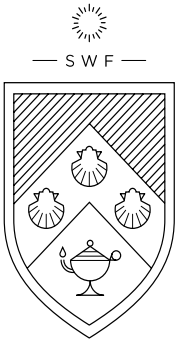

Leadership for public service: working with notions of co-creation of leadership and management roles in UK public service contexts

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This paper proposes a model of leadership and management in public service roles based on the concept of co-creation as an alternative to current dominant approaches in public service contexts that are largely shaped and influenced by ideologies associated with New Public Management (NPM).

First, the paper sets out three main criticisms and challenges of NPM and the distorting effect that it can have by privileging individualising rather than socialising effects of governance.

Second, I explore co-creation as an approach to management and leadership using data gathered from a two year study of leadership and management with Methodists Presbyters.

Finally, I present my model, elaborating it further in the rest of the paper. The model proposed offers an alternative approach to governance, leadership and management in sectors such as education, health and local government all of which currently appear to be suffering from a crisis of leadership.

Key words: *New Public Management, co-created leadership, public service, governance.*

Introduction

'It's no longer just about providing services, it's about working with communities and other organisations. It's about doing more with less and ensuring we spend our diminished budget as effectively as possible.'

(Lord Peter Smith, Leader of Wigan Council, 2014)

Smith, speaking in support of the *'Wigan Deal',* epitomises the challenge faced by UK public service organisations in leading, managing and delivering essential public services to the communities that they serve in the context of the current financial crisis. The *Wigan Deal* is one council's response to the need to cut more than 30% from its overall budget by 2016/17. The deal proposes a new contract with residents under which the council will work more collaboratively with the community, offering the opportunity for local community groups and other organisations to manage and lead the delivery of essential public services. The financial crisis presents many challenges, but also presents opportunities for those in leadership to rethink the ways in which they govern, lead and manage the delivery of essential public services.

Such a re-think may be long overdue; despite successive drives over the last three decades to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness through the introduction of New Public Management (NPM), public satisfaction in areas such as health, education and local government have all declined (Brookes, 2014; O'Byrne and Bond 2014; Bond and O'Byrne, 2013; Gruening, 2001; Barzelay, 2000). Since the early 1980s, these sectors have been subject to an onslaught of reform, regulation and top-down approaches to change, usually characterised as NPM (Pollitt, 1993; Hood, 1991, 1995). NPM is marked by market-led reform, large scale restructuring programmes, increased external accountability and a focus on importing leadership and management models from the private sector. The ideologies associated with NPM may, recent evidence suggests, have largely alienated professionals delivering frontline services and their service users from local governance and management of these services (O'Byrne and Bond, 2014; Bond and O'Byrne, 2013; Diefenbach, 2009; Broadbent, Dietrich and Roberts, 2007; Gombrich, 2000).

Other high profile cases reported in the media, such as significant failures of management in the NHS in relation to Staffordshire Hospital (Healthcare Commission, 2009); the attempted illegal closure of services at Lewisham Hospital (BBC, 2013a); investigations into the efficacy and legality of leadership practices in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Telegraph, 2014) and the decline of UK pupils' scores in PISA tests (BBC, 2013b) hint at continued deep-seated problems in management and leadership in public services.

These apparently sustained and entrenched problems present an opportunity to rethink and reframe current approaches to governance, leadership and management in public service contexts. Public service organisations, and leadership within them, are complex systems of human interaction that embody intra- and interdependent relationships between a number of key stakeholders including central government, elected leaders, managers, employees and service users. This suggests the desirability of approaches to governance, leadership and management that are socially inclusive and recognise the complexity of human interactions in public service organisations. It further situates leadership and management in these contexts as a dynamic process that should both help frame and be shaped by the communities in which they operate. In this paper I explore these issues and propose a model of co-created leadership, grounded in the experiences and practices of the Methodist Church, which might provide useful insights into possible further public sector reform.

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows. First, I problematise notions of management and leadership as informed by ideologies underpinning NPM. Second, I present the Methodist Church as an exemplar of a model of governance, leadership and management based on an approach of co-creation. Third, I draw the threads of this exemplar out into a model which, I suggest, might meet some of the shortcomings identified in the current dominance of NPM. This is followed by discussion and conclusions that link the emerging model of co-created leadership with some current trends in leadership theory.

Concepts of management and leadership in UK public services

Over the last three decades, NPM has been the dominant paradigm of leadership and management in public services in the UK. NPM is strongly influenced by public choice theory, principal-agent theory and transaction cost economics (Gruening, 2001; Dunsire, 1995; Pollitt, 1990; Aucoin, 1990). An essential principle of NPM is that differences between public and private sector approaches to management and leadership should be minimised, thus ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of public services (Barzelay, 2001; Hood, 1991, 1995; Pollitt, 1990). Whilst NPM is generally associated with public sector reform in industrialised economies, it has also exerted a significant influence on approaches to management and leadership throughout the not-for-profit sector in many OECD countries. Many areas of public service, from national and local government to education and health, have been significantly influenced by this approach to governance, management and leadership.

There are at least three main failings identifiable with NPM-inspired approaches to leadership and management in public service organisations. First, evidence suggests that NPM has failed,
in practice, to empower local leaders and organisations to shape the delivery of their services in the context of local community needs (Drechsler, 2005). NPM, in seeking to move away from a bureaucratic model, has not significantly secured the delivery of local services according to community need. Provision of services such as health, education and housing policy are still largely driven by central government and an increasing number of standard setting quangos, thus reducing the ability of local service providers to envision or enact alternative models of provision. As Drechsler (2005) notes, this diminution of local leadership and management can be seen as a concomitant of the privileging of contracting out to the private sector of many essential local services, leading to a reduction in citizen participation and rights, merely disguising the role of the imperial bureaucrat as the entrepreneurial bureaucrat.

Local governance through NPM has been marked by a complex and often burdensome culture of regulation, audit and inspection that may stifle opportunity for local innovation in service delivery significantly. Thus Lapsley (2009), in a paper tellingly entitled *NPM: The Cruellest Invention of The Human Spirit,* catalogues how the excessive use of management consultants, significant failures in the development of e-government, the growth of an audit society and the increasing use of risk management have led to NPM failing to deliver on all of its promises. Lapsley cites the case of the NHS, which has a heavy inspection and audit culture with at least 56 oversight bodies, and the Health Commission's ironically titled 'light touch' annual 'health check' that requires 500 separate information topics to be reported on. Lapsley also argues that, in areas such as ambulance services and policing, target setting can distort the activity and work of these professionals and lead to gaming and manipulation to ensure that national targets rather than local needs are met.

Processes of contracting out, the reduction in powers of local authorities, and increasing regulation and inspection frameworks mean that notions of public

services meeting and being accountable to local service users have largely remained unrealised. It may be that, because of the audit culture and inspection regime, more central control is exerted than under NPM's bureaucratic precursors. Wright sums up the impact of NPM on democracy in public services, arguing that it 'may be convenient for politicians to hide behind the smoke-screen of managerial decision and autonomy, but this hardly adds to the democratic quality of decision-making' (1997:11).

Second, NPM practices have failed to engage with the historical and cultural specificity of the organisations and communities in which it operates; this is marked by a correlation between NPM and the demise of the professional as manager – part of an increasing general distrust and disenfranchising of professionals in all areas of contemporary society (Gombrich, 2000; Broadbent, Dietrich, and Roberts, 1997; Krause, 1995). In place of such professionals, there has been a proliferation of the practice of 'general management' throughout the public services, with management idealised as a set of neutral, context non-specific skills and technologies. Thus areas such as health, schools and universities have seen the role of the professional significantly diminished in respect to their involvement in governance, management and leadership of the services in which they work.

Recognising that such transformations might be problematic in terms of creating dynamic management appropriate to context, there has been a more recent emphasis on leadership rather than management. In what O'Reilly and Read (2010) call 'leaderism', the new ideology is one of leadership within the tight boundaries of market ideologies. Leaders are free to lead, unencumbered by clumsy management strategies, but they can only lead in tightly constrained directions. Wallis and Dollery (1997) argue that these leadership discourses remove the need to wrestle with the challenge of aligning principal and agent by making the issue the establishment of a common goal between leaders and led. O'Reilly and Read suggest that such a shift could re-empower the role of professionals:

'The emerging discourse of 'leaderism' provides a potential way of unravelling this new 'power/knowledge knot' by repositioning service managers and professionals as strategic leaders and operational practitioners whose job it is to generate the long-term visions and develop the practical implementation technologies through which the needs and choices of much more demanding and discerning service consumers can be met.' (O'Reilly and Read, 2010: 972)

Whilst the concept of 'leaderism' might at first glance seem to address some of the challenges of NPM raised here, as O'Reilly and Read (2010) note, it is really an extension and hybridisation of NPM that still operates from the same basic ideologies driven through a neoliberal agenda. Thus in many respects their analysis and labelling of these approaches to management as 'leaderism' resonate with Drechsler's earlier claim that we are merely seeing the imperial bureaucrat recast as the entrepreneurial bureaucrat.

Third, NPM has also shaped the models of corporate governance and accountability introduced into public services. Munro and Mouristen (1996) state that governance should be viewed and understood as a broad concept, one that extends beyond formal structures and as encapsulating notions of how individuals interact and, in so-doing, how they form and reproduce their individual and collective identities. Roberts (1991; 1996; 2001), in exploring leadership and identity formation in relation to governance structures, distinguishes between 'individualising' and 'socialising' forms of accountability and suggests that the former can be destructive in privileging notions of the self and failing to recognise the interdependent nature of organisational contexts. Roberts clearly articulates the effect that this can have on leader-member relations.

'Individualizing effects, which are associated with the operation of market mechanisms and formal hierarchical accountability, involve the production and reproduction of a sense of self as singular and solitary with only an external and instrumental relationship to others. In contrast, socializing forms of accountability, associated with face-to-face accountability between people of relatively equal power, constitute a sense of the interdependence of self and other, both instrumental and moral.' (2001: 1547)

Much UK public sector governance has its ideological roots in agency theory (Ross, 1973; Mitnick, 1973), with a resulting emphasis on principal-agent relationships. This tends to perpetuate further the notion that strong individualistic leadership qualities or traits equates with successful leadership in public service contexts (Roberts, 2001). In contradistinction, Perrow (1986) points to the cooperative potentials of agency whilst Donaldson and Davis (1991), who argue for a stewardship governance model, and Powell's (1996) discussion of trust offer alternative conceptions of governance as a relational and socialising process.

Individualising trends in public sector governance are manifest, combined with leaderism, in the creation of new roles and bodies within the public services. Thus, the UK has newly created elected commissioners of police forces or school and hospital boards released from what advocates of NPM see as the shackles and burdens of local authority accountability.

In sum, NPM promotes and encourages approaches to management and leadership that reinforce individualism and self-interest as key characteristics of successful managers. Bach and Bordogna note that the result is 'an assumption that all individuals are self-interested and seek to maximise their own utility' (2014: 2282). Despite attempts to temper this through approaches such as 'leaderism', the dominant neoliberal ideology that underpins NPM still perpetuates the context in which the three main criticisms considered above continue to flourish and thus ultimately lead to a de-democratisation of local governance, management and leadership.

Methodism as a resource for an alternative

Given these limitations of management and leadership under NPM regimes, I now turn to the Methodist Church in the UK as an exemplar of co-created leadership and management of a form that might act as a resource for public sector reform. The data used here is drawn from a two-year study of governance, leadership and management undertaken within the Methodist Church in the UK between 2011 – 2013 (Guerrier and Bond, 2012, 2013). Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with Methodist presbyters and those who work with them. Further quantitative data was gained through an online survey of 313 presbyters. All respondents have been anonymised through a pseudonym.

The Methodists are the fourth largest Christian denomination in Britain. Founded by John Wesley in the eighteenth century, Methodism is a non-conformist Protestant movement. There are about 5000 Methodist church communities in the UK, organised into circuits and, within them, districts. The key precepts of Methodism have led to the development of a structure which is different from many other established churches. Methodism emphasises egalitarianism, inclusiveness and openness (Clutterbuck, 2011; Methodist Church, 2012) and distinctions between lay members and clergy are minimised. There is an expectation that lay people will take on formal roles in organising, managing and setting the direction of the church at all levels of its operation. In terms of its governance and structural configuration, Methodism embraces a philosophy of organisation that it terms *Connexion;* the circuit structure is designed to provide a *Connexion* which supports and holds the Church together (Clutterbuck, 2011). Whilst this structure is complex it is non-

hierarchical and for many it is what attracts them to Methodism, as two presbyters told us.

I think what's particularly.....probably the reason, above all, that I am a Methodist, is the lack of hierarchy in Methodism, and the sense of sharing, and of equal responsibility... (Adam)

you know, the sense of all being one, all sharing the responsibility for the decisions and, you know, we don't have the hierarchy above us, you know, imposing things. So that... as I say, I think that, over the years, has reaffirmed why I feel comfortable as a Methodist, and that has led naturally, I think, into my leadership style, and the way I've talked with the people in my churches, rather than, sort of talking to them, so much. (Bob)

This in turn, leads the church to work with notions of 'oversight' as its primary approach to management and leadership. Oversight, in this context, is a derivation of the Greek word *episkope – to* keep an eye on what is happening. It is fundamental to Methodist practice that oversight is a shared responsibility between different groups, individuals and formal bodies across the whole church. The ultimate governing body is the Methodist Conference, a gathering of both lay and ordained representatives, which meets every June. A key facet of the exercise of governance and leadership within Methodism relates to the nature of the relationship that presbyters have with the church and the local communities in which they are 'stationed' to serve. Leaders often act as stewards or servants, and work with those whom they are serving in a complex relationship that recognises the integrity and egalitarianism in co-creating these relationships. One of the presbyters interviewed encapsulated the complexity of these relationships.

And I think there's also within the church quite a strange, well, unusual relationship in that, effectively, I'm employed by the congregation and yet in a position of oversight over them, and that's quite an interesting tension. (Elizabeth)

All presbyters are expected to be itinerant, and to be available for 'stationing' to a role in a specific location by Conference at the beginning of each church year in September. In practice, presbyters typically stay at least five years in each appointment, often extended for another five years. These structural configurations and pluralistic approaches to management and leadership have led Ritcher (2002) to describe Methodism as 'a child of modernity'. The Methodist Church evinces a deep suspicion of and sceptical approach to individualised power and authority in its complex governance structures, and principles of oversight and *Connexion*. This stance towards individual power and authority in relation to management, leadership and governance, and a predisposition towards egalitarian and collegial relationships, has resulted in a strong orientation towards collective decision making, with a distinctive focus on the importance of groups, collaboration between lay and ordained members and the exercise of restraint on individualism.

The itinerant nature of ministry within Methodism also shapes the context within which management and leadership relations are formed. Many presbyters described how they tried to ensure that members in their churches retained responsibility for management and governance and that the presbyter's role was to assist with, rather than to direct, that process. Presbyters were very aware of the need to ensure that the congregations take ownership of the development of the church because they would not be there permanently. Ruth, a presbyter, emphasised this when talking about vision and strategy in relation to churches in her circuit.

And, how do I help you and enable you to own what those are, and to do them? So that when I'm not here anymore you know what it is, but equally it's not that something has been started or has happened, which as soon as I'm not there everyone's like, oh, thank God, we can stop doing that now. (Ruth)

Historically, Methodism has strong ideological connections with notions of social justice and working closely with the communities in which churches are situated. In our quantitative survey, 76% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the role of the circuit presbyter has to be crafted to meet the needs of the local community in which their churches are based. Joseph illustrates this point in relation to his enactment of his leadership and management responsibilities within his large and diverse circuit.

I'm going to the council estate now, I've got to lead in a different way there, I've got to think, relate, they don't follow any rules, so I've got used to that. And then we go to the village and again it's very different again. (Joseph)

For those seeking to effect change, this strong commitment to a core set of values and beliefs in relation to management, governance and leadership can present challenges. Several presbyters and lay members recounted stories about such things as changing the seating in a church, merging two choirs or where to place the candlesticks at Christmas which, it was evident, became leadership tests or challenges, as Naomi explains.

And I've never tried to work in an organisation where the roots go down that far and try and get people to change. You're dealing with emotions, you know, in a way that I think you don't in a lot of organisations. You know, we can't move out of this church because I was married here. I kind of understand that at some level but they're not normally the kinds of things that you'd be having in an office move discussion (Naomi)

A respect for the culture, history and roots of the organisation does not, however, mean that change is impossible to implement. Rather it tends to ensure that change is decided and enacted through processes of discussion, dialogue and consensus building and in this particular context high levels of discernment of God's will is required. Thus change often evolves and is driven incrementally and collaboratively, rather than through large scale, top-down approaches that have been so endemic in much of the public services.

There was a strong preference amongst the respondent presbyters for a participative and democratic style of leadership. Organisational theorists have long noted that there can be a difference between the approaches that people espouse in relation to leadership and how they act in practice (Argyris, 1977) and a limitation of the data is that we were not able to research leadership in action. Nevertheless, those who work with presbyters felt that in general they try to be participative and inclusive. One of the main reasons that many cited for adopting this approach was its fit with the principles of Methodism: indeed it was the lack of hierarchy and principle of shared responsibility that had drawn many to Methodism rather than to other Christian denominations initially.

I think what's particularly... probably the reason, above all, that I am a Methodist, is the lack of hierarchy in Methodism, and the sense of sharing, and of equal responsibility, and so therefore, any attempt to put a minister on a pedestal, which some congregations still like to do, and obviously was very typical, again, you know, a generation or two ago... I mean, it's natural for me to resist anything of that sort, and it's not natural for me to try to impose anything, or even to want to try to impose anything. I think I've got a, sort of, natural, sort of, democratic way of working. (Adam)

Sarah and Jacob offer further support that approaches to leadership and management within Methodism are based on notions of collaboration and co-creation. They outline in particular how, in working with other members of the circuit team such as fellow presbyters and lay members, they adopt a participative and non-directive approach to leadership.

I would like to think that I'm not too directive; I like to encourage people, I like to give people space to discuss things. I don't like to impose things, I like to work collaboratively as far as I can.... (Sarah)

... one, kind of, principle, one, kind of, vision that I would, sort of, be running with, it would be to, sort of, say to everybody, what is the contribution that you think... what is it that you bring to the table to, sort of, do? And then to, sort of, try and find a way in which they can actually use that, which I think, kind of, runs against... I don't know whether it counts as a management model because, I mean, in my experience of management, it's about somebody telling somebody else what to do, whereas I think actually it needs to, sort of, run the other way around. This is what I can do. Can you give me the opportunity? Can you help me find the place to actually, sort of, do this? (Jacob)

As noted, Methodism also has a strong tradition of lay involvement. Elizabeth recognises that the nature and function of her management and leadership role is heavily shaped and influenced by the nature and skills of the membership with whom she is working. She contrasts how context and skills sets of those with whom she is working can directly affect the roles and responsibilities that she needs to engage with.

I think also we're fortunate in this area that there are a number of professionals or retired professionals that can offer expertise. My previous appointment was quite different to that, and so I think, you know, I found myself doing, kind of, things there that I don't have to do now because someone's actually competent to do it. (Elizabeth)

Methodism faces challenges in maintaining and sustaining a model of management and governance that relies heavily on lay involvement and participation. In particular, as a result of what Clutterbuck (2011) has termed the missing generation, there are significantly fewer members between the ages of 25 and 55 who have traditionally performed these roles. Some presbyters described how these shortages were impacting on their role and the challenges it presented in terms of maintaining approaches to leadership and management that were collaborative. Ruth, a presbyter in a semi-rural location with some churches in her circuit in decline and many of her members already busy with work in their secular roles, managed to reframe the notion of volunteering into one of discipleship, which made it easier for her to persuade members to volunteer.

When people see themselves as a volunteer, and when I look at them as a volunteer, I find it very difficult to get them to do things, or tell them what to do. Oh, they are just a volunteer, you know, you are the paid minister and you have to do it until you die. But, I think what I'm trying to do is to get people to see it as part of their discipleship, and then it's doing it all for the Lord, not for the minister. You are not helping the minister out, in a way. You are doing your own call, fulfilling your own ministry, your own call to the Lord. (Ruth)

Despite diminishing resources and external governance pressures arising from legislation on charities' management and safeguarding, many presbyters have managed to maintain more participative approaches to management and leadership, as Rebekah revealed.

There are differences, great differences in being a manager in the world and within the church.....There are some....having said that, I mean, I'm a believer in the Kingdom of God and the right way to do things, and I feel very sorry, but...for those who can't do....who don't feel that they can do things in a Christian way out in the wide world, particularly in business. (Rebekah)

I'm not their boss. Now whether in the paperwork, I am, it is written in the job description, I'm the line manager. But actually the Church is their boss, but then I'm the one who manages and works with them. (Joseph)

...it's all about people, that's the thing; I have to keep telling myself, it's about people. The more you talk about management and leadership or oversight, you can easily start to think about it's about policy and plans and visions and goals. And you think no, you've got to limit that. I sometimes think people like me should just have it up on your door – it's about people stupid. (Joseph)

Another key facet prevalent within Methodism is working with notions of diversity and pluralism. Presbyters are individuals and have differences in outlook, beliefs and values, whether theologically or secularly informed. However, as the quotes below suggest, this diversity is celebrated and worked with to ensure the best fit between the skill sets they have and the needs and direction of the circuit in which they are working.

I mean, one of the real joys of the job is just how many different strands it does have, which also means that each of us, I guess, can be our own man or woman, as a Presbyter, because we're able to use the different gifts that we have, and actually perform the task in very different ways, and yet be equally valid and accepting.....accepted as Presbyters. (Adam)

...there's a lot of flexibility; I mean we have a great privilege, really. I mean you can do all sorts of things with your time. (Issac)

Towards a model of co-created leadership

The focus of this paper has been on developing an alternative framework to NPM based on co-creationary approaches to management and leadership in public service contexts. Fundamental to developing a model of co-created leadership for public services is the notion that the services provided will be fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of the society and community that they seek to serve. This places management and leadership within public services in a wider social framework, where key stakeholders and service users should be empowered and encouraged to engage in determining the formation, provision and delivery of services. This is in marked contrast to the quasi-market-led frameworks that dominate NPM and the emphasis on efficiency at the expense of effectiveness. Whilst efficiency and outputs are important in a model of co-created leadership, these have to be contextualised and defined according to local need and may vary from community to community. This in itself renders comparison between service providers through such formats as generic benchmarks and league table rankings highly problematic if not irrelevant. Leadership and management is thus shaped in response to these wider environmental contexts and the role, purpose and direction of leadership will all be influenced through a process of dialogue and discussion.

Second, a model of co-created leadership as demonstrated in the Methodist Church recognises the value of culture, history and tradition. It works with these complex social processes in seeking to promote change and development. It also recognises that challenging or seeking to change these

dominant paradigms needs to be a socially inclusive process. These models of leadership serve to decentre the notion of leadership discourses and move towards recognising leadership as a complex social process which is relational, interactive and interdependent. Conceptions of leadership from this paradigm are more concerned with leadership as a process of participation and collective agency in creating and sustaining trajectories of direction rather than exercising control and authority. Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012: 254) note that the effect of this is that:

'The place of individuals is thus reduced: actors are present in leadership – enacting it, influencing it, and creating it – but they are not "containers" of leadership.'

Such a perspective is not that far removed from Drucker's notion of management as a liberal art (Drucker, 2003). Influenced from a Christian perspective, Drucker offers an alternative conception of management which sees a wider social imperative and context for the operation and practice of management. From this perspective he also sees power as being necessarily mediated and in direct relation to responsibilities.

In developing the model of leadership and management as a process of co-creation, more recent conceptions of leadership as a social process are also of interest. Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012) have conducted an extensive review of current streams of research in this area and have termed these approaches *leadership in the plural.* Within this categorisation they identify four key streams of research and it is the stream associated with *'producing leadership through interaction'* (p. 211) that has most resonance with the concept of co-created leadership that this paper advocates and explores.

Leadership in the plural includes conceptions of leadership that have been termed distributed (Gibb, 1954; Bolden, 2011; Currie and Lockett, 2011), shared (Buchanan et al, 2007; Raelin, 2003), emergent (Hollander, 1961), participative (Vroom and Yetton, 1973) and servant (van Dierendonck, 2010; Greenleaf, 1977). Fletcher (2004: 650) encapsulates what leadership in the plural.

[It] re-envisions the who and where of leadership by focusing on the need to distribute the tasks and responsibilities of leadership up, down and across the hierarchy. It re-envisions the what of leadership by articulating leadership as a social process that occurs in and through human interactions, and it articulates the how of leadership by focusing on the more mutual, less hierarchical leadership practices and skills needed to engage collaborative, collective learning.

The model graphic below is represented as a heuristic framework, and has been developed through engagement with key literature and use of data from the Methodist study. The model is not intended to suggest that the relational aspects are formed incrementally or hierarchically but does seek to represent the relative importance of understanding management and leadership in public service contexts as being socially and relationally rather than individually constructed. Thus whilst individual skills, styles, values and ideologies play a role in the formation of an approach to management and leadership, these are developed and refined within the wider context of community/service needs, organisational values and culture and principally in relationship with others. The inverted triangle reflects a view that models of management and leadership in public service contexts should start their focus with context and need and seek to allow individuals to formulate their contribution to management and leadership within this wider context.

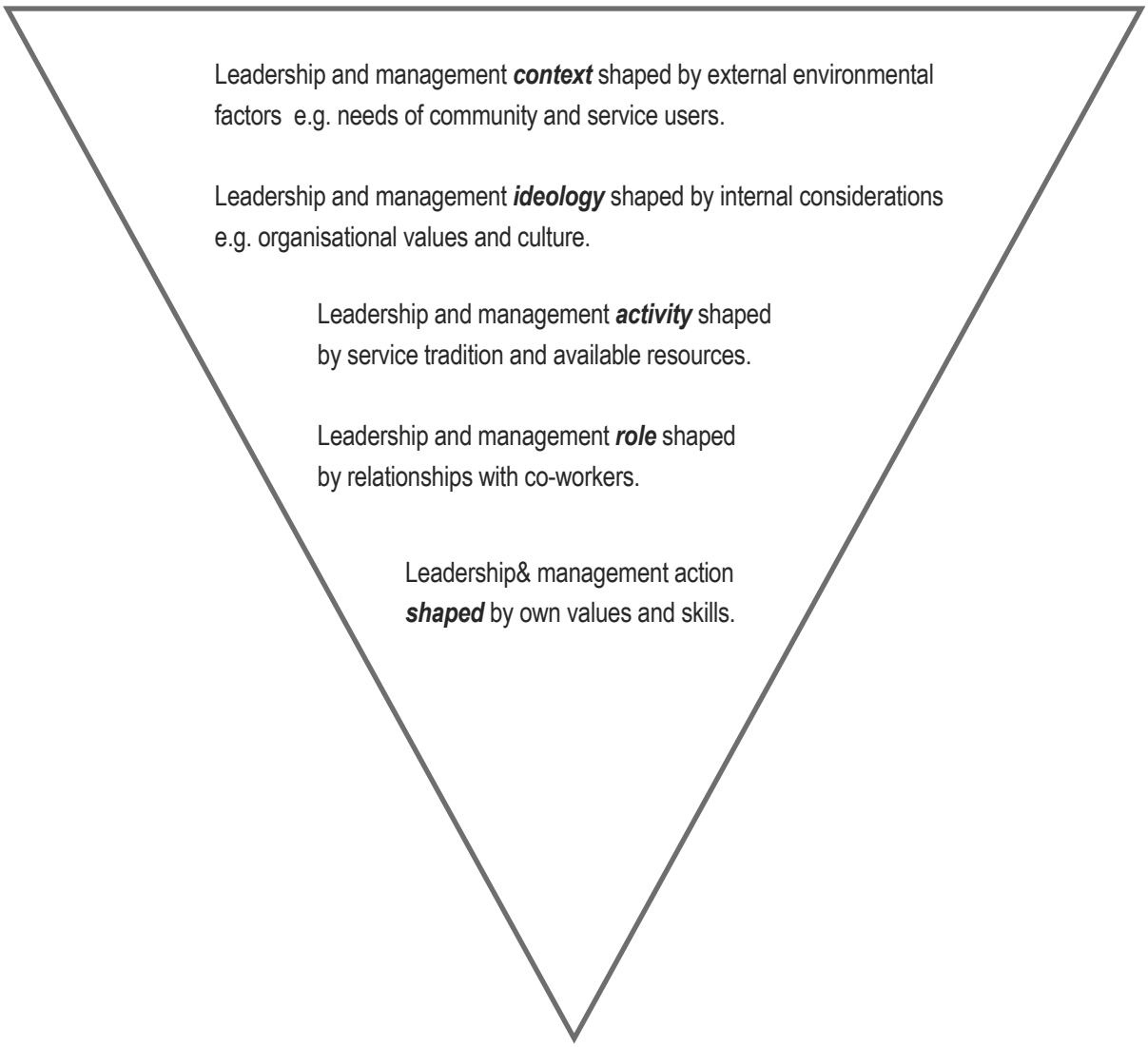

Figure one: Towards a model of co-created leadership

Co-created Leadership

The emphasis on the relational aspect of the model also recognises that individuals involved in processes of management and leadership will have their own ideologies and motivations for the work that they do. Unlike NPM, a model of management and leadership based on co-creation sees the crafting of this role taking place in relationship with others. This means that, through processes of discussion, dialogue and assessing skills and needs, individuals can shape their own role and purpose in relation to organisational and societal needs. Presbyters are individuals and can have differences in relation to outlook, beliefs and values be these theologically or secularly informed.

Conclusion

This paper commenced by identifying three main failings of NPM in respect of its effect on leadership and management in public service contexts. These were:

a) Its failure to empower local leaders and decision making relevant to local public service contexts;

b) Its tendency to ignore and disregard public sector values in the exercise of leadership and management in public service contexts; and
c) The distorting effect NPM can have on privileging individualizing rather than socializing models of governance.

As more sectors of our public services face resource constraints such as those that have prompted the *'Wigan Deal'* alternative approaches to governance, leadership and management of essential public services will have to be explored. Whilst there are many critiques of NPM, few offer evidence-based alternative models. Thus this study of the way Methodist presbyters think about and enact processes of governance, management and leadership is valuable as a means of exploring different models of management and leadership that may be transferable into other sectors.

The heuristic framework developed and presented in this paper offers a starting point for discussion and dialogue about alternative approaches in public service contexts. Additional research into the model of *connexional* structures and plural approaches to management and leadership used by the Methodist Church could also offer useful insights into the processes and effects of socialising forms of governance and the co-creation of leadership aimed at meeting and serving local community needs and addressing the shortfalls of NPM that this paper has highlighted.

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