

The Practice of Collective and Strategic Leadership in the Public Sector

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Abstract

Currently, a dyadic and hierarchical vision dominates in the literature on leadership as it does in the public sector (Gronn, 2002; Hiller and Vance, 2006). The transactional and transformational perspectives present leaders in relation with their subordinates or their supporters. Yet, that is a truncated vision of the reality because it disregards the situation and the other leaders present (Gronn, 2002, 2008; Raelin, 2005; Yukl, 1989). In the public sector, since the leaders have limited control (Moynihan and Wallace-Ingraham, 2004) and coexist collectively and in a dependent and independent manner (Raelin, 2005; Bourgault, 2007), I propose that different leaders interact in complementarity at different levels of the practice of leadership.

In this article, I propose a conceptual model of the individual development of leadership in connection with the practice of collective and strategic leadership in the public sector. Using a case history, I conduct an exploratory and heuristic study that leads to adoption, in a first phase, of Kuhnert and Lewis's model (1987). According to them, leadership can develop in individuals throughout their professional evolution. They propose three levels of leadership practice, two of which are transactional types (imperial, which is a weak level, and interpersonal, which is a higher level), and one of which is a transformational type (institutional). I propose a model that has four levels of individual practice of leadership, two of which are transactional (technical and organizational) and two of which are transformational (political and institutional). In a second phase, an exploratory and heuristic study is conducted by looking at the case of cadastral reform in Quebec, a strategic file managed by the same senior public servant I described in the first part of the article on leadership development throughout a career. The results show that different levels of leadership practice are necessary to the management and implementation of a strategic file and that if one or several levels of leadership are not assumed in a perspective of collective action, this has an impact on the overall performance.

This new proposal makes several contributions from the theoretical and conceptual point of view : it takes into account the organized dimension of the individual practice of leadership as a context for applying the individual development of leadership, in the context of the public sector. The model is a conceptual base to understand the practice of distributed leadership (cf. Gronn, 2002, 2008). It is a relevant model for the public sector as a field of action for leaders who share the same public service mission even if they are in different organizations. This model takes into account the opportunity (rather than the constraint) represented by the legal context of managers' accountability in the development of the practice of a collective and strategic leadership. I ultimately develop five main research hypotheses and five secondary hypotheses to test the generalizability of the results.

Key words: leadership, collective leadership, strategic leadership, transactional and transformational leadership, public management.

The Practice of Collective and Strategic Leadership in the Public Sector

I- Individual development of leadership

Political leader *and* managerial leader?

Two major streams define leadership in the public administration literature (Kettl, 2000): (1) political leadership, as a traditional approach in the political science field that separates the political and administrative dimensions of the public sector, the role of the administrative sphere being limited to implementing policy enactments in the purest hierarchical tradition of the bureaucratic ideal. Leadership is thus the prerogative of elected officials. This approach represents the dominant stream in the literature on leadership in the public sector. In particular, the authors says that to preserve democracy, the administration must be instrumental and a-political, reserving the exercise of leadership to politicians (cf. Elcock, 2001) even if public managers are recognized as having an influential capacity (Cook, 1998; Van Wart, 2003); (2) a second stream, which does not see public administration as being limited to an executive role but as having that are strongly and responsibly linked to public institutions. In fact, there is a dialectic tension between the instrumental (determinative) nature of public organizations and their influential nature (as stakeholders), the latter potentially being considered as a threat to democracy; this is why some prefer an instrumental-type public administration that is separate from policy. As Cook pointed out (1998: 227), there is nonetheless a distance between the rhetoric and the reality, and the instrumental and constitutive nature of public institutions is real. Public administration is an institution (Cook, 1998) and, as such, managers are the guardians of the public good. Elected officials must standardize the conduct of public managers for an ethical, transparent and responsible public management, which in return has an institutional responsibility. In other words, without taking the place or the political responsibility of elected officials, public managers, because they ensure the continuity of the government and have experience managing it, must exercise a formative influence (Cook, 1998) throughout their work in their organization (Cook, 1998) and at the inter-organizational level, influencing the collective processes.

In practice, although the political and administrative responsibilities cannot replace each other, these two levels of action are substantial and reciprocal (Svara, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2006; Lynn, 2001), meaning that one needs the other to function, especially strategically. Moreover, even though the literature on leadership is abundant and the topic has garnered the attention of researchers throughout the 21st century, few studies take into account the particular context of the public sector, nor do they take into account the dynamic of leadership practice in this context.

Political leadership can be seen not as an attribute linked to political status, but rather as linked to the personal style of the leader (Elcock (2001): one who exercises power for personal purposes and one who targets the public interest. In the first instance, *public choice* theoreticians and their defenders in political science see leaders as *rational maximizers* who seek to guarantee their supporters maximum support. Politicians' private interests remain subject to the electoral cycle (Fiorina and Schelsle, 1989, cited by Elcock, 2001) and remain elitist (the oligarchy spoken of by Michels in 1915), while those of bureaucrats appear to be marked by the construction of organizational fiefs (Tullock, 1976, cited by Elcock, 2001). Political-type leaders must retain and develop the approval of supporters and, to do so, the Machiavellian vision is still the order of the day. According to Machiavelli, individuals are motivated by their personal interests first and foremost and the Prince cannot trust a servant

who thinks of his own interests before those of the Prince. The Prince maintains the servants' allegiance by granting them favors in return (transactional leadership), and keeps them in fear of the consequences if they betray him or disobey his instructions (Tullock, 1976, cited by Elcock, 2001.: 23). While even preserving an egoistic view of leadership, political-type leaders today have no other choice but to respond to a demand that did not exist in Machiavelli's time: a moral demand in terms of the public interest that must take precedence over individual interests. As Elcock (2001) explained, this demand is present in political discourse but, sometimes betrayed by certain actions, it now challenges managers of the public good. This is a classic problem : "that of how influence over government decisions should be divided between elected politicians and the career bureaucrats who advise them", even though the line that divides the political sphere from the administrative sphere varies over time and depending on the governments of the countries (*id.*).

Individual or collective process? Transactional *and* transformational practice?

Is leadership an individual or collective process in the public sector? Van Wart (2003) counted only 25 articles directly related to leadership in the *Public Administration Review* (out of 100 articles in 61 years). In the 1940s, some studies focused on the discretionary capacity of public managers (Finer, 1949; Leys, 1943 cited in Van Wart, 2003).

As Van Wart points out (2003), leadership in the public sector is viewed monolithically and the various ramifications of leadership are not explored in different context on the basis of the different missions, organizational structures, accountability mechanisms, constraints or opportunities. A traditional hierarchical (top-down) view of leadership is still very present (Kettl, 2003), which explains the absence of studies on the dynamics of leadership practice in the public sector. Yet in the current modernization of public functions where there are now additional public service actors (agencies, partners, ministries, community organizations, etc.), and where the notions of result, efficient and effective management, and quality of services and ethics are becoming the leitmotiv, there is a need to better understand the practice of leadership in the public sphere. Is it an influential process of one individual within a group (for dyadic perspective see Hiller, Day and Vance, 2006; Northouse, 2001 or Taggar, Hacket and Saha, 1999, for example) or a collective process shared by a network of actors (collective perspective)? In either case, it is assumed that the success of the group depends on the success of the mission and is therefore a teleological phenomenon. (Yukl, 1989; Alban-Metcalf and Alimo-Metcalf, 2007).

In this article, I take the position that leadership is a collective process (Charan, 2006; Denis, Lamothe and Langley, 2001; Yukl, 1989) that involves both an individual dimension and a networking dimension, because the public service mission (health care, for example) is shared among different organizations.

The individual dimension includes both an operatory dimension and an interpersonal dimension. The operatory dimension – "how things get done and right," according to Zaleznick, 1977; Bennis and Nanus, 1985 – is what some call 'transactional leadership.' The interpersonal dimension – "do the right things" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985 cited in Yukl, 1989) and "what things mean to people" (Zaleznick, 1977 cited in Yukl, 1989) – is what others call 'transformational leadership' (Bass, 1985 cited in Yukl, 1989). Like Yukl (1989), in this paper I consider the terms 'managers' and 'leaders' to be interchangeable rather than different. However, I propose that there are levels of development of leaders (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987) and that transactional leadership is an operatory practice of a basic level while transformational leadership is a social practice of a more complex level. These levels of

individual practice correspond to the leaders' talent and not to their formal position of power. Consequently, while the formal position should correspond to a level of leadership practice, in practice, the correspondence between the two is not automatic. Leaders are therefore those who, in the context of public management, exercise a level of leadership corresponding to their level of personal development in this regard that matches, or does not match, the position held. They exercise it complementary with the other leaders concerned by the same given situation and who exercise, or should exercise, a level of leadership complementary to their own to manage situations.

At present, a dyadic and hierarchical vision dominates in the literature on leadership just as in the public sector (Gronn, 2002, 2008; Hiller, Day and Vance, 2006). The transactional and transformational perspectives present leaders in relationship with their subordinates or their supporters. Yet, that is a truncated vision of the reality because it disregards the situation and other leaders present (Raelin, 2005; Gronn, 2002; Yukl, 1989). A networking vision forecasts that in a given situation or problem, several leaders exercising different levels of leadership are called upon to intervene on the basis of their position of power or influence to provide effective leadership, so that the situation or the problem can be successfully managed. Networking leadership is distributed (Gronn, 2002) and includes the complementary exercise of transactional and transformational-type leaderships (Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson, 2003). Collective leadership as defined here applies in particular to the public sector where leaders have limited control (Moynihan and Wallace-Ingraham, 2004, where leaders coexist collectively and in a dependent and independent manner (Raelin, 2005), and were they are accountable.

In this paper, I suggest first that leaders might have an individual leadership development during their career. Second, since public sector leaders have limited control (Moynihan and Wallace-Ingraham, 2004), they coexist collectively and in a dependent and independent manner (Raelin, 2005; Bourgault, 2007), and they are accountable, I propose that different leaders interact in complementarity at different levels of leadership practice and in an inter-organizational mode.

Methodology

A within-case analysis (Miles and Huberman, 2003) and temporal bracketing (Langley, 1999) were used in an exploratory study. At the start, a life story to illustrate the career evolution of an experienced senior public servant renowned for his qualities as a leader, the case proved to be a rich heuristic source for this exploratory study of the individual and collective practice of leadership in the public sector.

Two in-depth interviews lasting nearly 6 hours, the testimony of resource people and verification of the facts in public documents enabled us to establish the database. For interpretation, the data were reorganized in two phases: (1) based on categories identified by Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) (see below), and in a longitudinal horizon, I matched the type of position held with the type of corresponding issue, and I analyzed the purpose of the individual's action (subject - organizing process) and the means he took to act and successfully deal with the issue (object - content of experience); (2) this data analysis allowed us to adapt and enrich the matrix of the individual development of leadership by identifying four levels of practice adapted to the public sector (in addition to the "imperial" category that I consider as stage 0 of individual leadership which I retained from the initial matrix): technical, organizational, political and institutional; (3) by using a real strategic file in the

public sector, I analyse the interconnections and complementarity between the four levels of leadership practice in the public sector.

Individual development of leadership: The Kuhnert And Lewis model (1987)

Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) proposed a constructive model of the individual development of leadership in connection with the practice of transactional and transformational leadership (see table 1). Drawing on the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) who, themselves, recognized degrees of application in the action of transactional and transformational leadership, and from the work of Kegan (1982), Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) proposed two stages of transactional leadership (imperial or weak, and interpersonal or high) and one stage of transformational leadership (called institutional) in the individual development of leadership. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), along with their supporters, were concerned with the actions of leaders and their impact on the actions of others, seen as followers. However, they did not explain what generates the action of these leaders (Kunhert and Lewis, 1987), and this was not studied in a particular context like the public sector (cf. Van Wart, 2003).

Table 1: The Kuhnert and Lewis model (1987, p. 652).

Stage	Subject (organizing process)	Object (content of experience)
Imperial (lower-order transactional)	Personal goals and agendas	Perceptions, immediate needs, feelings
Interpersonal (higher-order transactional)	Interpersonal connections, mutual obligations	Personal goals and agendas
Institutional (transformational)	Personal standards and value system	Interpersonal connections, mutual obligations

In the constructive and developmental theory of personality (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987; Kegan, 1982), individuals evolve according to the manner in which they construct or organize their experience about themselves and about their social and interpersonal environment. For Kegan and Lahey, (1984, cited in Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987), leaders who have reached superior levels of development also utilize the preceding levels to construct reality. The “subject” column indicates what the subjects (the leaders) use to define themselves. The “object” column indicates the relational interface with others used by the subjects. As their leadership evolves, the individuals transcend what defined them to use it as a transitional object or means of interaction. At the imperial stage, the subjects define themselves by their personal goals and agendas and they negotiate with the others by utilizing the perceptions, the most strongly expressed needs and the feelings of these others to achieve their own personal agendas. In fact, this stage corresponds to an absence of leadership, but it can take on the appearances of leadership depending on the discourse or status of the individual if I equate the individuals’ leadership to an authority relationship. At the interpersonal stage, leaders transcend their goals and agendas as personal agendas to make them a means of action, and they define themselves instead through their relations of mutual obligation with others. At the

institutional stage, they transcend their relations of mutual obligation with others as a personal agenda to make them the means of their action, and they define themselves henceforth by their value system and their personal standards.

I- Individual leadership development and the TOPI model

Career path and stages of individual development of leadership: the case of a senior public servant.

With the model proposed by Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) as a starting point (see Table 1), I propose an exploratory study of the individual development of leadership applied to the public sector.

I present and analyze the career path of Guy Morneau, a senior public servant and the stages of development of his leadership.

- I have had a very non-linear career path. I never had a dream, I never had a career plan as such, I knew what I liked, I knew what I didn't like. And that I think that was the best filter to guide me in my career.

This Quebec career senior public servant did not experience the imperial stage, where managers define themselves by their personal goals and agendas and use the emotions of others to achieve their personal agendas. A graduate in industrial relations, he began his career at the *Ministère de la Justice* (Department of Justice), where he evaluated specific cases relating to staffing and salary and negotiated specific job categories like that of substitute attorneys. Although his position presented him with normative issues, he was already aware of his abilities, and he was already showing a potential for leadership at the institutional level. He was able to take advantage of the responsibilities linked to his work to learn and develop his leadership.

- I remember my first mandate I was at the courthouse in Montréal. They called the mandate « qualitative analysis of human resources ». There was a lot of problems occurring in the working experience but they do not know why. Was it about the competencies? The management? The relationships between employers and syndicate? Between employees or employees and bosses? There was a lot of dissatisfaction and grumbling. I made interviews, we discussed about their work, about their working conditions, etc. Finally, I conclude that the quality of management was the issue. There was a very big problem of management! The direction and orientation were not clear, priorities not or bad identified, etc. In that case, they needed some new managers.

- I worked there, in the research and analysis service, where the first issue was to solve non traditional cases in organisational working. I managed a lot of various and difficult problems.

- I noticed that I had a predisposition to deal with complex situations and to find solutions that complied with the spirit or the letter of the major policy frameworks in the machinery of government but, for that, I had to be imaginative and creative.

- I was always concerned with the big issues. I thought at the time that I would like to make a significant contribution to a particular field, the world of labour relations.

At the time, the *Conseil du Trésor* (Treasury Board) was given the responsibility to manage the human resources of the entire public service in addition to its traditional role of budgetary control. Major rounds of union negotiation were taking place at this time. He became a negotiator for the government. He reached the organizational stage of leadership where the economic issues of governmental organization are important, and where he worked mutually and reciprocally with the other actors : unionists and government ministers alike.

- I found myself, I'm not sure how, at the Treasury Board in 1977. We needed to bring some order to the public service, bring good common sense to labor conditions, reconcile union and employers' interests by taking into account the capacity to pay, with solutions consistent with the value of the work, and avoid having too much distortion between the public and private sectors.

- So quite young, I found myself with weighty responsibilities, and also in some delicate situations. For example, as a Treasury Board employee, I found myself in a position where it was impossible to tell my boss, the president of the Treasury Board, what I was doing, because I was in a secret round of negotiations. (...) And since I am naturally very direct, very frank, I was direct and frank with my boss, the minister in charge of the Treasury Board: "I didn't choose this situation. But I want to assure you that when we have settled everything, you will have all the information. And I hope to convince you that it's a good settlement. But, in the meantime, you have to trust me. If that's a problem for you, speak to the Premier. I can guarantee you, however, that nothing will be accepted by the management without you being informed.

- So, you see, this created some very delicate situations and I wasn't sure of getting out in one piece, at least as regards personal relations. It was very intense!

- These were above all human experiences because we worked with human beings. For example, in negotiation, it's all about the ability to establish relationships with people who have a mandate. We don't start by bringing prejudices to the table, because those people will feel it quickly. We have objectives, they have objectives, so it is about being able to achieve consensus. You have to find a way where you can meet and eventually find a respective advantage in agreeing on something. So, these experiences allow you to develop patience, the ability to listen and to communicate. Then you have to live with the decisions, even if a lot of people become critical: "You gave us this, you did that..."

Here again, he demonstrated an ability to reflect; he understood the organizational issues but also the strategic and ideological ones. He was able to manage the mutuality of his interpersonal relations with the network of actors involved.

- I quickly understood through that experience, that when you rise to the red-folder level, you have to know your files thoroughly, and you must have the moral qualities and good health to be always ready no matter what happens. It made me develop an ethic because in working on strategic files, there are always cases that must be arbitrated, or moments when you are very close to the political powers that you have to convince to do or not do something, or to do this or that. You have to be clear, use simple words and get to the point of your message because those people don't have 5 hours to give you. They need to quickly understand the meaning of things, to quickly understand the issues, all the nuances there might be, because they have decisions to make and because they are accountable for them. Your job is to make recommendations.

- When the minister comes out of the Cabinet and you talk to him about a negotiation issue, he does not necessarily follow your argument, because he has his own common sense logic. He says to you: "Look, maybe you've been working on this for 6 months, but now the situation has changed, it no longer has anything to do with what we wanted to do." So, you have to really keep a cool head, be able to articulate, be disciplined, be a good communicator, be concise. These are qualities that we develop in the heat of action.

Even though his leadership evolved as his responsibilities increased, and he was now acting at a strategic level, he felt the need to work on more day-to-day files. He went back to practicing on an organizational level even though he continued to act strategically when he focused on governance.

- I did that (negotiation) for 7 years. It was an exciting period, but also morally and physically exhausting. It doesn't create a very interesting social life. You work with the Premier, with the president of the Treasury Board, you are in the news every day or every week. It makes for a somewhat artificial world. I felt the need to experience the reality on the ground, as it took place day to day and not in an artificial way like what we had in periods of negotiation.

- Then, I found myself at the *Commission administrative des régimes de retraite et d'assurances* (CARRA –public sector pension and insurance plan administration) as vice-president of administration and development, in particular responsible for public sector pension funds. It was 1984. I managed between 200 and 300 people. That helped me understand management.

- It was important for me that the employees subscribe to the objectives of the organization and that they develop a customer service focus. It was then that I started to be very meaningfully interested in governance, meaning that the administration is required to report to the members of the board of directors who have the power to decide whether to allocate the resources or not, whether to agree with the proposals that you made, or not. When you are president or vice-president, someone has to question your objectives at a given moment; you cannot be the only one to decide what is good or not. That is an exercise in humility that managers at all levels should engage in. It gives depth to things, and keeps you from getting carried away with things, that can prove to be big disappointments once they are put into practice. I stayed at CARRA for 5 years.

Guy Morneau displayed his ability to understand strategic issues, managerial issues and operatory issues alike. In government, he was recognized for his ability to solve complex problems.

- One morning, the telephone rang. It was one of my friends, who had become a deputy minister at the *Ministère des Ressources Naturelles* (Department of Natural Resources): "Come see me, I need you." He offered me the job of assistant deputy minister for public lands... Assistant deputy minister for public lands ... I had been responsible for negotiations and I had managed the public sector pension and insurance plan, what was the connection? I said: "But I don't know anything about that!" And he replied, "That's not what I want, it's not important that you know it. I have a problem, I want you to solve it," and he added, "There are not many people who can solve this problem because it's very complex." It was the reform of the Québec cadastre.

The TOPI model: individual dimension of leadership

This case study illustrates the development of leadership in a senior public servant who throughout his career was able to develop his leadership ability by seizing all the opportunities that were offered him. From the beginning, he showed an institutional type of leadership potential by his preoccupation with making a contribution to the world of labour relations. This indicates that the levels of leadership development do not necessarily correspond to a status, although the position in a given situation can promote the exercise of leadership. In this respect, this case study illustrates the links between the talent of leader (innate) and the occupational position (acquired). This is to say that status is not enough to make a leader, but it is an opportunity for leaders to develop and actualize their practice with current issues, as was the case here. It also means that status does not necessarily guarantee the development of the leader. However, in the case presented here, the progression between the level of practice and the status demonstrates coherence and pertinence between natural leadership ability and the capacity to actualize practice at progressive levels of the issues, which is a sort of ideal type.

This case study led us to adapt Kuhnert and Lewis's model (1987) to propose a new model that takes into account the organized dimension of the individual practice of leadership as a context for applying the individual development of leadership (see Table 2).

Table 2: Individual development of leadership in public management

	Levels of practice	Issues	Subject (purpose)	Object (means)
Transactional	0. imperial	personal	personal goals and agendas	perceptions, immediate needs, feelings
	1. technical	normative	task, structures, economic transaction	normative goals and agendas
	2. organizational	economic	mutuality, reciprocity of roles	task, structures, economic transaction
Transformational	3. political	strategic	public service mission, public institutions	mutuality, reciprocity of roles
	4. institutional	ideological	vision of society, society in the world	public service mission, public institutions

The TOPI model includes five levels of practice, three of which are transactional and two, transformational. The levels of practice presented here are linked to the attitude and conduct

of individuals and not to the status of an individual within an organization. I keep the “imperial” category that I consider as stage 0 of individual leadership, which I retained from the initial matrix. In the case studied, Guy Morneau, never been at stage 0.

At level 1, leaders can differentiate their interests from those of others, and they define themselves by the task they have to accomplish as well as by their role within the structures and their professional activities. They use their professional goals and agendas this time to successfully deal with normative issues—it is the rule that conditions their action rather than their personal goals and agendas as in the previous case. Guy Morneau was at this stage at the beginning of his career (as agent for human resources management in Ministry of Justice - 1974-1976).

At level 2, they define themselves in relation to their role within a network of organized actors (mutuality, reciprocity of roles) and they use socio-technical systems (task, structures, professional activities) to act and successfully deal with economic issues. The meaning of the word ‘organization’ here goes beyond the judicial idea of the term, to include, for example, the inter-organizational functional networks of the actors. Guy Morneau was at this stage of leadership when he was working at the Treasury Board (as responsible for public and parapublic sector’s negotiation -1976-1984). The levels of practice 0, 1 and 2 are transactional.

At level 3, leaders exercise a political level of leadership practice, the word ‘political’ being related to the power to act or to influence organized society. They define themselves by the public service mission to be accomplished and by the public institutions, and they interact on strategic issues through the network of involved actors. Guy Morneau was also at this stage of leadership when he worked at the Treasury Board (1976-1984) and as vice-president of administration and development of CARRA (1984-1989). Like level 4 leaders, they are capable of acting on the basis of a higher common interest and they exercise a transformational type of leadership. At level 4, leaders define themselves on the basis of their vision of society or of their society in the world, and they interact through public institutions or the public service mission.

Interestingly, Guy Morneau had always in head throughout his career a vision at a societal level and a sense public service mission but worked in considering the stakes he had to deal with.

II- From dyadic leadership to collective leadership

In the public sector, the practice of leadership is conditioned by the coexistence of two logics: political and administrative, as I said before. These are two different operating logics in the American literature on leadership that differentiate between political leadership (elected officials) and administrative leadership (managers).

The cadastral reform and collective leadership: case and discussion

This case study features the same senior public servant, Guy Morneau, and illustrates both the need to combine different levels of leadership to successfully handle a strategic file, at the transformational level, and the need to provide leadership at the transactional levels to successfully implement the strategy.

“In 1985, the government authorized the reform: it entrusted the MRNF (Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la faune) with the responsibility of proceeding with the renewal of the cadastre of the territory and ensuring that the cadastral plans are updated regularly.” (Vérificateur général, 2007-2008).

- When I began as assistant deputy minister in charge of the cadastral reform at the Department of Natural Resources (1989-1994), \$50M of the \$87M had already been spent... and there were no results! I like that type of challenge. The file might seem dull, the foundation of all property land rights, but it is important because many economic activities are rooted in these rights. So, if there are problems in this area, there'll be problems elsewhere. Therefore, I tried to undertake the modernization of the Quebec cadastre. It was a colossal operation.

- I started by asking a surveyor: “What is the cadastre?” He gave me the first definition. Then, another surveyor gave me another definition. Well! I saw 3 or 4 who gave me different definitions. Even the Minister of Justice had his own.

- We worked with surveyors and municipalities, who use the cadastre a lot to serve as property assessments for taxation purposes. Many people are affected by the cadastre, for the installation of power lines, for example. Those people needed the assurance that the reform would be done using generally accepted practices. It wasn't a question of going out to survey Quebec and putting pickets everywhere, which is what the surveyors wanted to do. We said that with modern techniques we could use satellite positioning, we could use the existing technology to get measurements and be able to accurately build the cadastral map, to within a few centimetres, which was very important. It made sense to use geomatics.¹

- But I had to convince the land surveyors that the technology had become essential. They were measurement specialists. In the past, when they came to “draw a line” in any country road, they had to cut down the woods to see the post at the bottom and the post at the top. But what good is that, in 10 years when the woods have grown back? They said to us: “It's always been done this way, so we'll keep doing it this way!” I had to use stratagems. They meant well because they had always done their work that way. So, we did a test with some surveyors in the field and surveyors using geomatics. The results were similar to within 30 cm. Geomatics could give probative value to the title deed.

- We were at the beginning of geomatics at the time, and implementing a system like that for the cadastre was equivalent in 1990 to a \$500 million dollar program that would take 15 years with a temporary organization, then a team of 50 to 60 people would manage cadastral maintenance. But we had to pass a law. It was 1990, in the middle of a recession, so you can imagine, a project like that was not very *glamorous* for a minister. “The cadastre is very important, you're right, Mr. Morneau, but it won't get me reelected.” “You're right -- Madam Minister, it won't get you reelected, but it is part of your ministerial responsibilities, and if there are problems with this file, it may give rise to more problems elsewhere in Quebec.”

- We convinced Ms. Bacon, who was minister at the time. We proposed the \$500M cadastral reform project to the government. Everyone said to me: “You'll fall flat on your face, Morneau, they won't find \$500M for that.” I replied that we would solve the problems one by one, that we knew how we would finance everything: users would pay for the rights. It was a fair solution. Finally, we passed the law in the National Assembly, in favour of renewal of the cadastre (R.S.Q., Chapter R-3.1).

- We were innovators and, at the same time, the first to establish a geomatics institute in Quebec. As long as we were spending \$500 million, we were going to enter the 21st century, not stay in the 18st century. Ms. Bacon emphasized the benefits of this decision: “Once the reform is complete, Quebec will assert its role in the protection of land rights.”

“The implementation of these complex information systems will make it possible to develop here an easily exportable expertise both in geomatics and in the cadastral field, and will create interesting openings for Quebec firms on the international market.” (*Le Soleil*, December 19: B3) [translation]. Other countries closely watched what was happening here, in this matter, especially Russia and Switzerland, and Venezuela had already chosen to use Quebec’s expertise and technology (*Le Soleil*, February 28, 1993: B4) [translation]. This episode instilled a huge dose of change in the whole machinery, and particularly in cadastral management. We equipped ourselves to do geomatics and we changed the way all land surveyors in Quebec operate.”

The TOPI model for distributed and strategic leadership

While Mr. Morneau was able to evolve his leadership throughout his career by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the different positions he held, he had always had an institutional dimension that truly expressed itself in this episode : 1) It was an ideological issue linked to geomatics as a new practice, a source of innovation, a competitive advantage for Quebec; 2) and it was a public service mission through both sound and efficient management of the territory (society), and the positioning of Quebec as a leader in geomatics (society in the world). Simultaneously, he used technical leadership in the way he convinced the land surveyors to change their practice by innovating; and he used organizational leadership in his management of the various stakeholders (land surveyors, municipalities and minister, in particular, their respective work, and the economics of the project). He was also able to act as a leader at a political level by utilizing the mutuality and reciprocity of the roles of the different actors (minister, municipality, land surveyors, and others). He had to marshal the different interests into a higher common interest.

He also exercised his institutional leadership by positively influencing the minister (the ministerial institution and the public service mission), who exercised her political leadership: considering the recession, it was strategically important to win the decision-making “battle” in Cabinet for the purpose of sound and efficient management of the territory.”

This part of the case reflects, not only a direct relationships between the hierarchical status and the level of leadership exercised, but, above all, between two adequate practices. The assistant deputy minister assumed an institutional level of leadership in this strategic file while the minister, as decision-making vector in government, assumed a political level of leadership. This does not mean that the minister had not reached an institutional level of leadership on a personal level, but in the conduct of this particular file, it was the assistant deputy minister who assumed this level of leadership while the minister assumed the leadership associated with her status. This does not mean that the minister had not reached an institutional level of leadership on a personal level, but in the conduct of this particular file, it was the assistant deputy minister who assumed this level of leadership while the minister assumed the leadership associated with her status. As institutional leader, the assistant deputy minister was able to understand the stakes at the political and organizational levels of leadership to resolve the problematic.

The epilogue of the cadastral reform case illustrates however that leadership not assumed at the appropriate level of action can have significant consequences, not only in terms of efficiency (costs-resources ratio) but also in terms of effectiveness (quality of the reform in regard to the management of the territory).

Epilogue of the case study

- The audit reveals that there were significant gaps in the planning process, especially in the matter of risk analysis and initial cost estimates. The project was influenced, in part, by competition problems, the reduced number of suppliers (land surveyors) and the quality of some of the work, which contributed to the cost increase and to the extension of the deadlines initially forecast (Vérificateur général, *Rapport à l'Assemblée nationale*, 2007-2008) [translation].

- The cadastral reform, begun in 1992, will cost nearly twice as much as forecast. It was supposed to end in 2006 at a cost of \$508M. But it will end only in 2021, and the cost will likely reach \$980M, noted the Vérificateur general, Renaud Lachance, in his annual report. This situation is attributed to the existence of a "quasi monopoly" among suppliers. Suppliers formed a group and have secured 97% of the contracts since 1994. Since 2000-2001, only one tender each was presented for almost all of the calls for tenders. Renaud Lachance asked Quebec to envisage other approaches to promote competition. (*La Presse*, June 08, 2006: A4) [translation].

- The role of the *Ordre des arpenteurs-géomètres du Québec* (Order of land surveyors of Quebec) [as professional order] is to monitor the quality of the services offered by the province's 972 professionals. The profession is very sensitive to legislative changes. Thus, the reform of the civil code, the cadastral reform, and the laws on the protection or development of agricultural lands, lead the experts to continually reposition themselves on the market. (*Le Devoir*, October 4, 1997) [translation].

- Questions were raised, yesterday, as to a possible collusion between the land surveyor firms that shared approximately one hundred million dollars in contracts for the cadastral reform. "Maybe the land surveyors made their own rules among themselves, I don't know", stated the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Normand Bergeron, before the parliamentary hearing on public administration. "But I know that every time we went to call for tenders, there was only one bidder." (...) Yesterday, in the presence of the Vérificateur général, Liberal and Parti Québécois Members of Parliament questioned public officials for more than two hours on various aspects of the file: cost provisions, risk management, lack of reporting to the Secretariat of the Treasury Board for several years. But the dramatic increase in land surveyors' fees starting in 1998 got the most attention. The hearing's Chair, Rita Dionne-Marsolais, even asked for the list of employees who left the Department of Natural Resources at that time. (...) The *Ordre des arpenteurs-géomètres* explains the situation as being due to the real estate boom in particular. Since the private sector is more lucrative, public contracts are less interesting for firms. (*Le Soleil*, October 19: 6). [translation]

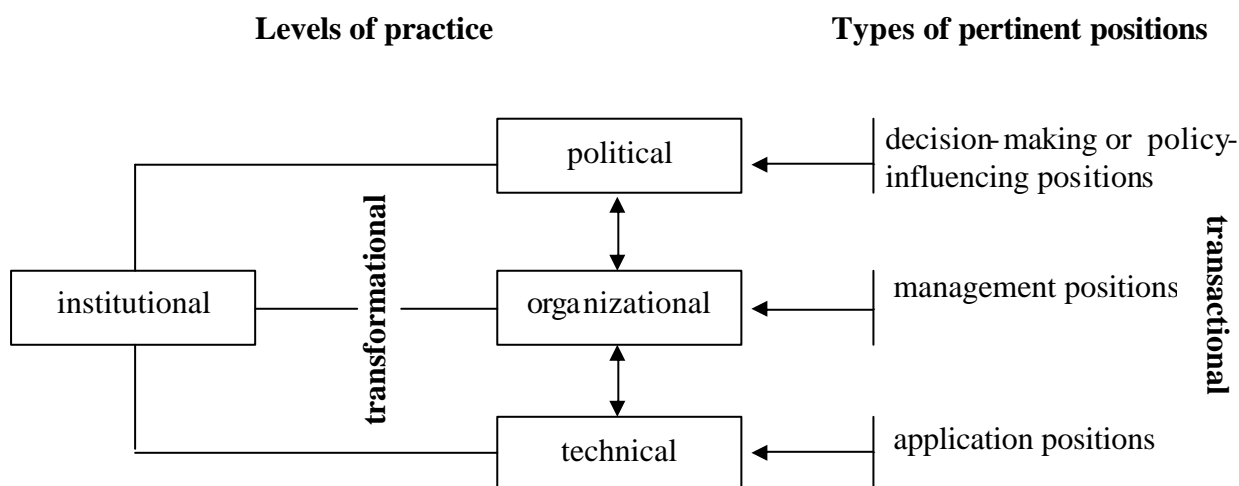
In the initial management of the cadastral reform file, the key leadership practice was transformational (the assistant deputy minister, temporary title of the public servant handling the file, and the minister). After the institutional and strategic challenges were successfully dealt with, the transactional levels of leadership, that is the organizational level, (the

Department of Natural Resources and the Order of land surveyors of Quebec (*Ordre des arpenteurs-géomètres du Québec*), as well as the technical level of leadership (public servants) had to take over and manage the implementation of the cadastral reform by meeting the economic and normative challenges. Yet, we observe that due to the lack of leadership at the organizational level and at the technical level (at the ministry through the standards relating to competition as well as at the Order of land surveyors of Quebec in relation to its members), there was a failure to manage the mutuality and reciprocity of roles between the ministry and the professional order in the management of public funds and the protection of the public in this matter.

For successful leaders at the transactional levels of leadership practice, this would have involved the ability to understand the economic and normative issues as well as the purposes and the means to achieve the strategy. Doubtless the Department and the Order of land surveyors needed to be aware of the overriding stakes of the reform (strategic and ideological) not only from the perspective of successful implementation of strategy and accountability but also from the perspective of individual development of leadership.

Figure 1 illustrates the collective organization of the levels of leadership practice. The levels of political, organizational and technical practice are matched with types of pertinent and interrelated positions at the transactional level (accountability). The institutional level of leadership practice can be exercised at all the levels so long as the individual thinks and acts in regard to the global public service mission, knowing that the different levels of positions held permit the exercise of a descending or ascending influence.

Figure 1: The collective practice of leadership



Admittedly, hierarchy is typical in public management with its hierarchical operating structures. However, in a sectoral or inter-sectoral context where joint action is essential to fulfill the public service mission, the levels of leadership practice are necessary to develop and achieve the sectoral or inter-sectoral strategy. This model therefore applies both in an organizational context and in an inter-organizational context.

Contributions, limitations and avenues of research

This first phase of exploratory study has at least two important contributions. First, it proposes a new model of leadership that takes into account the organized dimension of the individual

practice of leadership as a context for applying the individual development of leadership, here throughout the professional career. Of the debates about leadership reviewed by Van Wart (2003), the innate-acquired debate is irrelevant inasmuch as it is our position that the individual development of leadership (innate) is favored by the position held in an organization (acquired). The position fosters the increase of the influential capacity or the decision-making capacity, paving the way for taking on higher levels of issues. Second, it is a conceptual base to understand the collective and strategic practice of leadership.

Nevertheless, the exploratory and restricted nature of the study does not allow us to generalize the results. However, it does allow us to infer, in this first part, two main research hypotheses with secondary hypotheses in order to be able to generalize the results.

1. Status does not necessarily reflect the individual level of leadership practice. In corollary:

The individual level of leadership to be exercised is linked to the stake of the problematic or situation.

2. The individuals who succeed in developing their individual level of leadership practice over the course of their careers are leaders who understand the different levels of issues, both in a descending perspective and in an ascending perspective. In corollary:

The higher the hierarchical status, the higher the level of individual development of leadership should be, in regard to the management and the successful resolution of key strategic problematics.

3. Leaders who are able to develop their leadership has naturally a sense of vision for society and public service mission as well as public institution. In corollary:

People who are considering only personal issues, who defined them by personal goals and agendas, and use perceptions, immediate needs and feeling to act, don't have any vision of society nor have any sense of public service mission and public institutions.

These hypotheses could be dealt with separately or together depending on the research. A methodology combining questionnaires, case studies, perception studies and life stories could be made use of in various fields of application.

In the second phase, I outlined a particular event, the cadastral reform. I retraced the chronology of events, by identifying the actors involved throughout the events and their respective level of leadership based on the corresponding matrix in the new model. This allowed us to analyse different levels of leadership used, or not, by leaders during the cadastral reform as strategic file. Then I explain the study's contributions and limitations, and suggest future research avenues.

The second exploratory study contains at least three important contributions. First, it enables us to propose a new model of leadership that takes into account the organizational dimension of the individual practice of leadership, here, a collective and distributed leadership at the (inter) organizational level in the public sector. The model compares and contrasts both the individual level of leadership practice and the individual's status or positioning in relation to other actors. The institutional level of practice, with the public service mission focus that it includes, can be found potentially or concretely at all levels of practice. It is the status or the

capacity to influence that enables its actualization in action. Of the debates about leadership reviewed by Van Wart (2003), these results refer principally to strategic alignment (institutional, political, organizational, and technical) as an object of leadership. In corollary, leaders can make a difference to performance by understanding the different levels of issues and by assuming their complementary role.

Secondly, while the results can be applied as effectively in the private sector as in the public sector, the model proves to be particularly relevant in the public sector where this strategic alignment involves leaders who are in complex organizations or in groups of organizations within operating super-structures. The public sector lacks post-bureaucratic models (cf. Josserand, Teo and Clegg, 2006) for its administrative operations and management. This model contributes an empirical understanding of collective and strategic leadership, from which it is distributed (Gronn, 2002) for effective post-bureaucratic management.

Thirdly, the model is an innovative and strategic way for the practice of leadership in the public sector since the legal context of manager's accountability in Quebec.

Nevertheless, the exploratory and restricted nature of the study does not, for the moment, enable us to generalize the results. I therefore propose two main research hypotheses with secondary hypotheses in order to be able to generalize the results.

4. While the transformational levels of leadership practice are necessary to resolve a strategic problem, the transactional levels of leadership must also be activated to effectively and efficiently implement it. In corollary:

To act efficiently, transactional leaders must understand the overriding issues in addition to the issue of level of practice corresponding to their status or to their position of influence.

5. Leadership that is not assumed or is poorly assumed at the appropriate level of the issue is positively linked to the failure of programs, policies or projects. In corollary:

Effective staffing and promotion policies take into account individual level of leadership.

These hypotheses could be dealt with separately or together depending on the cases studied. A methodology combining questionnaires, case studies, perception studies and action research could be used in various fields of application.

Conclusion

In the article, I have first developed a conceptual model of individual development of leadership in the public sector. As to the debate about the best style of leadership to utilize, I infer from these results that it is a matter of aligning the right level of individual development of leadership with the type of position held. The case that I used allowed us to corroborate individual levels of leadership development and to identify three principal research hypotheses and three secondary hypotheses for future studies. I have made this an ideal-type case in the sense that it typically speaking illustrates the individual development of leadership of a manager throughout his career.

The model proposed implies an accountability linked here to the level of leadership development, which could be systematically taken into account during hiring or promotions to harmonize status with an adequate level of leadership practice.

Studies relating to the level of individual development of leadership, in connection with career progression, status, and the management of files, programs, policies or projects are needed to consolidate this conceptual model. I have proposed hypotheses to this effect.

As to the debate about the best style of leadership to utilize, I infer from these results that it is a matter of aligning the right level of individual development of leadership with the type of position held. In this way, other studies to refine the understanding of the model's operating mechanisms when different actors have to assume a collective and distributed leadership could also be conducted. The second section of the article proposes such a study with the case of the cadastral reform in Quebec.

In a second time, the article enabled us to infer a model of collective and strategic leadership. The case presented corroborates the idea that while political and administrative responsibilities cannot or should not substitute for each other, these two levels of public action are consubstantial and reciprocal, meaning that one needs the other to function.

In terms of leadership, complementarity succeeds authority in public management. In the current context of public service transformation, accountability and results-based management, the practice of collective leadership seems necessary to move beyond the traditional Weberian bureaucratic and hierarchical paradigm and to develop post-bureaucratic public organizations. The new research hypotheses that I have identified can be used for other studies linked to the practice of collective leadership and to its management.

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