

CHAPTER 3

Public sector
leadership:
Conditions,
challenges and
avenues

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ABSTRACT

The discussion in this chapter addresses the conditions in which public sector leadership is enacted: The political context, the high pace of change and the conflicting goals and values. Complexity, changeability and ambiguity are important challenges for public sector leaders. On this background, conventional and alternative generic leadership theories are explored, that ask: might these theories help public leaders; further specific public sector leadership theories are explored that question: what these might offer public leaders. The conclusion is that conventional generic leadership theories, for instance transformational leadership, may help public leaders to motivate employees, whereas alternative generic leadership theories such as situational leadership, translation leadership and chaos leadership may help public leaders to handle emerging agendas and new organisational ideas as well as support innovation. Public leaders, however, also need specific public sector leadership theories in order to cope with the hybridity of public organisations. Only through a manifold of leadership theories can the demand about including both contextual, situational and relational elements to good public leadership be ensured.

Keywords: Public sector characteristics, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, translational leadership, chaos leadership, public sector leadership.

INTRODUCTION

“Life is hardly a result of a planned change process” is the first line in the preface of Dag Ingvar Jacobsen’s important book on organisational change, change management and leadership (Jacobsen, 2004:5). Likewise, only in exceptional cases is public sector organisational development a result of rational and instrumentally planned leadership processes. The reality is that public sector leadership is carried out in a manifold, changeable world characterized by ambiguity. Public sector leadership takes place in a political context in relationships with many actors. Public sector leadership concerns both organisational fields, organisations, groups and individuals. In a context like this, there are great demands on leadership. A public sector leader has to master and be able to handle a variety of types and styles of leadership.

This chapter aims, in the spirit of Dag Ingvar Jacobsen’s important contributions to our knowledge on management and leadership, to present and discuss the variety of leadership theories that can help public sector leaders handle different contexts and situations. The discussion draws on both generic

leadership theories, presenting these as relevant for both public and private organisations, and public sector leadership theories developed to offer guidance in the handling of dilemmas in and around public organisations.

In the chapter, the theoretical manifold of leadership theories is used to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the conditions for public sector leadership? 2) To what extent may conventional as well as alternative generic leadership theories help public sector leaders? 3) What may a specific public sector leadership theory offer? The focus is on the Danish societal context, but the discussion is also relevant for comparable countries such as the other Nordic welfare states.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. The first section provides a description of the characteristics as well as the values of the political and organisational context in which public sector leadership is performed. The second section presents conventional, generic leadership theories in the form of classical leadership theory as well as transaction and transformational leadership theories, and discusses what these theories offer in a public sector context. The third section presents alternative generic leadership theories in the form of everyday leadership, distributed leadership, situational leadership, translational leadership and chaos leadership, and it is likewise discussed what these theories may offer in a public sector context. The fourth section focuses on the content of a specific public sector leadership theory, and the last section presents the conclusion and a discussion of the path ahead.

The leadership theories emerged in different historical and national settings and their content was influenced by different societal developments and challenges. Even though these dynamics are interesting to explore, they are not discussed here, neither does the discussion relate to public sector reform trends such as e.g. New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance. These concepts do address leadership and as such could have been relevant. However, they are not included here since they were assessed to be of less use to public sector leaders due to their complex and unclear content.

CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP: SAILING IN A PERILOUS OCEAN

Public sector leadership is carried out in a *political context*. The Danish democracy is manifold both externally in the international context and internally at the national, regional and local levels. At the national level, the political colour may shift in the wake of an election, but many policies are decided on across party lines. Even though regions and municipalities formally have autonomy, many policies are decided in negotiations between the three levels. The yearly

budget negotiations between the government and the respective regions and municipalities are particularly important. These negotiations lay down the economic conditions but in recent years have also established important policies and reforms. To gain legitimacy, politicians and public organisations have to be societally responsive.

There are many voices in society and many *interests*. There are great expectations for problem-solving. The many interested parties, politicians, citizens, users, companies and interest organisations, make demands. The media are almost always eager to talk about the causes of the various groups, particularly in situations where scandals are revealed.

For a long time, steady *change* has been a condition and the pace of change is rapid. Reforms are on-going. A new reform is often decided upon before the previous one has been implemented. School reforms, the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream teaching, rehabilitation into elderly care and the introduction of super hospitals are only a few examples (Greve & Pedersen, 2017). Crises come and go. The financial crisis in 2008 and the succeeding economic crisis institutionalised a perpetual pressure to increase both efficiency and effectiveness, and a new budgetary law decided upon in 2012 introduced a request about strict economic responsibility within the fiscal year (Ghin, 2018; Hansen & Kristiansen, 2018). This context re-vitalised former public sector dynamics related to “irresponsible responsibility” such as planning with stop-go activities, working with buffers in the budgets and, in some cases, the unnecessary use of resources at the end of the fiscal year (Hansen & Kristiansen, 2017). Since 2020, this strict economic regime has been on standby, while the Covid19 crisis makes demands on public organisations’ ability to rearrange activities. Behind the scenes, the climate crisis is waiting to be solved. Public sector leaders constantly have to be aware of changing agendas as well as being able to influence and adapt to these.

The political and changeable context means that goals in the public sector are conflicting, ambiguous and unstable. Goals, tasks and activities are value-laden as they relate to welfare, social development, health, knowledge development, security, climate and infrastructure. Some are even wicked problems, e.g., unemployment, psychic vulnerability and criminality (Busch, 2012). The aim is public value creation through public goods; but at the same time, the tasks and activities are specific. Teaching activities are directed towards pupils and students, health activities towards patients, food safety inspection towards shops, restaurants etc. In this way, public organisations produce both common goods directed at the public-at-large and user-oriented services directed at individual citizens (Blau & Scott, 1963; Antonsen & Jørgensen, 1992). Public sector leaders are expected to recognise both dimensions.

The public sector is diverse when it comes to organising and managing. The typology concerning state models conceptualises this heterogeneous profile (Antonsen & Jørgensen, 1992; Grøn & Hansen, 2014). The typology differentiates between the hierarchical, the professional, the responsive and the negotiating state. In the hierarchical state, the public organisations are neutral implementors of political decisions and in the professional state, autonomous agents of professional skills. In the responsive state, public organisations are directed towards the users by either listening to user expectations, acting as businesses corporations or co-producing with citizens. Finally, in the negotiating state, public organisations are mediators; they mediate interests, negotiate, develop networks and create compromises.

The state models are developed as ideal types. They are not found in an absolute form in real-life organisations. Most public organisations possess characteristics from several models; these are called hybrids (Denis, Ferlie & Gestel, 2015). However, the touch of the individual model varies like the balances between models across sectors and time. The hierarchical state, for example, is very distinct in the employment area where the job centres in local government are strongly controlled by rules. The professional state is very distinct in the educational area, in the cultural area and the law-court area. The responsive state is distinct within public transport as well as within childcare and elderly care, and the negotiating state is distinct within the factory inspection authorities. In the hospital area at the regional level, both the hierarchical, the professional and the responsive state models are distinct. The hierarchical state is manifest, for example, in treatment guarantees, the professional state in research activities as well as treatment decisions and the responsive state in the concept of patient-centred treatment. When several state models are at stake in an organisation, an organisational field conflict may occur, and dilemmas have to be handled. The theory of the state models does not contain an explicit leadership theory, but a leadership theory could be developed. In the section about public sector leadership, I will return to this. Here, a preliminary conclusion is that public leaders should have an eye on which types of state models are at stake and how they balance with their individual context. Likewise, they should keep an eye on how balances are changed across time, for example, due to reforms.

Public organisations are governed by *rules* in the form of legislation and government orders. In that sense, the hierarchical state is an element in all public organisations. Rules may be strong and detailed and make demands on both activities and processes as is the case in the employment area, for example. But rules may also be soft, laying down a framework for activities, for example, the case in the cultural area. For a number of years, public organisa-

tions have, to a great extent, been confronted with demands of implementing *result and evaluation-based forms of control* (Hansen, 2016; Kristiansen, 2019). Result-based control systems have been developed in both hierarchical relations between principals and agents and in more systemic forms, e.g., as benchmarking or accreditation systems covering organisational fields such as hospitals, the universities or the job centres in local government (Hansen, 2013b). To an increasing extent, public organisations are expected to document accountability on a variety of dimensions for a multiple set of actors. Evaluation-based forms of control are not always experienced as meaningful and helpful in the front line (Hansen et al., 2019). In some situations, public leaders experience that the possibilities of undertaking leadership responsibilities are reduced by demands from top leaders or from the external environment. This may be demotivating. Leadership directed upwards may be a solution but also a risky way out, since this may be experienced as unreasonable criticism.

Analyses of the values of public leaders in Denmark have shown that their universe contains both common public values and context-specific values. An analysis focusing on values in core production showed that the most important values were: innovation and renewal, autonomous professional values, responsibility towards society, public oversee and the rule of law (Jørgensen & Vrangbæk, 2013). In addition, context differences were revealed. The rule of law, as well as productivity, were more important at administrative levels than at the institutional levels responsible for core production. Likewise, user orientation, user democracy, and public oversee were more important at local government institutions than in central government.

There are no comparable, more recent analyses. But probably some changes have occurred. First of all, it may be expected that the rights-based regulations, which have been introduced in several welfare fields, have also sharpened the value of the rule of law at the core production level. Treatment guarantees in the health area is one example; the rules about the handling of information in local government about potential problems in relation to children is another. Secondly, as mentioned above, the request for strict economic responsibility within the fiscal year has probably sharpened the focus on budget compliance and productivity.

The public sector characteristics of complexity, changeability and ambiguity challenge public leaders. A context like this needs to be handled, but at the same time it presents possibilities. Public sector leadership is comparable to sailing on a perilous ocean. But remember, real sailors love challenging weather conditions. The following sections contain discussions on the management possibilities offered to public leaders in the manifold leadership literature. The point of departure is conventional generic leadership theories. Subsequently,

alternative generic leadership theories are discussed, and finally, specific public sector leadership theories. The repertoire is rich.

CONVENTIONAL, GENERIC LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The literature on leadership is manifold. Across time, various generic leadership theories presenting themselves as relevant to both public and private organisations have been developed. In *classical organisation theory*, for example “scientific management” (Taylor, 1911) leadership is an instrumental, rational process. Leadership concerns how to design organisations appropriately and how to develop effective procedures and processes. Leaders have clear goals, knowledge about alternative means and the effects of implementing these, as well as the competencies and influence encourage employees to implement leadership decisions in a loyal manner.

In more modern conventional leadership theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), a distinction was made between transactional and transformational leadership. *Transactional leadership* is based on a type of contract between leaders and employees. The core of the theory concerns how to make sure that employees have an interest in contributing to goal attainment. This can be obtained through the systematic use of conditional rewards, monitoring and sanctioning. Rewards that are determined by the efforts and results from employees may be pecuniary or non-pecuniary, e.g., in the form of positive verbal response. Monitoring is linked to sanctions for deviations. Leadership response is activated if efforts and results do not meet what has been agreed upon; these may take the form of critique or reductions in expected incentive earnings or wage increases.

Transformational leadership, on the other side, is a process where leaders and employees foster better performance in each other. The leader seeks to make employees responsible for organisational goals with the aim that their behaviour has to be driven by these. Four ways of conducting leadership are important according to the theory (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Jacobsen, 2017): 1) idealized influence, 2) inspirational motivation, 3) intellectual stimulation and 4) individual care. Leaders are described as persons with a strong and respected charisma. Leaders formulate visions and motivate employees to follow these. Leaders invite innovation and ensure that a good work environment is stimulated, which supports individual employees. The confidence of employees and their loyalty and respect towards the leaders are developed through these processes. Transformational leadership is related to value-based leadership, and leaders facilitate the development of organisational culture.

The different perspectives within conventional leadership thinking all subscribe to the world picture that leadership is a process controlled from the top,

and through the formulation of vision, mission and strategy as well as through organisational design creates followers and results. A metaphor may be the mother duck which crosses the street followed by her ducklings.

In Denmark, a large-scale leadership commission (*Ledelseskommissionen*) working from 2017 to 2018 with analysis and development advice on public leadership, was highly inspired by conventional leadership theory. This is evident in the advice of the commission, especially in the recommendations that “leaders have to set the direction” and “leaders have to set the team” (Ledelseskommission, 2018, p. 7).

Conventional leadership theory has several blind spots. It is a manifestation of myths that do not reflect reality, certainly not the reality in the public sector as it was presented in the prior section. Conventional leadership theory has its focus on individual organisations and especially the relations between leadership and employees. Conventional leadership theory has no explicit comprehension of the organisational environment. It is a closed systems perspective, to use the terminology developed by Scott (1991). This means that there is no conceptualization of processes going on in the relationship between the organisation and the environment, neither in relation to how the organisation adapt to demands and ideas in the environment nor to environmental leadership understood as leadership directed towards e.g. the top management, the political leadership, the citizens, interest organisations, media etc. Conventional leadership theory thus has severe limitations in a public sector context where ambiguity, goal conflicts and political activity steadily challenge instrumental rationality.

Add to this that widespread use of especially transactional leadership risks the promotion of a non-constructive view of organisations and humans. We are all, of course, able to point out situations where actors have conducted themselves in very selfish ways. But if political and organisational leadership practice is anchored in the view that organisations and humans always act in a selfish manner, this kind of behaviour will probably be promoted further.

Even though conventional leadership theory has its blind spots, transformational leadership theory in particular may be useful for public leaders. Transactional leadership, on the contrary, should be administered with caution because it may promote selfishness and risk crowding out intrinsic and public service motivation (Le Grand, 2010). And most importantly, conventional leadership theory cannot be the only approach in the public sector leaders’ toolbox. Public sector leaders need more perspectives on leadership. In the following section, alternatives are discussed.

ALTERNATIVE, GENERIC LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The literature on leadership also offers several theories, which in different ways are alternatives to the conventional theories. These are discussed below.

First, there is the theory about *everyday leadership* (Mintzberg, 2010). Leadership is here seen as a combination of craft, art and a bit of science. This theory is an alternative to conventional theory since it agrees with the myths on which conventional theory is built. According to Mintzberg, it is a myth that leaders are reflective, plan in systematic ways, are dependent upon compiled information and uphold tight control. Furthermore, it is a myth that leadership is mostly about hierarchical relations between a superior and some subordinates. The reality is that leaders work at a hectic pace in fragmented action-oriented processes. Moreover, leaders prefer informal types of communication, and lateral relations among colleagues and employees are just as important as hierarchical relations. Also, control is more subtle than it is open. All in all, what characterizes leadership practice is “calculated chaos” and “controlled disorder” (Mintzberg, 2010, p. 70).

Second, there is the theory about *distributed leadership*. This theory is an alternative to conventional theory because it expands the definition of leaders to include persons other than formal leaders. The core is the idea that a division of leadership tasks between several actors, including actors without a formal leadership position, may contribute positively to performance. Distributed leadership occurs through both delegation of leadership tasks from formal leaders to employees and when employees on their own initiative take on leadership tasks (Bolden, 2011; Jakobsen, Kjeldsen & Pallesen, 2016).

Third, there are theories about *situational leadership*. This group of theories is an alternative to conventional theory since they develop typologies of leadership styles and reflections about the situations in which each style should be used. For example, one typology distinguishes six leadership styles: the authoritative, the visionary, the affiliative, the democratic, the pacesetter, and the coaching style (Goleman, 2000). Leaders who follow the authoritative style give orders and expect obedience. “Do what I say” is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations of crises. Leaders who follow the visionary style show the way ahead by creating direction and mobilizing. “Come with me”, is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations demanding radical change and/or a clear direction. Leaders who follow the affiliative style create relations, harmony and emotional ties. “Humans first”, is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations where there is a need for healing conflicts as well as in stress situations where there is a need to motivate. Leaders who follow the democratic style create binding consensus through involvement. “What is your opinion?”, is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations

where there is a need to build consensus and get input from valuable employees. Leaders who follow the pacesetter style set ambitious goals, go ahead with a good example and render visible the parts of the organisation that create good results. “Do as I do”, is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations where there is a need to create results quickly and where employees are highly motivated and competent. Leaders who follow the coaching style develop human potential through advice and encouragement. “Try this”, is the mantra. This style of leadership is useful in situations where there is a need to help employees to improve performance.

According to Goleman (2000) the visionary, the affiliative, the democratic, and the coaching leadership styles are effective styles with a positive influence on the working climate. These styles build on awareness about other people’s feelings and therefore, are able to move them in a positive direction. The authoritative and the pacesetter styles, on the contrary, have a negative influence on the working climate. They have an in-built risk to create stress, reduce motivation and reduce flexibility. According to Goleman, these leadership styles should, therefore, be administered with caution. In a Danish context, where many public sector organisations are confronted with reform demands and resource scarcity, it seems unrealistic that public sector leaders should be able to treat the pacesetter style with caution. In many situations, the use of this leadership style seems to be a condition.

Fourth, there is the theory about *translation leadership*. This theory is an alternative to conventional theory in two ways. The translation theory focuses on the relations between organisations and their environments and it expands its viewpoint to include persons other than the formal leaders. The core of the theory is that recipes for how to solve problems, manage, organise and also conduct leadership infect like a virus and travel across the country, sectors and organisational borders (Røvik, 2011). When a procedure is put on the agenda in an organisation, whether it happens by force through the law, by advice from an inspection authority or consultants or on its own initiative, it has to be handled through translation (Røvik, 2016). Depending on the extent of the manoeuvre, the procedure may be copied, translated into a locally adapted variant or rejected. If translated into a local variant, this may become transmuted through adding or withdrawing elements from the original idea or through radical alteration. A professional translator needs to have a variety of competencies, including knowledge about the context from which the idea travelled, the content of the idea as well the context into which the idea has to be implemented. Further, the professional translator needs to possess courage, creativity, patience and strength.

Fifth, there is the theory about *chaos leadership* (Grøn, Hansen & Kristiansen, 2014). This theory is an alternative to conventional theory since it fundamentally departs from the idea that rational action is possible for leaders as well as organisations. Due to the fact that processes of change are characterized by emergence and non-linearity, organisations and leaders are confronted with ambiguity and complexity. This has to be handled politically as well as organisationally. Leadership is not about being in front as in conventional theory. Leadership is about being in between to extemporize and create platforms where possible actions can be discussed and where it is possible to create legitimacy for the need for changes (Stacey 2012). In other words, leadership is about showing patience and the will to accept complexity until trustworthy solutions emerge, but also to show courage and strength – in situations where it is not obvious which is the best solution. In addition, leadership is about being at the rear, not getting in the way of development but instead giving room for the playful strategy of the technology of foolishness (March, 1995: Chapter 4). Following the technology of foolishness paves the way for experimentation, acting unintelligently, irrationally and foolishly. Thereby current rules and routines can be cancelled, and organisational learning supported. Doubt has to be a partner, not a taboo in the world of leadership. Leaders should not be held accountable for results but instead for what they learn by experience as well as for what they allow others to learn (Kreiner, 2013).

On the basis of the above, an expanded situational leadership style typology can be developed. This typology was inspired by Goleman (2000) but goes beyond his ideas. First, in a Danish context, the democratic style may be advantageously reformulated to a negotiating and consensus-seeking leadership style. The mantra could be “How do we handle dilemmas together?” Second, three additional leadership styles are presented. They may be termed the shielding (Gjelstrup, personal communications), the translating and the extemporizing leadership style. Leaders following the shielding leadership style protect the organisation and employees from non-meaningful strategies from the outside. “Do not be distracted” could be the mantra. The shielding leadership style may be useful in situations in need of peace and quiet. Leaders following the translation leadership style adapt procedures to the organisational context, thereby implementing them in a meaningful manner. “We’ll do it our own way” could be the mantra. The translation leadership style may be useful in situations in need of creating local ownership to demands from the outside. Leaders following the extemporizing leadership style create platforms for experiments and change. “Let’s try this”, could be the mantra. The extemporizing leadership style may be useful in situations where ambiguity calls for learning by a trial and error approach.

The alternatives to conventional leadership theory, especially situational leadership theory, transaction theory and chaos leadership, are useful for public sector leaders. The alternative theories, to a larger extent than the conventional theories, offer help in handling challenges in a public sector context characterized by manifold changeability and ambiguity. The combination of conventional and alternative leadership theories is, however, not enough to address the challenges faced by public sector leaders. Public sector leaders are in need of more perspectives. Leadership theories are presented below that explicitly address the characteristics of public organisations.

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership has been a classical topic for discussion in the fields of political science and public administration. The division of labour between politicians and bureaucrats and the roles enacted by them has especially been a key question. However, since the 1980s the possible conflict between bureaucratic and political autonomy versus openness towards citizens has also been highlighted. Following these traditions, and based on a survey to agency heads in Norwegian municipalities, Dag Ingvar Jacobsen developed in 1996 a distinction between four municipal leadership roles placed along two dimensions. The classic administrator was characterized by political loyalty but negative towards citizen participation; the autonomous bureaucrat was likewise negative towards citizen participation but self-governing; the political bureaucrat was autonomous but positive towards citizen participation, and the linking pin was politically loyal and positive towards citizen participation (Jacobsen, 1996). Since then, other Nordic researchers have contributed to the endeavour of developing a public sector leadership theory.

Having followed these discussions, my conclusion is that a theory on public sector leadership should include both a contextual, a situational and a relational element. Below, this viewpoint will be elaborated.

Leadership is always carried out in a *context*. As stated above, the contexts in which public sector organisations work are varied. If we take it seriously that good public sector leadership is contextually conscious, we have to develop a public sector leadership theory that can help match the characteristics of a concrete context with appropriate leadership styles (see also Gjelstrup, 2017 for a corresponding argumentation).

In continuation of the state models presented in Section two, it is possible to develop a public sector leadership theory. In the hierarchical state, where public organisations are neutral implementors of political decisions, leadership is carried out from the top and focused mainly on securing that decisions and

rules are implemented in a loyal manner and complied with at the lower levels. In the professional state, where public organisations are autonomous agents of professional expertise, leadership is mainly about supporting and developing professional skills. In the responsive state, where public organisations are attentive to their users and act as corporations and/or co-produce with citizens, leadership is mainly about supporting and developing responsiveness. In the negotiating state, where public organisations are mediators that balance external interests, negotiate and create compromises, leadership is mainly about facilitating dialogue and negotiation processes.

Pedersen (2017: 290), who works with institutional logics and leadership in public welfare organisations, has developed a set of leadership styles. The leadership style in the bureaucratic state logic is the “loyal public servant” and the leadership style in the professional state logic the “appreciating and supporting leader”. As a parallel to the responsive state, Pedersen distinguishes between the market and corporation logic on one side where the leadership style is the “businessman” and on the other side the logic of the local community where the leadership style is the “networker”.

The theories on state models and institutional logic both build upon the idea of hybrid organisations (Denis, Ferlie & Gestel, 2015). Typical, there are multiple state models and institutional rationalities at play in a concrete organisation. For Pedersen, this means that public sector leaders have “to pack” and “to repack” leadership styles. Furthermore, a meta-leadership style: “the style packer”, becomes important.

Another related contribution to a public sector leadership theory has been developed by Klausen (2020) in his version of a theory on hybrid leadership. A hybrid leader is a professional (e.g., a teacher, nurse or doctor) who has acquired more general knowledge about how to organise and execute leadership as an add-on to professional knowledge. But hybrid leadership is not only about leadership education; leader identity is important as well. A public sector leader acknowledged for a high degree of specialized professional knowledge, with well-developed leadership skills as well as leader identity, is a real hybrid leader.

According to the theory (Klausen, 2020), hybrid leaders are more successful than generalist leaders in professional organisations. First, they understand the professional logic. Second, they have legitimacy due to the acknowledgement of their professional skills. On the contrary, it may be difficult for a generalist leader to build legitimacy in a professional organisation. Hybrid leadership is important in the public sector because very many public organisations have characteristics from the professional state model. Further, hybrid leaders have advantages as bridge-builders across central and decentral levels as well as across political, hierarchical and user logic on the one side and professional logic and

culture on the other. Hybrid leaders are able to read and interpret the agendas and to act in the different rationalities dominating different levels and actors. An interesting analysis of these dynamics comparing leaders in Norwegian universities and hospitals is found in Berg & Pinheiro (2016).

Further, a theory about public sector leadership should include a *situational* perspective. A crises situation calls for another leadership style than what ordinary operations requires. And the implementation of a politically-decided radical reform calls for another leadership style than the implementation of self-initiated innovation. Here Goleman's (2000) leadership styles, as presented above, are helpful. Goleman's perspective is, as mentioned, generic and focused solely on internal relations between leaders and employees. A public sector leadership theory should include a view of the importance of external leadership. In these Covid-19 health pandemic times, it has become very visible how the handling of a wicked societal problem calls for coordinating leadership across a range of public sector organisations vertically and horizontally as well as across the borders of the public and private sector.

Finally, a theory about public sector leadership should include a *relational dialogical* perspective. A well-developed social intelligence is a precondition for a leader to be able to read the environment and, on this basis, handle group-wise and individual relations in the interactions with employees, citizens, politicians and other groups. Relational building is a precondition for leadership legitimacy, but it is demanding and easily eroded. Once more, generic theory (e.g., transformational leadership and Goleman) is helpful, but again these theories need an add on in relation to the external environment. Well-developed external relations may support the diffusion of ideas and experiences, in Røvik's (2011) perspective, the travelling of the virus. By this, public sector leaders may be inspired to do constructive translational work.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it has been shown how Dag Ingvar Jacobsen has contributed to both conceptualisation of and empirical knowledge on leadership in general, as well as to knowledge on leadership in the public sector, especially in local government. In addition, it has been argued that there is still a need to further develop an explicit theory on public sector leadership. This has been done by discussing the conditions for public sector leadership and from there to go on discussing whether conventional generic leadership theories and alternative generic leadership theories may be helpful for public sector leaders. Table 3.1 sums up the characteristics of the leadership theories discussed.

TABLE 3.1: Overall picture of leadership theories discussed.

| Overall types of leadership theories | Specific leadership theories | Key content and focus points |
|---|---|--|
| Conventional, generic leadership theories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership classic • Transactional leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational design, process efficiency • Contracts, conditional rewards, monitoring, sanctioning |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformational leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility towards organisational goals, motivation, stimulant, care |
| Alternative, generic leadership theories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday leadership • Distributed leadership • Situational leadership • Translation leadership • Chaos leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation, controlled disorder • Delegation • Context chosen leadership roles • Adaption of solutions to local environments • Extemporizing, playing, giving room for creativity |
| Public sector leadership theories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State models and institutional logics • Hybrid leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling of multiple, public sector leadership styles • Combining professional expertise with leadership competence and identity |

In the public sector, leadership complexity, changeability and ambiguity are important challenges. These challenges are grounded in the political context, the many actors and interests, conflicting, ambiguous and unstable goals and a high reform speed. Conventional generic leadership theory, primarily transformational leadership theory, may help public sector leaders to motivate and support the development of employees. Alternative generic leadership theories, especially situational leadership, translation leadership and chaos leadership, may also help public sector leaders in their support of employees. In addition, these theories may be helpful when new organisational ideas have to be handled as well as in relation to creating innovation and try out experiments in order to cope with complexity and ambiguity.

However, there is also a need for a specific public sector leadership theory that can help in coping with conflicts and dilemmas stemming from the hybridity of public organisations. Here the state models, institutional logics and the enclosed leadership styles are fruitful frameworks, and the same goes for the theory of hybrid leadership. Only through such a manifold of leadership theories

can the demand to good public sector leadership about including contextual, situational and relational elements be ensured.

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