

CHAPTER 7

 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION*

R. A. W. RHODES

 1 INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC administration is an irredeemably multidisciplinary field, which draws on theories, models, and methods from a wide range of disciplines. Much work in public administration on leadership is derivative, drawn mainly from political science and organization theory. I do not cover the literature on leadership in the private sector or the generic leadership literature that claims to cover all organizations. This chapter focuses on the distinctive work about administrative leadership from individuals recognized as scholars of public administration and political science writing mainly for and about public organizations and practitioners.

The term ‘administrative leader’ covers ‘the front-line supervisor...to the non-political head of the organization’ (Van Wart 2003: 216). This positional definition of a leader is narrower than the increasingly popular term ‘public leadership’, which encompasses not only the holders of formal leadership positions in public organizations but also elected political leaders and civic leadership (Morse and Buss 2007: 4–5). Morse and Buss (2007: 4) see leadership as ‘a process of influence where a person or group influences others to work towards a common goal’. Cleveland (2002: p. xv) prefers ‘bringing people together to make something different happen’. After that, we are in the land of developing vision, mission statements, and ‘challenges’ to everyone. Leadership eludes a short, simple definition.

In the study of public administration, not only was leadership hard to define but studies of administrative leadership were also hard to find. The dominant view was that the task of senior bureaucrats was to apply top-down authority; they were cogs in the machine, not leaders (Weber 1947). Times changed as recognition grew that senior

* I would like to thank Arjen Boin, Jenny Fleming, Paul ’t Hart, Anne Tiernan, and Pat Weller for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

bureaucrats also manage conflict, power, values, and change (Burns 1978: 298). So, the question of whether public servants should be leaders is at the heart of the public administration literature on reinventing government, the new public management, the entrepreneurial public servant, and public value. All confront recurring dilemmas between discretion and accountability, and responsiveness and efficiency.

I begin with a brief historical survey before turning to the distinctive contributions to the study of administrative leadership by students of public administration. I focus on: leadership theory, the study of bureaucratic elites, ethnographic studies of bureaucrats, life histories of administrative leaders, and network governance and collaborative leadership. For each topic, I identify and discuss key texts. Finally, I argue for a broader analysis than the instrumental view of leadership, suggesting that we encompass fiscal retrenchment, the ‘dark side’ of administrative leadership, and interpretive approaches.

2 TWO TRADITIONS IN THE STUDY OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

There are two distinct traditions in the study of administrative leadership: the mainstream account of instrumental leadership, which draws its inspiration from the literature on organizational leadership; and the institutional leadership school inspired by the work of Philip Selznick.

The Mainstream: Instrumental Leadership

The textbook account of the history of leadership theory in public administration parallels mainstream histories (see, e.g., Henry 2009 ch. 5).

The history of leadership studies begins with the ‘great man’ theory of history followed by the study of leadership traits. When it became clear there was no one set of leadership traits, the study of leadership switched to the relationship between leaders and followers in small groups (see the articles in Gibb 1969 for several examples). Such situational theories evolved into contingency theory (Fiedler 1967) and transactional approaches (Blake and Mouton 1985), which stressed the variety of leadership styles and the need for style to ‘fit’ the managerial context. However, the field became mired in inconclusive micro-studies, and doubts grew about the suitability of these theories for the study of large organizations and political institutions. The ‘New Leadership’ approach (Bryman 1986: 280) came not from mainstream leadership studies but from political science. Interest shifted from small groups and transactional approaches to transformational leadership (Burns 1978). The debate about the relative efficacy of transactional and transformational leadership dominated the literature for two

decades. It was still lingering in the literature in the 2000s, although there was by then a much greater concern with integrated leadership approaches (see, e.g., Bass 1985; Van Wart 2005, 2013).

Students of public administration contributed little to this story. They ‘translated’ private-sector theories of leadership to the public sector. Overall, mainstream studies ‘have failed to create a critical mass of scholarly work on public sector leadership’ (Kellerman and Webster 2001: 487).

Van Wart (2005) provides the best public administration example of work in this idiom. He seeks a model of leadership that integrates previous approaches. It is said ‘to be useful in training and applied settings,’ treating leadership as ‘competency based,’ with his concepts forming a ‘scientific causal chain’ determining the leadership style or mix of styles (Van Wart 2005: 392; see also Van Wart 2013). Like all the work in this idiom, it retrofits private-sector theories to the public sector. It is instrumental in seeking to improve managerial practice and modernist in that it is ‘imbued with the rational model of organizational thinking’ (Bryman 1996: 289). This instrumental idiom constitutes the mainstream in the study of leadership in public administration.

Philip Selznick: Institutional Leadership

Doig and Hargrove (1987: 2 and n. 9) note that Selznick’s work, although seminal, was ignored in public administration for many years (see Selznick 1984a; and Selznick 1984b). Selznick was not a scholar of public administration nor of political science, but he exercises a pervasive influence in this subfield. There are too many case studies drawing on his work to cite here (see Boin and Christensen 2008 for a review). The key texts include Lewis (1980), Doig and Hargrove (1987), Hargrove (1994), Moore (1995), Boin (2001), and Wilson (1989); the best commentaries are by Hecl (2002) and Krygier (2012).

Philip Selznick’s work on leadership builds on his distinction between an *organization*, which is ‘a rational instrument engineered to do a job,’ and an *institution*, which is ‘a responsive, adaptive organism.’ An organization becomes an institution over time; ‘to institutionalize is to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements at hand’; and ‘the executive becomes a statesman as he makes the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership.’ The role of a leader as statesman is to ‘define the mission of the enterprise’; ‘the institutional leader... is primarily an expert in the protection and promotion of values’; and ‘the problem is always to choose key values and to create a social structure that embodies them.’ Institutionalization also involves ‘organizational character formation,’ which ‘aids the organization to adapt itself to its internal and external social environment.’ Leaders not only define the mission but they also protect its distinctive character, defend institutional integrity, and manage internal and external conflict. In sum, leadership is seen as a set of tasks, and an institutional leader is a statesman presiding over a polity, seeking to win consent for the institution from internal and external interest groups (all quotations from Selznick 1984b chs 1 and

2; all emphases in original). Thus, in his study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Selznick (1984a) argues that the agency used the myth of decentralization to grass-roots partnerships to co-opt local interests into its decision-making in an effort to win over a suspicious and conservative community. Unfortunately, he argues, this strategy backfired because it led to the larger agricultural interests capturing the agency's goals (and see Hargrove 1994 for an account of how the TVA leaders became prisoners of their grass-roots myth). This focus on the tasks of leadership, statesmanship, values, and managing internal and external conflicts underpins subsequent analyses of administrative entrepreneurs.

3 THE CONTRIBUTION FROM PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

What has public administration contributed to the study of leadership? The short answer is not a lot (Terry 1995: 2); although Van Wart (2011: 89) claims that 'public sector leadership is slowly becoming its own specialized area of leadership study'. In this section, I suggest that public administration has made a distinct contribution on administrative leadership in five areas: leadership theory, the study of bureaucratic elites, ethnographic studies of bureaucrats, life history, and network theory and collaborative leadership. Admittedly each had limited impact outside the study of public administration.

Leadership Theory

The defining debate in public administration's contribution to leadership theory is between proponents of the public servant as entrepreneur and the supporters of the administrative conservator. The debate has its roots in the work of Selznick, and its most recent incarnation can be found in the contributions of Terry (1995) and Frederickson and Matkin (2007).

Terry is critical of public administration scholars (e.g. Doig and Hargrove 1987; Moore 1995) for borrowing from the private-sector leadership literature. He sees that heroic model of leadership with the great man radically changing the organization and disdaining its existing traditions as a threat to 'institutional integrity'. An institution has integrity when 'it is faithful to the functions, values, and distinctive set of unifying principles that define its special competence and character' (Terry 1995: 44). The task of administrative leaders is to preserve this institutional integrity—that is, to conserve the institution's mission, values, and support. They must balance the autonomy necessary to maintain integrity with responsibility to elected politicians. Administrative leaders practise 'administrative conservatorship'. Like Selznick's leader, the conservator practises 'a form of statesmanship', which 'requires professional expertise, political skill, and

a sophisticated understanding of what it means to be an active participant in governance. Such skills are deployed to 'maintain commitment among the executive cadre to core agency values and sustain support among key external constituents and internal interest groups' (Terry 1995: 172).

For Terry (1995: 172; 1998: 197), advocates of the public entrepreneur are on a 'misguided quest', and he mounts a vigorous attack on the twin evils of public entrepreneurs and neo-managerialism. Together, they encourage self-promotion, rule-breaking, power politics, and risk-taking. They undermine democratic accountability and are 'oblivious' to such values as fairness, justice, and the public interest (see Lewis 1980 for examples). Behn (1998: 220) seeks a middle ground that envisages a leadership role for public officials on issues 'for which the elected chiefs lack either the inclination or the time'. Moreover, their task is also 'to help the agency not only [to] achieve its purpose today but also to create new capacity to achieve its objectives tomorrow'. So, they should exercise initiative, but be subject to checks and balances. Once again, the ever-present elephant in the room is the exercise of discretion and the problem of its regulation.

A decade later, the debate will not die. Frederickson and Matkin (2007: 36–8) are critical of the change agent or transformative view of leadership. They concede leadership as vision may be appropriate for the private sector but it is just plain 'wrong' for the public sector. Citing Szanton (1981: 24), they compare public leadership to 'gardening', requiring time, patience, experience, and political awareness. Public leaders work with available resources, understand and work with administrative culture, recognizing that change is incremental. They are realists who know that problems are complex, admitting of no easy solutions. Public leaders are 'quiet leaders' who are in 'for the long haul', and their craft is compromise. Much government is about coping, the appearance of rule and keeping things going (Rhodes 2011). The contrast with the transformative or change agent leader is as sharp as the parallels with the administrative conservatorship are obvious. Throughout, the debt to Selznick is marked.

The arguments for administrative leadership as gardening are dismissed as 'the ghosts of PA orthodoxy'. The ghosts include leadership infringing on politics; unwarranted degrees of administrative discretion; and leadership without checks and balances (Getha-Taylor et al. 2011: i85). The ghosts, however, are all too real and not figments of excitable imaginations. It is not axiomatic that 'public leadership is leadership for the common good, for the purpose of creating public value' (Getha-Taylor et al. 2011: i84). This assertion is a value statement, not a given. It is more plausible to suggest that 'the tension between bureaucracy and democracy, between efficiency and responsiveness, will always be there' (Getha-Taylor et al. 2011: i87). What is indisputable, however, is that the debate about public entrepreneurs versus administrative conservators is not limited to leadership theory. It is also about the role of public administration in the polity; about public accountability and the public interest. Under the label 'administrative ethics', students of Public Administration have a long-standing interest in the ethical standards governing bureaucratic behaviour (see, e.g., Rohr 1989; Cooper 2000).

The Study of Bureaucratic Elites

Elite studies have a long and distinguished history, and the study of bureaucratic elites is a small subset of this larger enterprise. It is considered rarely in reviews of leadership, but most countries have research on the origins, education, social networks, and behaviour of their top public officials—too many to cite here. There are even a few genuinely comparative studies as distinct from compendia of individual country studies. For example, Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman (1981) conducted a survey of politicians and bureaucrats in seven countries. They explored their social origins, their roles and styles in policy-making, their ideology, their commitment to democratic principles, and the interactions between politicians and bureaucrats. They use their findings to evaluate elite strengths and weaknesses as policymakers. One of the significant findings among many is American exceptionalism. They conclude that ‘bureaucrats and politicians are less distinct in the United States than in Europe’, with American bureaucrats acting as advocates, policy entrepreneurs, and even partisans (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981: 244).

Although the socio-demographic features of elites might seem a dry, even sterile, topic, it throws up some interesting debates. First, it raises questions about the representative nature of bureaucracy; for example, about the representation of women in the senior post in the public service (see, e.g., Ferguson 1984; Savage and Witz 1992). Second, it raises questions about the changing role of top officials—especially whether they are still ‘frank and fearless’ in giving advice after decades of administrative reform (see, e.g., Weller 2001). In their study of six parliamentary democracies, Rhodes and Weller (2001: ch. 9) show that there has been a demand for officials to be more responsive to political direction, with corresponding fears that advice has been compromised. The verdict on whether officials still offer frank and fearless advice is, at best, non-proven. There have always been tenured officials who prevaricated and procrastinated and contract appointees who acted in the great tradition and ‘told it as it was.’ There is no substitute for spine.

Ethnographic Studies of Bureaucrats

Few students of public administration use observation as a research tool. Of course, there are exceptions. There are a handful of studies of central or federal bureaucrats (see, e.g., Rhodes 2011; Rhodes, ‘t Hart, and Noordegraaf 2007), and a growing number of studies of street-level bureaucrats (see, e.g., Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). In the ethnographic study of both, Herbert Kaufman (1960, 1981) is the pioneer, even doyen, of empirical studies of administrative leadership.

In his analysis of central bureaux chiefs, Kaufman (1981) studied six federal bureaux for fourteen months, including thirty-one full days when he observed the bureaux chiefs sitting in their offices and at meetings. The conventional wisdom is that bureaux chiefs have much power and independence. Kaufman (1981: ch. 3) highlights the ‘confines

of leadership'. He compares it to 'stepping into a large fast-flowing river' and contending with 'an array of forces not of his own making that carried him and his organization along—sometimes at an unwanted rate and in an unwanted direction' (Kaufman 1981: 134). So, 'they make their marks in inches, not miles'. He suggests that, 'for all the power and influence attributed to their office and for all their striving, [bureau chiefs] *could not make a big difference in what their organizations did* during the period in which they served' (Kaufman 1981: 174, 139; emphasis added). Getting up close and personal changes the angle of vision and leads, as Kaufman freely admits, to surprises, especially about the confines of administrative leadership.

Although the term 'street-level bureaucrat' was not in common currency, Kaufman's *The Forest Ranger* (1960) pioneered the topic. He studied forest rangers and their supervisors in five districts. He visited the first district for seven weeks and the other districts for one week each; all the rangers' time was set aside for his 'conversations' and observations. There were also social visits to their families in the evening. He diagnoses a tendency to fragmentation created by hierarchical specialization in which, for example, forest supervisors and district rangers in the field apply policies to concrete situations. Anyone who tries 'to direct activities on a Ranger district without going through the Ranger can be sure of swift and vehement objection by the field officer' (Kaufman 1960: 210). He calls them 'switchboards', adapting general directives to specific conditions and areas. It is a pivotal position. It is a classic example of the street-level bureaucrat, only they patrol trails, not streets. However, local discretion did not fuel conflict with the centre. Rather, the rangers were 'principled agents' using their discretion to further organizational goals (Boin 2001: 9).

The term 'street-level bureaucrat' was coined by Michael Lipsky (1980: p. xii) and refers to teachers, police officers, and social workers and any other semi-professionals in face-to-face contact with clients of state services. It draws attention to 'the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures', which 'effectively become the public policies they carry out' (Lipsky 1980: p. xii). Lipsky's main concern is that street-level bureaucrats are increasingly rule bound and are at risk of losing professional discretion. Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003: ch. 12) disagree, claiming street-level bureaucrats 'actually make policy choices rather than simply implement the decisions of elected officials'. They fix client identities, often stereotyping them, which, in turn, fixes the occupational identity of the street-level bureaucrat as, for example, bleeding heart or hardnosed, which, in turn, sets the decision premisses for the street-level bureaucrat's judgements. They use their everyday routines for managing time, client demands, and the pressure on resources. They even evade decisions by rubber-stamping decisions made by other authoritative individuals, or by referring cases to such individuals. They have to manage the 'irreconcilable' dilemmas posed by clients' needs, administrative supervision (of rules and resources), and the exercise of state power. They are not heroes, but they are an example of bottom-up leadership.

The key issue running through this literature concerns the extent of professional discretion and the effectiveness of managers in reasserting control, mainly through

rules. Evans and Harris (2004) suggest that multiplying rules can create opportunities for more discretionary action, not less. Riccucci (2005: ch. 5) suggests that managing street-level bureaucrats should rely less on rules and reporting and more on open management with the participation of professionals, better education, and, on occasion, more micro-management. The exercise of discretion by street-level bureaucrats is an example of bottom-up leadership and, at its heart, is the same dilemma that stokes the debate about entrepreneurs and conservators—that is, discretion versus accountability.

Life History

As Lambright and Quinn (2011: 782) observe, the American literature on life history is ‘relatively small’ (but see the occasional series in *Public Administration Review*). It is seen as old-fashioned narrative, which is not theoretical or methodologically rigorous, or explanatory (Roberts 2002: 6–13). The key question is what is the use of life history in public administration? Is it the traditional biographer’s aim of a chronological history with narrative drive that uncovers the character of its subject? Or is it the historian’s aim of a better understanding of evolving public institutions and processes? Or is it the public administration scholar’s aim of answering some broader disciplinary question about public leadership? Harold Lasswell (1986: 1) suggested that ‘political science without biography is a form of taxidermy’. Equally, life history without an explicit use or theoretical stance is mere reportage.

In public administration, there are some fine examples of chronological life histories (see, e.g., Caro 1974; O’Halpin 1989). There are also single life histories that develop a larger argument. For example, Richard Chapman’s study of Sir Edward Bridges, Head of the British Civil Service in 1945–56, seeks to show that professional conduct depends on ethical leadership by ‘outstanding’ civil servants (Chapman 1988: 307; see also Cooper and Wright 1992). Comparative life histories organized around a single theme have more to offer. A good example of this approach is Doig and Hargrove (1987). In the introduction, they explain that they want to contest Kaufman’s pessimistic view that senior officials can introduce only limited incremental change. They want to reclaim individual leadership. So, they chose twelve individuals who held high-level executive positions in American federal, state, and local governments. They looked for ‘individuals whose careers at managerial levels were linked to innovative ideas and to efforts to carry those ideas into effect’. The authors of the individual biographies were asked to focus on a checklist of activities, including: crafting new missions or programmes, developing external constituencies, motivating new organizational members, and enhancing technical expertise. They then identify the several variables that sustained innovative leadership. There are three personal characteristics: capacity for rational analysis, the ability to see the political logic and new opportunities, and a desire to ‘make a difference’. There are also four external factors: governmental fragmentation and overlap, public support, new technologies, and political support from elected officials. The innovative leaders also had significant rhetorical and coalition-building skills. So, it is possible to conduct

comparative life history around a common set of themes and illuminate such questions as what conditions favour innovative leadership—no mean feat for an approach too often dismissed as not academic, subjective, and partial.

Network Governance and Collaborative Leadership

Morse and Buss (2007: 9) describe leadership in networks as ‘the most dramatic trend’ in public leadership. They argue leadership ‘across organizations within government as well as across sectors’ is ‘superseding the traditional image of government as top-down bureaucracy’. This interest in network governance (see Rhodes 2006) mutated to embrace working in partnerships and collaboration, and it is this strand that has the most to say about leadership.

Ansell and Gash (2007: 544) define collaborative governance as a collective decision-making process ‘where one or more public agencies directly engages non-state stakeholders’ in the ‘formal, consensus oriented, and deliberative’ implementation of public policy or management of public programmes. The key question is whether opposing stakeholders can work together in a collaborative way. The answer is a ‘cautious yes’, and a key part of that answer is leadership, which is ‘crucial for setting and maintaining clear ground rules, building trust, facilitating dialogue, and exploring mutual gains’ (Ansell and Gash 2008: 547). Such leadership is variously described as hands-off, soft, integrative, facilitative or diplomatic. The shared feature is that it is not directive, hands-on, or command and control.

Much of this work draws lessons for practitioners (see, e.g., Huxham and Vangen 2005; Agranoff 2007). It focuses on steering, on instrumental knowledge. There is little acknowledgement of the problem of accountability. Bovens (1998: 46) identifies the ‘problem of many hands’, where responsibility for policy in complex organizations is shared, and it is correspondingly difficult to find out who is responsible. He also notes that fragmentation, marketization, and the resulting networks create ‘new forms of the problem of many hands’ (Bovens 1998: 229). Even more troublesome is the frequency with which networks are closed to public scrutiny. The brute fact is that multiple accountabilities weaken central control (Mulgan 2003: 211–14, 225). The extreme examples of such private governments are the ‘dark networks’ of arms-trading and drug-smuggling (Raab and Brinton Milward 2003).

4 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In the mainstream literature, there is a set of ‘perennial debates’ in the study of public leadership. Van Wart (2005: 14–20) itemizes four. ‘What do leaders do? Does leadership make a difference? Are leaders born or made? What is the best leadership style?’ These debates reflect the mainstream’s ambition for cumulative, generalized, instrumental

knowledge and are not the most germane in the study of administrative leadership. I prefer to expand the research agenda by considering: the changing context of public administration, the ‘dark side’ of administrative leadership, and interpretive approaches.

Fiscal Retrenchment and the Changing Context of Public Administration

The context of leadership has changed dramatically since 2008. Previously, most discussions of public leadership focused on the issues posed by: globalization; the ‘triumph’ of neo-liberal ideas; the rise of managerialism in its guises of performance measurement, marketization, and, most recently, service delivery and consumer choice; and the IT revolution. The 2010s have turned into an age of austerity, with massive public-sector retrenchment, which will have many specific consequences for public administration. In the ‘hard times’ of the late 1970s and 1980s, we debated whether governments could go bankrupt and whether administrative practice favoured decrementalism over quantum cuts (Dunsire and Hood 2010). This time around, we know the new austerity will change leaders’ understanding of their organizational context. It is plausible to suggest that these understandings will support centralization, ‘head kicking’ (or the use of threats and inducements rather than persuasion), and financial retrenchment. Specific examples of such leadership include compulsory and voluntary redundancies, shorter working weeks, shedding female employees, and unilateral pension cuts. It can also provoke union militancy and a demoralized workforce. In particular, the European banking and debt crisis will have repercussions for administrative leaders for years, probably decades, to come. We need to trace the intended and unintended consequences.

The Dark Side of Leadership

The leader as hero is a common image in the public administration literature. They are presented as unsung heroes (Doig and Hargrove 1987), innovators (Moore 1995), and bastions of integrity (Cooper and Wright 1992). There is an unthinking equation of administrative leadership with good leaders, no doubt as an antidote to the incessant criticisms of bureaucracy. There are far too many examples of corruption, maladministration, and incompetence for anyone to be comfortable with this equation. Leaders are ‘villains’, adept at ‘humboggery and manipulation’ (Bailey 1988), who commit bad, sometimes evil, acts. Lipman-Blumen (2004: 19–22) provides a scary portrait of ‘toxic’ leaders. They leave their followers and possibly everyone else worse off. At one end of the spectrum, they undermine, demean, seduce, marginalize, intimidate, and demoralize employees. At the extreme end, they disenfranchise, incapacitate, imprison, torture, terrorize, and kill (Lipman-Blumen 2004: 19–20; see also Adams and Balfour 2004; Nye 2008: ch. 5).

Some of these characteristics and behaviours may seem unlikely for your everyday bureaucrat. The examples of bad leadership in our newspapers headlines describe venal corporate executives, fanatical religious leaders, and corrupt political leaders. It would be a mistake, however, to ignore the extent of administrative evil, whether the example is ‘big’ (J. Edgar Hoover’s ‘inappropriate’ uses of the FBI) or ‘small’ (the cynical ‘outing’ of British defence official David Kelly for an unauthorized conversation with a journalist, which led to his suicide). If we turn our attention to common, everyday actions, there are many examples of management practices such as head kicking and bullying fuelling low morale. Employees are demeaned, marginalized, and intimidated. Unethical behaviour can lower public confidence and trust in public authority and encourage whistle-blowing.

The analysis of bad public leadership is rare. If we are serious about holding administrative leaders to account, then we need to know why they failed, why and in what ways they were ‘bad’, why we supported them, and how they evaded accountability. There is a dearth of studies of the effects of ineffective and unethical administrative leadership on other bureaucrats, and on citizens.

Interpretive Approaches

The idea of ‘meaning’ lies at the heart of the interpretive approach. An interpretive approach seeks to understand the webs of significance that people spin for themselves. The researcher’s task is to write ‘our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to’ (Geertz 1973: 9). Any organization ‘hinges on the creation of shared meaning and shared understandings’ (Morgan 1993: 11, see also 276–80). Stories spell out the shared meaning and shared understandings. All organizations have a storehouse of many stories. This storehouse provides the everyday theory and shared languages for storytelling. As Boje (1991: 106) suggests, ‘stories are to the storytelling system what precedent cases are to the judicial system’. Leaders use stories not only to gain and pass on information and to inspire involvement but also as the repository of the organization’s institutional memory (see also Gabriel 2000; Rhodes 2011).

The focus on meaning and on telling stories may seem far removed from the concerns of practitioners; that is not the case. Leadership is about ‘the management of meaning’ and a way of leaders ‘exerting their influence on followers’; they ‘educate, inspire, indoctrinate and convince’ (Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Adler 2005, 14 and 15). It is ‘socially constructed through interaction’, and effective leadership ‘rests heavily on the framing of the experience of others’ in which ‘language, ritual, drama, stories, myths and symbolic construction . . . play an important role’ (Smircich and Morgan 1982: 258, 262). Rhodes (2011) reports that most, if not all, British civil servants accept that the art of storytelling is an integral part of their work. Such phrases as: ‘Have we got our story straight?’ ‘Are we telling a consistent story?’, and ‘What is our story?’ abound. Civil servants and ministers learn and filter current events through the stories they hear and tell one another.

Storytelling is not an example of academic whimsy, but an integral part of the everyday practices of civil servants. Stories explain past practice and events and justify recommendations for the future. So, research on leadership should also explore the ways in which leaders construct their own life stories as part of an organization's storehouse of myths and legends.

5 CONCLUSIONS

For mainstream leadership studies, its proponents concede that there is limited cumulative knowledge. Rather, we have competing theories and eclectic methods. The study of administrative leadership mirrors the general state of public administration. There is no single way to study administrative leadership.

Although there may be a plurality of approaches, nonetheless there are also shared concerns, most notably around the recurring dilemmas between discretion and accountability, and responsiveness and efficiency. These dilemmas lie at the heart of the debate about entrepreneurs versus administrative conservators; the professional discretion of street-level bureaucrats, the responsiveness of bureaucratic elites to their political masters, controlling bad leaders, and the problem of many hands in networks. The distinct and distinctive contribution of public administration lies in its analysis and debates around public accountability and the public interest. Social science's leadership theory does not answer such questions of political theory.

The most obvious trend is for studies of administrative leadership to have a broader and broader compass. What are the merits of increasing the scope of administrative leadership studies? The defining characteristic of administrative leadership is its basis in the authority of the state. Any action by a person in the administrative hierarchy that influences another person inside or outside the bureaucracy to work together becomes an example of administrative leadership. So, street-level bureaucrats are seen as leaders. Local-level, social entrepreneurs in a collaborative project may be emergent *civic* leaders, but they cannot be *administrative* leaders because they are not bearers of state authority. Leadership is not a given, but socially constructed. A formal organization such as a public bureaucracy 'is premised upon shared meanings that define roles and authority relationships' (Smircich and Morgan 1982: 259). Civic leaders do not share those meanings. So, studies of administrative leadership seek to answer questions about leadership in hierarchical organization, even when they are teasing out the contests over meaning and resistance to the top-down views of leadership.

The study of administrative leadership has a clear core: holders of formal leadership positions in public organizations. It also has a classic question: how do we hold such office-holders to account? As the boundaries of the state become more opaque, then roles become blurred and the old certainties are challenged. We must follow where we are led but heedful of the danger that, if leadership is everything, maybe it is nothing. We must not forget where we have come from, because administrative leadership is about

the constitutional and political role of public administration in the polity; it is not just about better management.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Kaufman, H. (1981). *The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs*. Washington: Brookings Institution.
- Selznick, P. (1984) [1957]. *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Terry, Larry D. (1995). *Leadership in Public Bureaucracies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

REFERENCES

- Aberbach, J., Putnam, R. D., and Rockman, B. A. (1981). *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Adams, G. B., and Balfour, D. L. (2004). *Unmasking Administrative Evil*. Rev. edn. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Agranoff, R. (2007). *Managing within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Ansell, C., and Gash, A. (2008). 'Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice', *Journal of Public Administration Theory and Practice*, 18/4: 543–71.
- Bailey, F. G. (1988). *Humbuggery and Manipulation: The Art of Leadership*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Behn, R. (1998). 'What Right Do Public Managers Have to Lead?', *Public Administration Review*, 58/3: 209–24.
- Blake, R. R., and Mouton, J. S. (1985) [1964]. *The Managerial Grid*. 3rd edn. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Boin, R. A. (2001). *Public Institutions: Leadership in Two Prison Systems*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Boin, A., and Christensen, T. (2008). 'The Development of Public Institutions: Reconsidering the Role of Leadership', *Administration and Society*, 40/3: 271–97.
- Boje, D. (1991). 'The Storytelling Organization: A Story of Story Performance in an Office-Supply Firm', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36/1: 106–26.
- Bovens, M. (1998). *The Quest for Responsibility: Accountability and Citizenship in Complex Organizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bryman, A. (1996). 'Leadership in Organizations', in Stewart R. Clegg, Cynthia Hardy, and Walter R. Nord (eds), *Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: SAGE, 276–92.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row; paperback edn, 1979.
- Caro, R. A. (1974). *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Chapman, R. A. (1988). *Ethics in the British Civil Service*. London: Routledge.
- Cleveland, H. (2002). *Nobody in Charge: Essays on the Future of Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Cooper, T. L. (2000) (ed.). *Handbook of Administrative Ethics*. 2nd edn. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Cooper, T. L., and Wright, N. D. (1992) (eds). *Exemplary Public Administrators: Character and Leadership in Government*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Doig, J.W., and Hargrove, E.C. (1987) (eds). *Leadership and Innovation: A Biographical Perspective on Entrepreneurs in Government*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dunsire, A., and Hood, C. (2010) [1989]. *Cutback Management in Public Bureaucracies: Popular Theories and Observed Outcomes in Whitehall*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, T., and Harris, J. (2004). 'Street-Level Bureaucracy, Social Work and the (Exaggerated) Death of Discretion'. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34/6: 871–95.
- Ferguson, K. (1984). *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1967). *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Frederickson, H. G., and Matkin, D. S. T. (2007). 'Public Leadership as Gardening', in R. S. Morse, T. F. Buss, and C. M. Kinghorn (eds), *Transforming Public Leadership for the 21st Century*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 34–45.
- Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions and Fantasies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). 'Thick Descriptions: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London: Fontana, 3–30.
- Getha-Taylor, H., Holmes, M. H., Jacobson, W. S., Morse, R. S., and Sowa, J. E. (2011). 'Focusing the Public Leadership Lens: Research Propositions and Questions in the Minnowbrook Tradition', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21 (Supp. 1), i83–i97. Doi:10.1093/jopart/muq069.
- Gibb, C. A. (1969) (ed.). *Leadership*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Hargrove, E. C. (1994). *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933–1990*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Heclo, H. (2002). 'The Statesman: Revisiting *Leadership in Administration*', in Robert Kagan, Martin Krygier, and Kenneth Winston (eds), *Legality and Community: The Legacy of Philip Selznick*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 295–310.
- Henry, N. (2009). *Public Administration and Public Affairs*. 11th edn. London: Pearson Longman.
- Huxham, C., and Vangen, C. (2005). *Managing to Collaborate: The Theory and Practice of Collaborative Advantage*. London: Routledge.
- Kaufman, H. (1960). *The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Kaufman, H. (1981). *The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Kellerman, B., and Webster, S. (2001). 'The recent Literature On Public Leadership: Reviewed and Considered', *Leadership Quarterly*, 12/4: 485–514.
- Krygier, M. (2012). *Philip Selznick: Ideals in the World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Lambright, W. H., and Quinn, M. M. (2011). 'Understanding Leadership in Public Administration: The Biographical Approach', *Public Administration Review*, 71/5: 782–90.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1986) [1930]. *Psychopathology and Politics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lewis, E. (1980). *Public Entrepreneurship*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Lipman-Blumen, J. (2004). *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians—and How We Can Survive Them*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Maynard-Moody, S., and Musheno, M. (2003). *Cops, Teachers, Counsellors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Moore, M. H. (1995). *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, G. (1993). *Imaginization*. London: SAGE.
- Morse, R., and Buss, T. F. (2007). 'Transformation of Public Leadership', in R. Morse, T. F. Buss, and C. M. Kinghorn (eds), *Transforming Public Leadership for the 21st Century*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 3–19.
- Mulgan, R. (2003). *Holding Power to Account: Accountability in Modern Democracies*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nye, J. S. (2008). *The Powers to Lead*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- O'Halpin, E. (1989). *Head of the Civil Service: A Study of Sir Warren Fisher*. London: Routledge.
- Raab, J., and Brinton Milward, H. (2003). 'Dark networks as problems', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13/4: 413–39.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2006). 'Policy Network Analysis', in M. Moran, M. Rein, and R. E. Goodin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 423–45.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2011). *Everyday Life in British Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rhodes, R. A. W., 't Hart, P., and Noordegraaf, M. (2007) (eds). *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Rhodes, R. A. W., and Weller, P. (2001) (eds). *The Changing World of Top Officials: Mandarins or Valets?* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Riccucci, N. M. (2005). *How Management Matters: Street-Level Bureaucrats and Welfare Reform*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Roberts, B. (2002). *Biographical Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Rohr, J. A. (1989). *Ethics for Bureaucrats: An Essay on Law and Values*. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Savage, M. and Witz, A., (1992)(eds). *Gender and Bureaucracy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Selznick, P. (1984a) [1949]. *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study of Politics and Organization*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Selznick, P. (1984b) [1957]. *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Shamir, B., Dayan-Horesh, H., and Adler, D. (2005). 'Leading by Biography: Towards a Life-Story Approach to the Study of Leadership', *Leadership*, 1/1: 13–29.
- Smircich, L., and Morgan, G. (1982). 'Leadership: The Management of Meaning', *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 18/3: 257–73.
- Szanton, P. (1981). 'So you Want to Reorganize the Government?' in Peter Szanton (ed.), *Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned?* London: Chatham House, 1–24.
- Terry, L. D. (1995). *Leadership in Public Bureaucracies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Terry, L. D. (1998). 'Administrative leadership, Neo-Managerialism and the Public Management Movement', *Public Administration Review*, 58/3: 194–200.
- Van Wart, M. (2003). 'Public Leadership Theory: An Assessment', *Public Administration Review*, 63/2: 214–28.
- Van Wart, M. (2005). *The Dynamics of Leadership in the Public Service: Theory and Practice*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.

- Van Wart, M. (2011). Changing dynamics of administrative leadership. Pp. 89–107 in *The State of Public Administration: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities*, ed. D. C. Menzel and H. L. White. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons. London: Collier-Macmillan Publishers.
- Weller, P. (2001). *Australia's Mandarins: the Frank and the Fearless*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Wilson, J. Q. (1989). *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books.