



A Literature Review on Public Leadership in Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the literature on public leadership, to identify emerging methods to research within that discipline, and to recommend potential research directions for the future. Our attention is focused on organisational leadership from the perspective of the PA, as opposed to other types of public leadership, such as political, community, and military leadership, which are discussed elsewhere. While conducting a literature review and analysis of public leadership, this research makes use of a new mix of bibliometric methodologies that have never been used before. The four basic approaches to public leadership (specifically, "functionalism," "behavioralism," "biography," and "reformism"), each with a distinct philosophy of science (viz., "objective vs. subjective") and the degree of analysis employed (i.e., "high vs. low"), are identified by our results (i.e. micro-level vs multi-level). Following our results, we propose four areas for future investigation: shifting the emphasis away from the "leading" component of public leadership, moving from basic to complicated, and concentrating on public leadership as a starting point for further investigation. A combination of co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling are the two general bibliometric retrieval approaches that we have employed in our methodology for retrieval.

Keywords: Leadership, public leadership, organizations; bibliometrics

INTRODUCTION

In his foundational overview of research on public leadership, Van Wart (2003) emphasized the need for greater study in a sector where "the needs are great and the research opportunities are numerous" (2003, 225). In an increasingly complicated and confusing world, new challenges and constraints are imposed on public organizations and their leaders, therefore public leadership is now widely recognized as a phenomena worthy of study (Van Wart 2013). The nature and significance of public leadership are fast evolving alongside the public sector. In

light of these dramatic developments, experts of public administration (PA) increasingly agree that leadership is vital to the efficacy and accountability of public organizations and, as a result, merits more attention (Raffel, Leisink, and Middlebrooks 2009b; Teelken, Ferlie, and Dent, 2012). Nevertheless, despite or perhaps because of the increased number of publications on this topic, public leadership remains elusive (e.g. Dull 2009; Fernandez 2005). It is difficult to acquire an overview of the numerous research streams and to comprehend their interrelationships due to the fragmented nature of the discipline.

This study attempts to map the literature on public leadership, to identify emergent approaches to research within that field, and to suggest paths for future research. Our focus is on organizational leadership from a PA viewpoint, as opposed to other forms of public leadership, such as political, communal, and military leadership (Raffel, Leisink, and Middlebrooks 2009a; Van Wart 2003, 2013; Van Wart and Dicke 2008). The relevance of this study is threefold: first, we extract a bibliometric map that provides orientation for the previous history, current state, and future development of research on public leadership and aids academics in navigating this fragmented subject. This aids in facilitating discourse across diverse perspectives and retaining theoretical, conceptual, and methodological balance. Second, we expand bibliometric applications by integrating two well-established methods – co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling – in a novel way that enables the integration of two independent sets of findings, obtained by applying each method individually, into a single map. Due to the fact that bibliographic data reflect the references that writers cite in scholarly publications, bibliometric maps can be viewed as the unintentional self-portrait of a scientific community that its members have crafted over time. However, a quantitative approach to the literature does not replace, but rather complements, introductions to and commentary on the subject by recognized field experts (e.g. Denis, Langley, and Rouleau 2005; Raffel, Leisink, and Middlebrooks 2009a; Teelken 2012; Van Slyke and Alexander 2006; Van Wart 2003, 2013).

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: the next section introduces the data and techniques of the bibliometric analysis. We will collect relational data derived from the bibliographies of approximately 800 journal articles, analyze them on two levels using network and factor analysis, and then combine the results using correspondence analysis. Our results suggest four generic approaches to public leadership (i.e., a functionalist, a behavioral, a biographical, and a reformist approach) that differ in their philosophy of science (i.e., objective vs. subjective) and level of analysis (i.e. micro-level vs multi- level). Five clusters of current research are connected to six clusters of foundational works on public leadership, as depicted in this map. In the fourth section, we evaluate the current state of the area and recommend four avenues worthwhile of additional research. There is a quick summary at the end of the paper.

METHOD

Four stages were required to process the bibliographic data (see Figure 1). Co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling are the two generic bibliometric retrieval techniques used in our methodology. Due to the varied levels of analysis addressed by these two methodologies, their outcomes are notably distinct (comparisons can be found in Jarneving 2005 and Vogel and Günttel 2013). We chose to combine the two methodologies in a novel way and include the results into a single map of research on public leadership, as opposed to the majority of bibliometric studies that use only one or the other.

Co-citations and bibliographic couplings are two types of intertextual links that develop when scholars prepare the reference lists for their publications. These associations are utilized as bibliometric measures believed to represent the degree of similarity between co-cited or related documents. On this basis, vast volumes of literature can be categorized into clusters of articles that tend to be homogeneous within the clusters but diverse across them. Despite their apparent similarities, there are significant distinctions between the two methods. A co-citation is a connection between cited papers, whereas a bibliographic coupling connects citing texts. When two publications a and b are cited by a third publication A, this is known as a co-citation (Small 1973). Thus, documents are co-cited if they are included on the same reference list. In contrast, bibliographic coupling occurs when two different publications A and B quote the same source a. (Kessler 1963). Thus, two documents are paired if their bibliographies contain at least one shared reference. A co-citation is a relationship between texts that are cited in another document, whereas a bibliographic coupling is a connection between writings that include the same reference.

Co-citation analysis is skewed toward the past of a scientific subject since it concentrates on cited documents, which are invariably older than citing documents (with the exception of publications referenced as 'forthcoming'). This approach identifies, as citations accrue over time, classical works that are regularly and often ceremonially rather than substantively referenced together. This makes co-citation analysis ideally suited for the identification of influential publications that represent the intellectual history and origins of a specific study subject. Nonetheless, this emphasis creates a degree of convergence with respect to the major research streams.

In contrast, bibliographic coupling favors contemporary research since it tracks more recent publications, regardless of how frequently they have been mentioned. In this way, it documents the production, not the consumption, of scientific texts. This strategy allows for some divergence because it encompasses all citing papers, including those that are unlikely to receive future attention because they deviate too far from the mainstream and/or were published in marginal journals. Thus, the combination of co-citation analysis with bibliographic coupling has the benefit of examining both convergent and divergent trends in the investigated topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The biographical method of studying public leadership

In recent scholarship, the biographical method has not emerged as a distinct cluster; rather, its existence becomes apparent through its connection to ethical questions of public leadership. In the third quadrant of the bibliometric map, this synthesis manifests as the Public Leadership Ethics cluster. The majority of articles in this cluster discuss the normative foundations of public leadership and how leaders manage the problems and paradoxes that result from the rising complexity of ethical dilemmas in modern politics. This approach is strongly tied to the New Public Administration school of thought, which appears as a small but distinct co-citation cluster. The most influential of these foundational publications is the report on the inaugural Minnowbrook conference (Marini, 1971), which laid the groundwork for the scholarly approach that gives this cluster its name. Traditional approaches to public administration have been criticized by this viewpoint. Moreover, instead of applying generic leadership concepts to the public sector, the 'new public administration' approach is concerned with common goods,

democratic values, and public trust (Crosby and Bryson 2005; Frederickson 1997) and with how public service ethics can be preserved in an era of non-hierarchical collaboration across sectors (Crosby and Bryson 2005; Frederickson 1997). (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Huxham and Vangen 2005; Luke 1998). In accordance with this, contemporary research focuses on the 'public' aspect of public leadership, which it describes as a normative commitment to the essential principles of public services (Denhardt and Campbell 2006; Getha-Taylor et al. 2011). This emphasis on democratic responsibility is mostly consistent with the stewardship view of administrative leadership, whereas the other alternatives tend to adhere to the entrepreneurial view, which places a higher premium on managerial discretion (Denis, Langley, and Rouleau, 2005; Van Wart 2003).

Several case studies, such as those involving French prime ministers (Bezes 2001), the director of a federal agency (Dobel 1995), and a former British prime minister (Moon 1995), highlight the increasingly complicated and frequently contradictory demands that public leaders confront today. Frequently, these tensions result from the contrasting logics of politics and administration, as well as of democracy and bureaucracy (Jung, Moon, and Hahm, 2008; Lee, Moon, and Hahm, 2010; Sinclair, Baird, and Alford, 1993; Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller 1999). Recent management innovations have exacerbated the conflict between administrative accountability and political responsiveness. As a result of these reforms devolving discretionary freedom to lower levels of the hierarchy, not only top-tier leaders but also front-line bureaucrats are increasingly challenged to manage complex sets of requirements (Vinzant and Crothers 1996). Such demands have rekindled scholarly interest in the ethical underpinnings of good administration, as well as the normative practices and moral resources that flow from them. In an effort to describe the personal characteristics that ethical leaders should possess, some authors highlight prudence and practical knowledge as requirements for making good decisions when presented with competing ideals (Dobel 1998; Kane and Patapan 2006). While there is some disagreement as to whether the values of conservatism or entrepreneurship provide more appropriate guidance for prudent leadership in the public sector (Currie et al. 2008; Kalu 2003; Terry 1990, 1998), most authors who are concerned with ethical issues tend to agree that leadership is a moral obligation as opposed to a mere right (Behn 1998).

The reformist view of public leadership

The reformist approach to public leadership represents the most densely filled quadrant on the bibliometric map. In some capacity, research in all other subfields is also concerned with public sector management reform challenges. Only in the reformist quadrant, however, is the preoccupation with public administration reforms the defining characteristic of entire clusters of literature. Current research relies heavily on the literature comprising the New Public Management cluster (e.g., Barzelay and Armajani 1992; de Leon and Denhardt 2000; Moe 1994), which has emerged as the most influential element in terms of explanatory power based on the co-citation analysis). The other co-citation cluster in the fourth quadrant, Organization Theory (e.g. Ouchi 1981; Selznick 1949; Trice and Beyer 1993), is close to the center of the bibliometric map and represents studies that provide a fairly general basis for research on public leadership and are somewhat applicable to all approaches.

From the 'new public management' paradigm, two strands of contemporary leadership study have emerged. The majority of the articles in the first cluster, titled Collaborative Public

Leadership, are primarily focused with the transition from government hierarchies to governance networks (Kirlin 1996). This change is exemplified by the new forms of engagement between institutions of the civil society and market economy that result from the empowerment of citizens as customers or consumers (Aberbach and Christensen, 2005) and competitive sourcing techniques (Joaquin, 2009), respectively. This concept contends that leadership is influenced by and influences cross-sectoral collaboration in a variety of ways. On the one hand, it is influenced by collaboration since networked methods of creating public goods and services reconfigure leadership roles in both politics and administration. In collaborative processes with delegated authority, the new position of leaders is more complex than in conventional settings, because leaders must combine it with the responsibilities of negotiator, contractor, expert, manager, mediator, sponsor, etc (Aberbach and Christensen 2005; Kronenberg and Khademian 2009; Ryan 2001). Consideration of a network as a whole, as opposed to focusing on specific components, and balancing its unity and variety (Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2011) pose unique challenges for public leadership. On the other side, leadership has been demonstrated to be a decisive aspect for collaborative success. This is true both for the early stage of cooperation, as leadership encourages the collaborative ability of public agencies (Weber and Khademian, 2008), and for the outcomes of collaboration, as agencies are more likely to interact effectively if leadership continuity is present (Behn 2010; Ryan 2001).

We refer to the second black cluster in the reformist sector as Public Reform Leadership because the majority of the included studies detail how leadership drives the spread of 'new public management' reforms across national, regional, and local contexts. This line of inquiry is an integral part of broader attempts to evaluate the level of implementation of management changes in the public sector (Brudney and Wright 2002; Moon and de Leon 2001). Several studies suggest that, among other variables, the presence of leaders who place a high focus on innovation and change facilitates the acceptance of reform agenda elements (Burke and Costello 2005; Cristofoli et al. 2011; Hansen 2011; Hennessey 1998). In addition, the greater the impact of this factor, the more positively leaders assess the symbolic costs and benefits of results-oriented reforms (Moynihan, 2005) and the more they internalize the values of reinventing government (Moon and de Leon, 2001; Sanger, 2008). Thus, the development of leadership abilities is viewed as a preferable method for fostering local competencies in preparation for the acceptance of global changes (Awortwi 2010; Wallis and McLoughlin 2007). However, once vested with authority, public officials may utilize administrative reforms to advance their own political objectives (Durant 2008). In a more critical vein, other studies view administrative leadership as a medium for the dissemination of neo-managerialist ideals that promote freedom and market-driven management in the public sector and, in turn, contribute to the weakening of administrative institutions (Terry 1998, 2005).

From straightforward to complex public leadership

Taking the context of leadership more seriously will necessitate not just the addition of more analytical frameworks to public leadership research, but also a reevaluation of how the several parts of public leadership (i.e. context, processes, and outcomes) co-evolve and interact. Specifically, non-simple interrelationships between observed events (i.e., ties other than direct unidirectional cause-and-effect relationships) merit greater attention than they have thus far gotten. Many linkages among the elements of public leadership are bilateral and contemporaneous, rather than unilateral and sequential. Future research must elaborate on the

'fit' between the context and process of leadership, as well as between leaders and followers, in order to account for these more complicated relationships and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership phenomenon. Prior until now, only a handful of research have studied the effects of such interactions (e.g. Ritz et al. 2012; Wallace and Tomlinson 2010). Despite the fact that the present study's design shows that we favor objective approaches using quantitative methodology, we believe qualitative research to be as as, if not more, suited for addressing concerns of "fit" in public leadership. In case study designs, qualitative research may account for a greater number of factors and more complicated interactions between these variables. This is due to the fact that the reduced number of observations necessitates that these methods deal with fewer issues of comparability and measurableness. The biographical and reformist approach could be applied to case studies to obtain inductively certain configurations of contexts, leaders, and followers; then, the functionalist and behavioral approach could be applied to test these interactions deductively in large-scale studies in order to elaborate on them.

CONCLUSION

According to some critics, "nothing in public administration is more significant, intriguing, or enigmatic than leadership" (Lambright and Quinn 2011, 782). The present study has offered a survey of historical and present research on the phenomena of leadership in public administration and developed a framework for integrating that research. The increasing quantity of publications in this discipline prompted us to adopt a bibliometric strategy, which is effective for identifying emerging patterns in quickly expanding bodies of literature. Our investigation resulted in a bibliometric map depicting four diverse yet interrelated approaches to public leadership, which are distinguished by a number of philosophical and analytic distinctions. The functionalist approach advances the strategic management of public organizations by focusing primarily on the performance implications of public leadership. The behavioral approach enables the transfer of theories and methodologies from the field of organizational behavior to the field of public administration. The biographical method tends to account for the political aspect of public leadership, as it concentrates on elected officials and senior appointees who have excelled in political domains. The reformist strategy contributes to the continuing discussion on public sector reforms, which has recently become more critical of managerial strategies.

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