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Developing Public Leaders in an Age of Collaborative Governance

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ABSTRACT

Leadership development in the public sector needs more of an emphasis on collaboration. Today's public leaders must be effective boundary-crossers, working in partnership with organizations across jurisdictional and sectoral boundaries. This paper identifies some key competencies of collaborative leadership that go beyond those already identified for organizational leadership. The purpose is to offer a starting point for discussions of how public leadership development efforts should be augmented in order to reflect the reality of collaborative governance. Important competencies for collaboration include personal attributes such as systems thinking and sense of mutuality; skills such as strategic thinking and group facilitation; and behaviors such as stakeholder identification and strategic issue framing. Developing collaborative behavioral competencies requires an inside-out approach that goes beyond learning tools and addresses the fundamental personal attributes that facilitate collaborative action.

Introduction

“Collaboration,” “collaborative governance,” and “collaborative public management” have become central to the language of public administration. A casual review of recent public administration literature in journals such as *Public Administration Review* and the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* finds dozens of articles about collaboration and network management. The theme of the 2007 conference of the American Society of Public Administration was “Monumental Possibilities: Capitalizing on Collaboration.” Indeed, a paradigm shift is taking place in public administration. The image of public administration as Weberian hierarchy is giving way to an image of the interorganizational network; an emphasis on command-and-control is being eclipsed by collaborate-and-connect. This, of course, is not unique to public administration but is rather part of larger global trends that transcend sector and place (Friedman 2005).

So what does all this mean for public leadership? What does public leadership—as practiced¹ by public managers—mean in this age of collaborative governance? What competencies should be at the forefront in efforts to develop collaborative public leaders? Does a collaborative context require additional or enhanced competencies, or are standard organizational leadership competencies sufficient?

Historically the field of public administration has paid too little attention to the topic of leadership (Terry 2003; Fairholm 2004). This is particularly true for interorganizational leadership in the public sector. Most contemporary treatments of public leadership (research and professional development) emphasize *intra*organizational leadership (e.g. Behn 1998; Terry 2003; Van Wart 2005). In other words, the focus of leadership development in public administration today is on *leading organizations*. However, today’s public managers “often must operate across organizations as well as within hierarchies” (Agranoff and McGuire 2003, 1), meaning organizational leadership, while necessary, is not sufficient. We must now consider how to develop collaborative or *inter*organizational public leaders.

In the pages that follow I highlight contributions from research on collaborative leadership (mostly from civic and private sectors) and collaborative public management, to consider what personal attributes, skills, and behavioral competencies are needed for public leadership in a collaborative context; for leadership across boundaries. I begin with a brief discussion of the concept of collaborative governance, follow with the research on collaborative management and leadership, and then highlight competencies that seem to stand out as being different from those identified for organizational leadership.

Collaborative Management and Governance

The recent special issue of *Public Administration Review* on “Collaborative Public Management” (December 2006) highlights a somewhat dramatic shift in emphasis away from the management and leadership *of* public organizations to management and leadership *across* organizations. A focus on hierarchy is giving way to a focus on networks and other forms of interorganizational partnerships. O’Leary, Gerard, and Bingham (2006) define collaborative public management as

...a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations. Collaborative means to *co-labor*, to cooperate to achieve common goals, working across boundaries in multisector relationships. Cooperation is based on the value of reciprocity. (7)

This understanding of collaborative public management grows out of a larger stream of scholarship on an expanding, if still muddled, notion of governance.

The term governance has come to be understood by many as the subject of public administration. Generally speaking, it is a term to describe how the public's business is accomplished. The so-called "steering of society" is viewed as a collective accomplishment of many actors—public and private—as opposed to a traditional view that equates governance with government. Frederickson and Smith explain that governance "refers to the lateral and interinstitutional relations in administration in the context of the decline of sovereignty, the decreasing importance of jurisdictional borders, and a general institutional fragmentation" (2003, 222). Agranoff and McGuire explain "governance as involving multiple organizations and connections that are necessary to carry out public purposes" (2003, 21).

Growing out of this broad understanding of governance is a call for collaborative governance, or rather, a recognition that effective governance is the product of collaboration. Collaboration includes the variety of ways public organizations work across boundaries. Crossing organizational, jurisdictional, and sectoral boundaries has always been part of public management and governance, but the recent emphasis on collaborative governance and collaborative public management recognizes that the frequency of such interorganizational efforts has dramatically increased and is likely to continue to increase. Further, there is a growing normative preference for collaborative efforts that transcends philosophic orientations. Indeed, collaboration is at the center of New Public Management (Kettl 2005) as well as the alternative, critical perspective that has been named New Public Service (Denhardt and Denhardt 2003). While the former may emphasize market values and the latter community values, both in practice correspond with an increased focus on networks, partnerships, and collaboration.

All this is not to say that hierarchy and intraorganizational leadership are no longer important. On the contrary, it is likely that working effectively in an interorganizational environment requires even more of intraorganizational management and leadership. At the very least, research on networks finds public managers still spend most of their time "working within the hierarchy." Agranoff's study of public managers across fourteen "public management networks" revealed that "there is a premium on the ability to understand and function across boundaries, but this skill has not necessarily replaced the need for internal skills" (2006, 57).

But the context of public management clearly is changing. Boundaries are more permeable, and "network" seems to better describe the operational environment of today's public manager than does "hierarchy." We live in an age of collaborative governance, where the so-called "steering of society" is now, more than ever, a process that includes the public, private, and civil sectors together, and not simply a monolithic public sector.

Collaborative Leadership

The research on collaboration, particularly collaboration for public purposes, is very consistent in recognizing the significant role of leadership in the success or failure of collaborative endeavors. Linden's study of collaboration in government and nonprofit agencies led to his conclusion that "leadership makes a huge difference" (2002, 146). Similarly, Jeff Luke (1998), following the work of Crosby and Bryson (2005), finds that in today's interconnected world, public leadership—which he distinguishes from organizational and public sector leadership—is essential. Public leadership "is a type of leadership that evokes collaboration and concerted action among diverse and often competing groups toward a shared outcome" (1998, 33).

Leadership for collaboration is very different than traditional notions of leadership that are organizational (hierarchical) and ultimately about authority and motivating "followers." Collaborative leadership is about partnership and mutual learning. It emphasizes shared power or "power-with" rather than "power-over" (Follett 1924). It is leadership from the middle as opposed to the top. Thus, the argument here is that yes, there are additional competencies required for effective leadership across organizations.

Several scholars have articulated models of collaborative (sometimes called "facilitative") leadership that are directly applicable to public managers. David Chrislip and Carl Larson (1994; Chrislip 2002), Jeff Luke (1998), Russ Linden (2002) and Barbara Crosby and John Bryson (2005) all discuss leadership from a collaborative governance perspective. The focus is on leadership as a process of pulling stakeholders together to solve public problems and thus none of them are explicitly public-sector. Put another way, rather than thinking of leadership in terms of accomplishing organizational objectives, these authors focus on solving public problems. Thus "collaborative" leadership is exercised across all sectors and "public" leadership, in this respect, is not confined to government organizations.

The task here is to distill out the specific leadership competencies that apply to the collaborative context. Numerous attributes, skills, and behaviors—collectively referred to as competencies—have been identified for public organizational leadership. Van Wart's excellent *Dynamics of Leadership in the Public Service* (2005), for example, describes in some detail ten traits, six "meta-skills," and twenty-one behaviors to total thirty-seven competencies for developing organizational leadership in the public sector (see Table 1). Most or all are generic competencies that cross all sectors; however Van Wart is deliberate in tailoring his message to a public administration audience.

<<TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>>

Van Wart's "Leadership Action Cycle" and the competencies included therein (summarized in Table 1), constitute the baseline for thinking about what competencies are required for collaborative leadership. Clearly many of the traits, skills, and behaviors are as applicable to leading in an interorganizational setting as they are within organizations. The task now is to determine what additional competencies are actually required for the collaborative context. To do this we turn to the literature on collaboration and collaborative leadership as well as the

literature within public administration that is coming to be known as “collaborative public management.”

There are many recently-published works that discuss the process of collaboration for public purposes² and, to varying degrees, the requirements of leadership for collaboration. Table 2 summarizes and synthesizes several different models of collaboration into a generic overview of the collaborative process. This overview implies some of the competencies that fall outside of the standard competencies for organizational leadership. The key element to consider is that in a collaborative process, no one is really “in charge” and power and authority is shared. Thus a “leader” in a collaborative process does not have the positional authority and built-in “followers” that the same individual would have in his/her own organization.

<<TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>>

The process sketched in Table 2 illustrates a remarkable amount of consistency across different treatments of collaborative processes. Most scholars identify specific prerequisites that need to be in-place before the process can begin. One of the most important prerequisites is the presence of a champion, a catalyst or sparkplug; or rather, a leader. The next phases of the process, from convening through determining the appropriate institutional mechanism and maintenance of the partnership, can all be viewed as being tasks of collaborative leadership. These tasks are specific leader behaviors that are supported by certain attributes and skills.

Several works specifically discuss competencies for collaborative leadership, both within and without the field of public administration. I include in this the path-breaking work of Agranoff and McGuire (2001 and 2003) who use the broader term of management (as in network management). While the differences and relationship between management and leadership are subject to debate, it is apparent that many features of collaborative “management” are actually leadership behaviors. Management behaviors can be thought of as operational, concerned with the “three-E’s” and so on. Leadership is about adaptation and change. Certainly leaders must manage and managers must lead. Here we focus on the leading aspect.

As mentioned, many competencies span both organizational and interorganizational leadership. For example, the service mentality discussed by Van Wart (2005) is consistently mentioned as a trait of collaborative leaders. Certainly the six meta-skills are all applicable to leading across boundaries. But there are some competencies that are either unique to the collaborative environment or at least expand significantly upon organizational competencies identified in Table 1. These competencies, summarized in Table 3, represent a starting point for thinking about what additional elements of leadership development are needed for collaborative governance.

<<TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>>

Following Van Wart (2005), I organize the competencies in terms of attributes (Van Wart uses the term “traits”), skills, and behaviors. A simple content analysis of related literature⁴ identified dozens of competencies. Those already included in Van Wart’s summary of public

organizational leadership competencies (either exact wording or different wording but same meanings) were taken out.⁵ The remaining competencies, summarized in Table 3, represent a starting point for articulating the enhanced or additional attributes, skills, and behaviors needed for collaborative leadership in the public sector. What follows is a brief discussion of these competencies.

Personal Attributes

In this section, several personal attributes that have been identified in the research as contributing to effective collaborative leadership are discussed. I use the term attribute rather than the more commonly used term trait because trait connotes a fixed characteristic; something that is in-born and not subject to change (think: genetic traits). To speak of leadership traits implies that ‘leaders are born, not made.’ Speaking of a personal attribute seems to be less restrictive. A personal attribute is a characteristic or quality, but not necessarily one that is hard-wired or fixed.

The way attribute is used here, however, is interchangeable with the way Van Wart (2005) describes traits. According to Van Wart, traits (or here, attributes) “are all relatively stable dispositions by adulthood.” Yet, “they are all amenable to significant improvement, and a few, to substantial improvement by training and education in specific situational environments” (93).

In scanning the literature on collaborative leadership, several specific personal attributes are identified that clearly stand out from the list discussed in Van Wart (2005) for organizational leaders. One of the most commonly cited attributes is what Linden refers to as “**a collaborative mindset**” (2002, 152). Collaborative leaders “see across boundaries” (Rosabeth Moss Kanter, quoted in Linden 2002, 161). They have “a vision of what collaboration can accomplish” (Gray 1989, 279). Luke (1998) explains this mindset as “understand[ing] the need to be inclusive and interactive, working across systems and agencies, connecting with other efforts, and involving key networks, partners, and stakeholders to pursue outcomes” (226).

The collaborative mindset means seeing “*connections and possibilities* where others might see barriers or limitations” (Linden 2002, 161, emphasis in original). This collaborative mindset is one that understands, values, and seeks out what Covey (1989) describes as the principle of synergy. “You begin with the belief that parties involved will gain more insight, and that the excitement of that mutual learning and insight will create momentum toward more and more insights, learnings, and growth” (1989, 264).

Another critical attribute identified across the collaboration literature is what Luke describes as a “**passion toward outcomes**” (1998, 223). This clearly overlaps with the trait identified in Van Wart labeled “need for achievement” (2005, 103-5). However there are some important distinctions. As described in Van Wart, need for achievement is based primarily upon self-interested motivations of personal advancement or winning. It is a “drive for excellence” that propels organizational leaders toward success (103). Collaborative leaders have a different focus. Their passion or personal desire is “to bring about change and to make a difference.” For them, “the desired result or outcome for the public good becomes the passionate focus and spark that energizes and mobilizes” (Luke 1998, 223). Thus, more than a need for personal and

organizational achievement, the collaborative leader is passionate about the common good, about creating public value. That passion is “an emotional spark that mobilizes and sustains energy...build[ing] support and trust in an interdependent web of diverse stakeholders” (224). Passion for results becomes a strong motivator for collaborative leaders, giving them “energy and sense of focus” that make them “clearly driven people” (Linden 2002, 152-3).

Collaborative leaders also “see the big picture” and “take the long view.” In other words, they are systems thinkers. **Systems thinking** is both an attribute and a skill. Senge (1990) explains system thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes” as well as “a specific set of tools and techniques” (68). Therefore it is both a habit of thinking (or attribute) as well as a set of skills that can be learned. Luke (1998) explains that this habit of thinking involves: 1) “thinking about impacts on future generations;” 2) “thinking about...ripple effects and consequences beyond the immediate concern;” and 3) “thinking in terms of issues and strategies that cross functions, specialties, and professional disciplines” (222). Jurisdictionally and/or organizationally bound public leaders have many incentives to think short-term and stay internally-focused. Being a systems thinker and considering the “forest *and* the trees” (Senge 1990, 127) requires both mental discipline and moral courage.

Collaborative leaders are often described as entrepreneurs (Morse and Dudley 2002; Henton, Melville, and Walesh 2004). They are noted for their **openness and risk-taking**. Being willing to experiment and take risks is a critical attribute identified by many observers of collaborative leadership (Luke 1998; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Henton, Melville, and Walesh 2004). “They are risk takers. They are not afraid of failure” (Henton, Melville, and Walesh 2004, 209). Risk-taking involves being comfortable with uncertainty, being able to make trade-offs, and “accommodating the unexpected” (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002, 101). Luke describes this attribute as a “committed openness...to identifying and testing new and diverse ways to achieve” the desired outcomes that drive them (1998, 225). They are willing to be wrong, to revise their thinking, and “understand that no project, program, or policy should be seen as final or definitive” (224-5).

A strong undercurrent in most treatments of collaborative leadership that receives very little explicit attention has to do with the leaders’ psychological connection with others. I label this a **sense of mutuality and connectedness** with others. This attribute is expressed in its ideal form in Martin Buber’s *I-Thou* (1958). Essentially it is a sense of being in relation with others, of being part of a whole; being a part of, rather than apart from, others. In its deepest sense, this attribute is a worldview reflected in the philosophical pragmatism of George Herbert Mead, William James, and John Dewey, as well as modern-day communitarianism (Etzioni 1996). The work of Mary Follett also speaks to this attribute, in a compelling way for a public administration audience (Morse 2006). However, one need not delve deep into philosophy or social psychology to understand this attribute. The interpersonal quality of mutuality and connectedness can be thought of in terms of perspective-taking (“putting oneself in another’s place”) and concern for others (Luke 1998, 227). The ability to “understand others’ concerns and perspectives” and ultimately, having an “underlying concern for others” is a foundation for the application of collaborative skills and ultimately successful collaborative action (Luke 1998, 226-8).

Trust⁶ is a widely recognized factor in successful collaboration. Williams finds a “consensus that trust must underpin effective relationships at both an individual and organizational level” (2002, 116). Clearly the attribute of personal integrity, identified in Van Wart (2005) and most other compilations of leadership traits is a component of this trust. But the genuine recognition and understanding of the other that stems from the attribute of mutuality and connectedness also connects in important ways with trust and trustworthiness (Covey 1989).

The “sense of relatedness” and genuine concern for the “larger public good” that runs through all of the preceding attributes, “cannot occur without first shifting one’s attention away from a preoccupation with oneself and toward looking outward to relationships and interpersonal networks” (Luke 1998, 226-8). Collaborative leaders have a good degree of **humility**, an attribute Linden describes as a “strong but measured ego” (2002, 154). They “don’t have to grab the headlines for every success. Quite the opposite, they seem to take great satisfaction when they can share credit for accomplishments with many others. Their ambitions are directed more toward organizational success than personal glory” (Linden 2002, 154). Collaborative leaders are entrepreneurs; they are ambitious and driven. Yet at the same time they are truly humble. Luke (1998) connects this to what psychologists call “ego-strength.” Persons with ego-strength “don’t have the internal motivation to be in charge of everything ... [there is a] willingness to share credit, which is crucial in forging agreements and sustaining action” (230-231).

These six attributes appear to be fundamental to effective leadership in collaborative settings. They work in concert with other fundamental attributes that are associated with organizational leadership (see Table 1), though in some instances there may be tension between what makes for good organizational leadership and what makes for good collaborative leadership. For example, decisiveness, an attribute prized in organizational settings might contradict the openness and humility needed for successful collaboration. The need for achievement in personal and organizational terms might be a source of tension with the passion for outcomes for the common good that transcend organizational boundaries. In practice, the public leader is constantly balancing competing personal and organizational commitments.

Skills

We now turn to skills, or “broadly applied learned characteristics,” that appear to be essential in the practice of collaborative leadership (Van Wart 2005, 92). Van Wart’s six “skills” (Table 1) are actually broad categories for a much larger set of skills. For example, “communication skills” includes oral, written, and non-verbal communications, as well as active listening skills—all certainly required in interorganizational settings as much as (or even more than) within organizations. In like fashion, there are three broad categories or skill-sets that are specifically discussed in the collaborative leadership literature that seem to be *in addition to* the six skill-sets noted in Table 1. These are labeled here as self-management, strategic thinking, and facilitation (or process) skills.

Self-management refers to the ability to prioritize and manage time effectively (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002, 102). A very large “self-help” literature exists that places self-management at the

center of not only personal effectiveness, but leader effectiveness (Covey 1989). In fact, some might consider self-management so basic to management skills in general that it is already included in Van Wart's "technical" skill set that includes "basic management knowledge/skills" (2005, 145-7). But this is a stretch. Self-management seems to be a fundamental skill-set that stands apart from the others, and while relevant for leading organizations, is particularly relevant when working across boundaries. The complex work of boundary-crossing, collaborative leadership requires—to use Covey's "Seven Habits" terminology—being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, and putting first things first (1989).

Strategic thinking covers a wide-range of skills that are only partially covered in the "analytic skills" cluster identified by Van Wart (2005) and other lists of leadership skills. Luke (1998, 151-184) offers an excellent discussion of the various components of strategic thinking for collaborative work. He argues that four sets of analytic skills are involved:

- "Framing and reframing issues and their strategic responses." This means defining problems "in ways that focus attention, stimulate an urgency for action, and provide a framework for the debates on action strategies."
- "Identifying and defining end-outcomes or desired results." Multi-party problem-solving efforts are enhanced by focusing on desired outcomes rather than detailing deficiencies. Effective leaders help groups identify outcomes and keep them separate from problems and inputs. They also clarify and "separate end-outcomes from intermediate outcomes."
- "Assessing stakeholder interest to discover common and complementary interests." Identifying stakeholders and determining their "goals, concerns, or stakes" is also a key component of the collaborative process.
- "Systematic thinking to reveal interconnections and strategic leverage points." This refers to the tools and techniques aspect of systems thinking mentioned earlier in this paper. There are many "visual tools for communicating about and seeing multiple connections and interrelationships." These include various conceptual "mapping" exercises that can vary greatly in degree of complexity.

Senge's discussion of system thinking includes additional insights and tools (1990). Furthermore, Crosby and Bryson's *Leadership for the Common Good* (2005) offers much in the way of skills development in this area, including several exercises and models for stakeholder assessment.

Collaborative leaders also have a "knowledge of the process tools" needed "for designing effective collaborations" (Gray 1989, 279). Again, Luke (1998, 185-217) offers an excellent discussion of the **facilitation skills** needed to lead "from the middle" and help a diverse group work together effectively. The four primary skills involve:

- Helping the group generate "fresh ideas and new insights." This includes helping a group separate idea generation from evaluation and asking open-ended questions that "inquire and reveal."

- “Coping with conflict.” This is a broad skill-set within a skill-set that is often included in discussion of leadership skills. The skills of principled negotiation articulated in Fisher and Ury’s *Getting to Yes* (1991) are essential here.
- “Getting a group unstuck and moving the debate forward.” More often than not collaborative groups can run out of steam or otherwise get in a rut. The skilled use of specific interventions can help a group get “unstuck.” It is also important to know when it is time to call on an external facilitator.
- “Forging multiple agreements.” Luke explains that “public leaders assist in forging agreement in three specific ways: they work to develop a nonconfrontational agreement-building process for selecting multiple strategies; they build larger agreements from smaller ones; and they seek high levels of consensus among diverse stakeholders.”

Again, there are many great resources for developing facilitative leadership skills. Schwarz’s *The Skilled Facilitator* (2002) is an excellent starting point.

Space does not allow full discussion of these three skill-sets. The reader is referred to other works mentioned above that give in-depth coverage of these topics (especially Luke 1998; Covey 1989; Crosby and Bryson 2005; and Schwarz 2002). The point to underscore here is that these broad skill-sets are for the most part not found in those identified with organizational leadership (see Van Wart 2005). While these three skill-sets clearly can contribute to better organizational leadership, they are especially important for interorganizational, or collaborative leadership; and along with the attributes discussed in the previous section, should form the core of leadership development for interorganizational collaboration.

Behaviors

It is important to note that attributes and skills of leaders are relevant inasmuch as they contribute to effective leadership behaviors. Thus, competencies go beyond who you are (attributes) and what you can do (skills)—they also must include what you actually do. In fact, most of the research on collaborative leadership focuses on behavioral competencies, those behaviors or actions actually displayed by leaders in practice. The organizational leadership literature groups leader behaviors into task-oriented behaviors, people-oriented behaviors, and organization-oriented behaviors (Van Wart 2005, 157). Descriptions of collaborative leadership behaviors tend to cut-across all three meta-categories. These behaviors naturally mirror the general process of collaboration (see Table 3).

Table 4 summarizes the leader behaviors identified from three different treatments of collaborative leadership. Chrislip and Larson (1994) and Luke (1998) are both broad treatments of collaborative leadership that are cross-sectoral; though each of them specifically address public sector practitioners as among their intended audiences. Agranoff and McGuire’s research (2001; McGuire 2006), on the other hand, is specifically focused on public managers. The behaviors they identify are in terms of “collaborative public management.” They don’t distinguish leadership from management, though most of the behaviors they identify fall under what others label leadership.

<<TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>>

While many leadership behaviors identified by Van Wart (Table 1) overlap with the behaviors associated with collaborative leadership (e.g. team building, environmental scanning, networking, and strategic planning), there are many behaviors that are more specific to the collaborative context. These behaviors include stakeholder identification and assessment, strategic issue framing, relationship development with diverse stakeholders, convening working groups, facilitating mutual learning processes, inducing commitment, and facilitating trusting relationships among partners. It is likely that a more detailed analysis would yield a much longer list of behaviors that stand apart from those associated with organizational leadership (Table 1). Therefore, the list discussed here should be considered a starting point only and not a complete account of all the behavioral competencies for collaborative leadership.

Stakeholder identification and stakeholder assessment are two behaviors that work in tandem during the initial phases of a collaborative process. Identifying a broad array of stakeholders is “the first step in creating a constituency for change” and precedes efforts to get people involved (Chrislip and Larson 1994, 65). Simply identifying stakeholders is not enough, however. Stakeholders must be assessed in terms of what they might contribute to a collaborative effort; what interests they have in the issue; how they might define the problem (or opportunity), and so on. Effective leadership entails finding the right mix of stakeholders to involve and ways to involve them. There are several helpful frameworks and tools available to help leaders identify and assess stakeholders. The first place to start is in Crosby and Bryson’s *Leadership for the Common Good* (2005).

Strategic issue framing is another key behavior of collaborative leaders. Luke argues that “effective public leaders do not necessarily promote solutions; they promote problems.” They become “advocates for issue emergence,” creating a sense of urgency around a particular problem or opportunity (Luke 1998, 41). Strategic issue framing involves transforming a condition (a latent problem or opportunity) into a high priority issue for the public—particularly those individuals and organizations that are seen as potential partners. Collaborative leaders use a variety of strategies for framing issues such as leveraging dramatic (or “focusing”) events and utilizing the media. They understand that how an issue is framed determines how fast it gets to the policy agenda, who gets involved, and what solutions are identified (Luke 1998, 41-65). Linden (2002, 107) refers to this kind of issue framing as “creating high stakes.”

Collaborative leaders also engage, in an ongoing basis, in **relationship development with diverse stakeholders**. Linden refers to relationships as “the glue to most collaborative efforts” (2002, 92). An illustrative example involves the efforts of a U.S. Forest Service administrative officer, Rod Collins, and his “Friday chowders” with colleagues from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Seeing that formal, infrequent meetings between the two agency offices were not productive, he invited his BLM counterparts to meet his team for lunch at a local restaurant. This evolved into a monthly routine for over four years that produced relationships and tangible results (Linden 2002, 101-2). Having chowder together seems almost trivial, but the research is very consistent in identifying these kinds of informal relationship-building efforts as

essential and producing powerful outcomes. Indeed, Williams' (2002) study of "the competent boundary spanner" states plainly that "a necessary part of interorganizational working involves building and sustaining effective personal relationships" (115).

Convening working groups is another clearly identified collaborative leadership behavior. Interorganizational groups simply don't come into being by happenstance. Bringing together the right stakeholders "to the table" is a critical act of leadership (Luke 1998, 67). Though there is no 'one best way' to convene a working group of diverse stakeholders, Luke (1998) finds that successful beginnings usually involve a "safe or neutral space for meetings" and a process that is perceived as being legitimate or transparent, not "driven by hidden agendas." Collaborative leaders "pay close attention to first meetings and invest considerable time and energy in the initial process of convening" (81).

After a working group has been convened, a key task of leadership becomes **facilitating mutual learning processes**. This involves "providing leadership to the *process*...setting the tone for the interactions, one that [is] respectful and hopeful." While the collaborative leader need not (ultimately) be the formal group facilitator, they do play a key role "establish[ing] high standards of communication, deliberation, open-mindedness, commitment, and hard work" for the group (Wondolleck and Ryan 1999, 122). The focus for the leader is in ensuring that the group "develop and nurture a deliberative process of mutual learning" (Luke 1998, 95). Leaders accomplish this by effectively "establishing and influencing the operating rules...[and] prevailing values and norms" of the working group (Agranoff and McGuire 2001, 299).

Throughout the process, collaborative leaders can be found **inducing commitment** both within and outside the working group. Leaders must induce commitment of participants early on during the convening stage and continue to induce commitment throughout the process, especially when the commitment level needs to go beyond talk (Agranoff and McGuire 2001, 299-300; Linden 2002, 173-4). Also, in order to sustain action during the implementation phase, commitment must be garnered from key decision makers. Effective commitment-building at this stage involves identifying other "champions," including advocacy coalitions and other power-holders who can help in the political process of allocating resources (Luke 1998, 128-31).

Another ongoing collaborative leadership behavior is **facilitating trusting relationships among partners**. This is different than building relationships with partners, though it may involve similar strategies. As working groups come together, differences will naturally surface and many relationship-based obstacles to collaboration will manifest themselves. Thus, in addition to having good relations with each of the partners individually, the collaborative leader makes efforts to build good relationships among the different actors in the group. Agranoff and McGuire (2001) explain that the leader "seeks to achieve cooperation between actors while preventing, minimizing, or removing blockages to cooperation" (300). Luke (1998) describes this as network facilitation. A network facilitator is a "multilateral broker" that builds "supportive relationship and strong bonds of trust among partners in the network" (143-4).

Of course, much more could be said about each of these behaviors. The reader may turn to the resources cited in this paper for more in-depth discussions of each of them. And again, there

likely are many other discrete behaviors that could be added to the list here. This list is offered only as a starting point for thinking about the leader behaviors in a collaborative context that are distinct from those identified for organizational leadership.

Leadership Styles

This discussion of competencies would not be complete without a word on leadership styles. In addition to attributes, skills, and behaviors, the study of leadership includes examining various overall “styles” of leadership. Van Wart (2005) reviews the various leadership styles identified in the literature. His “leadership action cycle” model views leader behaviors as being influenced by one’s leadership style combined with specific competencies and the operational environment. Identified leadership styles include “laissez-faire,” “directive,” “supportive,” and “participative” (Van Wart 2005).

The styles literature is very much from the organizational leadership point-of-view, with each implicitly assuming a leader-follower relationship. In other words, one’s “style” refers to general patterns of leader behavior in relation to subordinates, tasks, goals, and so on. While the participative style seems consistent with the “inclusive” style of collaborative leadership discussed in Linden (2002), it may be that leadership for collaboration requires a different style altogether. Bardach’s (1998) study of interagency collaboration identifies “facilitative” and “advocacy” styles that seem to best characterize effective collaborative leaders and also seem to be different from those identified in the organizational leadership literature.

Bardach (1998) notes that the facilitative style is a “kinder, gentler sort, sometimes called *servant...leadership*.” He continues, “[a] good facilitative leader is someone with appropriate self-awareness about the nature of the role and a natural gift for diplomacy. It is often someone with a broad-gauge, general background or cross-disciplinary training and experience” (226). Those with a facilitative style often have “a relatively positive personal disposition...perceived as neutral, someone with ‘no ax to grind.’” It is a “consensus-building style” (226-7).

In contrast, an advocacy style “approaches consensus building in a rallying spirit and carries it as far as it can reasonably do so” (228). The essential difference between a facilitative and an advocacy style is that advocacy leaders have a vision and works with others who support it while the facilitative leader essentially subordinates to the group (228). In either case, the style of leadership is very different from the normal “top-down” ones that dominate discussions of organizational leadership. The collaborative leader’s style stems from the attributes discussed above, attributes that engender joint-work and power-sharing.

More research could and should be done to explore the styles of collaborative leaders when they are working in an interorganizational setting versus when they are working within their “home” organizations. Is there a consistent organizational leadership style across collaborative leaders? Is it possible to be a directive leader within one’s organization but a facilitative leader on the outside? These are just a few of the many interesting research questions for studying collaborative leadership as exercised by public managers.

Developing Public Leadership for Collaborative Governance

In reviewing the collaborative leadership literature for this paper, it became apparent that the focus tends to be on tasks or behaviors. In other words, we know a lot about what collaborative leaders do. There is much less written about whom collaborative leaders are; what makes them tick; what attributes form the core of their character.

In considering what these competencies discussed in this paper mean for public leadership development, two important observations should be made. First, if the aim is to develop public leaders who are better equipped to lead in a shared-power world, in an age of collaborative governance, then we need to start from the inside-out. As Marc Holzer discusses in Workshop 1 of this conference, our culture seems to promote an image of leadership that is antithetical to what we have described here as collaborative, or facilitative, leadership. If current or future public leaders are to work across boundaries effectively—creating public value in collaboration with actors across different jurisdictions and even sectors—then they have to have the mindset, the will, or habits of the heart to do so. The leader whose very character is rooted in command-and-control, top-down models of leadership may very well be able to learn the skills of collaboration, but it is unlikely those will be translated into behaviors.

Covey's simple, yet profound, approach to leadership development is called "inside-out" (1989; 1990). What he means by that is "to start first with self—to start with the most *inside* part of self—with your paradigms, your character, and your motives" (1990, 63). In other words, if you want to be effective at leading change in an interorganizational setting, i.e. a collaborative setting, then you have to *be* a collaborative person. Linden's "questions on your collaborative leadership" (2002, 165) provide a nice starting point for self-reflection:

- Do you come across as someone who prefers to be the source of all new ideas?
- Do others see you as someone who typically wants to find the answers to problems and challenges on your own?
- How do you react when others' perspective on an issue is very different from yours? Is that an irritation to be avoided? An inconvenience to be overcome? An asset to be used?
- When you're working on an issue with others, how likely are you to ask if there's anyone else with a stake in the issue?
- When you're trying to influence others, how much do you tend to push your own ideas, and to what extent do you use pull to invite other into the discussion?

In an age of collaborative governance, where shared problems and shared-power is the norm, the public leader must truly *become* the kind of person with whom others can trust and respect. A focus on skills or tools will be useless if the personal attributes are not in alignment. The attributes must come first.

Public leaders operate on many different levels. Figure 1 is a simple illustration of this concept. Public leadership begins with personal leadership, the realm of what Covey calls "private victories" (1989). This is the realm of personal attributes and how they interface with one's

world. The next level is that of interpersonal leadership or how one interacts with others. The leadership enacted at that level influences one's leadership at the organizational level. In other words, effective leadership of organizations is built upon many interpersonal interactions. Organizational culture, for example, is developed through the sum product of countless interpersonal interactions. And organizations that work well "across boundaries" have cultures amenable to joint-work. Thus effectiveness at the "public" (interorganizational) level is contingent on the kind of leadership at the organizational level. And so on.

<<FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>>

Ultimately, leadership development for collaboration (the outer ring or "public" level in Figure 1) cannot be divorced from organizational, interpersonal, or personal leadership. They are all connected and begin with the self—the personal attributes one develops. This is the second observation regarding how the competencies discussed in this paper fit into the broader discussion of public leadership development. That is, the inside-out approach can also be a way of thinking of leadership at all four levels. Whether a formal training program, mentoring, or self-reflection, the individual working to become a better collaborative leader can think about the competencies and what they mean at each level of leadership. What does being a collaborative leader mean for my own personal leadership? For my leadership in interpersonal situations? For my organizational leadership? And for my leadership across boundaries "for the common good" (Crosby and Bryson 2005)?

The development of leaders that can successfully lead change and create public value through partnerships and collaboration is of paramount concern for the field of public administration today. This paper offers a starting point for thinking about some of the specific competencies of public leadership for collaborative governance. Beyond the suggestions above regarding an inside-out approach to leadership development, I leave to others⁷ more specific discussions of *how* to develop these leadership competencies in others. The purpose of this paper has been to stimulate more thought and discussion regarding the *what*.

NOTES

1. References to public leadership in this paper will relate to leadership within the context of public administration. While the term can and is used more broadly to encompass political leadership and even civic leadership, the effort here zeroes in on leadership as exercised by those in the public service.
2. There are many more treatments of interorganizational collaboration in the private sector that are likewise useful—especially the work of Huxham and Vangen (2005)—but not as directly as those that specifically focus on collaboration "for the common good." The primary difference has to do with interests. In private settings the profit-motive and organizational interest are paramount; actors engage in collaboration to further their own interest. In the public sphere, self-interest certainly can be a factor, but the primary force bringing actors together is a shared interest in solving a public problem and/or in creating public value.

3. Drawn from Gray (1989), Heifetz (1994), Luke (1998), Chrislip (2002), Linden (2002), and Crosby and Bryson (2005).
4. Though many relevant sources were consulted for this study, the primary sources utilized here that speak directly to the question of leadership competencies are Bardach (1998), Luke (1998), Linden (2002), Chrislip and Larson (1994), Sullivan and Skelcher (2002), Straus (2002), Williams (2002), and McGuire (2006). This pool of literature is admittedly not complete; there are literally hundreds of sources that in one way or another are relevant to collaborative leadership in the public sector. However, these sources seemed directly relevant and all, to one degree or another, specifically identify leadership competencies in terms of behaviors and/or attributes and skills.
5. Again, it is important to emphasize that many competencies identified as key to collaborative leadership are already part of the organizational leadership rubric. Personal integrity, for example, is clearly as important to work within an organization as it is for working outside the organization. Energy and resilience are certainly required for successful collaboration as well. In order to keep this paper reasonably short, a discussion of the items of overlap is not undertaken. Rather, the focus is on competencies identified that seem to fall outside the standard ones for organizational leadership.
6. Trustworthiness may also be viewed as a separate attribute. Luke (1998, 233-6) includes an excellent discussion of trust and personal integrity. It is not included as a separate attribute here, however, because it seems more of an outgrowth or product of integrity and the sense of mutuality that leads to authentic relationships rather than something that exists independently. In other words, one must have integrity and authentic relationships to build genuine interpersonal trust.
7. The forthcoming book *Innovations in Public Leadership Development* (2007, M.E. Sharpe), edited by Ricardo S. Morse, Terry F. Buss, and C. Morgan Kinghorn, includes several chapters which discuss specific models and experiences regarding the *how* of public leadership development.

This paper will be included as a chapter in the forthcoming book mentioned in note #7 above. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2007 ASPA National Conference.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 – Public Organizational Leadership Competencies (drawn from Van Wart 2005)

Traits	Skills	Behaviors	
Self-confidence	Communication	<i>[Task-Oriented]</i>	Managing personnel conflict
Decisiveness	Social Skills	Monitoring and assessing	Managing personnel change
Resilience	Influence Skills	work	<i>[Organization-Oriented]</i>
Energy	Analytic Skills	Operations planning	Scanning the environment
Need for achievement	Technical Skills	Clarifying roles	Strategic planning
Willingness to assume responsibility	Continual learning	Informing	Articulating the mission and vision
Flexibility		Delegating	Networking and partnering
Service mentality		Problem solving	Performing general management functions
Personal integrity		Managing innovation and creativity	Decision making
Emotional maturity		<i>[People-Oriented]</i>	Managing organizational change
		Consulting	
		Planning and organizing personnel	
		Developing staff	
		Motivating	
		Building and managing teams	

Table 2 - The Process of Collaboration³

<p>1. Prerequisites Boundary-crossing problem or opportunity Complex problem that requires “adaptive work” Shared-power environment At least some willingness to work together A “sparkplug” or “catalyst” to initiate process</p> <p>2. Convening Identifying stakeholders Issue Framing Getting stakeholders “to the table”</p> <p>3. Exploring and Deciding Choosing an appropriate process and facilitator Reframing the problem (or opportunity) as a group Identifying shared interests and desired outcomes Exploring and identifying strategies Identifying and gathering additional information necessary for decision making Forging agreements</p> <p>4. Doing and Sustaining Building support outside of the group Appropriate institutionalization Monitoring outcomes Network facilitation to maintain and strengthen commitment</p>

Table 3 – Collaborative Leadership Competencies*

Attributes	Skills	Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative mindset • Passion toward outcomes • Systems thinking • Openness and risk-taking • Sense of mutuality and connectedness • Humility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-management • Strategic thinking • Facilitation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder identification • Stakeholder assessment • Strategic issue framing • Convening working groups • Facilitating mutual learning processes • Inducing commitment • Facilitating trusting relationships among partners

*In addition to competencies already noted for organizational leadership (see Table 1)

Table 4 – Collaborative Leadership Behaviors

<u>Chrislip & Larson</u>	<u>Luke</u>	<u>Agranoff & McGuire</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring Commitment to Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Convincing people that something can and should be done ○ Convening stakeholders • Leading as Peer Problem Solver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helping groups create visions and solve problems ○ Build relationships • Building Broad-Based Involvement • Sustaining Hope and Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoting and protecting process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Awareness (Issue Framing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stimulate awareness and emotional concern that problem or opportunity exists ○ Elevate issue to priority status by creating sense of urgency and “do-ability” ○ Use “attentional triggers” to expand number of people concerned about the issue • Forming Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify full spectrum of stakeholders ○ Enlist core working group members and design multiple levels of participation ○ Convene first meetings • Creating Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build and nurture effective working group ○ Facilitate mutual learning process ○ Promote and facilitate strategy development • Sustaining Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build commitment and political support ○ Institutionalize cooperative behavior ○ Network facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying participants and stakeholders ○ Tapping resources of those persons ○ Recruiting potential members • Framing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitating agreement on leadership and administrative roles ○ Helping establish identity and culture for the network ○ Helping develop working structure for network, including strategic planning • Mobilizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inducing commitment to the joint effort and building support from key players • Synthesizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engendering productive and purposeful interaction among all actors ○ Facilitating relationships to build trust and promote information exchange

Source: Chrislip & Larson (1994, 138-41); Luke (1998); Agranoff and McGuire (2001, 289-301); and McGuire (2006, 37)

Figure 1 – Four Levels of Public Leadership

