active participation and cooperation from business leaders whereas the externally governed design (city governance from a distance) does little to change the orientations of local business people and
Introduction does not foster widespread participation because of a lack of participation structures. This chapter brings home the point that public sector leadership interested in promoting collective public action should pay proper attention to the institutional design of cooperation with other actors.

The final chapter in this section by Ingraham (Chapter 12) examines the leadership and organizational coherence assumption that is common in the literature. She points out that the assumption of a coherent organization in which leaders have authority over resources and members’ allegiance is ‘thrown into substantial disarray’ by the impact of contracting-out. Contracting-out implies leading and collaborating with organizations that are, at best, loosely linked. In the setting of public organizations, the consequence is that linkages in terms of, for instance, commitment to mission and organizational values become ‘unglued.’ The analysis of the impact of contracting-out modernizing the US Coast Guard fleet proves her point. When the contractor’s performance results – and the contract arrangements for oversight and accountability – turned out to be inferior, the leadership was forced not only to revise the contract terms but also to return to the Coast Guard’s strong record in order to reglue the organization and the commitment to its public mission both internally and externally. She concludes that moving through and across organizational walls and the capacity to glue are important parts of the leadership challenge.

Part IV Ethics, Values and Diversity

The failings of public sector leaders are often attributed to an ethical shortcoming. In fact Daniel Kim (2002) argues that from a servant-leadership perspective, failing to make the effort or take the time to foresee the consequences of decisions is an ethical failure, not simply a managerial mistake or an unfortunate, unpredictable outcome. The awareness of the relationship between leaders, leadership and ethics extends back to Plato and Aristotle and has been extensively examined and considered. Likewise and similarly related, the topic of diversity has garnered extensive attention as organizational practices, social norms and public policy have reciprocally influenced one another to greater levels of understanding. Thus this section of the book aims to provide some unique and current perspectives on the nature of ethics and diversity.

Working and leading in the public sector requires attention to the specific needs of both external constituents and internal stakeholders, that is employees. The important relationships between satisfied employees and high quality public service reinforces the need for leaders to more closely examine the nature and nurture of what influences and motivates
followers. Influence is based on what one values, and indeed the relationship between leader and follower is often rooted in a high degree of value compatibility. Values, and the rules guiding their application, are the root of ethics as well. Respecting others, building community, manifesting honesty, showing justice and serving others have long comprised the core principles of ethical leadership (Northouse 2007).

Navigating a leader’s ethical conduct versus his or her ethical character, particularly when attempting to deconstruct a multifaceted public sector problem, constitutes a key challenge for ethical public sector leaders. Even more ambiguous, however, is the relationship between multiple levels of ethical analyses, in this case between the individual, the organizational systems and the organizational culture. When things go terribly wrong, could no one and nothing be to blame? Gary Klein, in Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions (1999), writes about research by Jim Reason (1990) at the University of Manchester that asserts that decision errors are not a result of human error, but rather the result of what he calls latent pathogens – poor design, poor training, poor procedures and systems that may be undetected until relevant. ‘It is easy to blame the operator for the mistake, yet all of the earlier problems made the mistake virtually inevitable’ (p. 273).

Diversity in organizations is often part of a conversation about ethics, ensuring inclusive and equitable policy and practice as socially just. As public and organizational structures have changed, diversity has evolved from a tolerance model to an embrace model, and now perhaps to a capital model. In other words more than simply a ‘nice idea,’ diversity is a source of measurable value that can be translated into economic capital. Viewing diversity as a form of capital enables communities and organizations to benefit from new perspectives, the energy of contrasting ideas, the more civil culture necessary to navigate differences and a greater sense of community that can come from finding common ground in a shared vision.

A model of diversity capital, however, requires effective leadership to facilitate and guide diverse persons and perspectives. Diversity across individuals, while more salient, overlooks the complexity of differences within individuals as well as the ways that complexity manifests in different contexts. If one objective of honoring diversity is to more effectively meet the needs of those one leads (or serves), then one must understand the diversity of individual needs. Newman, Guy and Mastracci in Chapter 13 assert that ‘emotion work is as individual as cognitive work . . . subject to individual differences.’ The authors explore the work experience of social workers, 911-operators, corrections officials, detectives and child guardians to ‘reveal the centrality of emotion work in the service exchange and underscore affective leadership in practice.’ By acquiring the skills and focusing on the affective dimensions of individual diversity, and engaging
the emotional labor required to do so, leaders can create more meaningful connections with those they serve and ultimately lead more effectively.

In their chapter on leadership for an ageing workforce (Chapter 14), Vanmullem and Hondeghem provide empirical evidence supporting the need for leaders to adapt their style to various age levels. While chronological age has been noted as a form of diversity for some time, Vanmullem and Hondeghem expand this conceptualization by examining broader age categories that capture career progression phases and their modulating effect on the association between leadership style (task, relationship, change) and motivation (want-get discrepancy of 16 job values). As the authors note, ‘This [research] indicates the importance of age diversity management; in other words supervisors must have insight into the needs and capabilities of the different age groups and must try to accommodate this, for instance, through an adapted leadership style. In order to understand these different needs and capabilities, insight in the work values of the different age groups is necessary.’

At the organizational level or perhaps at an even more abstract and generalizable level, Johnston and Gudergan (Chapter 15) examine the nature of public-private partnership agreements (PPPs). They argue that the important and necessary technical-rational aspects of PPP arrangements are well developed; however ‘... implicit relational conditions, especially how the partners should behave at all stages of the PPP, has been largely neglected to date. These aspects, which might be referred to as the social contract are typically implicit aspects of the governance of PPPs and are not usually included within the legal contract.’ It is within this social-relational aspect that ethical issues arise or, more importantly, can be foreseen and worked through as part of the agreement. Johnston and Gudergan evidence their assertions by examining various supranational reports but more interestingly illustrate the perils of such oversight in a case study where unforeseen outcomes led to competing values and actions between private and public entities. With no guidance for navigating the conflict beyond the technical-rational legal contract, ethical lapses were quickly realized and the public ill-served. Ethics and diversity are individual level constructs that, although overlooked in the technical-rational organizational level, are often key to the success or failure of leadership.

Adams and Balfour (Chapter 16) provide a fertile starting point for a critical analysis and discussion of individual ethical thinking and activity vis-à-vis an organizational cultural milieu. They argue that the technical rational framework of many organizations, in this case multiple agencies of the federal government addressing Hurricane Katrina, implicitly influences leaders and managers such that they rely on the organizational level
structure to guide their ethical behaviors. This often leads to outcomes that would be questioned by the moral compass of the individual. And this lack of individual ethical mindfulness leads generally competent individuals to incompetent acts, and in many cases unethical behavior. Adams and Balfour note, ‘Public leadership must . . . [be] aware of the potential for ethical failure by the state and its agenda, and by a societal role . . . that can recognize the need to transcend conventional ethics and professional practice when needed.’ Thus, masked by the implicit cultural influences of a technical rational mindset, and perhaps a particular ideological culture, the leadership failures during Hurricane Katrina offer insight into the relationship among ethics, competence and administrative evil.

Part V  Leadership Training and Development

In May 2008 the James MacGregor Burns Academy for Leadership held a symposium on Public Leadership Competencies and Curricula, inviting many of the leading figures in academic and federal efforts in preparing public sector leaders. Jeffery Raffel was involved in this because of his role in NASPAA accreditation efforts. While there was agreement with the statement, ‘Leadership is a developing skill area; it is growing in importance in many fields,’ there were many laments that as a curriculum topic leadership is not given its due:

Ironically (or paradoxically), there are numerous efforts at public sector leadership training and development despite the limitations of public sector leadership scholarship and skepticism among many public affairs faculty about the topic. As Fairholm (2004, p. 35) concludes, ‘Training public managers in the skills and techniques of leadership and management has become a major part of public human resources efforts.’ This is happening despite the neglect of scholarship on public sector leadership in public administration. The ‘dearth of empirical research on leadership is evident’ (p. 37), yet training for leadership roles is pervasive.

There are many ways to develop leaders (Van Wart and Dicke 2007, p. 355) ‘including experiences and trial and error,’ through job rotation, networking and mentoring. Indeed there are numerous programmatic efforts in public sector leadership in the USA and Europe. Ironically, perhaps, few formal public administration or public policy master’s programs include much material explicitly aimed at public sector leadership.6

There are however numerous training and development programs across the globe for government employees that focus on leadership. For example the Federal SES (Senior Executive Service), specifies fundamental competencies including the following: interpersonal skills, oral communications, integrity/honesty, written communications, continual learning and
public sector motivation. The Introduction notes, ‘The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) are based on extensive research of the attributes of successful executives in both the private and public sectors; they are a collaboration, reflecting the best thinking of many senior executives and associations, as well as agency human resource professionals.’ These ECQs are:

- Leading change
- Leading people
- Results driven
- Business acumen
- Building coalitions

Leadership development training and development programs in the USA are numerous including local level (ICMA [International City/County Management Association] Certified Public Managers), state government (National Conference of State Legislatures), university centers (for example, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina, University of Richmond, University of Southern California) and others (Van Wart and Dicke 2007). While less developed, there are many European initiatives in leadership development and training. Lawler (2008) identifies several European training efforts including the National College for School Leadership in UK education; National Health Service (NHS) Leadership Center (with NHS Leadership Qualities Framework); and Leadership Centre for Local Government.

Ingraham (2006b, p. 376) summarizes the state of the leadership development field well, ‘. . . there is an increasingly broad consensus among practitioners and academics that leadership matters, [although] the consensus does not extend much further than that . . . Definitions of effective leadership and how to achieve it vary widely.’ As Ingraham points out, the identification of competencies ‘has become a primary leadership development tool’ (p. 377), but the list keeps growing without a good way to set its priorities. Ingraham and Van Slyke (2006, p. 392) state that ‘cases of leadership success,’ almost exclusively from the private sector, are the basis of much of the leadership literature. ‘This is a crisis and opportunity in that many will retire but we have the opportunity to rejuvenate the public service’ (Ingraham and Van Slyke 2006, p. 393).

Within this context of leadership development, two chapters in this final section provide a comparative analysis of leadership training programs across many nations, and the third discusses the issues in evaluating the impact of such programs in the context of the British Senior Civil Service.

Mau (Chapter 17) uses a comparative case study approach to examine
the evolution of competency models for recruiting, selecting, assessing, developing and compensating senior public service employees in the USA, Canada and Australia. He assesses the extent to which the three competency frameworks under investigation effectively capture the essence of leading in the public sector by clearly establishing a distinctive public sector leadership brand. The chapter makes the argument that effective leadership competency frameworks must be sufficiently parsimonious so that they can actually be meaningfully utilized in hiring, compensation and promotion decisions but suitably nuanced so that they recognize that leading in the public sector, while in many respects similar, is not completely analogous to leading in the private sector.

Beinicke and Spencer (Chapter 18), also using a comparative approach, analyze mental health leadership training programs and competencies in eight countries: Australia, Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, the UK and the USA. Health leadership programs are also examined and, to a lesser extent, those in public administration. Selected leadership training programs are highlighted and a cross-national leadership and management skill-set is derived.

In the final research chapter (Chapter 19) Horton examines the ways in which training interventions are being used to develop leadership in the British Senior Civil Service (SCS) and determine how their effectiveness is currently being evaluated. First Horton describes the three leadership programs designed and delivered by the National School of Government to develop leadership skills and competencies within the SCS. Second she explores the literature on evaluation of training and identifies some key models that are influencing current practices in both private and public organizations. Third she identifies the ways in which the leadership programs are currently being evaluated and then identifies which of the evaluation models found in the literature are either explicitly or implicitly being used. Finally Horton considers the problems of evaluating training and how to ensure that there is a return even if the impact cannot be measured.

The editors’ Conclusion, after briefly answering many of the questions raised in this Introduction with insights gained from the chapters herein, focuses on the implications of this research for preparing public sector leaders and the themes derived from the 18 research chapters in this volume.

NOTES

1. ‘Flexicurity’ is a policy promoted by the European Commission. The term is a combination of flexibility and security. The policy promotes a balanced approach to globalization, offering the flexibility that corporations require and the security that employees want.
The main idea is that since the idea of a lifetime job is no longer feasible, workers should accept the idea of securing their employability by investing in their own competences; directly related to this firms gain flexibility from workers' willingness to accept employability (instead of a lifetime job) but in return they should support workers by offering opportunities for training and paying for training costs.


5. Both NAPA books described in this chapter, for example, include only papers written by US authors focusing on the US experience.

6. At the master’s level in the US, few graduate programs explicitly address leadership although leadership lies at the formal heart of the master’s accreditation process. Current National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) standards ‘apply to individual masters degree programs whose purpose is to provide professional education for leadership in public affairs, policy, administration’ (http://www.nasppa.org/accreditation/seeking/reference/standards.asp, 3 April 2008). While some programs may address leadership issues in a required human resources or organizational behavior course, few programs have explicit courses aimed at leadership per se. Fairholm (2004) in his article on leadership in public affairs programs states, ‘Current (and past) master of public administration programs still teach mostly management skills and techniques’ (p. 51); and thus he calls for focus on new skills, ‘relationship building, values, change, creativity, and flexibility’ (p. 50). MBA programs should ‘include leadership specialties as a core competency with courses to reinforce it’ (p. 51). ‘Leadership’ is listed as one of 15 areas of specialization on the NASPAA website search engine designed for prospective students to select appropriate programs but only one program is listed within this area. The Bush School (Texas A&M) program, University of South Dakota, and the Hubert Humphrey School at the University of Minnesota have consciously and successfully introduced leadership into their MPA programs (Fairholm 2006; Crosby and Bryson 2005). The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) is focused more on preparing students for academic positions in public administration; the word ‘leadership’ is not mentioned in the standards criteria document. EAPAA ‘standards apply to individual degree programmes whose purpose is to provide academic education for professional proficiency in academic level roles in the public domain’, http://www.eapaa.org/OffDocs/EAPAACriteriaSept2006Rev3.pdf, 3 April 2008.


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