Editorial

Advancing public leadership research

Introduction
As the new Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Public Leadership*, I would like to express deep appreciation to the founding Editor-in-Chief, Stephen Brooks, and the Associate Editor, Megan Mathias, for their leadership and many contributions to building this journal. Also, I would like to thank the Editorial Board members and consulting editors. Together they have built a good foundation over the past three years for this journal to advance research on public leadership.

The current issue of the journal provides a snapshot of the range of topics involved in public leadership, including, but not limited to strategy, ethics, human capital, and organizational culture. An interdisciplinary approach to public leadership can be seen in the research and authors in the current issue, as well as those who have contributed to the *International Journal of Public Leadership* over the past three years. Elinor Ostrom (2010) outlines in her Nobel Prize acceptance speech the value of bringing together varied academic disciplines and researchers to deepen the understanding of collective action dilemmas. Similarly, as noted by Jos Raadschelders (2011), the complexity of the public sector calls for interdisciplinary research to explain the dynamics of leading and managing in the public sector.

As of the incoming Editor-in-Chief, I look to build on the past success of the journal. I would like to cover the following two items: introduce myself, and outline my strategy for direction of the journal.

Professional experience
For the past 20 years, my research, consulting, publications, and teaching have focused on leadership behaviors and strategy practices that are effective in complex, demanding and dynamic environments in the public and non-profit sectors. I am a Professor at the University of San Francisco, with a joint appointment in the USF School of Management and in the USF School of Nursing and Health Professions. Recently, I was elected as a Fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration, a non-profit academy chartered by Congress for the past 50 years to advise on complex public governance challenges. I was a Visiting Researcher at Oxford University, 2016 and was appointed the Visiting Scholar 2017-2018 for the Center for California Studies at the California State University, Sacramento. I received a Fulbright Specialist Program grant in 2011 for lectures on public institutions and leadership at Aydin University in Istanbul, Turkey. Early in my career, I worked in county and municipal government for more than ten years.

My recent publications include editing and writing chapters in the book, *Public Health Leadership: Addressing Population Health and Social Determinants* (2017) and a chapter scheduled for publication in the book *Financial Sustainability and Intergenerational Equity in Local Governments* (2018). I have designed, delivered, and directed more than 15 leadership training programs internationally and nationally, as well as for state, county and local government.

Strategy
As Editor-in-Chief, the strategy moving forward will develop and connect in the publications each aspects of title of the *International Journal of Public Leadership*. The development of each feature will be possible through expanding the journal's network

of researchers and communities of research throughout the world. I will look to work with the Editorial Board, as well as to invite new members, to connect with individual researchers, as well as associations of researchers, for example, the Academic Network of Public and Political Leadership. This strategy will design the journal's outreach to other "connecters" – to use Malcolm Gladwell's term – building on existing relationships and expanding the journal's network to welcome research from throughout the world.

Moving forward, the core elements outlined below will develop a strategic differentiation in the journal's mission and contributions to research on public leadership. The journal's outreach internationally for research on public sector leadership offers the opportunity to not only publish important research pieces from varied nations, but also provide a platform for comparison and contrast of findings within each issue and across issues. That comparison can be done informally currently, with the potential over time to more explicitly develop the public leadership research questions that ought to be explored in greater depth.

International
The strategy moving forward is to outreach to researchers in each part of the world to continue and extend the "international" focus of the journal. The international dimension of the journal facilitates an opportunity to intentionally develop comparisons on public leadership across nations. An international approach invites public leadership research beyond established performance management systems to explore, as Claire McLoughlin (2015) thoughtfully develops in her research, and questions in the public sector on fragile or conflict driven states. The *International Journal of Public Leadership* welcomes research on the varied contexts of public leadership throughout the world.

Journal
The term "journal" reflects a deep commitment as the Editor-in-Chief to insure the highest quality of double-blind reviews for manuscripts submitted on public leadership. I see the role of reviewers as twofold: first, to assess the suitability of the submissions for publications, building on existing public leadership research, to promote the high quality in the articles published in the journal; and second, to offer constructive and insightful comments that facilitate the development of researchers whose manuscripts are not selected.

In terms of methodology, I see the complexity and challenges of public leadership as calling for the varied perspectives across a wide range of research methods. The interdisciplinary character of public sector research questions (Raadschelders, 2011) has a long-standing intellectual history of varied approaches to research from Dwight Waldo to Herbert Simon with competing methods and world views. The research on leadership in the private sector encompasses the qualitative approaches, for example, the 40 years of thoughtful contributions and insights by Warren Bennis as well as the data-driven research on performance and leadership, for example, as developed in-depth by Jim Collins (2001). Similarly, there is a call in public sector research from the qualitative research emphasizing narrative, for example. in Ospina and Dodge (2005) to the more quantitative method-driven research on large data sets public sector leadership found, for example, in Wright *et al.* (2012). As the Editor-in-Chief, I welcome the range of qualitative and quantitative methods that advance the understanding of public leadership in contexts throughout the world.

Public
In the public sector, as a long-standing Researcher, Montgomery Van Wart (2011, 2017) thoughtfully has outlined that there are numerous leadership theories and models in the public sector. Overall, this journal has an opportunity to research these models in practice across the varied dimensions, contexts, and cross-sectoral partnerships where public

leadership create public value. Public leaders respond to a long-standing set of big questions that affect much of their organizations (Behn, 1995) in leading public sector organizations and institutions (Kirlin, 1996; Callahan, 2001). In addition, public leaders confront a range of "wicked problems" with varied stakeholders and apparently intractable challenges. Roberts's (2013) review of the underappreciated intellectual tradition in public administration research of accounting for the "large forces" offers a foundation for exploring the leadership dimensions in developing responses to the big questions and societal forces in the public sector. In additional, the research on public leadership has recognized and continue to study leadership in the context of public sector values such as rule of law and recognition of human dignity (Newland, 2012), as well as within a set of ethical expectations (Cooper, 2012).

Leadership

Herbert Simon's (1952) insights on the varied levels of society provides a typology for inviting pubic leadership research at varied levels of society including individual skills and behaviors, as well as with the unit of analysis as teams, organizations, communities, or institutions.

Contemporary public leadership research considers the role of leaders in the performance of a public organization (Wright *et al.*, 2012). Future research can consider how leadership moves public organizations from the Jurassic age to more effectively address contemporary challenges (Kettl, 2016). In addition, there is a long-standing recognition that leaders create public value (Moore, 1995) not only at the organizational level but also at the institutional level (Gingrich, 2015), in engagement with citizens (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015), and with state legitimacy in fragile and conflicted states being more than a function of service delivery (McLoughlin, 2015).

Conclusion

As incoming Editor-in-Chief, the outline above only begins to sketch the landscape for research of public leadership. And I welcome a wide range of international research on public leadership. As a reader, you may find that there is research on public leadership that I fail to account for in this initial discussion. I not only "embrace your dissent," in the words of my former colleague, Bob Biller, but I also invite you to submit your research to the journal or discuss with me. This journal facilitates dialog that deepens and expands our collective understanding of leadership and informs the practice of leadership. I welcome the opportunity to work toward these goals with my colleagues on the Editorial Board, with those submitting manuscripts, and in discussions at conferences and other venues.

Richard Callahan

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Further reading

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