Researching Public Leadership, Entrepreneurship & Innovation: Examining Theoretical Assumptions and Methodological Challenges

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My talk will draw on a wide literature but you may be interested in the following references

**Published**


**To be published in the next three months**

**Chapter**-Liddle J (2016) Public Value Management & New Public Governance: key traits, issues and developments, chapter in Ongaro E and Van Thiel. S (2016) The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe, page numbers to be advised


**Special edition**-(June 2016) Regions 302- on Urban and Regional Leadership, Editors-Liddle, Gibney, Sotaurata and Beer-based on RSA Research Network outputs
Underlying arguments of this presentation

I want to convince you in the course of this presentation that pre-existing views of leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation are based on three false assumptions:

- **Assumption 1**
  Public Sector is still (largely)Weberian, hierarchical, and ‘top down’ - is it?

- **Assumption 2**
  The world of business always offers good practice models and insights into the phenomena

- **Assumption 3**
  Private sector models are easily adapted to Private Sector contexts & situations - are they?

AND

I want to argue that emulating or importing ‘good practice’ from the commercial and business worlds might be a mistake, given the Global financial meltdown and continuing market volatility
Structure

1. Changing context-new PS Logics

2. Outdated Leadership Models

3. Research into Public Sector Leadership

4. Public Sector Entrepreneurship & Innovation

5. Conclusions and Q and A
Traditional Public Administration

New Public Management

Public Value Management

New Public Governance

Over time
MOVING FROM Top Down

Mechanical machinery of Government
- Levers of power
- Chain of Command
- Cogs in machines

More suited to Industrial age of standardised products, Mass production, assembly lines

Towards

Co-produced

Organic systems ECO-sphere & Whole Public Service System
- Flexible
- Organic
- Emergent
- Coherent
- Co-ordinated
- interactions

Living, evolving & adapting to environments

Influences

Weberian, rigid, reductionist, Inflexible, top heavy Mechanical chain of cause & effect

Adapted from Hartley & Benington
Public Value = What brings value/ Satisfaction to Stakeholders

- User Value
- Value to wide stakeholders
- Value to wider society
- Environmental Value
- Social value (Aids cohesion)
- Political value (serves Democracy)

Mark Moore
How to utilise INTANGIBLE ASSETS
R&D, software, brand, Design, Human Resources, organ’l capacities

How to invest in INTANGIBLE ASSETS
R&D, software, brand, Design, Human Resources, organ’l capacities

How to Link SUPPLY CHAINS (suppliers, providers, partners) Within WIDER INNOVATION ECO-SYSTEM

How can ‘intangible’ assets in the supply chain be augmented to add Public Value?

How is ‘Value’ being added to all processes?
How can services be aligned to AGREED Public Value Outcomes and Impacts? (Agreed by all stakeholders)
Who is a Leader?
Leadership research historically

1930s  Great Man Theory - not Great Women!!

1960s  Traits Theories

1970s  Behavioural Theories

1970s  Situational/ Contingency Theories

1980s  Transactional

1990s  Transformational

2000s  Adaptive, reflective, enabling

Distributive, Collective, shared, ethical, value-based
Leadership of Social Movements

Toxic Leadership

Both focused on **Accountability** of Leadership

RSA Research Network
(Sotaurata, Liddle, Diamond, Beer, Gibney, Horlings, Potluka et al)

How to explore leadership within varied contexts (spatially) in places and relate the varieties of leadership with variegated (diversified) experiences

What shapes spatial leadership (e.g. levels of autonomy, resources, role of higher authority)?
Researching Leadership

Thousands (if not more) of definitions of the concept
Topic of research and debate for centuries, no agreement on how to define or research it
201 million web pages on the topic
6 million books on Amazon

No real evidence that Leadership makes any difference at all to performance

Retrospective analyses that introduce superficial causal links between performance and leadership practices-lots of stories of success and War Stories ‘How I turned the organisation around’

Based on heroic leaders-mainly men and their traits, characteristics, behaviours, etc
Researching Leadership

- Over-simplification of patterns and interactions between leaders
- Hidden aspects of power
- The systemic nature, rather than personal characteristics of leadership
- Though acknowledging the need for catalysts, conceptualisers, connection makers, sense makers
- Its a shared process-path dependency, history, developing networks, trust
- Socially embedded process
- Too much linearity and dependence on a ‘super hero’ type of leader (mainly men !!!)
The Field of Management Research

Discipline Base
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Economics
- Anthropology
- Politics

Sub-Fields
- Organisational Behaviour
- Design & Learning
- HRM
- Leadership
- Public Administration
- Public Sector Management

Geography
- Complexity Theories
- Operational Research
- Accountancy And Finance
- Strategy
- Entrepreneurship/SMEs
- Innovation
- Marketing Operations Management
- Industrial Relations

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Researching Public Leadership

THREE MAIN FORMS OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

- Civic
- Political
- Bureaucratic/Administrative

OR A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE

(there are others such as managerial, professional, technocratic)

There is a massive multi-disciplinary literature but confusing and contradictory
3 ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**STRUCTURES**
- Structures
- Institutions
- Organisations
- Partnerships
- Networks

**PROCESSES**
- Processes-individual or collaborative?

**PEOPLE**
- People/Agency-individual
  - Or collaborative/constellations?
  - Associational?
  - Rotational?

**Focus**
- Unit of analysis?
- Top down or bottom up?
- Hierarchy or emergence?
- Formal/Informal?

**Focus**
- Political, social, administrative, accountability, managerial, PV Stream Analysis supply chain?
- Spaces between state/non-state jurisdiction?

**Focus**
- Leaders/followers?
- Stakeholder engagement?
- Key roles? Who does what?
Elites

Power Elite
C Wright Mills
Corporations, Military and Government
In society

Reputational Power
Hunter - who makes decisions in society
Listed 175 people, looked for top 40 leaders-snowballing

Classic Elite Theory
Pareto & Mosca
A select group intellectually superior to the masses

Oligarchy
Michels - elites spend time maintaining their position

Who Governs?
Where does power lie
Dahl

Weber’s Theory
Of Authority
Up until the 1990s

Research into leadership was unremarkable and methodologically disappointing

Findings had limited utility and some researchers believed that the concept should be abandoned altogether

Most research was quantitative and of little value—conducted by social psychologists (focused on experimental designs) rather than sociologists and organisational theorists

Since 1990s

Improved measurement & analytical techniques

Greater use of meta analysis and systematic review of evidence

Huge surge of interest in transformational and charismatic leadership

Better cross-cultural studies

Diversity in types of leadership research—still dominated by questionnaires

Need more qualitative, interpretive and inductive approaches
Traditional ways of researching Leadership—some problems

Which variables to use
Which traits, characteristics, parts of the history or story

Cause and effect—which variables affect others?

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES—ARE FIXED** (age, rank, income, education)

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE** (political choices, abuse of power, changes to leadership structure)

**EXPLANATORY VARIABLES**
Personality, cognitive styles, early childhood, birth order, inner drives/motivation, personal value system
More innovative methods of researching Leadership

Methods of analysis beyond interviews/case studies/ focus groups

OR Critical Incidences/Key Informants

Ethnography - long term tracking

Visualisation - Story telling & Story boarding

Experimentation

Journey mapping

Direct observation

Brainstorming and design skills

Biographical analysis

Stakeholder engagement models

Social network analysis

Appreciative Enquiry

U Theory

Action research of matched pairs of leaders

Co-produced research

Use of social media

Qualitative interviewing

Focus groups

Language-based approaches: conversation analysis; discourse analysis

Collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents
Leadership Research can build on existing research and fill some gaps in knowledge

State architectures are being transformed to achieve overall strategic objectives, with central and local state providing leadership and direction (more steering than rowing) & a series of complex, formal and informal overlapping networks taking the place of discrete, territorial places and control, Papadopoulos, 2007

Geographic connectivity-multiple socio-spatial forms, patterns and meanings, within tangled, overlapping, dispersed scalar mosaics/networks in conjunction with other socio-spatial structuring such as place making, localisation, contacts (leadership?), distancing, network formation and so on Terkelin, 2005

Economic institutions, social interactions and politics shape development-codified knowledge, social capital (leadership?-my emphasis here), institutional capital, tacit knowledge, space and proximity all add to ‘untraded inter-dependencies’ Storper, 2013

Implementation networks are situated at regional or local level but boundaries do not converge with administrative delineations-in that sense they are ephemeral and based on function, Conzelman, 2008

Can Leadership fill the ephemeral gap?

Can leadership be the missing ingredient that explains why some urban and regional places grow, and others decline?
A New Paradigm?

- Understand both POWER & INFLUENCE
- Importance of history
- Combining Processes and outcomes
- Move away from Organisational specificity & individual leadership research
- Involve stakeholders in co-producing research
- Not rely on Leadership models from Private sector
- How to research Social Embeddedness?
- Location for research-entrefée Access?
- How knowledge, innovation & design shape places
- Innovative Research design & methods
Future Leadership research needs to be more **systematic and systemic** on:

- **Process and outcome issues** - new methods of evaluation?
- **Longitudinal research** - to capture temporal aspects and history
- **Comparative research on**
  - Individuals
  - Organisations
  - Networks
  - Projects
  - Collaborations
- **Knowledge and innovation systems**
- **Capturing formal and informal connections** (hidden aspects)
- **How capacities are built up over time**
- **Identify how places are influenced by socio-economic and political models**
- **The links between**
  - Institutions
  - Governance structures
  - People
Who are the leaders? Not pre-selection but emergence
Do they make a difference, and how?
Is it an illusion that leaders shape and design places?
How are strategies developed, resources deployed and power systems developed?
How do leaders learn to be leaders?

Formal and informal aspects of leadership-identifying those leaders who lead processes into unchartered territory
Prismatic Ecology Theory of Public Administration

**Methodologically**

By adopting biological and ecological methodologies to emphasise the interactions of administrations with their environments.

It was his attempt to bring together:

- **STRUCTURE**
- **PROCESSES**
- &
- **AGENCY (PEOPLE)**

Based on the view that society and its organisations are organic and evolving, so we need to account for:

- History, ideology, value systems, social structure, economy, political symbols, allocation of power, heterogeneity, overlapping jurisdictions, level of formalism/informalism

TO APPRECIATE

**Social Transformation**
In Urban and Regional Leadership research we need to assess the wide range of theories available in the multiple disciplines outlined earlier, and either arrive at an amalgam/composite conceptual/theoretical approach or adopt a Grounded Theory approach and appropriate methodological design & research methods, thus to:

- Identify critical variables/topics for investigation
- Look for patterns of correlation rather than causality
- Acknowledge any causal inferences

Riggs’ framework can be used as a guide to key categories eg which traits, characteristics, parts of the history or story, environmental/context factors – key variables/categories to adopt

Acknowledge that our research differs from previous ‘Leadership research’ which was ‘organisationally bounded’ and focused on the ‘individual leader’

It may have flaws, as indeed all qualitative research has, but should not negate current and future research
Leading entrepreneurship & Innovation/Design in Public Sector
Historically

- Re-inventing Government movement from the USA
- Downsizing-Reducing the Size of Government
- Re-engineering, Re-imagining
- Quality models borrowed from manufacturing (TQM, Quality Circles etc)
- Market testing-Best Value, Better Govt- Total Place
- Privatisation-PPP-PFIs
- Innovative solutions to social problems
- Lean PS
- NPM-PVM-NPG
- Co-production
- Transforming places (Porter)

- Plus many others I have forgotten about !!!!!
Pollitt (2012) urged scholars to develop multi-disciplinary explanatory frameworks to explain innovation and entrepreneurship in the PS-embedded in daily routines, rituals and practices.

A key problem for public managers/leaders is that research and practice is ‘locked’ in and they rarely have time to reflect on how innovative/entrepreneurial they have been.

But lots of evidence of being as innovative, if not more so, than commercial counterparts.
Lots of examples

- Urban/City entrepreneurship
- Community/social enterprise
- Female/ethnic/ageing entrepreneurs
- Rural Entrepreneurship
- Social enterprises
- Entrepreneurial Government
- Bureaucratic entrepreneurs
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Enterprising Places
- Enterprising cities
- Enterprising regions
- Experiential Cities
- Creative Cities-Florida R
- Services, Tourism, Sports, Arts-Myserscough
Public Sector Innovation

OECD Oslo Manual on Public Innovation

The implementation of new or significantly improved product, service or process, new marketing or organisational method, business practice, workplace organisation or external relations

- Novelty-relative to context
- Implementation-not just an idea
- Impact-better public results

DEMAND FOR INNOVATION
- Meaningful and valuable

- CONCEPTS
- TECHNOLOGIES
- TECHNIQUES
- METHODS
- FORMS
- SYSTEMS
- PROCEDURES
March 2000
EU Lisbon Strategy

- To make the EU the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy in the WORLD, for sustainable growth, better jobs, social cohesion and respect for the environment

- Innovation
  - is the main driver for economic change
'European Regions need different mind sets, new slogans of growth, new stories of success, and very different recipes—different strategies for different regions'

A different mix of strategies, appropriate to that region (eg manufacturing, services, infrastructure, innovation, human resources, knowledge transfer, absorption of new ideas)
Why innovate?

- Need to reduce costs, enhance performance, strengthen the organisation
- Remain competitive-globally PS not productive
- Be adaptable to changing social, economic, political and environmental changes
- Breath new life into organisations- what will a future PS look like?
- Bring in a new creative culture
- To attract high quality, creative managers
Innovation

- Is a concept not a concrete entity-no real agreement on what it is
- Across the world all governments have Innovation Units-normative – ‘it is a good thing’
- It is not new-50 years of government innovation
- Awareness in the 1970s that governments must re-invent itself (Quality movement, Osborne and Gaebler’Entrepreneurial Government, Re-engineering)
- Novel use of IT and WEB to innovate citizen engagement- e-government?
Innovation

- Growth in academic literature
- Need to ‘add public value’
- NUDGING citizens into behaviour change
- Improving decisions about health, wealth, happiness
- Create social architecture and desired behaviour for innovation and transformation

- It is not exclusive to the private/commercial sectors
- Innovation is risky—are civil servants ‘risk averse’?
- Who owns the property rights on public innovation—in the commercial world patents protect property rights
- Accelerated by fiscal austerity
- Need for smarter interventions/outcomes/impact focus
- Rising expectations and less funding
Innovation

- Needs an institutional environment with governments, companies, non state agencies learning, developing and sharing knowledge to create a ‘knowledge economy’
- Walker (2000) Innovations needs changing boundary relationships to work with external partners- this could be more important that the innovation product itself

- Public Sector Innovation- Governments can play a role in establishing the conditions for change within NETWORKS for change
- Government agencies can deal with societal challenges, or ‘wicked issues’ that NO ONE AGENCY can solve alone (eg crime, climate change, terrorism)
Innovation

Governments must decide

- WHICH INTERVENTIONS
- WHICH POLICY TOOLS
- WHICH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
- NEW FRAMES OF REFERENCE

How can Governments interact with citizens/ companies/private businesses etc?

- The role of politics and politicians?
- Who has legitimacy/is accountable?

Creating new networks for Innovation

- Internal
- External
- Who are the innovators?
- Network operators
- Network champions-connection makers
- Network promoters- has the authority and legitimacy to make things happen
- Creative thinkers-how to encourage them?
- Vision keeper-individuals who want to drive the innovation
Innovation

- Linking capacities within a milieu of innovation (WHERE IDEAS COME FROM)

- Needs openness, variety
  (HOW IDEAS CAN FLOW)

- Building trust and social capital, strong inter-relationships, strong leadership and boundary spanning between sectors of the economy

KEY QUESTIONS

- How can public innovation link capacities to create meaningful interactions between
  GOVERNMENT
  MARKET
  SOCIETY

- How can correct MECHANISMS BE PUT IN PLACE FOR INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE TO FLOW?

- How can innovation be assessed?

- Are new innovations efficient?
How to Link
INTANGIBLE ASSETS & SUPPLY CHAINS
(suppliers, providers, partners)
Within WIDER INNOVATION ECO-SYSTEM

+ 

Needs critical boundary spanners to link people, ideas, resources, and build innovative networks

Innovation
The UK NHS as an example

Public sector worker more likely than Private sector to be employed in knowledge intensive industries Qualified to degree/Masters levels Tasks that are knowledge intensive

SO PUBLIC SERVICES ARE A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY INDUSTRY
In the UK-an estimation of 50 billion pounds of INTANGIBLE ASSETS

NHS
How does it link with private sector? How are new products, services introduced? Who decides on innovative products, processes etc? Does it involve users, patients, suppliers of medical equipment in designing new Products? What research goes into design? Where is the knowledge/Intangible assets? How is knowledge exchanged? Joint ventures in care- Who evaluates?
De Vries, Tummers, Bekkers, 2015
Innovation in the PS: A systematic review and future research agenda

**Innovation Types**

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<th>Innovation Types</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Process Innovation- Administrative or Technological</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Product or service Innovation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Governance Innovation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptual Innovation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
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</table>
Identify who are the innovators

How/why innovators are different to non-innovators?

Are the systems in place to encourage innovation?

Do existing mechanisms facilitate KE and ability to draw info together?

Where are the blockages?

Traditional project management tools inadequate to measure innovation?
In the following 2 slides- a quick synopsis of the chapters in

Liddle (2016) Public Sector Entrepreneurship-
publication date June

To illustrate new approaches to PS innovation and entrepreneurship
State works with private sector to develop ‘service tanks’ and business models for value accumulation between state and private sector-innovation is a joint venture

LAs use sponsorship (financial and otherwise) to add PV-Newcastle CC-novel way of adding PV

Innovation flourishes with a recognition of PS educational values of legality, common good, accountability, integrity etc

**Bricolage** in bringing together scientific knowledge, top-down with bottom up generated knowledge-Nigeria

- Leicester CC as animateur, regulator and entrepreneur to use Culture And Heritage to build infrastructure, develop networks, seek legitimacy and bring in private/civic agencies to drive transformation-innovation is multi-faceted-not just about individuals

- Glasgow CC USED Commonwealth Games to re-imagine the city and developed multi-scalar, multi-agency strategy and governance to leave a legacy and created ROI-innovation is strategic and long term
Longitudinal ethnographic analysis of innovation in local communities to uncover embedded narratives on negotiation-to give voice to marginalised groups—innovation can not be top down.

Challenge to Neo-cassical Liberal assumptions on innovation eg profit, perfect markets, homogeneity and competition—in rural areas is different-based on collaboration and need to balance social and commercial values.

FRS NW-how FRS staff used earlier novel approaches on safety and community engagement to bid for, and win a project to integrate Eastern European migrants—they had novelty AND worked out how far beyond their existing authority levels they could go.
In summary

Plurality of inter-relationships between state, non-state and civic agencies/agents—state still regulator and has legitimacy

Outdated Leadership Models based on management science models that are ‘organisationally specific’ and ‘individualised’ so don’t accommodate the reality of urban & regional contexts or multi-agency partnerships

Existing innovation and entrepreneurship research based on individuals and products—not collaborative processes

Urgent need to theorise these new relationships/contexts and develop methodologies and new categories

Many obstacles to innovation in PS (risk taking, power, accountability, who owns the innovation—its not like taking out a patent on a new product, shared ownership, common good?)

My plea is to move away from theories/methodologies developed for private sector research and inappropriate for the complexities of public sector research
A final quote from Klein et al (2014)

‘public organisations are usefully analysed as entities that create and capture value in both the private and public sectors, as the public sector can act entrepreneurially by creating or leveraging bundles of capabilities to shape subsequent entrepreneurial action. This involves complex interactions among public and private actors, and co-evolutionary processes’.
The Institute for Public Policy & Professional Practice (I4P)

This lecture was promoted by the Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice, Edge Hill University’s cross-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange initiative. The Institute is committed to exploring the opportunities for cross sector collaboration and co-operation and to draw on the experience of practitioners as well as academic researchers to inform new ways of working and learning.

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