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**Public Sector Leadership Research in Australia and New Zealand:
A Critical Assessment of the Current State of Play.**

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ABSTRACT

Van Wart's (2013) public sector leadership study contends "it is hard to argue that the field is fully mature", and, "fragmentation and conflicting nomenclature continue to be a problem, but at a more sophisticated level". This literature review builds on this study with a two-fold approach. First, it assesses the recent research developments in the field across the New Zealand and Australian region. Second, it attempts to facilitate a dialogue between the scholarly and practitioner communities. The results reveal the disintegrated and disconnected state of the field. Finally, it calls for collaborative research amongst the scholarly research community across the Tasman, and a collective focus and responsiveness to address this continued divergence in the field.

Keywords: Critical perspectives on leadership, public sector and community leadership.

INTRODUCTION

This literature review examines the recent research development within the field of public sector leadership across New Zealand and Australia. The paper does so for two reasons. First, although this field is embryonic, it is growing at a phenomenal pace resulting from a rapidly changing environment and the varied challenges faced by government. In that respect, the stocktaking exercise conducted in this paper can help to identify gaps in the body of knowledge. Is the region mainly

consuming ‘overseas’ approaches, or is it actually part of setting the research agenda? It can also exhibit tendencies with regards to theories, methods and approaches.

Second, the two jurisdictions are some of the more prominent representatives of Westminster systems, and share a number of institutional features, in particular with respect to a professional, non-partisan public service providing continuity and accountability (Rhodes et al. 2009). At the same time, they have both been subject to massive public sector reform attempts from the 1980s and onwards. A period during which public sector leadership has been announced one of the cornerstones for public sector transformation.

Service delivery in Australia’s public sector is at state, territory and local government levels, while for New Zealand’s it is only at the state and local government level. However, both countries have grappled with challenges that are consistent with New Public Management (NPM) in past decades. The recent reform experience within New Zealand and Australia has recognised a need for flexibility and agility in a fast changing environment resulting from the rapid pace of technological advances and its multi-level impacts.

New Zealand and Australian government has adopted similar solutions to problems that cross governments (both national and international), cross jurisdictions, cross sectors and cross portfolios referred to as ‘whole of government’, ‘joined of government’, ‘networked government’ and ‘connected government’. A critical known challenge facing their public sector in the years to come is the longer-term sustainability of its workforce due to an ageing demographic, with an impending need to develop and retain emerging leaders within a cohort nearing retirement. This will require careful management, to avoid a sudden loss of essential corporate knowledge and expertise from within the public sector. The research question proposed in this paper is:

Is there a common pool of research that focuses on the current state of the public sector leadership field across the Australia-New Zealand region?

As a public servant employed in the New Zealand public sector, I have a privileged vantage point to witness up-close many of the leadership conflicts, eclectic relationships, dilemmas and

paradoxes presented in the academic discourse that have been constructed around both the traditional leadership theories and the post-structuralist approach to literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on the widely cited review by Van Wart (2013) on public sector leadership which remains one of the few comprehensive and in-depth studies in the field. The definition of public sector leadership used in this review is synonymous to administrative leadership broadly defined by Van Wart (2013) as ‘the people (at all levels) and the accompanying processes and networks that lead, manage, and guide government and non-profit agencies; it focuses on civil service and appointed leaders rather than political leaders, and focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on implementation and the technical aspects of policy development over policy’.

Van Wart’s (2013) study assess the state-of-the-field by addressing questions such as: What are the major contextual factors affecting both public sector leadership as a practice and its study? How does the scholarly public sector leadership literature in general, and the administrative leadership literature specifically, compare descriptively to what it was in 2003 in terms of volume, venue, and topics? How have the perennial debates in the field evolved? What appear to be the significant advances in the field and what are the contemporary challenges that the field faces? What areas seem ripe for research?

In particular, he argues that the development of critical management theory along the lines recommended by Alvesson and Willmott (1992) into a critical leadership dialogue (Collinson and Grint 2005), is one of the main advances in mainstream literature. Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) being informed by an eclectic set of perspectives (e.g. Ospina and Su 2009; Sinclair, 2007, 2011), questions the hegemonic views in the mainstream literature which take for granted that leaders are the people in charge who make decisions whilst followers are those who merely carry out orders from 'above' (Collinson, 2012). This view is explored in the following sections, informed by the critical findings from the literature review undertaken.

METHODS

In order to review the literature published on Public sector leadership, this study was designed as a two-step approach. The first step was to identify and collect studies on public sector leadership. An initial keyword search was conducted in two databases (Web of Science and Scopus) over the period of 2010 to 2016. The key words inputted in the 'Title' field were 'Public sector leadership' and the pool of articles were reviewed by abstract. The search was refined by selecting 'Country/Territory' as 'New Zealand' and 'Australia' with 'Articles' and 'editorial material' selected as the target media. In the Scopus database the selection was further refined by restricting the search to the 'subject areas' including 'Arts and Humanities' and 'Social Sciences'. Whereas, in the Web of Science database the selection was restricted to the 'Categories' of 'Public administration'. A total of 66 articles were collected from a total of 45 journals and 1 electronic book chapter (see table 1: Number of public sector articles by database). To complete the first step, the duplicate records and non-relevant articles were removed which yielded 25 articles including 1 book chapter, These publications were then carefully analysed to ascertain their relevance to the research questions which produced the final count of articles as 24, out of which 7 used qualitative methods, 14 used quantitative methods and 2 were based on mixed methods. The second step was data analysis. By analysing the research presented, the articles were further grouped into empirical articles, non-empirical normative think pieces. Selection was based on the content analysis of articles/abstracts with a public sector leadership focus and articles specifically focusing on leadership, political leadership or public sector research were excluded.

Volume of Articles in the Databases

In order to get a view of the spread of the articles between the two databases, the volume of articles were compared. There were in total 18 and 7 articles that were relevant to the research topic in *Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases respectively. While the articles excluded were in total 13 and 28 respectively in *Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases. See figure 1 for breakdown of articles by database.

Insert Figure 1- Table 1: Number of public sector articles by database

Public Sector Leadership in the Selected Journals

Public sector leadership is a vast topic and covers variety of specialized areas. The literature commonly categorizes it into Political leadership, administration leadership, community leadership and non-profit leadership. Also the search yielded articles addressing the fields of tertiary education and Health sector. To capture these categories, the articles were coded into - 'Administrative leadership' and 'Other'. See Figure 2 as below.

Insert Figure 2- Table 2: Public sector leadership focus: Administrative and others.

The 'Other' category included community leadership, non-profit leadership and leadership in the tertiary and health sector. The articles that primarily had a focus on Political leadership (elected leaders) were excluded. Although, articles addressing the relationship between senior public sector leaders and the political or parliamentary members were included. In total there were 20 articles with an 'administrative leadership' focus and 4 journals in the 'Other' category.

Methods Used in Public Administration Journals

To gain an insight on the research methods employed in each of the journals, a detailed analysis was undertaken to outline methods being adopted. This exercise was purely to ascertain the balance of the methods used. The journals contained research conducted with qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. With quantitative methods, surveys and large N-studies were the most common and many used regression analysis and modelling in some form. Qualitative research utilized case studies, interviews and discourse analysis either to test the hypotheses in a particular unit of analysis or to infer from a case within a specific contextual settings.

As figure 3 outlines, 7 studies were data based, 6 were case based, 1 was a comparative case based and 7 were non-empirical in focus. Two books that were found relevant to Public sector leadership were also reviewed (Edwards & Jeffrey, 2010; Kane & Patapan, 2011). The overall analysis found that the methods of analysis varied significantly across the areas that were studied.

Insert Figure 3- Table 3: Methods used in public administration journal.

RESULTS

The following sections outline the findings which have been categorized into 5 dominant lines of enquiry: organizational change management, Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, gender and race inequities, effects of authorising environment, Leader-follower relationship and the different types of leadership styles and behaviours.

I. The Role of Leader as a Change Agent

There appears to be a divided view about the role of leaders as change agents within the public sector organization. Three opposing views were noted in the literature. The first view upholds leadership as ‘important in generating and maintaining change’ (Ross et al, 2011), that ‘high quality managers’ support change in the face of difficulties (Sutton & Moore, 2011) and there ‘needs to be strong leadership at the highest levels of government’ to drive the necessary shift in public perceptions (Rowley & Phibbs, 2012). Perl & Newman (2014) argue that due in large measure to leadership from the public sector, public-private partnership did not constrain but rather the ‘public sector leadership enabled an effective engagement with environmental policy priorities’, avoiding the risks of demands for a ‘privileged position’ from private sector partners (Lindblom, 1977: 172–173).

Yeo & Ajam (2010) on the other hand argue that leaders are instead important ‘source of catalyst’ for facilitating organizational change and that people are the ‘connecting tissues’ that contextualize the power of information regarding change and its consequences mediated by IT by affecting the creation of social structures and redistribution of power relations, and therefore, leadership roles need to be redefined to embrace the participatory complexity of multiple relationship streams brought about by the change and also promoting boundary-crossing among leaders. Also, interestingly the ‘popular image’ of the manager as change agent versus the likely reality that many managers will be ‘far from effective change agents in their responses to change and their implementation of change processes’ (Matthew et al, 2011). Lastly, Kuiper et al (2014) contend that the research into public sector

change leadership is not very theory-driven and most of the current work in this field examines a public sector case without really considering the distinctive features of leadership in the public sector.

II. Human Resource Management Tools and Measurements

The traditional views that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are an implementation tool for leader's strategic efforts are challenged in recent research (Berman et al., 2013), because in the public sector HRM policies are not readily changed and in these leaders come up through the ranks of agencies (hence, being often accepting of these policies), thus political or "regime" factors likely affect executive leadership which, in turn, has HRM implications. Their comparative study undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region and United States suggests that although 41% and 22% respondents respectively were satisfied with their civil service system, HRM factors (such as hiring well-qualified candidates, using appraisal to hold people accountable, providing competitive salaries and linking rewards to performance) were relevant to public executive leadership in both settings, therefore concluding that 'Executive training is relevant for capacity building, but insufficient in light of limited political leadership'.

Berman (2015) by using the examples from Singapore and New Zealand further notes that among the greatest challenges and frontiers in public administration today is finding a way to increase leadership at the top of agencies that ensures leadership for all agency programs, and that 'leadership does not stand alone', but is part of 'whatever is needed'. Traditional strategies have often focussed on management for strengthening leadership development, however training is only a small part of the leadership development experience; efforts are more reliant on feedback for on-the-job experiences with greater attention to role expectations for political appointees and senior officials (ibid).

III. Causality of Gender and Race Inequities on Public Sector Leadership

There is mounting research evidence that the perpetuating gendered notion of leadership still remains strongly biased towards men in senior positions and is endemic, being supported through social and political structures. The two strategic themes that stand out as relevant to all or most of the perceived barriers to progression are 'committed leadership support' and 'support and development'. Although the research notes that Australian public sector has performed better on gender equity outcomes as

compared to the private sector, findings revealed that ‘women often feel that their confidence has been battered into submission’, and that women face, ‘cultural and organizational biases that are making it currently so hard to attract and retain other minority groups’. Therefore, a fully effective APS that reflects its stated values will not be attained until there is ‘50/50’ men and women at senior levels (Evans et al., 2015). Hutchinson’s (2014) study in the Western Australian (WA) local government notes the prevalent and entrenched masculine norms of leadership as ‘the lack of diversity within council leadership’ that exclude women due to the compromising relationship between the CEO and the political arms resulting in adoption of informal processes for appointment of the CEO role resulting in inconsistencies causing ‘a dissonance or disconnect between diverse constituencies’.

Lindorff (2011) argues along similar lines that up to and including the Executive Level (EL) women are significantly more positive than men about their work and the organisation. However, at Senior Executive Services (SES) level men are more satisfied. The New Zealand study on institutional racism highlighted the failure on part of the health sector leadership to detect and eliminate racism. Through the counter narrative viewpoints of Maori health leaders, the patterns of systemic institutional racism within public health policy are presented, further proposing that this could well be the case within other colonial health systems (Came, 2014).

IV. Influence of Contextual Contingency on Public Sector Leadership

Tiernan (2015) notes that an extensive scholarly literature acknowledges the ‘problematic nature of leadership in a public sector context’ – the difficulties inherent to a model premised on responsibility and accountability being shared by elected and career officials. This is because, politicians exert greater control over career officials resulting in a range of unintended consequences; and management reforms do not recognise the primacy of politics, nor the stewardship obligations of public sector leaders. Thus, arguing that ‘a reimagined partnership’ between elected and unelected officials is essential to improve policy capacity.

‘Hart and Rhodes (2014, 12) argue the traditional ‘craft skills’ of the senior bureaucrat, which include: counselling, stewardship, prudence, probity, judgement, diplomacy and political nous have been devalued and downplayed by the relentless focus on managerial skills of the kind demanded by

political leaders. In a similar vein, Mulgan (2010) critiques the supposed politicisation and excessive responsiveness in the Australian Public Service (APS), noting that ‘The Minister insists on it’ or ‘the Minister is dead set against that’ are constant departmental motifs, therefore, suggesting that Moran report's (2010) approach to public sector leadership is taken from international management theory that works well in a business context and in the United States (US) government system, is less well-suited to Westminster-style systems and therefore, the Westminster systems require their own model of service management.

Providing a nationally accredited leadership course may not be the best choice for a public service department where context is critical (Hadley, 2014); and the limited success of training intervention for ‘softer leadership skills’ has resulted from a failure to account for the operational context (Orazi et al, 2013) which was the greatest inhibitor to training participation and transfer (McCracken et al, 2012). It is important to integrate the contextual factors such as ‘specific dimensions of the cultural, social and institutional context’ in order to understand the practice and experience of leadership when attempting to understand ‘the role of leadership within a specific organization or profession’, as successful policy measures to address this challenge remain elusive (Linley et al, 2013).

Martin and Spano (2015) examined performance management systems in local governments in Victoria, Australia and Sardinia, Italy. They found that for public managers in each system the development over time of an organization's performance management system is essential to address the strategic issues facing their community, and they ‘will recognize the connection between compliance-oriented performance management and the articulation of creative and innovative ways to address strategic issues in individual communities’. However, the ‘new public sector environment’ has resulted in structural changes with increased pressure to achieve targets and maximise financial performance resulting in leaders and managers simply swimming against a strong current with little thought about effectively transferring training content (McCracken et al, 2012)¹.

¹ Evidence from their small scale study of Canadian and Irish managers raised issues concerning motivation and self-efficacy which could be problematic given the turbulent environment in the public sector, which will require increasingly motivated and confident leaders to manage the transition. The findings illustrate that

V. Public Sector Leadership Styles

There is strong evidence that leadership is important at all levels of the organisation in varying degrees (McCarten's, 2012) but there was a wide variance in the preferred leadership styles, behaviours and traits exhibited by the senior public sector leaders. In this section we discuss 3 types of leadership styles and approaches which this review covered:

1. Leader-follower dualism

Scholars have found that the role of leaders in rationing is not simply in the application of hard power over followers, but instead in appealing to others on an emotional level and encouraging them to engage with particular agendas (Glasby et al. 2011, Robinson et al. 2011) and adding the foundation of positive behaviour into the training agenda increases training cost efficiencies because the traditional means of training, rewarding, and mentoring employees are not adequate to meet the changing demands of the environment (Wijewardena, N., et al., 2014).

2. Transformational / Collaborative / Ethical / Servant leadership

Ritz et al (2014) argue the lack of direct effect of transformational leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB); support the assumed indirect relationship between leadership and employee behaviour; emphasize the relevance of public service values when analysing leadership behaviour in public sector organization; and also the mediating effect of Public Service Motivation (PSM) and goal clarity. Sun & Anderson (2012) argue that Transformational leadership is the most appropriate style (Angus-Leppan, Metcalf, & Benn, 2010), but it must be augmented with civic capacity. Secondly, leadership is stated as an emergent property of the collaboration (Eberhard et al, 2013), rather than a specific role or person and has therefore been characterised as distributed leadership, because individuals 'step forward' and 'step back' into roles to serve the group and the common purpose (Mandell and Keast, 2009). Further, research from Health and Education sectors highlight that initiatives with strong collaborative leadership approaches also need an increased resource allocation and coordination (Bruce, 2012). Head (2010), however, warns about the 'high offsetting costs

leaders in both public sector jurisdictions face similar issues and these have been exacerbated by the current turbulent climate.

of intensive and continuous collaboration’; it is not the ‘standard solution’ for resolving complexity and uncertainty. Finally, Maio et al (2012) based on three-wave survey data obtained from 239 public sector employees in China, found that ethical leadership² has an inverted u-shaped (curvilinear) relationship with unethical pro-organisational behaviour (UPB). Affective³ trust rather than cognitive trust is the mechanism by which servant leadership induces higher levels of commitment (Maio et al, 2014).

3. Behavioural and skills-based approach leadership

Stewart (2014) put forth the concept of Innovative public sector leadership as requiring forms of dual leadership based on partnerships between innovators and managers: one manifestation of the complementary-skills approach to leadership. For effective public sector leadership, in addition to a clear understanding of the authorizing environment and how to manage it is required (Gallop, 2011), a ‘recognition of the different activities and duties involved in public service, leaders need personal relationship skills, management expertise, political savvy and the capacity to adapt’ (Hartley et al., 2007). Developments in the Organizational Behaviour literature are pointing towards the creation of ‘positive work environments’ (Kimberley & Härtel, 2008) through ‘positive leadership behaviours’ to achieve employee well-being, better commitment to organizations, and better functioning.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

A key limitation of this study is that it covered only 2 databases, included 15 journals and 24 articles, and some relevant journals were excluded from scope. Secondly, the review was intended to cover a shorter time span of past 6 years and studies that were published earlier were not included. And finally, the regional focus of the study was inhibiting in providing a comprehensive view of the research across the full breadth of the field.

² Brown et al. (2005) define ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p.120). UPB defined as unethical behaviour conducted by employees with the aim of benefiting their organization (Maio et al, 2012).

³ Affective trust, refers to what develops from the emotional ties between the subordinate and the supervisor as they engage in a process of social exchange (Yang and Mossholder 2010). It develops when the subordinate genuinely believes that the supervisor cares for their welfare and acts with their well-being in mind (Colquitt et al. 2007). Cognitive trust, refers to the trust which results from a rational evaluation by the subordinate of the supervisor’s salient personal characteristics such as their competence, dependability, and reliability (Wang et al. 2010).

DICSUSSION

Van Wart (2013) argues that the question, is not whether leadership is the most important factor or is so minor as to be ignored, but rather to get a sense of when it is important, and the precise nature and processes of leadership that lead to success in the specific situation regarding the criterion studied such as performance, accountability, employee satisfaction, organizational change, etc. This review has covered all the above cases, and in addition it has surfaced other themes such as gender-based bias towards women and minorities in leadership roles, relationship between leadership and HRM practices and finally, it identifies a greater awareness among researchers on the contextual contingency factors within which leadership roles are enacted. Often practitioners are served up decontextualized and prescriptive leadership models promising to “fix the problem”, but in reality its applicability and implementation within the public sector is problematic. Therefore, the review findings further present an opportunity for a dialogue between the academic and practitioner community in setting the scene for greater collaboration.

This review has found that the post-structuralist approach within CLS, noted by Van Wart (2013) as ‘one of the main advances in mainstream literature’, calls into questions the prevailing view that leader-led relations are inherently consensual by proposing that the relations and practices of leaders and followers are mutually constituting and co-produced. Bringing into focus the emotional side (Glasby et al. 2011, Robinson et al. 2011) of the leader-follower relationship, suggests that the traditional dichotomous identities of leader and follower are increasingly becoming ambiguous and blurred. Followers within distributed leadership programs may act as 'informal leaders' and conversely, leaders in some cases are required to act as 'calculable followers' (Collinson & Collinson, 2005). Leaders cannot predict or assume followers motivation, obedience and loyalty. Thus, in the context of causally indeterminate and unpredictable events, 'romanticizing leaders' merely provides a reassuring, simplified way of understanding complex organisational processes (Meindl et al, 1985).

This review has also picked up numerous dichotomies and dualisms (Fairhurst, 2001) such as leadership/management, transformational/transactional, autocratic/participatory and leaders/context, which are prevalent in mainstream leadership studies thus suggesting a "bi-polar shopping list approach"

(Grint, 1997: 3) being adopted by the researchers. Fairhurst (2001) problematizes these, identifying the primary dualism as that between the individual and Collective⁴. This privileging of one 'side' of the binary at the expense of the other is referred to as 'the inevitable heirarchization implicit in dualistic construction' (Baxter and Hughes, 2004) .Thus, there is a recurrent dualistic tendency in leadership studies to rely upon over-simplified binaries that elevate one side of the dichotomy whilst marginalizing other (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996).

The findings from this review suggest that leaders alone cannot give effect to organizational change processes (Berman, 2014), rather multitude of conflicts, paradoxes, ambiguities and tensions within which leadership identity and power relations are conceived and enacted are of greater relevance. Mainstream leadership studies that tend to privilege leaders have long since been critiqued by scholars (Prince, 2005; Collinson, 2005; Ray et al, 2004; Gronn, 2002; Meindl et al, 1985). This shift has called for a need to rethink leadership as a set of dialectic relationships (Collinson, 2005). It has been acknowledged in the past that the leaders' contribution to the collective enterprise is inevitably somewhat constrained, closely tied to external factors outside of a leaders control such as those affecting whole industries (Meindl et al, 1985).

Studies with strong gender and race-biased themes are noted in this review. Numerous feminist studies in the past demonstrate, workplace power relations can be highly gendered, 'masculinity' is associated with leadership, with men's power and influence frequently remaining dominant in ways that reproduce women's marginalization (Cockburn 1991). While notions of leadership are often saturated with the gendered imagery of the assertive and heroic male, women have been largely excluded from senior positions (Sinclair 1998). Given contemporary developments that assert alternate leadership ontologies – as relational, affiliative and emergent (Cunliffe, 2009; Denis, Langley & Sergi, 2012; Gagnon, Vough & Nickerson, 2012; Trehan, 2007) – traditional, highly masculine approaches would appear to be counterproductive (Collinson & Collinson, 2014). Also, the issue of complacency towards

⁴ Fairhurst (2001) argues that studies typically concentrate either on leaders, in ways that overlook the dynamics of the collective, or on the latter thereby neglecting the former's basis for action.

institutional racism takes centre stage, especially in developed countries descending from Anglo-Saxon tradition that express dissent from the minority leadership voices.

This review refocuses our attention on the problem associated with the transferability of private sector management methodologies, skills expectancy and training programs into the public sector domain only reinforces the embeddedness of public sector leadership model within often competing political drivers and organisational cultures. Many ostensibly international Leadership Development Programs are highly US-centric and western in their assumptions, methodologies and aims (Goffee & Jones, 2006). Although this review notes the positive impact of performance management systems in the area of strategic management, caution needs to be exercised against unanticipated and highly distorted outcomes, particularly when measurement systems and targets are unrealistic and cut across and contradict one another (Collinson & Collinson, 2007).

This review has found that the diversity of methods used by the researchers in the field does provide rich and insightful findings which further deepens our understanding, taking us a step closer to the sense-making process that gets implicitly called upon because of the divergent nature of the subject. It appears that field is fast expanding with interesting research being conducted across the Education and Health sectors, with a growing recognition of the contextually contingent factors, complexities, dichotomies, contradictions and ambiguities that are associated with the field which are discussed in past studies.

CONCLUSION

This literature review was tasked with critically assessing the recent research developments within the field of public sector leadership across the New Zealand and Australian regions. Secondly, it sought out a need to facilitate a dialogue between the scholarly and practitioner communities across the Tasman in an effort to galvanize a common and coherent understanding of the field.

In conclusion, the results suggest that although there exist a mix of empirical and non-empirical research in the region, empirical studies in the field are more dominant in their numbers. This signals a stronger focus on empirical research across these two countries. However, it appears that the field

remains divided into sub-units with little coherence. It is unclear whether this sub-division has promulgated because of the development of differential leadership theories, models and frameworks, or whether these difference are a causation of the existing sub-divisions in the field. But either ways, it has implied consequences on the advancement of the field as a whole. Notwithstanding the limitations of this small scale regional study, this review makes a small contribution by resurfacing this as a problem.

Finally, it questions the disintegrated and disconnected state of the public sector leadership research within the Trans-Tasman context and calls for more collaborative research on grounds of fostering stronger cohesion and convergence of research needs and agendas. This review urges the scholarly research community to band together by taking a more collective focus that not only accounts for the segregated state of the field across multiple domains, but is also responsive in addressing the rather large variance resulting from adoption of fragmentary, inconsistent and contradictory taxonomies.

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Table 1

TABLE 1 Number of public sector leadership articles by database

Journal	Web of Science	Scopus
<i>American Review of Public Administration</i>	1	-
<i>Australian Journal of Public Administration</i>	5	2
<i>Canadian Public-Adminisatration</i>	1	-
<i>Environmental and Planning C-government and Policy</i>	1	-
<i>International journal of organizational Analysis</i>	1	-
<i>International Public Management Journal</i>	2	-
<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	2	-
<i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i>	3	-
<i>Policy and Society</i>	1	-
<i>Public Administration</i>	4	-
<i>Public Administration and Development</i>	1	-
<i>Public Administration Review</i>	2	-
<i>Public Management Review</i>	1	-
<i>Public Money and Management</i>	2	-
<i>Public Personnel Management</i>	1	-
<i>Review of Policy Research</i>	1	-
<i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i>	2	-
<i>Urban Policy and Research</i>	-	1
<i>Social Science & Medicine</i>	-	1
<i>Tourism Geographies</i>	-	1
<i>Resources Policy</i>	-	1
<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Business administration</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management</i>	-	4
<i>Journal of School Health</i>	-	1
<i>Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector quarterly</i>	-	1
<i>Research in Transportation Economics</i>	-	1
<i>Australian Journal of International Affairs</i>	-	1
<i>International journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit organisation</i>	-	1
<i>Food Policy</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Asia-Pacific Economy</i>	-	1
<i>Sustainability</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Future Studies</i>	-	1
<i>International Review of Red Cross</i>	-	1
<i>Workshop Wollongong University</i>	-	1
<i>Discourse and Communication</i>	-	1
<i>Health Promotion International</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	-	1
<i>International journal of public administration</i>	-	1
<i>International Journal of Public SectorManagement</i>	-	2
<i>International Journal of Electronic Rural and Remote health Research, Education, Practice and Policy</i>	-	1
<i>Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Report</i>	-	1
<i>Health Soc Care Community</i>	-	1
<i>Australian library journal</i>	-	1
<i>Health Promotion International</i>	-	1
<i>Book Chapter</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	-	1

Table 2

TABLE 2 Public leadership focus: administrative or other

Journal	Administrative	Others
<i>Australian Journal of Public Administration</i>	4	-
<i>Canadian Public-Adminisatration</i>	1	-
<i>International journal of organizational Analysis</i>	1	-
<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	1	-
<i>Policy and Society</i>	1	-
<i>Public Administration</i>	4	-
<i>Public Administration and Development</i>	1	-
<i>Public Administration Review</i>	1	-
<i>Public Money and Management</i>	2	-
<i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i>	2	-
<i>Social Science & Medicine</i>	-	1
<i>Resources Policy</i>	-	1
<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Business administration</i>	1	-
<i>Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of School Health</i>	-	1
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	1	-

Table 3

TABLE 3 Methods used in public administration journals

Journals in Public Administration	Database	Case study	Comparative case study	Non-empirical
<i>Australian Journal of Public Administration</i>	2	1		1
<i>Canadian Public-Adminisatration</i>		1		
<i>International journal of organizational Analysis</i>		1		
<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>				1
<i>Policy and Society</i>		1		
<i>Public Administration</i>	1	1		1
<i>Public Administration and Development</i>				1
<i>Public Administration Review</i>				1
<i>Public Money and Management</i>			1	1
<i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i>	2			
<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Business administration</i>				1
<i>Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management</i>		1		
<i>Journal of School Health</i>	1			
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	1			