Book Review

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP: INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Jeffrey A. Raffel, Peter Leisink, and Anthony E. Middlebrooks, eds., *Public Sector Leadership: International Challenges and Perspectives.* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009), 442 pp.; US $173.00 hardcover.

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As increasingly complex policy issues and large-scale crises such as global threats and financial issues have challenged governments, the need for effective leadership has become more important than ever in the 21st century. However, despite the urgent need for its application, there has not been enough attention paid to public management leadership studies until the last two decades. In large part this is a result of needs created by the way the public sector has lagged behind development in society. Both public and nonprofit sectors have traditionally adopted the models of leadership used to solve problems in the private sector (Ingraham, 2006). The public sector context and constraints uniquely affect leadership and organizational effectiveness, thus requiring effort to develop a more accurate model than generalized leadership theory (Van Slyke & Alexander, 2006; Van Wart, 2003). It is time for the public sector to catch up. The contribution to the study of public sector leadership in this book is particularly valuable. It not only provides a variety of case studies in developed countries but emphasizes the different institutional settings to help our understanding of possibilities for organizational learning and adaptation. This well-designed book incorporates 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.

Beginning at the macro level and trends of governmental reform, Part I illustrates how the United States and European countries deal with the pressures to reform and modernize public services. Frances Stokes Berry (Chapter 2) suggests that, in the process

of adapting the New Public Management (NPM) trend, public administrators must realize the value conflicts of NPM and redefine democratic values in public services. We must understand that NPM is not a panacea that can solve all sorts of governmental problems. For individual leadership styles to succeed when governments adopt broad reform perspectives, it is necessary to comprehend the complexity of macro-, meso-, and micro-level challenges that are deemed institutional or organizational (Chapter 5). Martin Marcussen (Chapter 4) and Harald Saetren (Chapter 3) both provide detailed analyses to demonstrate that contingency factors play important roles.

The political drive for the reform of public services has been moving toward better understanding leadership development. Part II specifies how different institutional settings affect the relationship between political and administrative leaders and discusses the democratic values residing in the council-manager and mayor-council models, which corroborates that different accountability associates require different types of leadership (Chapter 6). Especially in different political cultures, such as the European Commission (Chapter 7) and Russia (Chapter 8), politico-administrative relations have unique requirements based on specific situations that involve specific sets of people.

While policy issues or global problems cross borders and boundaries, the public sector must apply leadership to interorganizational, cross-organizational, or collaborative networks. Section III provides a broad range of applicable case studies and enriches the study of collaborative networks. This section suggests that different types of networks function differently and require different types of leadership. In collaborative networks, Myrna P. Mandell and Robyn Keast (Chapter 9) perceive leadership as a process catalyst, which in turn can produce an innovative outcome. With information-sharing networks, J. Ramon Gil-Garcia, Theresa A. Pardo, and G. Brian Burke (Chapter 10) depict three essential variables, including executive involvement, formal authority, and informal leadership, in order to facilitate cross-boundary information sharing. On the other hand, as the focus turns to special districts, institutional design can influence cooperation with other actors. Jonathan B. Justice and Chris K. Skelcher (Chapter 11) find that the self-governance design elicits active participation and cooperation from business leaders. Regarding the predominant issue of contracting out government services, Patricia Wallace Ingraham (Chapter 12) elaborates on managing contracts for oversight and accountability that could challenge public sector leadership when loosely coupled relationships are engaged.

The problems of hierarchy cannot fully be resolved by involving interorganizational coordination and stakeholder participation. In this dynamic political environment, how to protect and create public value is still a major concern of public sector leadership. Thus, Part IV highlights the importance of individual characteristics of leadership and ethical behaviors preventing technical rationality from operating under the consequences of ethical shortcomings. Two chapters provide detailed analyses of the Hurricane Katrina crisis (Chapter 16) and the Sydney Cross-City Tunnel (Chapter 15) and stress that a

technical-rational mindset can cause unpredictable failures in terms of ignoring complex social relations. Considering not only the satisfaction of external constituents but the needs of internal employees, it is critical to focus attention on motivating followers to do a better job. Meredith A. Newman, Mary E. Guy, and Sharon H. Mastracci (Chapter 13) demonstrate that connectivity and relationship-building are key leadership traits and are also skills for developing rapport and emotional engagement. The effect of leadership style can meet the expectations of workers when dealing with both emotional labor and different age groups (Chapter 14).

The last section of this book focuses on the training and development of public sector leadership. Comparing many countries, two chapters (chapters 17 and 18) examine leadership skills and competency models, which illustrate how to lead effectively in public organizations and build a distinctive public sector leadership brand. The final chapter (Chapter 19) demonstrates how training interventions have been used to develop leadership in the British Senior Civil Service and identify ways in which leadership programs can be evaluated.

Despite that the development of leadership in public administration is heavily influenced by business scholars, this book conceptualizes public sector leadership and extends the existing U.S.-focused leadership model, thereby leading us in a new direction for the study of public sector leadership. The chapters outlined here are based on case studies that occur in specific situations and involve specific sets of people, especially at the top management level. Readers may have two challenges when learning from these lessons. First, there is the challenge of reconciling the cases outlined here with our own existing networks of beliefs and values. Second, the circumstances in which the cases are applied might be subtly or substantially different from those occurring in our own surroundings. The case studies and outlines of the lessons on how to successfully lead provide guidelines to relate to the individual reader's circumstances.

Mencius, a Chinese philosopher, stated that there are three conditions required for a leader to manage a government successfully: the right time, the right place, and the right people. Broadly, good timing implies anticipating and preparing in order to make effective decisions to employ resources effectively and design good institutions; the right place implies that the leader is in an appropriate position, politically and physically, to make decisions and have them carried out; the right people implies that the leader has chosen the best people to assist in realizing his or her goals. However, the leader must also conquer the hearts of the citizenry and gain public support. Thus he or she must know how to lead and how to display his or her leadership capacities to win the citizens' trust. This sage philosopher believes that the most important factor to run a government is to have the right person who fulfills all three conditions.

Therefore, the primary objective in this book is to convey that leadership does matter. However, we should realize that two other factors, right timing and right place, can make leadership successful. Although we never know exactly when the timing is right, we can

know our historical roots and political culture. As the trend of reforming government is seen all over the world, we can use these case studies to supplement our own direct observations of leadership problems and processes. Then, we can compare the reflections of these cases on successful leadership with our own circumstances and cultures. Furthermore, we can identify ideas suggested by these cases and lessons that can be the basis of our own practical experiments in leadership behavior.

This book demonstrates that public sector leaders enable change and renewal. Effective public sector leadership can enable public service to keep up with cultural changes and facilitate organizational learning. In spite of how countries and people throughout the world are now globally connected, we still sometimes have the experience of feeling like an outsider in a different culture. Most of the book's attention is on Western countries. An Eastern perspective would allow researchers to continue to build a causal model for practitioners to apply to their specific contexts. Most Asian countries, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, are influenced by Confucianism. This invisible cultural feature embedded in Eastern societies cultivates people's values, beliefs, rites, rituals, and practices into strategic organization drivers, which in turn can contribute to organizational innovation, speed, agility, and results.

Additionally, most cases described in this book demonstrate how political environments affect top level bureaucrats' behaviors and their strategies for success. The substantive political system and decision-making process is the core objective in the field of public administration. Public administrators appreciate their external political environments in the same way that they recognize the importance of political systems and have specific political and institutional boundaries. However, these analyses only focus on the top level of bureaucracies that may be limited in position and authority, and therefore it is not possible to predict and generalize the leadership capacities for all public servants. In effect, middle management can wield great influence on governmental reform and innovation (Borins, 2000). Leadership in the middle ranks is somewhat neglected in the collection of readings in this book.

Lastly, focused on governmental settings, this book proposes that effective public sector leadership skills are exercised in many political systems. Government, serving as an agency of society as a whole, needs to consider democratic values and pursue socially desired outcomes. Leadership for public managers is not just a right, but an obligation (Behn, 1998). Developing a training program and measurement scale of public leadership qualities based on the business literature is important, because it provides a better micro foundation for understanding public managers' behavior. However, understanding how administrative leadership competency is developed to make it applicable for the public sector requires that we acknowledge the external political environments and activities in which public administrators engage.

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