

Different perspectives on the practice of leadership

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Matthew R. Fairholm University of South Dakota Different Perspectives on the Practice of Leadership Public administrators need not only practical and intellectual permission to exercise leadership, but also a practical and intellectual understanding of what leadership actually is. Much has emerged in the public administration literature and practice about the need for and legitimacy of public managers exerting leadership in their work, complementing the traditional functions of organizational management and policy implementation.

Calling on the experiences and ideas of practitioners, this article offers an empirical understanding—both descriptive and prescriptive— of what leadership actually looks like as it is practiced by public managers. It uncovers five leadership perspectives (ranging from leadership as equivalent to scientific management, to leadership being a whole-soul or spiritual endeavor) held by public managers and discusses their implications for public administration. It legitimizes the notion that leadership is a crucial part of public administration and offers public managers the chance to improve or enhance those legitimate leadership activities.

Public administrators not only need practical and intellectual permission to exercise leadership, they need practical and intellectual understanding of what leadership actually is. Training public managers in the skills and techniques of leadership and management has become a major part of public human resource efforts (Day 2000; Sims 2002; Rainey and Kellough 2000; Ink 2000; Pynes 2003). Articles and essays have surfaced in the literature about the need for and legitimacy of public managers exerting

leadership in their work, complementing the traditional functions of organizational management and policy and program implementation.

Books have emerged to lend more specificity to the topic of leadership in the public sector. Still, in the face of technicism, strict policy implementation, and a fear of administrative discretion, it has often been a significant struggle to discuss the philosophy of leadership in public administration. This article offers empirical insight, both descriptive and prescriptive, about what leadership actually looks like as practiced by public managers, and it supports a growing focus on leadership in the literature (Behn 1998; Terry 1995; Van Wart 2003). The research findings influence public administration and the individual public administrator by first growing our basic understanding of leadership, refining our perceived public administration roles consistent with that understanding, and finally, reshaping the professional training of public administrators. These new ideas about how public managers view and practice leadership legitimize the notion that leadership is inherent in and a crucial part of public administration, and it offers public managers the chance to improve or enhance those legitimate leadership activities. The hope is that the current trend of building leadership and management capacity among practitioners will be undertaken with a more proper focus and with renewed theoretical and practical vigor.

Background: The Leadership Apology in Public Administration Public administration traditionally is the study and work of management in public organizations. It is also the study and work of leadership in those organizations. Public administration emerged with a bias toward management science—the expert, the decision maker—but management

science has not sufficiently served public administration (McSwite 1997). Bennis (1993) suggests that managers Matthew R. Fairholm is an assistant professor in the Political Science Department and the W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership at the University of South Dakota. His teaching and training experience spans the public, private, nonprofit, and university settings, including extensive training and consulting in the District of Columbia government and with federal government executives. His academic and professional interests focus on public administration, leadership theory and practice, and organizational behavior.

E-mail:edu. Different Perspectives on the Practice of Leadership 577 focus on doing their work right (that is, correctly), while leadership is concerned with selecting the right things— programs, policies, values, goals, etc. —to work on. In today's environment, it makes more sense for us to describe public administration as the practice and theory that grapples with doing the right things right in the service of society. In short, public administration is the work of management and leadership. In contemporary literature, the concepts of management and leadership are constantly being defined, compared, and differentiated. 1 A simple way to see the distinction is that if you can count it, you can control it, you can program it, and therefore, you can manage it. If you cannot count it, you have to do leadership. While some still may not see a distinction, the leadership literature today by and large accepts the differences. Notions of leadership, for instance, grounded the government reinvention efforts so prevalent in the 1990s (Ingraham, Sanders, and Thompson 1998).

For example, Sanders (1998) argues that leadership is essential in the working and transformation of government. He suggests the key ingredients of leadership in government reinvention include “ single-minded purpose and a strategic perspective with a proclivity for risk ... participation and persistence” (55). Behn (1998) says that leadership is required in the world of public administration to resolve its inherent imperfections. He suggests that no matter what we call the work of public managers, managing the systems and procedures are only part of the job.

Initiative, motivation, inspiration— the things of leadership—also play a critical role in making government and government organizations work. Behn offers that the question is not whether they should lead, but rather what kind of leadership should public administrators be practicing. For him it is “ active, intelligent, enterprising leadership ... that takes astute initiatives designed to help the agency not only achieve its purposes today but also to create new capacity to achieve its objectives tomorrow” (224). Terry’s (1995) view of leadership serves as a backdrop to much of Behn’s discussion.

While Behn focuses on the traits and behaviors of public managers, Terry emphasizes a normative, values-laden approach to leadership, dismissing the heroic leadership constructs in favor of the leader as conservator of institutional and organizational values and goals. The idea of public managers infusing values into an organization is not a new one, even if it is often ignored. Selznick (1983) states that the point of leadership is to “ infuse the organization with values. ” And Denhardt (1981) says the theory

and practice of public administration are integral to the development of the state and its allocation of values in society. It follows, therefore, that public administration must encompass far more than technical concerns (Hart 1984). Fairholm (1991) focuses a discussion 578 *Public Administration Review* • September/October 2004, Vol. 64, No. 5 of values leadership in the work of public administration, presenting a model of leadership that is consistent with the fundamental constitutional values that guide and shape the work of public managers. Luminaries in the field, such as Follett (1918), Barnard (1938), and Waldo (1980), have also discussed leadership issues in terms of values and relationships.

This focus has been renewed in the leadership literature discussing emotional intelligence, or the ability to understand people and act wisely in human relations (Goleman 1995). Nevertheless, for most, leadership is only one of many supporting elements of public administration's success or efficacy, not a major factor in public administration theory and practice. In fact, some public administration theorists avoid the topic of leadership altogether. James MacGregor Burns (1978) offers a reason. In modern times, he writes, leadership research and theory have been misfounded in social and political thought. Burns emphatically argues that an encompassing leadership theory has suffered both from an ill-advised intellectual trip "down a blind alley," leading only to misguided ideas of authority, and from the inadequacy of empirical data (23). Researchers have denigrated the idea of leadership, he contends, because they misunderstand the evolving nature of authority derived from changing social structures, and because they have missed opportunities to tie in research procedures and focuses from intellectual

interests such as psychology, sociology, history, and political science, not just scientific management, Weberian bureaucracy, and the like.

Following Burns's argument, perhaps public administrators are still afraid of the concepts of raw power, authority, and domination, with which a misguided history of leadership theory has endowed us with. Specifically, many in public administration suffer from a preoccupation with traditional arguments surrounding the potential evils of authority. This preoccupation revolves around typical public administration issues and concerns that are described in ways contrary to the focus on leadership found in recent literature. These concerns can be summarized by what might be termed the "three D's": (1) dichotomy arguments that say leadership looks too much like politics and therefore should be eschewed; (2) discretion arguments that simply define leadership as a maverick and undesirable version of administrative discretion; and (3) domination/ authority arguments that suggest leadership is merely another form of domination and authority and, therefore, is inherently dangerous because it tends to create societal units that are dominated by the whims of unchecked (that is, unelected), morally hegemonic "men of reason" (McSwite 1997).

Despite these objections (indeed, perhaps because of them), studying what leadership actually is and how it is applied makes sense in the world of public administration. As Burns once optimistically declared, "At last we can hope to close the intellectual gap between the fecund canons of authority and a new and general theory of leadership" (1978, 26). Certainly, studying leadership in public administration offers an opportunity to jump the

practical hurdles that history and intellectual narrowness have presented. Such endeavors can begin to close an intellectual and practical gap and help complete the field.

Beginning to Fill the Public Administration Leadership Gap For public administration, the leadership gap has really only existed in the academic realm. Practitioners have been “doing leadership” and dealing with authority and influence all along, but without a good model for what they are doing. While some writers in the field have focused on leadership, overall, public administration scholars have done little to help understand what leadership in public organizations is. Van Wart (2003) suggests it is still an area worthy of more thought and especially more research. His review of public administration articles suggests that leadership itself has not been in the mainstream of public administration literature and that a dearth of empirical research on leadership is evident. Many public administration academics are, at best, ignoring leadership issues and, at worst, rejecting the concept. Practitioners, on the other hand, are trying to gain sufficient training or grounding in leadership to deal with the relationship-based issues they face daily. Because of this practitioner focus, a few universities have started programs explicitly linking leadership and the public sector environment.

Increasingly, government agencies are devoting time and financial resources to leadership and management-development programs. 2 Many state governments have committed to offering the nationally recognized certified public manager training to their employees. And most federal agencies have leadership-development programs for senior executives, middle managers,

and new recruits with significant leadership potential. You Know It When You See It Even with all of this focus on leadership development, public administration as a field has not devoted sufficient scholarly attention to the topic. People often lump all executive functions or behavior into the word “ leadership. ” They disregard the unique leadership techniques that have prompted contemporary leadership scholars to differentiate leadership and management. Thus, they may say that virtually everything done in organizations is leadership— which also means that nothing is. One reason for this lack of attention is that understanding leadership is hard. In part, this is true because of the many extant management and leadership theories, approaches, and definitions. To some extent, though, these definitions of leadership simply reflect the theory that each individual researcher has about the leadership phenomenon. One authority on leadership suggests, “ Leadership is like beauty. You know it when you see it. ” As Stogdill (1974, 7) suggests, “ there are as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. ” Understanding leadership, then, may entail understanding people’s conceptions or mind sets about the phenomenon and framing these perspectives in a useful model. Studying practitioner views on leadership, therefore, is an appropriate and valuable start to understanding what leadership looks like in public administration to public administrators. This article deals with the author’s study focusing on what leadership looks like to public managers. This research develops empirical evidence that different perspectives on leadership exist that shape the behavior of individual practitioners in ways specific to their mind sets. This is a “ personal conceptions” or “ perspectival” approach to leadership

study. This perspectival approach reveals the different ways that individual public managers see their leadership activities every day—how they conceive of leadership from their perspective. Therefore, it provides a richer, more meaningful understanding of the concept of leadership and facilitates a more complete analysis of the leadership phenomenon. It also suggests it is likely that practitioner leaders can grow in their understanding of leadership. Importantly, this research better informs the work of public administrators by emphasizing both the leadership and the management responsibilities that are evident as practitioners ply their craft. Leader and Leadership Two main approaches to studying leadership emerge.

The most popular is a focus on the leader, suggesting that leadership is best understood by studying specific individuals in specific situations (Bennis 1984; Kouzes and Posner 1990; Carson 1987; Sanders 1998). Proponents of this method focus on the qualities, behaviors, and situational responses of those who claim to be or are given the title of leader. In this first approach, leadership is what leaders are or do, and therefore the meaning of leadership derives from the work of the leader: Leaders define leadership. The second approach recognizes that studying individual leaders may not get you to a general understanding of leadership (DePree 1992; Wheatley 1999; Heifetz 1994; Burns 1978; Greenleaf 1977). This approach rejects the idea that leadership is a summation of the qualities, behaviors, or situational responses of individuals in a position of authority at the head of organizations. Proponents of this approach accept that leadership is something larger than the leader— that leadership encompasses all there is that defines who a

leader may be. Hence, the meaning of “ leader” (or who may be labeled a leader) depends on the leadership techniques displayed, not the position held. This second approach differs from the leadercentric approach mainly by asking the question, “ what is leadership? ” instead of “ who is a leader? ” This second, more philosophical approach guides this research exploring how public managers view leadership. Applying the Perspectival Approach to Understanding Leadership Paradigmatic, perspectival, or worldview conceptions of how we look at the world are not new in literature. Barker (1992) uses the term “ paradigm” to suggest a system or pattern of integrating thoughts, actions, and practices. Graves (1970) describes different states of being, each of which determines actions, relationships, and measures of success. Although the states of being are somewhat hierarchically arranged, Graves’s research shows that a person need not necessarily grow to higher levels or states of being. Harman (1998), in reviewing the history of science and knowledge, suggests there are three fundamental ways (perspectives) of seeing and knowing the world and the phenomena of social interaction. Other authors see cultures shaping the way we view things in our everyday experiences (Quinn and McGrath 1985; Schein 1996; Herzberg 1984; Hofstede 1993). McWhinney (1984) explains the importance of looking at paradigmatic perspectives in studying leadership. He argues the different ways people experience reality result in distinctly different attitudes toward change, and understanding these different concepts contributes to new understanding about resistance to change and modes of leadership. Morgan (1998) also suggests that the way we see organizations influences how we operate within them and even

shapes the types of activities that make sense within them. The Theory of Leadership Perspectives The research draws on the perspectives outlined by Gil Fairholm (1998). He suggests that people view leadership in at least five different ways. These perspectives not only shape how one internalizes observation and externalizes belief sets, they also determine how one measures success in oneself and others. Thus, Fairholm says, "defining leadership is an intensely personal activity limited by our personal paradigms or our mental state of being, our unique mind set" (xv). Our leadership perspective defines what we mean when we say "leadership" and shapes how we view successful leadership in ourselves and others. He explains that while the leadership perspective that someone holds may not be the objective reality about leadership, people holding that view behave as if it is. Individuals immediately draw on their own conceptions to internalize conversations about leadership. They define leadership for themselves and use their perspective as the basis for judging whether others are exercising leadership. Frustration, confusion, and even conflict may arise because individuals may simply have multiple, competing, even conflicting conceptions of what leadership is. Fairholm posits five distinct leadership mind sets that emerge from experience and literature from the past 100 years or so. The first is leadership as (scientific) management. This perspective equates leadership with the type of management that draws on the scientific management movement of the early part of the twentieth century, which still has relevance for many even today. In this perspective,

much emphasis is placed on managers understanding the one best way to promote and maintain productivity among the employee ranks.

Gulick's (1937) famous mnemonic, POSDCORB (plan, organize, staff, direct, coordinate, report and budget), had great influence on the work of public administrators by legitimizing and routinizing the administration of government and fits squarely in this perspective. The second perspective, leadership as excellence management, suggests that leadership is management but focuses on what has been called the "excellence movement." Popularized in the 1980s by Peters and Waterman (1982), Deming (1986), and Juran (1989), this perspective focuses on systematic quality improvements with a focus on the people involved in the processes, the processes themselves, and the quality of products that are produced. The third perspective is leadership as a values-displacement activity. This perspective defines leadership as a relationship between leader and follower that allows for typical management objectives to be achieved primarily through shared values, not merely direction and control. Leadership success depends more on values and shared vision than on organizational authority. Although the values-leadership perspective differentiates leadership and management, it still focuses much on the role of the leader in the relationship. The fourth perspective, leadership in a trust culture, shifts the focus toward the ambient culture where interaction between the leader and the led is based on trust founded on shared values, recognizing the follower as having a key role in the leadership relationship. This mind set emphasizes teams, culture, and mutual trust between leader and follower, which are the methods leaders use to institutionalize their values. The last perspective is

whole-soul (spiritual) leadership. This perspective builds on the ideas of displacing values and maintaining a culture of trust, as it focuses attention on the whole-soul nature of both the individual leader and each follower. This perspective assumes that people have only one spirit, which manifests itself in both our professional and personal lives, and that the activity of leadership engages individuals at this core level. " Spirit" is defined in terms of the basis of comfort, strength, happiness; the essence of self; the source of personal meaning and values; a personal belief system or inner certainty; and an emotional level of being. Equating spiritual leadership with the relatively new idea of emotional intelligence may seem natural. Emotional intelligence is indeed related to social intelligence and wise human relations. It involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer 1990). Emotional intelligence is a useful concept (perhaps for all of the perspectives, but especially from values leadership on), but it involves only a part of what spiritual leaders might use in their larger-scaled task of capturing the spirit (the soul, the heart, or the character) of followers at the emotional, but also at the value, intellectual, and technical levels. Whole-soul (spiritual) leadership integrates the components of work and personal life into a comprehensive system that fosters continuous growth, improvement, self-awareness, and self leadership in such a way that leaders see others as whole persons with a variety of emotions, skills, knowledge, and abilities that go beyond the narrow confines of job needs. Spiritual leadership is essentially the linking of our interior world of moral reflection with our outer world of work and social relationships. The

theory suggests these five perspectives are distinct but related hierarchically, leading to a more accurate and comprehensive conception of leadership. This hierarchy suggests that succeeding perspectives encompass and transcend lower-order perspectives, and that individuals must move through simpler perspectives before being able to comprehend and engage in leadership activities characterized by more complex perspectives. To gain a full picture of leadership, the theory suggests, we should take into account how a “holarchy” of leadership perspectives offers a compilation of leadership elements that produces a more comprehensive view of the leadership phenomenon (Koestler 1970). Within this compilation of leadership elements, some transcend others to such a degree as to make the less encompassing elements look less like true leadership. As we move up the model, the distinctive elements of leadership as differentiated from management become more refined. The Leadership Perspectives Model The leadership perspectives model explains leadership in terms of these encompassing perspectives (figure 1). The model shows five concentric triangles, the smallest of which is scientific management and the largest of which is whole-soul leadership.

Thus, in two dimensions, we are able to see how one perspective can encompass and transcend another perspective. For example, values leadership encompasses the ideas of scientific management and excellence management, but transcends them in ways that help us to see distinct activities and approaches that create a line between management theories of the past and leadership ideas in contemporary literature. The leadership perspectives model operationalizes significant elements of Fairholm’s initial

theory, illustrating how these constructs, along with operational categories and key leadership elements, relate. The specific leadership elements are ones that are found in contemporary leadership literature. Overall, the model points the way not only to understand the phenomenon of leadership better, but also to teach leadership and develop individuals in their leadership activities.

Key Research Findings This researcher performed a content analysis on 103 essays written by middle managers in the District of Columbia government describing their conception of leadership.

Data were also collected from 31 interviews of public managers (balanced in terms of government function, personnel grade level, gender, and ethnicity) in three metropolitan Washington-area jurisdictions — Arlington County, Virginia, Washington, DC, and Prince George's County, Maryland—as a supplement and verification of the essays' analysis. The content analysis and interview data reveal the following general findings about the leadership of public managers in terms of the five leadership perspectives.

Five Leadership Perspectives.

The content analysis revealed four distinct, “pure” leadership perspectives and one transitional perspective (that is, excellence management). The scientific management, values leadership, trust culture leadership, and whole-soul leadership perspectives were evident as distinct mind sets held by practicing public executives. Fifteen of 103 essays (14.6 percent) reflected completely distinct leadership perspectives. All perspectives were evident in mixed or combination forms. The scientific management perspective was identified as the perspective of choice most often, receiving

the most hits t 24 percent, while the excellence management perspective received the least at 15 percent. Each hit measures the existence of at least one description or reference to a leadership element in the leadership perspectives model. The evidence for each leadership perspective is reinforced by the analysis of both the essays and the interviews. Excellence management garnered the least concrete support. It is the only perspective that did not have a pure form found in the essays—that is, no one was identified as solely in this perspective—and almost one-third of the essays had Different Perspectives on the Practice of Leadership 581

Figure 1 Leadership Perspectives Model 11. Ensure efficient use of resources to ensure group activity is controlled and predictable 12. Ensure verifiably optimal productivity and resource allocation 13. Foster continuous process-improvement environment for increased service and productivity levels 14. Transform the environment and perceptions of followers to encourage innovation, high quality products, and excellent services 15. Help individuals become proactive contributors to group action based on shared values and agreed upon goals 16. Encourage high organizational performance and self-led followers 17.

Ensure cultures conducive to mutual trust and unified collective action 18. Prioritization of mutual cultural values and organizational conduct in terms of those values 19. Relate to individuals such that concern for the whole person is paramount in raising each other to higher levels of awareness and action 10. Best in people is liberated in a context of continuous improvement of self, culture, and service delivery Whole-Soul (Spiritual) Leadership Trust

Cultural Leadership Values Leadership Excellence Management 1. Incentivization 2. Control 3. Direction Scientific Management 14. Motivation 15. Engaging people in problem definition and solution 16. Expressing common courtesy/respect 17. Values prioritization 18. Teaching/coaching 19. Empowering (fostering ownership) 11. Measuring/ appraising/rewarding individual performance 12. Organizing 13. Planning 14. Focusing on process improvement 15. Listening actively 16. Being accessible 17. Setting and enforcing values 18. Visioning 19. Focusing communication around the vision 10. Trust 11. Team building 12. Fostering a shared culture 10. Creating and maintaining culture through visioning 11. Sharing governance 12. Measuring/appraising/ rewarding group performance 13.

Inspiration 14. Liberating followers to build community and promote stewardship 15. Modeling a service orientation 13. Developing and enabling individual wholeness in a community (team) context 14. Fostering an intelligent organization 15. Setting moral standards no hits relevant to this perspective. However, the interview data show it to be the most frequently described perspective. This finding suggests that excellence management may be more appropriately labeled a transition or bridge perspective from scientific management to values leadership. This perspective may reflect people's tendency to mix the vocabularies of management and leadership as they try to express what it is they actually do. People hear the newer 582 Public Administration Review • September/October 2004, Vol. 64, No. 5 terms of leadership, but they may not yet be able to shake off the traditions of management theory and the vocabulary of industrial revolution. The result is a description of leadership that mixes the efficiency and productivity

mantra of scientific management with the relationship, teamwork, values, and empowerment vocabulary of recent leadership literature, such as that found in the values-based leadership and emotional intelligence literature.

Hierarchical Leadership Perspectives. The five perspectives of leadership tend toward a hierarchy. The public managers described perspectives that related in loosely hierarchical ways—perspectives that encompass and transcend other perspectives. In this sense, the scientific management perspective is of a lower order in the leadership perspective hierarchy. All of the other perspectives encompass and transcend it. Whole-soul leadership is of a higher order, transcending the other four. The interview data verify essay data and confirm the five perspectives relate in a hierarchical manner.

Through trial and error, by increasing their awareness of leadership activities, or by increasing their levels of responsibility in the organization, individuals may progress from lower-order perspectives to higher order perspectives. This suggests that some people may extend their understanding and practice of leadership over time. This could happen if a career is maintained at the same organizational level or if it spans multiple levels. Data illustrate that adopting a new perspective transcends the previous one. For instance, the tools and behaviors of a lower-order perspective may be the building blocks for the tools and behaviors of succeeding perspectives, but they are not adopted unchanged from one perspective to another. As one moves up the hierarchy of leadership perspectives, the tools, behaviors, and approaches one uses are encompassed and transcended and can, at certain levels, be totally

sublimated by other tools and behaviors so as to be obsolete or even antithetical to the work of a leader in higher-order perspectives. Distinctiveness through the Operational Categories. The perspectives can be distinguished by understanding how someone describes the implementation (or doing) of leadership, the tools and behaviors used, and the approaches to followers taken in the leadership relationship. The content analysis of all 103 essays suggests that specific leadership elements within the “ approaches to followers” category distinguish a person’s leadership perspectives (such as giving orders, motivating, team building, inspiring). However, the tools and behaviors that individuals describe in “ doing leadership” are more helpful in differentiating leadership perspectives than either of the other two. Table 1 summarizes the number of times a leadership element within the operational categories of the leadership perspectives was distinctly described in the essays. A total of 1, 343 distinct references to the leadership elements that define the categories outlined in the leadership perspectives model were found in the 103 essays. The interview data reinforce the fact that the operational categories in the model are useful in distinguishing leadership perspectives. Seeing More the Higher Up You Are. The higher in the organizational hierarchy public managers are, and the more time in service they have, the more likely they are to subscribe to higher-order perspectives.

Perhaps this is a commonsensical notion, but rarely, if ever before, born out by research (though by no way is it to say that by virtue of promotion individuals necessarily adopt more encompassing views of the leadership responsibilities). Comments from interview subjects validate this idea. One

mid-level manager within the whole-soul leadership perspective stated bluntly that “ my views have changed over a number of years. ” Another response from a senior executive within the trust culture leadership perspective indicated, “ If you were to ask me five years ago I would have a different answer, I’d have different thoughts. As this individual began to understand different aspects of the job, especially aspects dealing with values and relationships, new ideas and technologies began to emerge and were viewed as successful. These statements, typical of many this researcher received, lend evidence that people can and do move from one perspective to another and that the movement is toward higher-order perspectives—perspectives that are more encompassing and transcendent than previous conceptions. There may even be a point at which they realize what they thought they were doing in terms of leadership actually turned out to be more managerial in nature. A realization of how leadership differs from management causes them to focus their leadership effort differently. One public administrator confided that “ in this current job, I jumped right into management (there was a lot wrong in that area) and I was frustrated that I hadn’t taken the time to do the leadership. Now I am starting from scratch all over focusing on the ‘leadership piece’ because the office still did not function well. ”

Gender and Racial Congruence. All five perspectives were evident in male and female public managers at the same relative frequencies. However, females tended slightly more toward the excellence management perspective, while males tended slightly more toward the scientific management perspective. All five perspectives were evident in African American and white public managers at the same relative frequencies. These

facts suggest the leadership perspectives model applies regardless of the gender or race of the person engaging in leadership. Functional Incongruence. The data reveal the functional area of government in which public managers operate may influence leadership perspectives.

Public managers in the public safety and justice function tend toward the first three perspectives in the hierarchy: scientific management, excellence management, and values leadership. Public managers in the government support, direction, and finance function revealed all but the trust culture leadership perspective. Public managers in human services and education, economic regulations, and public works reflected all five leadership perspectives, although they tended toward the lower-order perspectives.

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Table 1 Summary of Hits Within Each Perspective By Leadership Elements and Operational Categories

| Leadership perspective | Operational categories | Leadership elements |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Scientific management | Ensure efficient use of resources to ensure group activity is controlled and predictable | Ensure verifiably optimal productivity and resource allocation |
| Excellence management | Measuring, appraising, and rewarding individual performance | Organizing (to include such things as budgeting and staffing) |
| Values leadership | Planning (to include such things as coordination and reporting) | Incentivization |
| Trust culture | Control | Direction |
| | Implementation description | Tools and behavior |
| | Approaches to followers | |

Total Excellence management Implementation description Tools and behavior Approaches to followers
 Total Values leadership Implementation description Tools and behavior Approaches to followers
 Total Trust cultural

leadership Implementation description Tools and behavior Approaches to followers Total Whole soul leadership Implementation description Tools and behavior Approaches to followers Number of hits Foster continuous process-improvement environment for increased service and productivity levels Transform the environment and perceptions of followers to encourage innovation, high quality products, and xcellent services Focusing on process improvement Listening actively Being accessible (to include such things as managing by walking around and open-door policies) Motivation Engaging people in problem definition and solution Expressing common courtesy and respect Help individuals become proactive contributors to group action based on shared values and agreed upon goals Encourage high organizational performance and self-led followers Setting and enforcing values Visioning Focusing communication around the vision Values prioritization Teaching and coaching Empowering (fostering ownership)

Ensure cultures conducive to mutual trust and unified collective action Prioritization of mutual cultural values and organizational conduct in terms of those values Creating and maintaining culture through visioning Sharing governance Measuring, appraising, and rewarding group performance Trust Team building Fostering a shared culture Relate to individuals such that concern for the whole person is paramount in raising each other to higher levels of awareness and action Best in people is liberated in a context of continuous improvement of self, culture, and service delivery Developing and enabling individual wholeness in a ommunity (team) context Fostering an intelligent organization Setting moral standards Inspiration Liberating followers to build community and promote stewardship Modeling a service

orientation Total 584 Public Administration Review • September/October 2004, Vol. 64, No. 5 Percent for Percent for element category 39 24 57 54 64 15 15 74 342 11 7 17 16 19 4 4 22 100 18 10 38 25 6 21 14 3 31 9 59 15 13 183 5 32 8 7 100 22 59 17 35 19 81 44 15 61 26 340 10 6 24 13 4 18 8 100 16 7 15 28 23 37 24 77 18 238 6 12 10 16 10 32 8 100 28 12 19 8 20 36 55 51 14 17 240 8 15 23 21 6 7 100 18 51 30 48 28 42 30 13 37 50 0 46 34

Discussion: Implications for Public Administration The leadership perspectives model posited in this study emerges as a valid way to test both the descriptive and prescriptive potential of the perspectival research approach and helps to frame a more comprehensive view of leadership. It is descriptive in the sense that it defines and explores how one may view leadership and positions that perspective into an overarching leadership model. To some, leadership is scientific management, but that perspective may not be as encompassing (as complete a description of the phenomenon) as another perspective.

The section of the model from values leadership to whole-soul leadership describes leadership in a more refined manner (and more in line with contemporary literature on leadership, such as emotional intelligence), with whole-soul leadership perhaps being the better overall description of what transcendent leadership looks like. The model is prescriptive in the sense that it explains which activities, tools, approaches, and philosophies are required to be effective or successful within each perspective. This research suggests that in order to fully understand what leadership is, we have to take into account that some of what we call leadership is often encompassed and transcended by other, more enlightening conceptions. The more

enlightened we become in terms of transcending leadership elements, the more able we are to see leadership as distinct from what contemporary literature would distinguish as management. Burns (1978) refused to use the term “ management. ” Instead, he used the term “ transactional leadership” to distinguish lower-order organizational technologies from the ideas of higher-order leadership, which he termed “ transforming leadership. ” This model adds new light (and support) for why Burns may have chosen to use leadership to describe his more managerial descriptions of organizational activities, in that some do view management as leadership. However, we are able to understand through this model that some perspectives of what we do are not leadership at all, but rather management—perhaps good management, but management only. In other words, everything we call leadership may not actually conform to the distinctive technologies of leadership. This leadership perspectives model allows public administrators to more easily recognize their day-to-day leadership (and management) efforts and to see those efforts in broader, more encompassing ways.

The research and findings based on the model can influence public administration and the individual public administrator by (1) growing their understanding of leadership, (2) helping to refine public administrators’ roles and recognize that their measures of success in these roles will reflect activities consistent with their leadership perspective, and (3) reshaping the professional training of public administrators. Growing One’s Understanding of Leadership This research suggests that one’s understanding of leadership depends on the perspective that one brings to the question.

The perspectival approach to leadership assumes it is possible to expand and grow one's understanding of leadership, even to the point of realizing what one thought was leadership may more accurately be called management or, as Burns put it, transactional leadership. It does not assume one must necessarily move from one perspective to another, but it does suggest that movement can and does occur. Interview subjects reflected a sincere and reflective approach to leadership, which they felt comfortably fit their views of how they interact with other people and how other people interact with them. These were not expressions of leadership styles (that is, calculated activities to achieve some specific goal or achieve a particular agenda depending on the situation or follower maturity). Rather, the perspective a person holds defines (1) the truth to them about leadership, (2) the leader's job, (3) how one analyzes the organization, (4) how one measures success in the leadership activity, and (5) how they view followership. The leadership perspective is the umbrella under which different leadership styles may be pursued or expressed (Hersey and Blanchard 1979). Leadership perspectives, therefore, are not leadership styles to be changed willy-nilly.

Rather, leadership perspectives are paradigms and worldviews (leadership philosophies) that need not necessarily change over a lifetime, but may be grown and changed through concerted training efforts, life experiences, and learning opportunities. One interviewee in the public library system suggested the things she did and believed as a first-line manager were totally different than the things she does and believes now as a senior

executive. She said that what got her to her current position was no longer effective where she currently sits in the organization.

As she progressed through different levels of the organization, she also progressed through different perspectives of what leadership meant to her and how she practiced it as a public administrator. Redefining and Refining the Roles of Public Administrators Just as leadership can be viewed in multiple ways, so can the roles of the public administrator. This research reinforces the idea that the perspective of leadership that public administrators accept (implicitly or explicitly) determines their actions and how they measure the relative success or failure of those actions. Therefore, the leadership perspectives within which public administrators operate most likely influences the roles they choose to play. Public administrators who sit squarely in the scientific management perspective accept that the traditional public administration principles of efficiency and effectiveness and the activities summarized by POSDCORB fully explain the purposes and processes of their work. To them, technical managerial skill and scientific, reasoned precision must be the purview of public administration without the pressures of political activity, which “rightly” belong to politicians.

Public administrators holding to the excellence management perspective add an emphasis on process improvement and stakeholder involvement to discover and resolve potential problems in efficient and effective processes. These first two perspectives, scientific management and excellence management, focus on the administrative side of the classic public

administration dichotomy. Together, they ground the traditional measures of success for public administrators, which the leadership perspectives model suggests may actually be based on transactional management ideas— not leadership at all.

However, as we have seen, there are those who claim more for the profession of public administration than the technical and predictable. Many say that the politics-administration dichotomy is no longer relevant, if it ever was. These public administration leaders bring a values perspective to the work they do and recognize their potentially influential place in society (Marini 1971; Waldo 1971; Frederickson 1997). Some focus on the societal impact they can make. Others focus on the organizational impact they can make. Others find meaning in creating great public administrators one by one, either by teaching, mentoring, or going about their public-sector jobs in inspiring ways. These views of public administration may fit more comfortably with the philosophies of higher-order leadership perspectives. No wonder, then, there are still disagreements within the field as to its proper role and stance in society: There are public administrators who honestly measure success and implement leadership from dramatically different leadership mindsets. They use different tools and engage in behavior and approaches toward others very differently. These perspectives also guide how they view the work of other public administrators, always gauging the success or failure or the appropriateness of another's work based on how they conceive of leadership in public administration. Not only does this sometimes cause confusion and frustration within public organizations, where public servants are doing the day-to-day work of government, but it

also adds to the confusion and frustration in debates about the field itself. Perhaps these debates might better focus on the perspectives of leadership among public administrators that dictate their values, goals, and behavior more so than the academically defined roles that public administrators are said to play.

The perspectival approach to leadership, therefore, may encompass a way to analyze the field of public administration itself. 586 *Public Administration Review* • September/October 2004, Vol. 64, No. 5 Some public administrators who hold to lower-order leadership perspectives may never see a reason to progress through different perspectives. The research findings in this study conclude, however, that there are perspectives of leadership that encompass and transcend lower-order perspectives, that growth and progression is evident in the ways people conceive of leadership, and that moving to higher-order perspectives increases a public administrator's capacity to cope with increasingly complex issues, organizations, and relationships. Hence, there are ways of conceiving of leadership in public administration that transcend and encompass more limiting perspectives. This translates to public administrators who seem more organizationally sophisticated and emotionally intelligent, as well as more attuned to the personal or individual issues of their jobs. They deal more with people, public issues, and policies (both within the organizations and outside it) and are able to facilitate more success in an increasingly complex world. The perspectival approach to leadership also points to a clearer way to understand the different measures of public administration success. The hierarchical nature of the leadership perspectives model

suggests the role of public administrators encompasses the technical implementer and skilled mediator roles, but transcends them as well. It suggests that public administrators may rightly play a more facilitative, policy-making, and collaborative role—roles that are more in line with higher-order leadership perspectives—and those roles may be more appropriate (if not necessarily more effective) roles in general.

Shaping Professional Training, MPA Curricula Designs, and the “Oughts” of Public Administration Understanding leadership perspectives as they are applied to the work of public administration can be used not only to refine (and redefine) the field, but also to provide a foundation for training new public administrators. As important as the technical and traditional management skills of public administration are, there is also a need to focus on the recently recognized skills and perspectives of leadership such as relationship building, inspiration, culture creation, values change, creativity, and flexibility.

If such a focus is neglected in the training and work of public administration, the field may never get past the continual debates about its legitimacy, usefulness, and place in government and society. In today’s organizational climate, where technology and information are expanding rapidly, along with the knowledge base and professional and personal requirements of the workforce, higher-order leadership perspectives and the public administration roles associated with them may indeed be more effective. Public administrators are often in a better position to suggest new programs and new directions or government. Higher-order mind sets assume, or at

least allow for, this function as a part of doing leadership in public administration. The leadership perspectives model helps to redefine the field to focus on public service as an opportunity to engage in leadership within public organizations. It supports our continual efforts to teach others to seek the highest ideals of public service, and thereby to leave to citizens a legacy of trust, integrity, and responsibility, as well as high-quality service delivery and accountability. This implies there are approaches to public administration that should be adopted over others (such as community building, value shaping, visioning, and stewardship). It implies there are approaches to public administration that are more encompassing and transcendent than others. The research describes what leadership looks like in the work of public administration, emphasizing that the work within public organizations influences the work of public organizations. Public administrators can, therefore, better understand their work as leaders inside the organization—not just middle managers, but middle leaders as well (G. Fairholm 2001; M. Fairholm 2002). Remember the one public manager who “ jumped right into management,” but then realized he had to start “ from scratch all over focusing on the ‘ leadership piece’ because the office still did not function well. ” Well-functioning offices are key to well-delivered services and good government. Another public administrator explained that “ leaders need to be modeling behavior, what you want from people you must model. If you want to have a certain type of communication from others you must communicate that way. If you want people to develop people, you must develop people. You must model the work ethic; do what is required or help. I believe in having respect for the position one holds, but I also believe

inequality. You need to work to build a community. ” This perspective outlines a kind of organizational work that influences how both the internal and external mission of the organization is carried out. The leadership perspectives model clarifies leadership as distinct from discretion or mere uses or abuses of authority. The different perspectives of leadership make the work of public administration look and feel different depending on the different mind sets public managers hold from which they view their craft.

These perspectives prescribe how public administration ought to be. Indeed, the “ oughts” of public administration are shaped by the perspective of leadership that one holds. What the leadership perspectives model also offers, however, is that not all perspectives are equal in application. Some perspectives are more encompassing and transcendent than others—that is, some are more operationally useful today than others. Recognizing this potential measure of our work should influence how this work is taught and how individuals are trained.

Current (and past) master of public administration programs still teach mostly management skills and techniques. Often programs add the word “ strategic” to the planning function to give it a top-box orientation, but it is still focused on institutional planning and numbers, not values. A course on managerial leadership is emblematic of this approach, and it is not sufficiently comprehensive. MPA curricula and professional development programs would benefit from discussing the descriptions of leadership perspectives and the type of public administration consistent with those descriptions. They should train specific skills, ompetencies, and technologies

that the different perspectives demand, including emotional intelligence or other higher-order concepts about values, relationships, and dealing with stakeholders at the emotional level. MPA programs should include leadership specialties or include leadership as a core competency with courses to reinforce it. The leadership perspectives model itself offers fundamental skills and approaches that can be used as a framework to shape a training and development program or even as part of an MPA curriculum. For example, a five-day leadership training program might use the perspectives to outline each day's activities.

Each day would include a section on implementing leadership from that perspective, coupled with skills-development activities for the leadership elements within the "tools and behavior" and "approaches to followers" categories. Each day might then end with the implications for public administration from that perspective. Table 2 outlines such a training design. These curricula and programs should recognize some of the more normative issues about these perspectives and devote attention to answering the questions about how public administration should be thought about and practiced in encompassing and transcendent ways. Conclusion

As public administration begins to include discussions of leadership more explicitly in its work and training, the field will not only better understand its legitimate role in society, it will also produce men and women who are competently and confidently prepared to do the work of public leaders. The task of public administration today—both intellectually and operationally—is to better understand these perspectives and ensure the field is adopting the

most appropriate and encompassing approaches to and measures of our work in the societies we live in, the organizations we work in, and the individual lives we influence.

Overall, the perspectival approach to understanding leadership is a credible and valid way to better understand how people can operate in this complex yet intensely personal world within which public administration finds itself staunchly entrenched. Different Perspectives on the Practice of Leadership

587 Table 2 Generic Leadership Training Program for Public Administrators

General daily format Day 1: Leadership as Scientific Management

Implementation description—what leadership looks like Day 2: Leadership as

Excellence Management Implementation description—what leadership looks

like Skills development • Measuring, praising, and rewarding individual

performance • Organizing (to include such things as budgeting and staffing)

• Planning (to include such things as coordination and reporting) • Focusing

on process • Setting and improvement enforcing values • Listening actively

• Visioning • Being accessible (to • Focusing include such things

communication as managing by around the vision walking around and open-

door policies) • Creating and • Developing and maintaining culture enabling

individual through visioning wholeness in a community (team) • Sharing

governance context • Measuring, • Fostering an appraising, and intelligent

rewarding group organization performance • Setting moral standards

Follower relationship concepts • Incentivization • Control • Direction •

Values prioritization • Motivation • Engaging people in • Teaching and

coaching problem definition and solution • Empowering • Expressing

common (fostering courtesy and respect ownership) • Trust • Team building

• Fostering a shared culture Conclusion Public administration practice—Each day discuss what this leadership perspective tells me about my work. Introduction Day 3: Values Leadership Day 4: Trust Cultural Leadership Day 5: Whole-Soul Leadership Implementation description—what leadership looks like Implementation description—what leadership looks like Implementation description—what leadership looks like • Inspiration • Liberating followers to build community and promote stewardship • Modeling a service orientation Notes References 1. This debate centers on some general ideas. Management embodies the more reasoned, scientific, position-based approach to organizational engagement, such as setting and maintaining organizational structure, dealing with complexity, solving organizational problems, making transactions between leader and those being led, and ensuring control and prediction.

Leadership embodies the more relationship-based, values-laden, developmental aspect of the work we do in organizations, such as changing organizational contexts, transforming leader and those being led, setting and aligning organizational vision with group action, and ensuring individuals a voice so that they can grow into productive, proactive, and self-led followers (Burns 1978; Kotter 1990; Taylor 1915; Urwick 1944; Zaleznik 1977; Ackerman 1985; Rosener 1990). 2. Examples of these universities and programs include the Farber Center for Civic Leadership at the University of South Dakota, the Center for Excellence in Municipal Management at The George Washington University, the Management Institute at the University of Richmond, and several programs at Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Chicago. Washington, DC has also devoted considerable

<https://assignbuster.com/different-perspectives-on-the-practice-of-leadership/>

resources to building and sustaining a public-private partnership with the academic, business, and philanthropic communities to focus on developing management and leadership capabilities in its midand senior-level management tier, though budget cuts now threaten the endeavor (CEMM 1996). See also Wimberley and Rubens (2002) for more on leadership development programs through partnerships.

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