

2016

# The Conceptual Framework of Leadership in a Public Private Partnership

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2016

Abstract

The Conceptual Framework of Leadership in a Public Private Partnership

by

Mary Ellen Ludden

MBA, Husson University, 2011

BS, University of Southern Maine, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

March 2016

## Abstract

Partnerships between public and for profit organizations are increasing in frequency and scope due to scarce economic resources to support and deliver social programs.

However, little is known about the characteristics of a successful partnership versus the characteristics of a failed partnership. The purpose of the study was to explore the leadership characteristics that were exhibited by the management team of a public-private partnership (PPP) that suffered a significant failure at the onset of the partnership, but recovered successfully over a period of time. The research question explored which leadership characteristics existed within the public and for-profit leadership teams that impacted the project team's ability to deliver the program requirements. A qualitative case study approach was utilized with the theoretical framework leveraging both Greenleaf's servant leadership philosophy and Burn's transformational and transactional leadership styles. A purposive sampling strategy identified 9 people who played a key role in the PPP, experienced the repercussions of the failure, and participated in the remediation efforts. All data were inductively coded and then subjected to a constant comparative method of analysis. The analysis revealed a strong relationship between servant leadership attributes exhibited by the leadership team and the project team's ability to traverse the partnership challenges. Data analysis indicates the necessity of effective servant leadership, specifically the attributes of understanding and empathy. Implications for positive social change from this study may lead to improved partnership delivery outcomes and better utilization of taxpayer funds to administer social programs.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my Mom and Dad who never stopped believing that their daughter would accomplish all of her dreams once she set her mind to it. To my sons, Christopher, Channing, and Corey, you continue to be the lights of my life and I am very proud of each of you. Lastly I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Billy, who has patiently awaited the publication of this document and supported my pursuit of this goal in neverending ways. I love you all.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Background of the Study**

Partnerships between public and for profit organizations that are formed to deliver and execute social programs to a specific recipient population are increasing in popularity (Grossman, 2012). Historically, these public private partnerships (PPPs) have been popular in the construction and infrastructure sectors as they allow the partnering organizations to share resources as well as risks (Petersen, 2011). However, with the recent worldwide economic downturn, many governmental agencies are openly seeking partnerships with for-profit organizations as a means to infuse private sector methodologies, innovation, and technologies into government programs (Chou & Lin, 2013). These PPPs are moving into areas of service delivery not traditionally performed by the public sector, which is creating a larger reliance on the private sector to deliver these programs on time and within budget. However, they are often being led by public servants who may not possess the leadership skills necessary to successfully manage the partnership in the dynamic environment created by the collaboration of a diverse group of stakeholders (Kotze & Venter, 2011). According to the National Council of Public Private Partnerships (2012), the definition of a public private partnership is a “contractual agreement between public agencies and private sector entities that allow delivery of a service or facility for public use.”

One of the many challenges for the organizations forming public and private partnerships is to effectively merge distinct cultures and organizational financial motivations into one partnership culture to support the effective delivery of the social program or initiative. The alignment of values needed to create a culture of trust and collaboration amongst the participants largely falls to the leaders of the public sector organization in conjunction with their peer leaders in the private organization. The challenge of aligning leadership teams becomes amplified due to the perceived conflicts of interest (Boardman & Vining, 2012) that are associated with the partnerships (Regan, Smith, & Love, 2011) whereby private sector organizations may benefit from the public organization's partnership in future procurements given their close working relationships with the public organization's team. Mannion, Brown, Beck, and Lunt, (2011) examined the Partnership for Health (PfH), which is comprised of both public and private organizations, and observed that each organization brought a distinctive organizational cultural fingerprint to the partnership. Mannion et al. (2011) also noted that each management team held distinct cultures of "management and beliefs" that could ultimately impede the success of the partnership by creating conflict and misalignment of objectives. The successful merging of cultures must be driven by the organizational leadership teams involved in the partnership using leadership skills that will propel the program team to success.

Research literature in the field of public and private partnerships is topically broad, and researchers vary in their assessment of the partnership operating model.

The absence of a definitional consensus on what constitutes a public private partnership (Koontz & Thomas, 2012) is apparent throughout the literature and leads to further confusion when the added complexity of measuring performance is added to the dialogue. In addition, the absence of impact analysis relating to leadership characteristics throughout the literature on PPPs constitutes a gap because the primary focus of the available research tends to be directed towards performance management systems (Grossman, 2012) rather than specific leadership characteristics.

The sheer dollar amounts that fund public private partnerships is staggering as was illustrated by the Air Force failure to implement the “Expeditionary Combat Support System” (Stross, 2012), which to date has cost the American taxpayers in excess of \$1 billion dollars over six years for a program that has now been permanently shuttered by the government. An assessment conducted on the project estimated that to achieve a minimum level of functionality would require another \$1 billion in investment by the taxpayers with an estimated completion date of 2020 (Stross, 2012). One of the findings documented in a review by the Institute for Defense Analysis, which is utilized by the government to conduct assessments of projects, noted that one of the failures of the project was the lack “of an accountable leader” and the inability of decision making to be empowered at lower levels of the program team (Stross, 2012). Understanding the leadership characteristics that must be modeled by the management teams collaborating on a PPP initiative that lead to successful outcomes is critical to the future of these partnerships and to the wellbeing of the constituencies that benefit from the services provided by the organizations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The formation of partnerships between public and for-profit organizations are increasing in frequency and scope due to scarce economic resources being available to support and deliver social programs, yet little is known about the characteristics of a successful partnership versus those of a failed partnership. The economic value of these partnerships can be prodigious, and the risk of funds being misallocated or misused during the administration of the partnerships can be detrimental to the recipients of the programs. One facet of the PPP operating model is the need for multiple organizational leadership teams to coalesce around a shared goal, while minimizing the impact of diverse corporate cultures, shifting priorities, and leadership styles (Zou, Kumaraswamy, Chung, & Wong, 2014). The messaging that allows the partnership team to understand the goal and vision of the project is delivered and repeated by the individuals in leadership roles throughout the partnership lifecycle. This study addresses the problems that leaders within PPPs face in motivating and providing guidance to their teams in order to navigate the challenges that are unique to such partnerships in successfully implementing the scope of work.

The specific public and private partnership that was utilized for this case study was related to the software system implementation that the State of Maine undertook to modernize their Medicaid claims system. The initial PPP to replace the claims software system utilized a product developed by Client Network Services, Inc. (CNSI), which was originally slated to cost \$25 million but ultimately ended up costing taxpayers in excess of \$55 million (Krigsman, 2012).

The CNSI system experienced significant problems and was replaced by a product developed by Unisys that would cost the taxpayers an additional \$179 million (Merrill, 2008).

The inability to establish a consistent leadership model within a partnership that lends itself to a successful public and for-profit partnership can lead to failed delivery of social programs and have detrimental impacts to the stakeholder recipients of those services. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the leadership framework utilized, as a single variable, within a public and private partnership. The recent failure of the launch of the Healthcare.gov website, which was intended to serve as an enrollment conduit for individuals to obtain health care coverage as mandated by the Affordable Care Act, has illuminated the large-scale issues of struggling public private partnerships (DePillis, 2013). Schadler (2013) asserted that “Healthcare.gov’s failure start[ed] with leadership, not technology” and highlighted the inability of the project team leadership to assume accountability and integrate as a single operating unit and operating instead as a technology versus business operating model. A traditional public program brings with it public scrutiny and a desired level of transparency in order to ensure that the public’s interests are protected; however, recent large-scale failures of partnerships such as using Healthcare.gov illuminates a lack of protection of citizen interests by public officials who transact these partnerships largely through contractual agreements (Chen, Hubbard, & Liao, 2012).

The story of Healthcare.gov illustrates the monies that can quickly be wasted in a PPP if not managed effectively. Healthcare.gov, a system designed to allow the public to enroll and purchase health care coverage, was a partnership which was formalized by contract between the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the organization Consultants to Government and Industry (CGI). The website go-live date was scheduled for October 1, 2013, at which time the site locked up after a small population of less than 3,000 users attempted to utilize the site to purchase insurance (Sun & Wilson, 2013). The criticism directed at the organizations involved was swift. It came from multiple stakeholders who believed the government knew there were severe issues plaguing the website prior to its launch (Sun & Wilson, 2013). According to testimony in December, 2013, offered by the Secretary of HHS, Kathleen Sebelius, the failed website had already cost the government “\$319 million to date with outstanding commitments to contractors totaling \$677 million” (Easley, 2013). In January of 2014, HHS announced that they were relieving CGI of their duties and engaging Accenture to revive the struggling architecture supporting the website. The Accenture contract to rehabilitate Healthcare.gov had a one year period of performance and was estimated to be approximately \$90 million (Reuters, 2014).

The implications of this study could lead to a better understanding of barriers and hurdles that should be mitigated throughout the course of the PPP lifecycle to ensure the highest likelihood of implementation success for all invested stakeholders. This added understanding could be utilized to develop curricula for academic institutions and leadership programs in preparing future leaders for collaborative operating models.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore the leadership characteristics that are exhibited by the management team within the PPP, as observed by participants in the PPP, that influence the outcome of the partnership whether it is a successful or less than successful outcome. A PPP can be comprised of multiple organizations that bring a variety of backgrounds, capabilities, objectives, and management styles to the partnership. One facet of the partnership model is the requirement that multiple organizational leadership teams coalesce around a shared goal while minimizing the impact of diverse corporate cultures and leadership styles in order to effectively deliver the scope of work defined by the government. The inability to establish a consistent leadership model that lends itself to a successful public and for-profit partnership can lead to failed delivery of social programs with detrimental impacts to the stakeholder recipients of those services. Therefore, the purpose of this study will be to gain an understanding of the leadership framework utilized, as a variable within a public and private partnership. The implications of this study could lead to a better understanding of barriers and hurdles that should be mitigated throughout the course of the partnership lifecycle to ensure the highest likelihood of implementation success for all invested stakeholders.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What leadership characteristics (i.e., servant, transformational, or transactional leadership characteristics) are present within the public and for-profit leadership teams that are observable by the integrated project team?

RQ1.1: Of the characteristics identified by participants, how did the participants think those characteristics impacted the team's approach to the program the PPP was responsible for administering?

RQ2: How did the leadership characteristics of both organizations influence the project team's ability to deliver services at each phase of the project?

RQ2.1: Did one organization's leadership team dominate the partnership's integrated team? If so, how?

RQ3: What leadership characteristics, positive or negative, were visible to the project team that influenced the overall project team on the partnership initiative?

RQ3.1: Of those leadership characteristics, which were more dominant, the positive or negative? How did they impact the team?

RQ4: How would the participants of the PPP describe the partnership culture?

R4.1: How did the leadership team influence the culture that was observed by the participants?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study leveraged both Greenleaf's servant leadership philosophy (Greenleaf, 1977) and the leadership theories of Burns, who developed the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership styles (Burns, 1978). These theories encompass the sentinel leadership approaches developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and to date have evolved little over the passage of time even with the extensive literature that exists about both.

The foundation of servant leadership according to Greenleaf (1977) is that a leader must want to be a servant above all else, but over time chooses to be a leader. When one reflects upon public organizations administering large scale social programs, the aptitude to serve for the greater good is an inherent characteristic that one would assume presents itself in the leadership ranks of public organizations. In stark contrast, Burns (1978) identified two categories of leadership to encapsulate the characteristics he most identified throughout the course of his studies. Burns (1978) asserted that transactional leadership was mainly a function of “leading through social exchange” while transformational leadership was more aspirational in nature and allowed the leader’s followers to “achieve extraordinary outcomes.”

Upon examination of these theories, the primary theoretical constructs are focused on individual leaders and their specific attributes (Dudau, 2009). This disclaimer would become critical while the case study was conducted in order to evaluate the impact of individual leader characteristics on the integrated program team’s cultural environment and how those characteristics factored into the emerging project team culture as opposed to whether the team’s culture evolved through informal leaders who resided on the project team and were not linked to the any specific formalized leader. Both theories are widely utilized by scholars to identify individual characteristics of leaders and tend to be people-centric rather than attributed to a project culture (Dudau, 2009).

These theories were leveraged to understand if the characteristics associated with transformational, transactional, or servant leadership were visible in the leadership structure of the PPP by the participants of the partnership.

The presence or absence of these characteristics was assessed for their impact on the eventual outcome of the partnership's stated charter. In addition, to further contribute to the literature on leadership, the responses were utilized to identify if there were any emerging trends in leadership approaches that are significant and can contribute to the understanding of organizational and individual leadership characteristics particularly in an integrated organizational model that frames the PPP.

### **Nature of the Study**

The research study was conducted utilizing a qualitative approach which allows for the analysis of "emerging questions" (Creswell, 2008) as behavior is observed and data is collected regarding the research problem. The research method that was utilized was the "case study" (Creswell, 2008) approach which allows for exploration of a "single issue but multiple case studies are leveraged to illustrate the issue" (Creswell, 2008). The type of population that was leveraged for the study was a single case study centered on a public and for profit partnership.

Document review provided a significant source of data to be examined via existing media releases, government report issuances, and reports issued by third party assessors of the project. Data was collected utilizing interview techniques, both on an individual and group basis, through the use of observations and the review of existing artifacts such as media accounts and other public records that encompassed this PPP.

The data that is extracted from those documents was specific to themes related to the perception of the importance of leadership skills, and led to further questioning and challenging based upon the themes that emerge throughout the course of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Definitions**

*Public organization:* A governmental organization largely funded through public funds.

*Private organization:* A private sector organization which generates its own revenue and profits.

*Public private partnership:* A partnership entered into between a public and private organization in which joint collaboration and decision making is utilized to achieve a specific outcome. The partnership involves leveraging innovative approaches and risk sharing amongst the entities.(Steijn, Klijn, & Edelenbos, 2011).

*Servant leader:* The leader is identified as having servant characteristics first rather than seeking power. (Greenleaf, 1977).

*Statement of work:* Commonly referred to as the SOW and outlines the partnership initiative scope, roles, and responsibilities.

*Transactional leader:* Leaders who lead primarily through “social exchange” (Burns, 1978).

*Transformational leader:* Aspirational leader who enables followers to achieve extraordinary results (Burns, 1978).

### **Assumptions**

An assumption was made that there would be sufficient publicly available information to explore the single case study and that participants in the selected case would be available to respond to surveys and/or interviews. Due to the elapsed time since the selected case study, an assumption was made that the participants would be willing to discuss their observations without regard to professional impact. When individual participation proved to be a constraint, public information was leveraged for the study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this study focused on the leadership characteristics within a single public and private partnership. The study did not focus on additional influencers that may have impacted the outcome of the initiative such as the lack of performance indicators or political impacts. The case study approach was “bounded by time and activity”(Creswell, 2008) by utilizing the State of Maine’s implementation of a new Medicaid billing system. The selection of this particular case study allowed for the research to focus on a failed public private partnership which eventually succeeded by virtue of the project team purchasing a replacement system and implementing strong project management from lessons learned. The State of Maine partnered with CNSI, a Maryland contractor (Enrado, 2006), which ultimately cost the State of Maine in excess of \$56 million for a contract initially budgeted at \$15 million.

The ultimate outcome of this particular partnership was that CNSI was relieved of their role and a new contractor, Unisys, had to be brought in to overhaul the system, which was a decision made by the project team.

### **Limitations**

The findings of this study were limited to public and private leaders who participate in public and private partnerships. Due to the nature of the case study approach, the findings were not generalizable to all public and private partnerships, but rather, could be utilized to support the development of curricula through the identification of new approaches to leadership in future PPPs. The selection of the case study allowed for insights into a failed partnership (Patton, 2002) that evolved into a successful partnership by virtue of a replacement system being implemented.

### **Significance of the Study**

Historically, PPPs have been widely utilized in infrastructure projects (Chowdhury, Chen, Tiong, 2010), but they have recently been gaining popularity in the delivery of social programs, technology development, and other areas where the public sector is struggling to maintain efficacy of administration of publicly funded programs. The benefits to organizing a PPP include the “sharing of risk, leveraging private sector innovations, and infusing expertise that may reside in the private sector and is only accessible through a partnership” (Chowdhury et al., 2010).

Although partnerships bring multiple benefits to the stakeholders and the recipients of the services, significant challenges are identified throughout the literature regarding the success of these organizational models.

The act of successfully merging two culturally distinct organizations with varying economic structures, approaches, and outlooks is critical to the successful deployment of a PPP that delivers social programs, but this is rarely considered prior to the initiation phase of the collaboration.

As the frequency of PPPs grows in relation to global challenges, the value of such partnerships are increasingly being recognized in institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO), which has an annual budget of approximately four billion dollars (Nebehay & Lewis, 2011). WHO partners with organizations to administer health care to global recipients; current estimates claim that 20% of the world's population does not have access to health care (Nebehay & Lewis, 2011).

As a partnership evolves, misaligned leadership philosophies are exposed as the combined project teams struggle with the varying leadership approaches and motivations associated with each distinct organization. Omobowale, Kuziw, Naylor, Daar, & Singer (2010) note that these conflicts in motivation can arise as private industries utilize PPPs to potentially gain a future market advantage equating to profit or future business with the public organization.

This study supports further understanding of what leadership characteristics are most successful when executing PPPs so that program teams can be carefully selected and aligned during the planning phases of the venture. The potential social impact from the outcome of this study could be the opportunity for future modification to management curricula in academia in order to better prepare future leaders for success in the public or private sector.

## Summary

The increasing reliance by the public sector on the private sector to deliver public services is shifting the traditional paradigm of responsibility of the delivery of key components of social programs from one sector to another with increasing amounts of public monies being utilized to fund the programs. The high visibility of recent failed partnerships has called into question the viability of these operating models with the focus being directed at the leadership and management of these programs. The likelihood of a decrease in PPPs is minimal given the perceived lack of innovative solutions generated solely by public organizations and the perception that the private sector is able to bring significant resources to bear when engaging in a partnership with a public organization. In addition, the economic challenges that plague the worldwide market are a continued incentive for organizations to continue to share risks, costs, and decision making in order to successfully implement social programs.

The integrated leadership team has an important opportunity to define the successful pathway for the partnership and impact social programs in a positive manner by establishing a cohesive leadership structure for the partnership. The ability to identify key characteristics that are critical indicators of a future program's success will allow program teams to proactively structure their leadership teams with the balanced abilities of effective leaders from both organizations.

Chapter 1 outlined the background and important social applicability of this study to future partnerships who can leverage the findings to select candidates for their leadership teams based upon identified attributes that lend themselves to successful partnership outcomes. Chapter 2 will explore the literature to date on leadership styles within partnerships, the debate around the success or failure of the PPP model, and the evolving model of these partnerships as they expand their service delivery into social programs. Chapter 3 will document the rationale behind the selection of the qualitative approach and the use of the case study approach to explore the themes of leadership present in PPPs. Chapter 4 will capture the observations made throughout the course of the case study, and Chapter 5 will summarize the findings of the case study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

The increasing frequency of establishing PPPs coupled with the high visibility of private organizations executing public programs is exposing vulnerabilities in the PPP organizational model that have led to large scale failures and misappropriation of taxpayer funds (Forrer, Kee, Newcomer, & Boyer, 2010). As organizations experienced financial challenges due to the global economic downturn, many traditional for-profit organizations began evaluating governmental contracting opportunities as a viable business model to increase revenue streams and generate profit. The expansion of organizations participating in PPPs is creating a collision of organizational cultures when a traditional mission-driven public organization partners with a for-profit business agent to deliver public goods (Turhani, 2013), often creating an environment of mistrust and a political juxtaposition that is in conflict with the stakeholders' commitment to the partnership. The distinct cultural characteristics of each organization are referred to by Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2011) as the partner's *organizational imprint*. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2011) argue that this imprint can be impactful from a single organizational lens or can be a factor that is derived by the industry or environment in which the organization operates.

An important component of the PPP is the understanding that it is foundationally based upon a public organization partnering in some manner with a private sector organization to deliver a shared goal or objective (Johnston & Gudergan, 2007) by sharing risks and creating efficiencies (Fandel, Giese, & Mohn, 2012).

Public organizations, by definition, are created through regulatory activity to achieve a specific mission (Ruffin & Rivera-Santos, 2012) and are largely funded through public sources of revenue. The for-profit organization has traditionally had a more aggressive operating model than a public organization and is focused primarily on delivering profit for its shareholders (Boardman & Vining, 2012).

Kolk, Dolen, & Vock, (2010) argue that misaligned motivations amongst the partners can be driven by self-interests such as perceived increased revenue generation, access to customers, or access to new markets. This can create mistrust and conflict between the organizations that enter into the partnerships. This misalignment of objectives can further complicate the leadership team's ability to successfully execute the initiative by inserting cultural dynamics that influence the partnership's cohesion but are outside of the team's control. In addition to self-interest factors that may influence the partnership cohesion, the lifecycle of a PPP can involve a combination of teams and organizations over the period of the partnership, which adds complexity to the aligning of the cultural aspects of the PPP (Zou et al., 2014).

The PPP is initiated by the public organization through a competitive bidding process which is traditionally led by a private organization's bid and proposal team. Upon award of the contract, primary responsibility in the PPP transfers to an implementation team and ultimately to the production team who will lead the operations and maintenance of the PPP (Zou et al., 2014). Many of the teams may be led by varying leaders all the way from CEO to front line manager with differing levels of leadership effectiveness and accountability.

An assumption that may occur early in the PPP lifecycle is that all parties are joining the PPP with the same motivation to enhance overall social welfare and will participate in shared decision making (Turhani, 2013) throughout the course of the partnership. This may lead to false expectations and create downstream impacts that contribute to the failure of the initiative. The additional scrutiny by taxpayers assessing the monetary funding levels and the perception of fiscal waste associated with these PPP structures further complicates the team's ability to coalesce around a shared goal, as blame for perceived failures has typically been placed upon the public organization for misuse of taxpayer monies (Rufin & Rivera-Santos, 2012). Understanding how these contradictory business cultures, inclusive of their leadership teams, integrate into a single temporary organization is critical to understanding how to develop a successful PPP model.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature review was completed utilizing the Walden University Library databases as well as the Google Scholar search database. The following databases and key topics were utilized to identify literature:

- Public private partnerships
  - Thoreau
  - Google Scholar
- Servant leadership
  - Thoreau
  - Google Scholar

- Transformational leadership
  - Thoreau
  - Google Scholar
- Transactional leadership
  - Thoreau
  - Google Scholar
- Government contracts
  - Thoreau

In addition to the databases utilized, the sentinel works *Servant Leadership*” (Greenleaf, 1977), and *Leadership* (Burns, 1978) were read in book format to ensure a full understanding of the leadership principles. The literature review utilizing the databases was limited to peer reviewed articles that had been published within the last five years by utilizing the advanced search functionality inherent to all the databases utilized during the course of the literature review. In addition to the macro level topics listed above, key search terms were utilized to limit the response universe retrieved from the databases.

The search terms and combinations utilized for the literature review were as follows:

- *Public private partnerships*
- *Failed*
- *Success*
- *Success factors*

- *Criteria*
- *Revenue stream*
- *Performance management*
- *Assessment*
- *Social programs*
- *Service programs*
- *Infrastructure*
- *American*
- *Benefits*
- *Disadvantages*

Search terms and combinations used for transformational leadership were as follows:

- *Transformational*
- *Management*
- *Organizations*
- *Partnerships*
- *Cross sector*
- *Effectiveness*
- *James MacGregor Burns*

Search terms and combinations used for servant leadership were as follows:

- *Servant leadership*

- *Robert Greenleaf*
- *Effectiveness*
- *Partnerships*
- *Organization*
- *Informal leadership*
- *Followership*

Search terms utilized in the queries for transactional leadership were as follows:

- *Transactional leadership*
- *Effectiveness*
- *Partnerships*
- *Transactional and transformational comparison*
- *Organizations*
- *Partnerships*
- *Applicability*

Search terms utilized in the queries for government contracting were as follows:

- *Government contracts*
- *Fail*

There were numerous studies questioning the definition, constructs, and viability of PPPs but few that delved into why these business models fail and what can be improved about the model to make them more successful in executing their charter and statement of work.

Leadership studies on servant, transformational, and transactional theories were plentiful, but no literature was found that applied those theories to public private partnerships.

## **Research Strategy**

### **Private Public Partnership Structural Discord**

Existing literature on the success of public private partnerships is contradictory in formalizing a definition of what a PPP is. (Grossman, 2012). Grossman asserts that the rapid growth in these types of arrangements have made determining a one size fits all definition a challenge for scholars. Kolk et al., (2010) argue that the disparity of types of partnerships from infrastructure to social programs and the lack of control groups have led to the debate on the effectiveness of public and private partnerships. Within the literature, common characteristics that are often cited when describing a PPP model are shared risk amongst participating partners, innovation infusion from the private sector, and knowledge sharing amongst organizations (Johnston & Gudergan, 2007). The literature also contains numerous studies on PPPs as they relate to infrastructure and construction projects, but there are limited studies on PPPs in the social sector regarding services, technology, or other models that have emerged in significant numbers over the last decade.

The knowledge sharing and collaboration between organizations that is intended to occur throughout the partnership is believed to generate enhanced solutions to public issues (Kort & Klijn, 2011) that exceed what the individual partners could have achieved without the partnership.

Jianxing Yu & Zhiyuan Qu (2012) challenge this construct of a PPP by asserting that market-based economics prevents organizations participating in a PPP from complete transparency in sharing innovations or best practices lest it lessen their position in the market. In addition to the enhanced solutions that are imagined (Kort & Klijn, 2011), there is also an expectation that efficiencies will be derived from the partnership allowing for cost savings that would not have been recognized should the public organization have attempted the initiative without partnering (Fandel, Giese, & Mohn, 2012). Hodge and Greve (2007) further suggest that PPPs are being utilized as an improved model of oversight and contractual viability; however, the outcome and results of these partnerships are debated within the literature and express contradictory conclusions.

A common theme throughout the literature is that the ideal PPP leads to enhanced delivery of the program or service and is achieved through efficiencies driven by innovation (Steijn et al., 2011). PPP's have traditionally been commonplace in infrastructure or construction projects (Johnston & Gudergan, 2007); however, as of late, the PPP operating model has been expanded into technology projects, social programs, and service delivery models. The perception of conflicts of interest arise when participating private organizations are not completely independent from organizational self-interest in seeking future work from the public organizations with which they partner (Boardman & Vining, 2012).

PPPs can be comprised of multiple private sector organizations who zealously guard their proprietary intellectual property (Jianxing Yu & Zhiyuan Qu, 2012) even though it may have been the discriminating factor in how they were selected for the partnership. Kort & Klijn (2011) assert that these quasigovernmental partnerships are independent bodies that operate without regard to political pressure from public organizations or potential influence from parent organizations that govern the private partners. The benefit to this independence is rapid decision making embedded within the project team that can accelerate the implementation of the public service or project (Kort & Klijn, 2011) by achieving previously unachieved efficiencies (Fandel et al., 2012). The negative aspect is that the partnership teams may not have complete autonomy in decision making during the course of the partnership but must yield to organizational interests as defined by the leadership level.

There is also some debate in the literature around the governance aspect that needs to be in place to ensure that the government does not assume a disproportionate share of risk (Landow & Ebdon, 2012), and this can only be accomplished if both parties are involved in the decision making equally with strong oversight and leadership from the governing bodies. Chowdhury et al. (2011) explain that the various stakeholders supporting the partnership typically have varied goals and objectives that must be achieved as an outcome of the partnership, which seems to contradict the perceived model of shared risks and resources amongst the partner members. The contradiction widens as those varying objectives experience counter objectives from other participants in the model such as the recipients of the service being provided.

Many scholars are focused on the structure of the agreements precipitating the partnership's delivery of goods and/or services or attempting to define performance metrics that would capture the outcome of the partnership based upon key performance indices (Koontz & Thomas, 2012). Skepticism also exists around the perceived successes of PPPs within the literature. This skepticism has largely arisen from partnerships that have experienced excessive budgetary overruns and poor delivery of the expected services (Kee and Forrer, 2012). The partnerships that experience challenges regarding budget and service delivery are then plagued by a perceived lack of ownership within the partnership structure as to which organization is at fault for the failures (Kee and Forrer, 2012).

Koontz and Thomas (2012) suggest that the lack of established metrics or benchmarks at the onset of a partnership leads to arbitrary assessments of success versus failure. The lack of clearly stated goals and performance metrics would need to be defined at the onset of the contractual negotiations between the partners. Furthermore, Koontz and Thomas (2012) argue that the lack of clear definition on what a PPP actually is continues to contribute to the uncertainty of whether this model of sharing risks amongst entities is a successful operating model. It may be assumed that if there is a lack of definitional framework that outlines what a PPP is and is not, and this lack is exacerbated by the absence of clear performance measurements, this could be a significant contributing factor to the organizational ineffectiveness that these initiatives experience.

Forrer, Kee, Newcomer and Boyer (2010) agree that there is a lack of definition around what constitutes a PPP as well as a perceived lack of accountability, and they attempt to establish their own framework for the operating model. Forrer et al. (2010) agree with Koontz and Thomas that the predominant driver in the PPP expansion is largely related to the public sector's inability to deliver goods and services on a scale needed in today's society. The challenge with the model that Forrer et al. (2010) establish is that it eliminates partnerships that are a result of a contractual agreement between a public and a private entity, which contradicts the majority of the literature on PPPs.

The early framework of the agreements can contain such information as the service to be delivered, how it is to be delivered, and the key desirable outcomes that the partnership wishes to attain. The stakeholders participating in the partnership also need to be aware of the level of accountability they possess for their portion of the PPP, which in many cases can lack balance between the participating agencies and entities (Forrer et al. 2010). This level of imbalance can place further stress on the public managers as they grapple with varying degrees of stakeholder management across the initiative. The varying degrees of stakeholder accountability and levels of power can then create conflicts of interest amongst the stakeholders as each party attempts to control their position and the outcomes of the PPP (Papadopoulos, 2012).

In addition, Dudau (2009) explains that the public organization partnership leader suffers from the contradiction that arises from being an impartial administrator while serving in a leadership role.

The primary role of a public servant, according to Vigoda-Gadot and Beerli (2012) is to translate legislative policy into actionable programs or initiatives. The public administrator must also serve in the role of compliance oversight while attempting to serve as a motivational leader for the project team. Historical leadership theories such as transformational, transactional, servant, or situational are focused on the individual leader who possesses the characteristics that align with one of the aforementioned traditional categories (Dudau, 2009) and may contradict popular perception of a public servant's leadership characteristics. However, the scale and scope of large PPPs do not hinge upon a single individual's leadership role that traditionally occupies the top of a hierarchical structure, but rather should rely on various levels of the partnership structure for leadership roles. A leader's role within the PPP is a gap that exists within the current literature and was the focus of this research study.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Theorists on leadership styles and approaches continue to leverage concepts that originated from transactional and transformational leadership theories developed by Burns (1978) along with servant leadership theories developed by Greenleaf (1977) and situational leadership theories authored by Hickman (2009), all of which provide a framework that is focused on the individual as leader (Dudau, 2009).

The aforementioned sentinel works on leadership styles are diametrically opposed to each other as one evaluates the characteristics that define transformation, transactional (Burns, 1978), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and situational leadership (Hickman, 2009).

Individuals who provide leadership within a PPP are challenged to provide strong direction across multiple entities involved in the initiative while ensuring that the entire integrated project team is coalescing around the shared goals and objective of the PPP. In addition, the concept of distributed leadership within a PPP amongst multiple members of a project team (Mertkan, 2011) can complicate the traditional hierarchy model of leadership which depicts leader at the top of a structure and all subordinates reporting to that single individual. Understanding the leadership approaches that individuals leverage within a PPP will help us understand the benefits of leadership and its impact on the partnership participants.

### **Transformational and Transactional Leadership in Partnerships**

Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as “one or more persons engaging with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.” Transactional leadership is described by Burns (1978) as “a person taking the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things.”

The definitions themselves delineate between a leader who raises the performance of the team to previously unheralded heights, transformational, to the leader who is aware of the value of exchanging reward for tasks completed, but does not seek the loftier goals of inspiring those he interacts with, transactional (Burns, 1978).

Transactional leadership is more commonly aligned with the traditional roles of hierarchical management who derives outcomes through a distinct reward system (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013) in order to motivate employees to achieve outcomes which may be described preconceived notions of public managers. When we consider the traditional public servant, we may not immediately think of a transformational leader due to our preconceived notions of public servants as bureaucratic type of individuals who lack the sense of urgency to accomplish mission critical goals, however, Maddock (2011) reminds us that many public servants are now embracing the role of change agent and actively engaging in activities with the private sector to effectuate change.

Partnerships that span sector's may require leader's to employ both transformational and transactional leadership styles as approaches to successfully implement their mission by utilizing characteristics linked to transformational leaders to communicate and inspire all participants of the partnership. The need for transformational leadership within partnerships may be a direct result of a lack of impact that transactional leadership styles have on followers who desire to be part of a larger vision and for which simple transactional mechanism are meaningless as motivators (Tyssen, Wald, & Heidenreich, 2014).

Kolk et al. (2010) suggest that studies that explore how the mission of the partnership are diffused communication-wise both vertically and horizontally throughout the organization to participants are noticeably absent in the literature. Kolk et al. (2010) further argue that transformational leadership can be both driven from the stereotypical leader figure at the apex of the organization or can be elevated from the associate level upward by employees that emotionally equate their role to the support of the overall corporate mission. This culture of transformational leaders is viewed by Kolk et al., (2010) as a “social contagion” in which employees begin to replicate the fervor for which they view the mission of the partnership.

This view of transformational leadership developing within the rank and file of organizations to impact the organizational culture (Kolk et al., 2010) is a variation on Burns (1978) initial theory of the more traditional single, leader atop an organizational chart viewed as the transformational driver of the organization’s mission. The literature does not explore how this “contagion” is spread nor what the various organization’s leadership does to infuse the project culture with this energy to propel the partnership to success. The literature identifies leadership impacts within an organization but neglects to explore how the facets of leadership styles influence cross-organizational initiatives. We will explore the positive attributes of transformational leaders as documented in the literature first, and then delve into negative aspects of transformational leaders. Both the positive and negative aspects can lead to varied outcomes within organizations and across sectors.

Transformational leaders (Burns, 1978) have been largely perceived historically to have positive impacts on organizational objectives by inspiring the followers of the organization and helping them achieve ambitious goals. Burns (1978) cites Gandhi as an example of a transformational leader who was able to inspire and mobilize millions of his fellow Indians to seek and pursue a greater good for themselves and their country. The Academy for Leadership in Education (ALE), a partnership between businesses and educators in Salisbury, Md., constructed a program that heavily leveraged the characteristics of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) to develop future academic leaders who could assume positions in leadership roles within surrounding area school districts (Andes, 2009). The program relied on trust building exercises to generate an environment of collaboration at the onset of the discussions amongst business leaders and educators who participated in the program (Andes, 2009) in the attempt to accelerate the establishment of a collaborative environment amongst the various stakeholders.

The results of the program have yielded positive results with over a third of participants assuming leadership roles in education which the program attributes to the environment of trust and collaboration that was generated while instilling a common vision of the benefits of education. The relativity of transformational leaders establishing an environment conducive to positive collaboration is interpreted to have resulted in these strong findings.

A further complexity around theories relating to transformational leadership styles is that many believe that transformational leaders provide strong leading indicators that weigh heavily in favor of successful outcomes (Chiaburu, Smith, Wang, & Zimmerman, 2014). In other words, the partnership would be perceived, by applying transformation leadership concepts, at the onset to have a greater chance of success with a transformational leader (Chiaburu et al., 2014). However, the majority of the literature is focused on transformational leadership as it applies inter-organizationally rather than the impacts of transformation leadership on cross sector partnerships. Concern also exists within the literature around the ability of study participants to clearly recognize and delineate between leadership styles in a definitive enough fashion to articulate which style impacts their behavior the most (Chiaburu et al., 2014) in delivering positive results.

Transactional leadership according to Burns (1978) is primarily focused on a leader inducing benefits and performance from their employees through transactional means such as wage increases, bonuses, or benefit increases (Chiaburu et al., 2014). For the public servant involved in a PPP, there are less opportunities for transactional recognition to impact their performance and motivation given the nature of governmental compensation models which rarely yield bonuses or wage increases outside of the standard annual cycle. Many public servants are burdened with the culture of government employees exhibiting behavior of the “good soldier” (Vigoda-Gadot & Beerli, 2012) and implementing policies while maintaining a sense of status quo continuity which contradicts the personality traits needed to inspire a group of partners involved in the partnership.

Further complicating the leadership complexity within partnerships is a theory introduced by Tyssen et al., (2014) in which they suggest that projects are de facto temporary organizations which can lack the stabilization of a formal organization and create dynamics within the leadership model that are not inherent within more formalized structures. This temporary organization definition which applies to a project may be better suited to transactional leadership styles where rewards are associated with short term gains (Tyssen et al., 2014). In addition, transactional leadership's exchanges of values are not always positive but can consist of punitive measures when a project's goals are not met (Tyssen et al., 2014).

### **Servant Leadership**

Greenleaf's sentinel work on Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is still cited today in many leadership studies as a model of leadership characteristics that focus on "the servant as leader" which is based upon an individual's desire to ensure other's wants are fulfilled ahead of their own desires. The other important core component of Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is that the individual does not necessarily seek out the role of leader at the onset of their journey but rather evolves into the role through the passage of time and performing the role of servant first. Greenleaf (1977) began conceptualizing servant leadership years before authoring his sentinel work, but ultimately observed that American's were suffering a "leadership crisis" so he began documenting his theory that a leader is both servant and leader simultaneously.

Greenleaf (1977) recognized two limitations with his theory upon the initial release of his essay.

The first limitation was related to the lack of empirical evidence to support his theory while the second encompasses explaining the contradiction inherent with a servant and leader being characteristics in one individual (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf (as cited in Hickman, 2009), reconciled the second contradiction by asserting that an individual that aspires to be a leader above all else will be influenced by material gains rather than the benefits for the people he leads whereas an individual who is servant first will always put other's needs and development ahead of the leader's own desires. Melchar & Bosco (2010) also assert that a gap remains in the literature regarding how leaders at multiple levels of the organization benefit from having a servant leadership culture, and whether the characteristics associated with servant leadership lead to a higher level of dedication and success within individuals or group initiatives.

Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is a popular management philosophy given its altruistic themes that deem a leader to be selfless and motivated to elevate their followers and institution. Within the literature, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), is also viewed as an altruistic high water mark that all leaders should attempt to achieve by mobilizing and empowering their subordinates (Melchar & Bosco, 2010) through specific attributes that exemplify a higher authority management style that is able to mobilize their employees to achieve the goals of the organization. The servant leader (Melchar & Bosco, 2010) relies upon his followers to focus on the best outcomes for the organization and spends his time ensuring that his actions model that desired behavior.

An interesting gap within the literature is that the application of servant leadership in public organizations is limited at best which is a noticeable disconnect given the expectation on civil servants to serve the public good.

The concept of followers becomes an important theme within the literature in that the followers must acquiesce their allegiance to that of the leaders explains Hollander (as cited in Melchar & Bosco, 2010), while leaders by virtue of exhibiting servant leadership characteristics begin establishing a culture of perceived servant leadership throughout the organization by modeling the behavior to employees. Public employees would be most likely to exhibit Servant Leadership behaviors as a result of the culture they operate professionally within whereby they are employed to serve in the public's interest. Table 1 illustrates many of the key behavioral traits that are closely related to Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and have been adapted to this table utilizing Greenleaf's writings.

Table 1 *Characteristics of Servant Leadership and Follower Behavior*

	Servant Leader	Follower	Outcome on Culture
Perception	Views oneself as servant before leader.	Viewing servant leadership behavior's allows followers to develop servant leadership characteristics.	Organizational goals and objectives are prioritized over personal individual goals and gains.
Empower	Empowers followers to serve in the best interest of the organization.	Empowered to act with the organizational interest as their priority.	High performing organizational culture evolves as individuals focus on organizational objectives.
Motivation	Places interest of followers and organization over personal need or gain.	Informal leaders arise within organization to place the organizational goals above all else.	Development of talent pool for leadership is enriched through informal leadership roles established by the servant leadership culture.
Credibility	Possesses authentic leadership qualities	Perceives the leader as wholly invested in their success.	High trust relationships between leaders and followers lead to high performing organizations(Melchar & Bosco, 2010)

The tenants of trust from taxpayers to public organizations regarding public private partnerships is being eroded as these large scale failed partnerships cost taxpayers millions of dollars in wasted monies with a perceived lack of accountability, increased fraud, and increased scrutiny on the organizations who have failed (Kee & Forrer, 2012). Greenleaf (1977) emphasized decades ago that the need for trust from organizations would become a critical factor of their success and longevity. Wong and Page (as cited in Melchar & Bosco, 2010), assert that servant leadership can serve as an important remediation factor for the degradation of trust that is occurring due to large scale organizational failures. Many of the visible failures that occurred within businesses during the 2008 financial market crashes were widely perceived to be due to a lack of strong leadership (Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011) and the absence of alternative leadership models present in large organizations which traditionally focused on intellect related skillsets in their leaders rather than the more difficult to measure soft skills.

Servant leadership is viewed as an altruistic model of leadership which should align with a public servants role within a government organization to make decisions on behalf of a greater good. Kee & Forrer, (2012) note that a critical component of a public private partnership is the presence of individuals who embody the stewardship of the mission and can impart that sense of vision on the partnership team.

The challenge of the term partnership is that many of these initiatives are funded by the public organization which gives an appearance of a misalignment in shared decision making and ownership which requires an emphasis on shared decision making mechanisms throughout the project team to ensure a balanced perspective is achieved through debate and dialogue (Kee & Forrer, 2012).

### **Variables**

The variables utilized in this study are the dependent variable of public private partnerships coupled with the independent variables of leadership impact, management effectiveness, and follower perception of the leadership styles embodied by the leaders of the PPP. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2011) assert that the literature on PPP's has been fragmented and largely unbeneficial to scholars who wish to understand these models, the definitional boundaries of the operating model, and the value proposition they bring to the stakeholders they seek to serve. What is not at debate within the literature is the need for these partnerships to continue in order to leverage the private sector resources, innovation, and availability of funds to ensure public programs are implemented and executed successfully.

The theme within the literature surrounding the inherent conflicts that arise between the motivations of a public organization versus an organization who operates in the private sector is well established as a concern but not well articulated as to what those divergent philosophical approaches mean in terms of impact (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011) on the success or failure of a PPP.

The literature also lacks the measurement of leadership effectiveness as a contributing factor to PPP's nor does it address what styles are most visible to PPP participants. There is also agreement within the literature that the factors that would define a PPP's success versus failure have not been established nor monitored to give an empirical report card on these operating models according to Bloomfield (as cited by Turhani, 2013).

### **Research Methodology Justification**

The scale and complexity of PPP's has been increasing in scale and scope exponentially as these business model's gain popularity outside of the traditional construction and infrastructure projects that historically heavily leveraged PPP's to execute implement large projects (Forrer et al., 2010). Due to this complexity, a qualitative study utilizing a single case study has been selected as the approach to study leadership effectiveness as a factor which impacted the success or failure of a PPP. According to Creswell (2008), qualitative studies allows for the researcher to assign meaning to social issues or events as interpreted by the subjects who experienced them when an issue has not been well researched by previous scholars. A qualitative study involves interacting with the subjects "typically collected in the participants setting" (Creswell, 2008) and leverages the "researcher as key instrument" (Creswell, 2008).

### **Case Study**

A case study will allow for an intensive exploration of a single instance of a PPP which will span a specific time period and project (Creswell, 2008).

The nature of a case study allows for extensive data collection utilizing surveys, archival information, and interviewing techniques to name a few approaches which will allow for an inductive type of analysis in which the conclusions are built upon the layers of information collected (Creswell, 2008). As little has been researched in terms of leadership effectiveness or leadership styles as they apply to PPP's, a single case study will be utilized in order to thoroughly examine the phenomenon of leadership that was utilized in a single PPP. The single case study selected for this study will be the State of Maine's implementation of a Medicaid Information System that was intended to process the Maine Medicaid health care claims by electronically adjudicating the claims submitted by providers (Enrado, 2007).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

There is extensive literature on the leadership styles of transformational and transactional (Burns, 1978), as well as servant leadership styles (Greenleaf, 1977) but there is a gap in the literature on how those particular styles apply to a PPP.

In addition, a gap exists within the literature studying failed PPP's and the relatability of the leadership style that was in existence during the course of the PPP and how it may have influenced the outcome of the partnership.

The challenging component of the literature around PPPs continues to be the contradictory viewpoints on whether the PPPs as an operating model are successful in our current global economic environments or whether the complexity of the PPPs has created laborious partnerships that yield little value and create enormous budgetary overruns for the agencies that sponsor the PPP.

The study of leadership continues to entice scholars to the field of study as business environments shift and modulate into new operating models, challenges arise at previously unheralded velocity, and ethical breaches become common place in the worlds of both government and private industry. The budget overruns and perceived failures of the initial launch of the healthcare.gov website served to reinforce the public's skepticism around the viability of big business to partner with government to deliver services or solutions that benefit the public good. The congressional testimony that followed that large scale failure was broadcast on national television as leadership members from both the Department of Health and Human Services and the private organizations they had partnered with were interrogated by members of congress but none of the leaders took the lead in assuming accountability for the failure (Weise, 2013).

What is clear within the literature is the consensus that there exists a great need for PPP's to be successful given the benefits the private sector can bring to the public organizations who are chartered to provide services that serve the greater good. The ability of private organizations to innovate, create capital, and share the risks are all viewed as positive attributes of the PPP.

What is not clear within the literature is the type of leadership model that will create a successful model which delivers the public services chartered within the initial agreement and the scope of work committed to by both parties.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The increasing monetary amounts associated with public private partnerships along with the politicized climate that has been created by perceptions of government ineptitude and private sector greed has created a tension point around the viability of PPPs. Historically, PPPs have been widely used in infrastructure projects, but the recent and future nature of the partnerships has been aggressively moving into the implementation and execution of aspects of social programs that serve large scale disadvantaged populations (Hodge & Greve, 2007). The government has frequently leveraged private sector organizations to benefit from their innovative solutions, share risks, and secure private sector funds to further public sector missions; however, the failure of many such PPPs has placed the legitimacy of these partnerships in the middle of a political debate around perceived nepotism, mismanagement, and elongated timeframes to implement programs that were intended to be short term partnerships (Kee & Forrer, 2012). The goal of this qualitative study using a case study design is to examine the impact that leadership styles have on the effectiveness of the PPP and the success of its overall outcome. This chapter will outline and describe the research design and rationale for selection of the case study as well as the approach to data collection and analysis.

## **Research Design and Rationale**

### **Research Questions**

The research questions focus on aspects of the leadership characteristics that should have been visible to the participants in the partnership and allow for the researcher to specifically focus on the leadership theories that are a central tenant of this study. During the introductions with the research subjects, information that outlines each of the foundations that comprise both servant, transformational, and transactional will be explained to ensure the subjects are acquainted with the theories being researched.

RQ1: What leadership characteristics (i.e. servant, transformational, or transactional leadership characteristics) are present within the public and for-profit leadership teams that are observable by the integrated project team?

RQ1.1: Of the characteristics that were identified by participants, how did the participants think those characteristics impacted the team's approach to the program the PPP was responsible for administering?

RQ2: How did the leadership characteristics of both organizations influence the project team's ability to deliver services at each phase of the project?

RQ2.1: Did one organization's leadership team dominate the partnership's integrated team? If so, how?

RQ3: What leadership characteristics, positive or negative, were visible to the project team that influenced the overall project team on the partnership initiative?

RQ3.1: Of those leadership characteristics, which were more dominant, the positive or negative? How did they impact the team?

RQ4: How would the participants of the PPP describe the partnership culture?

RQ4.1: How did the leadership team influence the culture that was observed by the participants?

The research will be conducted utilizing a single case study which allows for the researcher to focus on a single partnership by studying the leadership team and participants in a detailed manner incorporating archived documentation, interviews of participants, and survey methods to gather information. Due to the lack of research that has been conducted on leadership impact on PPPs, a single case study limited in time and scope allowed for an in-depth analysis of the themes that emerged over the course of the study (Patton, 2002). The PPP that was selected was the State of Maine implementation of the Medicaid billing system, the initial failure of which created enormous burdens on the health care providers and the State of Maine (Enrado, 2007).

### **Role of the Researcher**

As a resident of the State of Maine and an employee of a major health insurance company, I observed the implementation of the State of Maine's Medicaid billing system through media reports as a downstream stakeholder. At the time I was employed by a health insurance company as a Medicare auditor. One of my roles as a Medicare auditor was to assess the integrity of dually eligible payments that are made to health care facilities which were partially derived from the Medicaid status of patients. I was not a participant in the partnership initiated to replace the Medicaid claims system nor was I an employee or supervisor for either the State of Maine or CNSI.

I also have no financial interest in a health care provider and so did not benefit in any way from the system's failure or lack of implementation. I do work as a contractor for the Medicare program via my employment at a health insurance company that is part of one of the largest PPPs in the United States, whereby HHS subcontracts out the major functions of the administration of the Medicare program to private insurers. My 17-year role has given me a unique lens into the working relationships between a public and private organization as they partner to deliver the implementation of a social program.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative study was conducted utilizing a case study design which allowed me to extensively explore a single case by leveraging the State of Maine implementation of a Medicaid claims processing system through the use of private organization capabilities. The initial system procured by the State of Maine was a CNSI-developed product that was implemented in 2005 and had significant problems processing Medicaid claims once the system went live in 2005. After experiencing issues with the CNSI product, the State of Maine made the decision to procure a replacement system developed by Unisys that went live in 2010. The Medicaid claims processing system project utilizing the CNSI product was initiated in 2001 for \$15 million dollars and was scheduled to be completed by 2002, but ultimately did not go live until 2005 at a cost of more than \$70 million to the taxpayers of Maine and triggered an investigation by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Aswell, 2013). The team then initiated a new system search, and a contract was awarded to Unisys, which ultimately went live in 2010.

A single case study methodology was selected in order to maximize the exploration and understanding of the phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994) within a constrained construct allowing for the in-depth understanding of the experience of the participants through the use of the interview process. The single case study also allowed for the researcher to leverage a case which could be “bounded by time and activity” (Creswell, 2008). The single case study approach was optimal for a subject that met the definition of a PPP and also contained both failures and successes associated with the overall implementation. The Maine Medicaid claims processing system presented such a subject.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

In keeping with the framework that qualitative research provides, the participants were “purposefully selected” (Creswell, 2008) due to their involvement in the State of Maine partnership with CNSI and Unisys to implement a new Medicaid claims processing system. Publicly available archival records consisting of media reports specific to the Maine claims processing system were utilized to identify participants who were engaged in the project to implement the new system. Based upon those archival records, a listing of 22 names was compiled in a tracking log as the total participant population listing in alignment with the qualitative sampling approach of “small samples of people, nested in their context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with which qualitative researchers work.

Using the participant sample population listing that was developed using the public archival information, the 22 participants were contacted via a letter that was approved by the Walden IRB explaining the objective of the study, the benefits it will provide to future PPPs, and the assurance that their role will remain anonymous in the published dissertation. Once the interviews commenced, an additional two members not identified in the archival documentation were identified by participants as key members of the team, and those two additional individuals were then also sent the letter explaining the objective of the study. Of the total potential population of 24 participants, nine agreed to interviews as a mechanism to capture their experiences as they related to leadership influences they observed on the PPP team. The nine participants' transcripts were reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis as interviews commenced to ensure that saturation was obtained once repetitive themes were observed emerging from the data collection process (Creswell, 2006).

### **Instrumentation**

Due to the timespan of the selected case study, the primary instrumentation that I used to collect data was publicly available archival information and participant semistructured interviews with those who had direct knowledge of the PPP (Patton, 2002). This allowed me to capture key themes that emerged via the dialogue and artifacts regarding the observations made that related to the leadership of the PPP.

In preparation for the semistructured interviews with the participants, the interview questions posed to the participants during the interviews were developed by using instrumentation from Bass and Avolio's (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as well as the servant leadership behavior scale (SLBS) developed by Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008). The MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997) and the SLBS (Sendjaya et al., 2008) were selected due to their alignment with the conceptual framework being used that related to transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). While the questionnaires themselves were not used as they were designed for quantitative studies, the themes and statements from both instruments were converted to qualitative questions and submitted for IRB approval. Leveraging these previously developed instruments allowed for a common platform applicable to both theories that had been used during previous studies and ensured focus of topical points throughout the course of the interview process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This approach to instrumentation development was approved by the Walden IRB on May 11, 2015.

In utilizing the case study of the State of Maine Medicaid claims processing system implementation that concluded in 2010, actual observations are not feasible to leverage under the circumstances.

Patton (2002) cautions the researcher that interviews may not always be reflective of the actual experience due to communication challenges that an interviewee may possess or the passage of time may create, so interview data was triangulated using publicly available archival data to cross reference emerging themes and ensure that sufficient data existed to reinforce an interviewee's observations and interpretation of their experience.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Multiple validity strategies were employed to ensure that the trustworthiness of the findings were not questioned and were extensively documented to allow for researchers to duplicate the results (Creswell, 2008). A key strategy that was leveraged over the course of the study was the triangulation of varying sources of archival information, documents, and subject interviews, which allowed for key themes to be cross-verified through multiple sources of information. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder while I took notes throughout the conversations to capture key themes and observations discussed by the participants. Once the interviews were transcribed by an external resource, I compared the transcripts with the digital recording and handwritten notes. In addition, archival documents such as media reports were leveraged to cross-check different timeframes, milestones, and observations discussed by the participants that yielded rich data (Maxwell, 2005) for comparative purposes.

This rich data (Maxwell, 2005) also allowed for the triangulation from one participant's transcripts to another in order to identify if there were any "negative cases" (Maxwell, 2005) that created an inconsistency within the data that was contradictory to the nature of the study. There were no such instances of "negative cases" identified during the course of the analysis (Maxwell, 2005). In addition to triangulation of differing research artifacts, the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were transmitted to the participants subsequent to the interviews as a means to validate the my interpretation of the subjects' experience, which Maxwell (2005) refers to as "respondent validation." All data collection efforts by the researcher was categorically organized and coupled with detailed descriptions of all interviews, documents reviewed, and archival information retrieved.

### **Ethical Procedures**

All participants were invited to engage in the research study through a written letter explaining the objective and social impact their participation would bring to the case study. All participants remained anonymous by assigning each individual an alpha code that identified their comments within the body of the study so that no identifiable information was exposed to public readers or stakeholders. As the partnership concluded over six years ago, the invitations were sent directly to participants without including their employers on the communication. All data is stored on an encrypted file and safeguarded with passcodes for privacy purposes. Documentation was scanned, labeled, and also stored on an encrypted file that is password protected.

### **Summary**

This chapter summarized the approach that was utilized during the course of the research study by identifying the methodology used, which was qualitative via a single case study. The case study selected was the State of Maine partnership that was initiated to implement the Medicaid billing system. The participant population was nine subjects who were either directly or indirectly involved in the partnership and who provided observations through recollections of their experience of the partnership and of leadership styles that were impactful to the team. The actual data collection outcomes and analysis will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

## Chapter Four: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of the leadership characteristics that were employed by key members of a PPP and were observable by the project team and key stakeholders within the selected PPP. The single case study was focused on the implementation of a new Medicaid claims processing system in the state of Maine which occurred over an extended time period from October, 2001, to September, 2010, and involved two major system procurements and implementations. The first procurement was won by CNSI in the fall of 2001 and the system was implemented in January, 2005.

Table 2

#### *Timeline of CNSI System Implementation*

CNSI System	10/2001: CNSI Awarded Contract by the state of Maine
	10/2002: Initial Go Live Date
	Fall, 2002: Go live extended to October, 2003
	January, 2005: System Goes Live
	Late January, 2005: Serious Issues are noted with the system
	February 16, 2005: Press conference held announcing significant issues
	2006: Major release to fix issues fails

Source: Holmes, (2007) and Harvey and Chacon, 2011.

Once it was clear to the HHS team that the CNSI system was not going to be able to meet the claims processing requirements as established by the project team and the State of Maine, a decision was made to proceed with a new procurement to identify a system that would ultimately replace the CNSI system. The awardee of that procurement cycle was Unisys.

Table 3

*Timeline of Unisys System Implementation*

Unisys System	2007: New procurement issued by the State of Maine for a Medicaid Claims processing system.
	2008: New Vendor, Unisys, is selected by the State of Maine.
	September, 2010: New Maine Claims processing system goes live.

Source: Harvey and Chacon, 2011

As noted in Chapter 1, the leadership teams within a PPP face intense scrutiny and pressure from multiple forces to deliver large scale implementations on time and within budget, even while the complexity of these implementations have escalated over time. The leadership characteristics that are present within these challenging environments can influence the ability of the project team to navigate the scrutiny while managing the resource constraints.

The original four research questions to support the exploration of leadership characteristics within the public private partnership were

RQ1: What leadership characteristics (i.e. servant, transformational, or transactional leadership characteristics) are present within the public and for-profit leadership teams that are observable by the integrated project team?

RQ1.1: Of the characteristics that were identified by participants, how did the participants think those characteristics impacted the team's approach to the program the PPP was responsible for administering?

RQ2: How did the leadership characteristics of both organizations influence the project team's ability to deliver services at each phase of the project?

RQ2.1: Did one organization's leadership team dominate the partnership's integrated team? If so, how?

RQ3: What leadership characteristics, positive or negative, were visible to the project team that influenced the overall project team on the partnership initiative?

RQ3.1: Of those leadership characteristics, which were more dominant, the positive or negative? How did they impact the team?

RQ4: How would the participants of the PPP describe the partnership culture?

RQ4.1: How did the leadership team influence the culture that was observed by the participants?

These questions were formulated by leveraging the conceptual framework of Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership theory and Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory.

## **Chapter Organization**

The remainder of the chapter is organized to review the results of the case study as they relate to the research questions. The chapter will encompass the process of collecting the data by describing the setting utilized to conduct the interview as well as the demographics of the participants. In addition, the content of the chapter will explain the data collection technique utilized and the associated data analysis that occurred subsequent to the participant interviews. Issues of trustworthiness will be discussed as they pertain to the overall study as discussed in Chapter 3, with the results of the data analysis described as it relates to the research questions.

### **Setting**

The single case study of the State of Maine implementation of the Medicaid management information system utilized to process Medicaid health care claims submitted by health care providers was intentionally selected due to the time period related to the project. The first system was implemented in 2005 using the CNSI product, and the second system utilizing the Unisys product was implemented in 2010. This timeframe allowed for the passage of time and distance for all of the participants who were interviewed, which provided the participants an opportunity to speak candidly about their experience and observations without fear of reprisals. The participants were assured of their anonymity, and due to the specific roles that they played, only themes and succinct quotes that would not divulge their roles have been included within the body of this document.

The participants were confident in their recollections and observations during the time of the scheduled interviews, and did not appear to experience any detrimental or negative environmental conditions which were influencing their remarks. All of the participants understood the extreme nature of the project that they undertook, the duration, and unique conditions with which they operated within during the project lifecycle. This unique and large scale implementation provided the framework which supported Maxwell's (2005) theory that case studies which are extreme can often provide critical insight and alignment to the conceptual framework.

### **Demographics**

The participants in the study were specifically selected for their involvement with the project by virtue of being an employee of the State of the Maine who worked on the project during the timeframe of the implementations and subsequent ongoing remedial activities or were key external stakeholders who were involved in the system impacts subsequent to the initial go-live date of January, 2005. I utilized the “theoretically driven” (Miles and Huberman, 1994) sampling methodology which allows for the sample selection to be formulated by leveraging the concepts identified in the servant (Greenleaf, 1977) and transformational (Burns, 1978) leadership theories. The theoretical sampling strategy allowed for focus on those individuals who played a key role within the constructs of the PPP by assessing their role and aligning it with the conceptual framework. Based upon historical artifacts such as media reports, public website information, and participant recommendations, a total of 24 individuals were identified and invited to participate via electronic mail.

The 24 individuals were identified through archival information published regarding the project that included media reports, government assessments, and publicly available information from websites.

Based upon the artifacts, of the 24 participants who were mentioned frequently and specifically as “key informants” (Patton, 2002) were identified. These individuals were also cross-referenced frequently throughout the interview process by the actual interview participants, which was consistent with the historical artifact treatment of their roles. For example, Participant 1A\_5 frequently referenced 1A\_1 as critical to the overall project implementation lifecycle while also mentioning other participants. In addition, 1A\_1 also cross referenced many of the participants through the course of that interview and highlighted key team members who contributed to the overall project. Of the 24 invited participants, there were five women and four men who accepted an invitation to participate and comprised the actual participant pool for the study. All of the participants were in positions either as employees of the State of Maine or external stakeholders involved in the health care field to observe or interact with the project team subsequent to the 2005 failed implementation and through the eventual successful project replacement of the system with the Unisys product. I did not pursue exceeding the population size of nine as the themes captured through the course of interviews were very consistent amongst participants, which was determined through ongoing data analysis throughout the interview process utilizing the interview recordings and archival records. This allowed me to conclude that saturation had transpired.

### **Data Collection**

The Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB) granted approval (05-11-15-0314305) for the study to proceed on May 10, 2015. A component of the IRB process was to submit a draft e-mail invitation to send to each participant inviting them to join the study and explaining the purpose of the study, which was approved as part of the overall application. As each participant responded, a copy of the consent form was transmitted via e-mail with a request to either respond electronically in the e-mail with their willingness to participate or send back a signed copy of the document. In addition, a participant tracking log was developed to capture each communication transmission from each participant, the date of response received, and whether the consent was received via a scanned document or via e-mail. All consent forms and e-mail communications were archived and saved via secure encrypted drive complete with password protection to maintain the confidentiality of each participant.

In accordance with the IRB approved process, upon receipt of communication in the affirmative of the participant's consent to participate, a one hour interview was scheduled in coordination with the participant's availability. Each interview was audio recorded with a digital recorder as communicated in the consent form and at the opening of each discussion. Interview notes were also taken by the researcher throughout the conversations to capture high level observations, themes, and key takeaways from each interview.

At the conclusion of each interview, I would inquire if there were other members of the project whom the participant would recommend be included in the study. If other participant names were recommended outside of the initial sample population, an e-mail invitation was transmitted. Many of the names recommended were part of the initial sample set, although that was not shared with the participants. The common names that were suggested by each participant was evidence of the importance of their role to the overall project. Patton (2002) asserts that names that are mentioned “repeatedly” are typical of the snowball or chain sampling methodologies and allow for identification of a subset of key individuals that expand and then synthesize to a smaller number of key actors within the study which supports the validation of the population.

Throughout the course of the interviews, a semistructured approach was utilized as approved by the Walden IRB. This allowed for a semistructured interview using questions and themes extracted from Bass and Avolio’s (1997) MLQ as well as the SLBS (2008) developed by Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora. The questionnaires themselves were not utilized as they were designed for quantitative studies. The themes and statements within the scales were converted to qualitative questions. The benefit of the semistructured interview was that the approach allowed me to ask prepared questions while granting for “probing” (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008), which is important to allow the researcher to ask follow up or clarifying questions that support a deeper understanding of the respondent’s answers. In addition, the transcripts were also sent to the participants for their review and to offer each participant an opportunity to edit or correct as necessary to ensure the data collected was accurate as recorded.

## **Interview Questions**

The interview questions were developed based upon two scales which were Bass & Avolio's (1997): MLQ and Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora's (2008): SLBS. These scales are designed for quantitative research, but the themes within the scales were extracted in order to develop interview questions for the qualitative case study participants. An example of the questions are as follows:

### **Transformational Leadership Questions:**

1. How were critical assumptions used in the partnership reexamined to question whether they were appropriate?
2. In what way did the leaders talk about their most important values and beliefs during the partnership?
3. During the project, how did the leaders seek differing perspectives when solving problems?
4. How did the leader express their optimism about the future?
  - 4a. How did the leader create a compelling vision of the future at the onset of the project and throughout the course of the project?
5. What was your experience like as far as the leader instilling pride in the team members for being associated with him/her and the project?

### **Servant Leadership Questions:**

1. In what ways did the leader consider others' needs and interests above his or her own? Can you share specific examples?

2. When the project encountered challenges, how did the leaders of both entities appear to handle the issues when confronted with the obstacles?
3. In what ways, did the leader exhibit a sense of a higher calling to motivate the team through those challenges? Do you have specific examples?
4. In what ways, were the leaders able to articulate to the team a shared vision to give inspiration and meaning to work?
5. As the project encountered challenges, how did the leader react when criticized? Were they able to focus on the message not the messenger?
6. As the program evolved over time, were you able to observe leadership characteristics that inspired you to lead others by serving? Are you able to describe a specific example?

The semi-structured approach allowed for the researcher to ask questions that would assist with the identification of either transformational (Burns, 1978) leadership characteristics or servant leadership characteristics (Greenleaf, 1977) by linking the questions by category to the key themes that align with each framework.

I conducted all of the interviews myself utilizing a digital tape recorder to capture the discussions accurately, which allowed for the researcher to conduct observational note taking throughout the discussion. The usage of the digital recorder also allowed for me to be fully engaged with the participant during the interview as encouraged by Patton (2002) and ensured the level of accuracy of the conversation by recording it rather than attempting to notate the entire discussion.

During the course of the interviews, there were no unusual circumstances that arose, however, the initial timeframe was expanded to include data collection of the entire span of the multi-contractor project which spanned 2001 -2010. I de-identified the participant's names and identity prior to having a transcriptionist transcribe all the interviews. I then proceeded to code all the transcripts myself by manually reviewing each transcript for key themes in order to utilize the information for the data analysis phase of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The interview process yielded lengthy transcribed documents which were analyzed continuously by the researcher throughout the interview process by initiating the analysis phase immediately upon concluding each interview as recommended by Maxwell (2005). This continual analysis was conducted by listening multiple times to each recorded interview, reviewing observational notes, and referring to specific public archival documents referenced by the participants as being helpful to the study topic.

This approach to data analysis, whereby the researcher frequently returns to the artifacts, inclusive of transcripts and archival documents, for in depth understanding is also encouraged by Rudestam and Newton (2007) to ensure that the researcher thoroughly understands their data and meaning. As key themes were noted within the various forms of source documentation, they were labeled, manually coded, and then were categorized in a post interview framework developed by the researcher that was developed by identifying macro level themes that emerged from the qualitative data.

This manual coding process involved the researcher reviewing each page of the interview transcripts, or archival documentation, repeatedly which allowed for common themes to be labeled, coded, and grouped together, identifying key areas of focus, and categorizing the data according to repeated usage by multiple participants which allowed for the identification of repetitive themes to surface. The initial framework that was developed utilizing the qualitative data involved 33 key themes that ranged from loyalty themes to perceptions of the leader themes. These 33 macro level themes were then utilized to identify sub level themes that were closely aligned in topic or relativity in the conversation, as mentioned by the participant, to the macro level theme. These 33 macro level themes, and sub level themes, were then repeatedly reviewed over the course of several months to identify commonalities, disconnected themes, and synergies amongst topics to develop synthesized groupings of data. These revised groupings of synthesized themes were then aligned to the initial coding framework developed prior to the interviews being initiated by the researcher.

Prior to the initiation of the interview process, an initial coding framework, depicted in Table 4, was developed showing high level themes that are associated with both Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978) to ensure that key characteristics aligned with the conceptual framework were identified prior to the interviews to minimize bias once the coding of the transcripts began. The creation of codes prior to fieldwork is encouraged by Miles and Huberman (1994) to allow the researcher to begin the process with a “start list” that include “key variables” of the conceptual framework.

Creating this coding framework allowed the researcher to identify terms consistent with the theoretical framework in the research data utilizing the source documentation comprised of archival data, interview notes, interview transcripts, interview recordings, and ultimately map these themes described by the participants back to the framework developed prior to the commencement of the interviews. In addition, the framework allowed for terms that were not consistent with the leadership theoretical framework to be captured for analysis to identify contradictory themes that could potentially appear in the documentation and be utilized to develop alternative theories of leadership that may have been leveraged by the team.

Key themes from the conceptual framework coded prior to fieldwork for transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) are included in Table 4. Key themes from the conceptual framework coded prior to fieldwork for Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) are included in Table 5.

Table 4

*Transformational Coding Framework*


---

Idealized Influence	II
Vision	II-V
Hope	II-H
Transcendent	II-TR
Futuristic	II-F
Elevate Others	II-EO
Inspired Motivation	IM
Clear Sense of goals	IM-CG
Charisma	IM-CH
Listens to all views	IM-LV
Optimistic	IM-O
Challenging	IM-CHA
Intellectual Stimulation	IS
Empowerment	IS-EM
Awareness	IS-AW
Learning Environment	IS-LE
Creative	IS-CR
Individualized Consideration	IC
Individual Support	IC-IS
Develop Others	IC-DO
Nurture	IC-NU
Sensitivity	IC-SE
Weaknesses	W
Can be seen as distracting	W-D
Ineffective	W-I
Intense	W-I
Overwhelming personality	W-OP

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Table 5

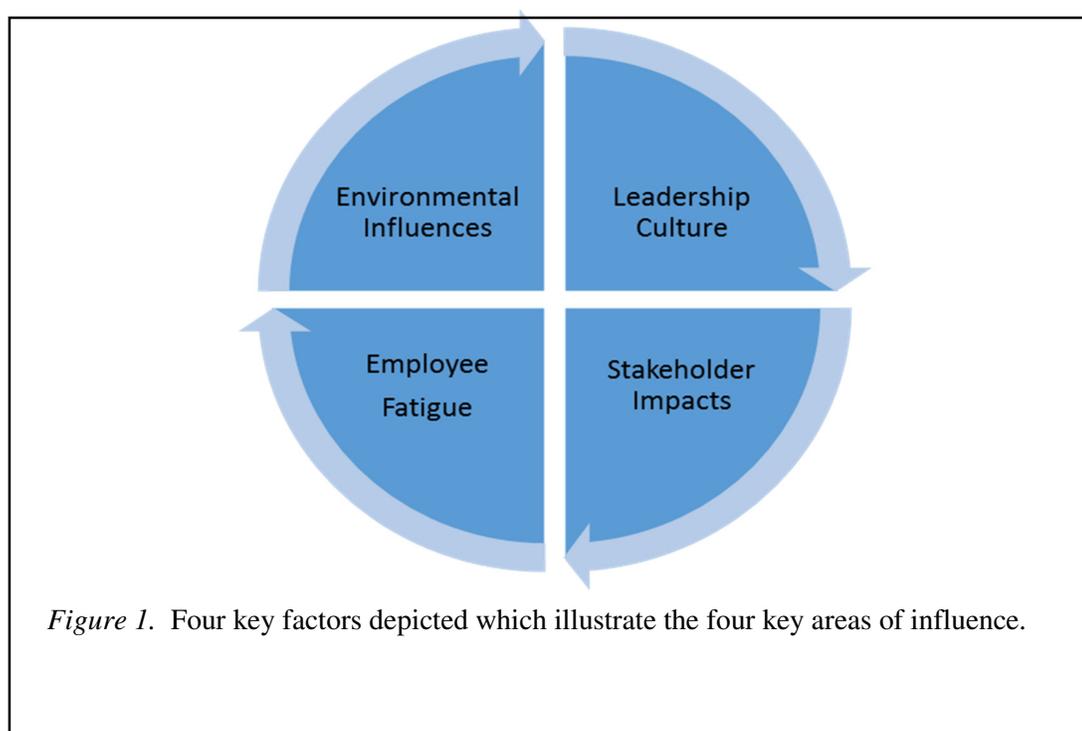
*Servant Leadership Coding Framework*

Servant First	SV
Others before self	SV-O
Community Builder	SV-CB
Humility	SV-H
Stewardship	SV-ST
Elevates Others	SV-EO
Listening & Understanding	LU
Trust	LU-TR
Collaborative	LU-CO
Seeks alternative opinions	LU-SA
Intuitive	LU-IN
Attentive	LU-AT
Empathy	EM
Compassionate	EM-CO
Supportive	EM-SU
Perceptive	EM-PE
Persuasive	EM-PR
Development	DE
Spiritual	DE-SP
Develop Others	DE-DO
Moral	DE-MO
Ethical	DE-ET
Weaknesses	W
Can be seen as indecisive	W-ID
Ineffective	W-IE
Lack of direction	W-LD

Upon receipt of the transcripts, the researcher began the examination of the documents in conjunction with the interview notes that were written by the researcher to capture key descriptors during the interview process. These key descriptors were coded and labeled as significant themes during the initial data analysis, but not formalized as categories during the initial review to allow for repeated review and in depth data analysis over a period of time. The transcripts were reviewed by the researcher numerous times to allow for the initial identification of the 33 high level themes that were emerging from the interviews, and manually coded into categories by utilizing the coding framework depicted in Tables 4 and 5. In addition, the audio recordings were also reviewed multiple times to ensure the themes emerging in the documents were identifiable within the audio recordings and aligned with the interpretation of the data that was extracted from the transcripts. Listening to the audio recordings also allowed the researcher to determine where emphasis had been placed upon a topic by the participant based upon their tone and cadence of speaking while describing their experience whereby when a participant was excited by a particular observation their speech tended to increase in volume and speed as they became immersed in their recollection of the topic.

Themes that emerged during the analysis were categorized by leveraging the key themes previously identified in the coding framework depicted in Table 4, and aggregating them into topical areas that described the operating environment of the implementation team and its leadership.

Once the initial 33 macro level themes were synthesized, they were categorized into four themes that were very strong throughout the transcribed documents, archival records, and audio recordings and now identified as Level 1 leadership themes. These Level 1 leadership themes were high level themes that emerged in each of the interviews and have been categorized as environmental influences, leadership culture, stakeholder impacts and employee fatigue.



*Figure 1.* Four key factors depicted which illustrate the four key areas of influence.

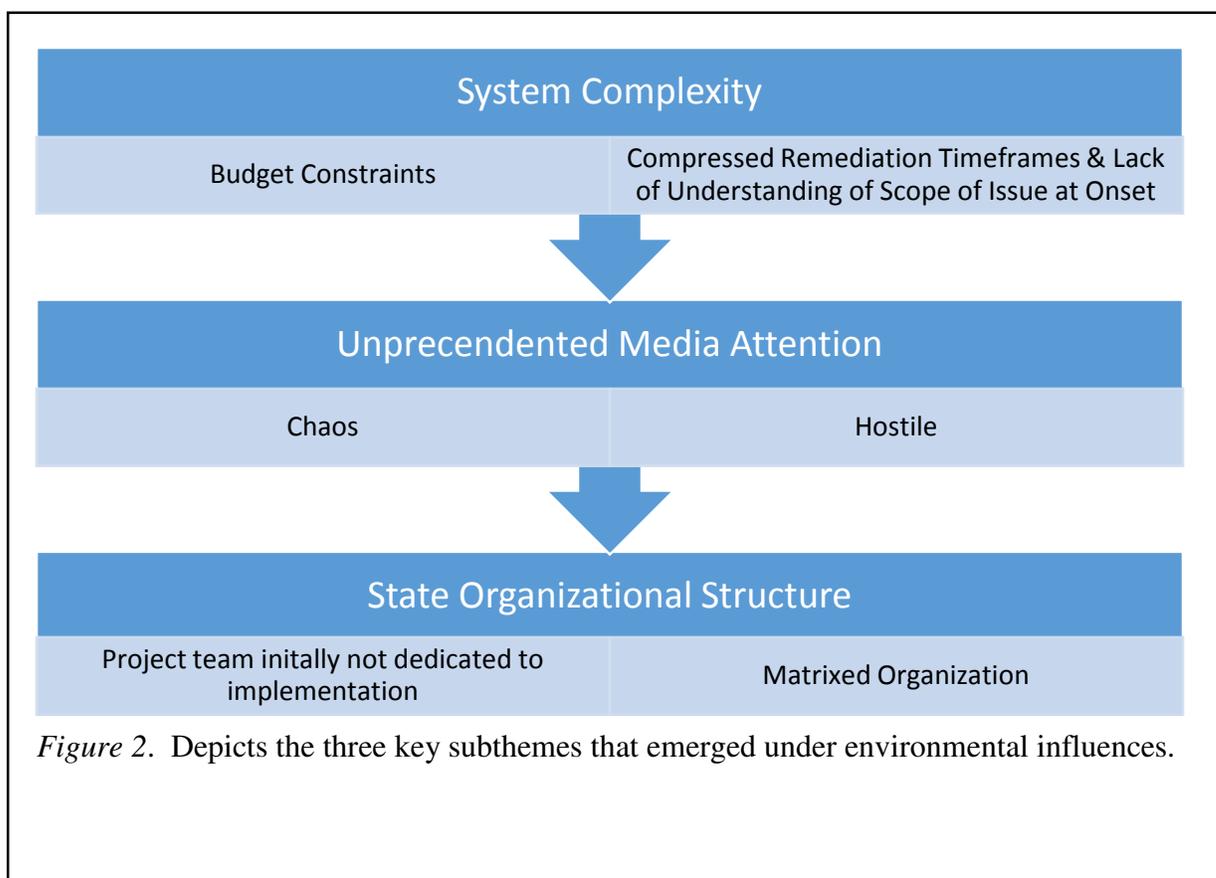
Upon conducting the interviews and analysis it was important to explore these themes via the data as a mechanism to understand the overall environment that the partnership existed within to further understand the leadership framework that emerged as a result of these Level I themes.

The environmental influences that impacted the team were significant not only in scale but also in duration which led to a sense of isolation within the team. Many of the team members referenced the onslaught of publicity that occurred during the initial implementation of the system, throughout the remediation attempts, and ultimately subsiding once the interim payments had been initiated by the State of Maine to ensure provider cash flow impacts were minimized. One participant noted that the failed implementation was “regular front page news” and “staff at that agency would wake up, look at the paper, or listen to public radio on their way into the office and they’d hear themselves being vilified and politicians calling for everybody there to be fired.” The pressure on the staff according to multiple interviews was pervasive and visceral in its negativity towards the implementation team and state employees as a whole, and ultimately affected the team’s culture. The Bangor Daily News (Haskell) quoted a dentist in a March 19, 2005, article asserting “that due to the computer snarl and the department’s inconsistent, “too little, too late” response, providers have lost faith in the MaineCare program. “People are really mad... they have developed a mistrust of the system,” he said.” Even with the initiation of interim payments the criticism continued when another article claimed “the overpayment problem is ‘one more indication of the continual incompetence’ in the department” (Wallack, 2005).

Inevitably the State of Maine bureaucracy was thought to be disconnected from the scope and scale of the issue through comments issued by the Commissioner, who soon thereafter resigned “I don’t want to minimize the impact,” the commissioner said, “but I think calling this a ‘nightmare’ is an exaggeration” (Haskell, 2005).

This lack of confidence in the State team was mentioned by several team members who noted that it became just as important to “you know in that moment, what we were talking about frankly was how we’re going to fix this computer. But really what it turns out we were talking about is how we’re going to fix us.” Many of the participants in the study mentioned the emotional vulnerability of the staff and the toll the failed implementation had on their ability to maintain a positive outlook. The leaders quickly realized they had to focus not only on the software issues that were plaguing the Medicaid system, but also support the team that they needed to execute the recovery successful.

The environmental influences had key themes associated with Level 1 themes that emerged throughout the course of the interviews depicted in Figure 2 which were:



They key subthemes that aligned to the environmental level I themes were the complexity of the claims system, the politicized environment which drew media attention, and lastly the organizational structure of the State which influenced how resources were assigned and managed. The participants in their interview responses indicated that it was challenging to learn, via the media reports that the perception from the public was that the State team, which was utilized in vernacular to describe the overall team, was incompetent, disconnected, and isolated from the impacts that were a derivation of the implementation. In fact many of the participants were assigned to the project team subsequent to the go live date though many of them had held positions within the State that operated at the periphery of the implementation.

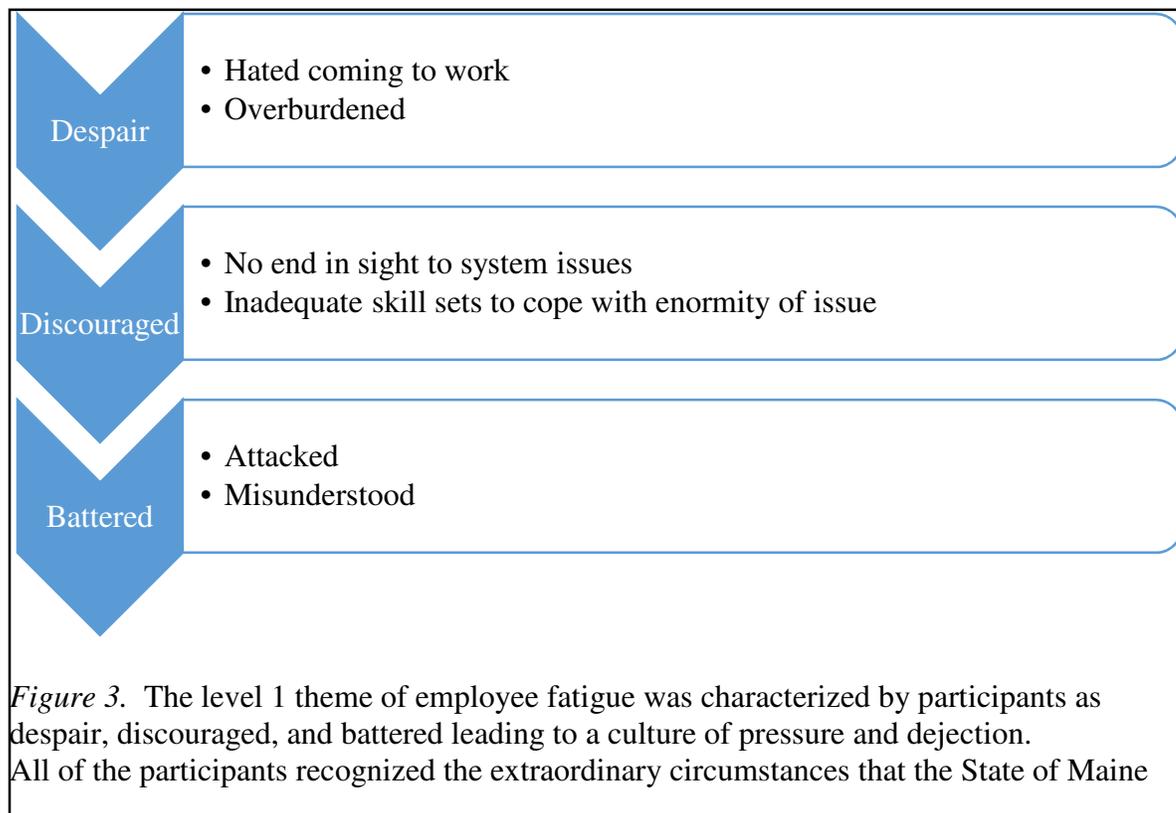
The second level I theme that emerged was impacts to stakeholders. Stakeholders in this context refers to the provider community administering care to the Medicaid population and the Medicaid beneficiary who is the recipient of that care. Based upon published documents, the impacts of the initial failed implementation to the stakeholders were widespread and swift. Due to configuration issues, the system was unable to completely process claims and “by the end of the summer (2005), 647,000 claims were clogging the suspended claims database, representing about \$310 million in back payments” to providers who administered health care services to Medicaid patients (Holmes, 2006).

Medicaid populations are traditionally referred to as vulnerable populations and the impacts to their care was no less measurable as “some of Maine’s 262,000 Medicaid recipients were turned away from their doctors’ offices, according to the Maine Medical Association. Several dentists and therapists were forced to close their doors, and some physicians had to take out loans to stay afloat” (Holmes, 2006).

The participant’s all acknowledged, through the course of interviews, how aware they were of the impact to the Maine health care system and how deeply impacted they were by the inability of the initial system to successfully adjudicate claims. One participant mentioned that it became a “war type environment” where the hostility grew at such a fast pace and was multiplied by the multiple releases which were creating larger issues than the one’s the release was attempting to remediate. The multiple remediation releases led to more confusion, more fixes, and the inability to identify the root cause of issues. Eventually the project team made the decision to reduce the amount of releases to ensure that there were no further impacts created that were detrimental to the provider’s.

The environmental influences and stakeholder impacts led to employee fatigue which was the third theme that emerged within each of the interview transcripts and archival documentation. Although there was a core project team compiled of various leaders and individual contributors, there were many tangential employees impacted from the initial implementation from claims processors to call center employees and IT support staff. Multiple participants mentioned employees crying during the time of implementation due the sheer volume of inquiries and lack of staff to accommodate the provider’s calls.

Holmes (2005) explained that “day after day, the calls kept coming. The bureau’s call center was so backed up that many providers could not get through. And when they did, they had to wait on the phone for a half hour to speak to a human.”

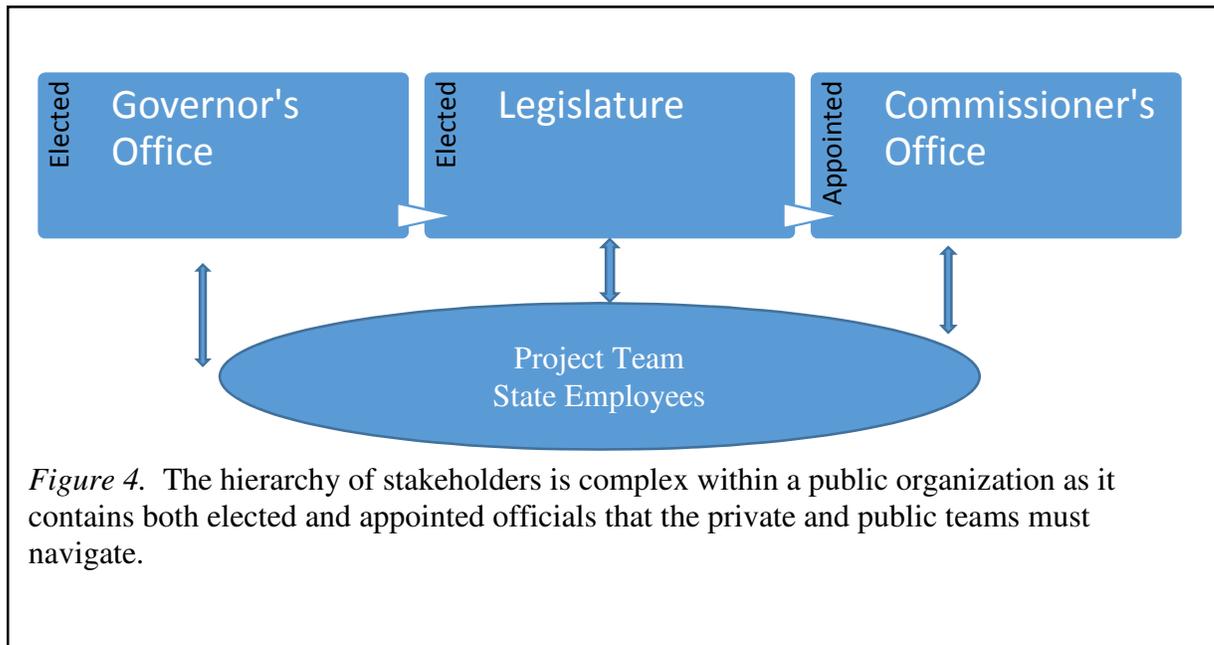


Employees, provider staff, legislative participants, and other external stakeholders were confronted with these emotional themes during this time period and understood the toll it was taking on these stakeholders and employees was significant.

Lastly, one of the unique aspects of a public private partnership is the convergence of political agendas, lifelong public servant roles, and for profit sector employees.

Boardman & Vining (2012) assert that PPP's have less than successful outcomes due to the conflicts between the private sector participant and their government counterparts. This perceived conflict can be a derivative of the for profit maximization goals typically associated with the private sector as opposed to political appointees (Boardman & Vining, 2012) who factor in voting impacts all the while counterbalancing the innate nature of the lifelong public servant.

The State of Maine leadership environment pre and post implementation was mentioned by several participants and characterized consistently by each of them. Several of the participant's spoke of the culture pre 2005, prior to the system go live, and the impact it had on not only the project team but the Department of Health and Human Services staff at large. To further complicate matters, it is important to note that while the initial system was being developed, a complete restructure was occurring within the State of Maine merging Maine's Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services with the Department of Human Services to create the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (Holmes, 2006). Several participants used terms such as "hostile" and "autocratic" to describe the environment that existed during this time period leading up to the failed MMIS implementation. There are also multiple levels of stakeholders within the State government that were mentioned as key drivers of political pressure on the project team and employees tapped to support the program and those were the Governor's office, the Legislature, and the Commissioner's office.



These matrixed groups of individuals had differing levels of interest based upon the pressures received from various constituencies. The Governor's office was occupied by John Baldacci who had been elected in 2003 and was quickly becoming the face of the failed implementation. Many members mentioned the pressure they felt from the Governor's office to implement the system by an artificial deadline which was not based upon formal evaluation of the system's failings or requirements needed to remediate the issues. The legislature was deluged by their provider constituencies and Medicaid beneficiaries to solve the issues that were creating an access to care for vulnerable patients.

One participant mentioned how critical it was to retain the open channels of communication with the legislature and Governor's office as misinformation between those stakeholders could create confusion and additional work for all involved.

Another participant mentioned that in the early days of the system go live it was just “pure crisis management” and much of their time was spent trying to get information to the legislatures and public without creating further misinformation channels.

A factor not often discussed in PPP literature is the dynamic that is created from the different lens created by the political elected official’s campaign promises, political appointees, and employed public servants. Several participants mentioned the phenomena whereby a culture exists within state government that employees realize that they have been through multiple administration’s and can “outlast” political shifting agenda’s and can create resistance to change by virtue of that posture. As one participant explained, “the culture of any state government is ride out the commissioner because I'm going to be here longer than they are.” One participant stated that the “problem was that you're dealing with long time state employees who've gone through many commissioners and who have their own resistance to new systems and they either think they know it or they don't know it, but they don't... they want to try and connect... do it anyway, you know? So there's just all kinds of those internal dynamics that are always prevalent when you have long time state employees that ride out commissioners and that don't really believe the commissioner is going to do what she or he says.”

Another participant asserted about PPP’s is that “the other frustrating part about doing it in government obviously is the time horizon of the political system, the legislature and the Executive Branch really do not have oh, a vista that extends beyond the next election.”

Several participants mentioned being reminded frequently during the remediation of the initial system was that there was an impending election and that the system had to be fixed in time to avoid a negative political outcome. Participants also mentioned that while trying to communicate the status of the project to various legislative bodies, and the related barriers to success, that due to the political environment many of their concerns went unheard and were dismissed outright while the message continued to be emphasized around needed success due to political timeframes.

In addition, the Commissioners of the various agencies tend to be appointed by the Governor and their tenure is directly related to the elected official's term as determined by the voters. This creates an environment where there are multiple levels of leadership from elected, to appointed, to state workers who are employed by the State of Maine but whom all report into a matrixed structure leaving the lines of authority blurred. Those groups of individuals don't always align for a single objective because of the differing agenda's that may exist within each group. The added complexity of resistance to the project team also existed based upon political party posturing, political aspirations, rather than a concerted effort to join forces and solve the problem of the Medicaid claims processing collectively. Several of the participants mentioned the culture of the leadership at the onset of the implementation and in the months that followed the system's failure to adjudicate claims as "disconnected."

Table 6

*Leadership Culture*

Pre system implementation leadership culture	Leaders disconnected from staff
	Employee input not valued nor sought out
	Lack of credibility

The culture described subsequent to the implementation and through several key individual changes in roles will be discussed during the review of the research questions and the linkage of data analysis.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness can be described as the ability to provide the data in an unbiased manner (Patton, 2002) by introducing rigor into the process through a series of procedures and protocols. These series of protocols and rigor allow for the tenant of credibility to be proactively woven throughout the study by mechanisms such as leveraging differing data sources, triangulations and systematic data collection procedures (Patton, 2002) as outlined in Chapter Three. The credibility of the study is focused on whether the conclusions that are drawn from the data make sense and are accurate to our subjects and the readers of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As described in Chapter Three, multiple data sources were utilized inclusive of archival data sources and interviews which allowed for the triangulation of the data which allowed for the identification of consistent themes which were elicited from both sources of data.

Triangulation of the data minimizes the risk that the conclusions drawn in the study could be based upon inherent biases (Maxwell, 2005) identified in Chapter Three. In addition to the triangulation of data, the triangulation of theories by leveraging (Patton, 2002) both Greenleaf's Servant Leadership (1977) and Burn's Transformational Leadership (1978) yielded additional descriptive characteristics that were applied to the data.

Once the interviews were completed, and the dialogue was transcribed, a copy of the transcript was transmitted to each participant to afford them the opportunity to review and comment on the accuracy of each document. In addition, the archival records were reviewed subsequent to the data analysis as well as the transcripts to confirm the patterns that were labeled and coded, as well as seeking alternative data themes that may disprove the initial data analysis (Patton, 2002) of which none were detected.

External validity, or transferability, has been accommodated through rich, textual responses and descriptions to ensure that the findings can be transferable "between the researcher and those being studied" (Creswell, 2006). Finally, dependability is achieved through a strong audit trail of interview logs, email contacts, audio recordings, transcribed documents, and the literature review which contains the archival documents within the reference listing.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1**

What leadership characteristics (i.e. Servant, Transformational, or Transactional Leadership characteristics) are present within the public and for profit leadership teams, observable by the integrated project team?

Utilizing the coding framework developed prior to the interview's, included in Table 4 and 5, as a starting point, and the questions developed prior to the initiation of the interviews as a result of the two instruments being leveraged in questions & themes extracted from Bass' & Avolio (1997) MLQ as well as the SLBS (2008) developed by Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora allowed for the following themes and characteristics to be identified through data analysis and depicted in Table 7. These characteristics were not solely attributable to a single individual but were indicative of characteristics utilized to describe multiple leaders, both formal and informal, who supported the partnership and implementation of the Medicaid Claims System. Level I coding themes were identified through the labels derived from the transcripts and mapped to the pre-interview coding framework in Table 4 and 5. Sub Level I themes were consistent themes that arose during the interviews and were aligned with the Level I themes either through referential comments made by the participants or by categorizing the themes by topic and aligning consistent terms with the Level I themes.

These sub level themes were identified by assigning labels to areas of qualitative data extracted from the source documents that closely aligned with the Level 1 themes by virtue of their connectivity during the dialogue or participant referencing of the relatability of these sub level 1 themes to the overall leadership Level 1 theme. Based upon the themes that emerged from the transcripts, the existence of characteristics of both Transformational (Burns, 1978) Leadership and Servant (Greenleaf, 1977) emerged from the discussions as being visible, and impactful, to the project team.

The characteristics that were visible were consistently identified by the interviewee's throughout the interviews.

Of note in Table 7, you can clearly see that there were characteristics associated with both Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership which were not referenced by the participants, or identified in the qualitative data throughout the analysis process. For example, under Servant Leadership and the Intellectual Stimulation category, there was no data visible which supported that a learning environment existed or that creativity was a present characteristic within the leadership team. This lack of data may be related to the crisis situation that the team was attempting to manage once the first implementation of the claims system failed, and the inability to be creative or develop a learning environment during a crisis but further research would have to be done to confirm that hypothesis.

Table 7

*Servant and Transformational Characteristics Visible to Project Team*

Servant Leadership Themes	Level I Themes	Sub Level I Themes
<b>Servant First</b>		
Others before self Community builder Humility Stewardship	Medicaid population was priority Strong understanding of stakeholders Deep sense of responsibility Service to the community	Humility in role Did not take things personally Understood there was a greater good Linkage to a public servant role was strong
Elevates others	Team was empowered	Matrixed organization makes that difficult
<b>Development of Others</b>		
Spiritual Develop others Moral Ethical	Empowered  Honesty was priority	Appreciated  Compliant and credibility were important
<b>Empathy</b>		
Compassionate Supportive Perceptive Persuasive	Concern for disenfranchised population Daily Meetings Understood Environment Politicized environment	Understood employee exhaustion Leaders attempted to shield team Realization of severity of impact Ability to engage stakeholders during interim phase
<b>Listening &amp; Understanding</b>		
Trust	Dependent upon one another for success	Developed subsequent to reorganization changes
Collaborative	Desire to work with internal and external stakeholders	Understood that relationships were critical
Seeks alternative opinions	Strong collaboration but able to make final decision	Leader becomes focal point of decision making
Intuitive	Understanding of ramifications of system failure	Interim payments were critical step
Attentive	Established internal communication levers	Difficult at times due to severity of issues
<b>Transformational Leadership Theory</b>		
<b>Idealized Influence</b>		
Vision Hope	Gave team hope that they would solve the issues	Understanding of the visible roles of leaders
Transcendent Futuristic	Understood need for replacement systems	Engaged federal government in discussions
Elevate Others	Understood need for key individual to be visible	Empowered team to enact decisions
<b>Individualized Consideration</b>		
Individual support	Aware of toll project was taking. Supported team.	Nightly roundup meetings were vital to team
Develop others Nurture Sensitivity	Understood that team needed to be rallied	Awareness the toll project was taking on employees
<b>Intellectual Stimulation</b>		
Empowerment Awareness Learning environment Creative		

Inspired Motivation		
Clear sense of goals Charisma	Early identification of severity of issue	Able to understand needed resolution
Listens to all views	Considered many inputs but not all views	Time was of the essence and input had to be limited
Optimistic	Developed positive outlook to inspire the team	Always believed they would succeed
Challenging	Unwavering in belief that the team could solve the issue	Strong belief in key team members ability

The categories that had the strongest themes emerge from the qualitative data extracted from the source documents that related to the conceptual framework from the Servant Leadership theory (Greenleaf, 1977) were servant first, listening & understanding, and empathy. The strongest themes that emerged from the qualitative data extracted from the source documentation and manual coding from the Transformational Leadership theory (Burns, 1978) was Idealized Influence and Inspired Motivation. The dominance of the Servant Leadership themes (Greenleaf, 1977) was a result of the severity of issues that were experienced upon the implementation of the CNSI system which slowly subsided over time, but left a lasting impact on the participants and the stakeholders. Without question, the participants felt strongly about their role and the critical nature of the system implementation due to the impact it was having on the Medicaid population which is traditionally a vulnerable population within the State health care system. All of the participants and external stakeholders recognized the higher calling their role encompassed by enabling health care services to this vulnerable population.

Characteristics of Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978) were also visible and seemed critically important to the interviewees in terms of setting the vision, giving hope to all involved that they would persevere, and ultimately successfully implement the new system.

A critical component of the team's communication approach was to have a "daily round up" each day from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to discuss issues, talk about upcoming events, but ultimately to allow the project team to relieve some of their stress prior to going home at night. Many of the interviewees mentioned how meaningful the daily round up was to them and their ability to navigate the next day of project challenges.

In dealing with a crisis mode, it is not unexpected to assume that areas like intellectual stimulation are not a focus while the priority remains resolving wide spread issues and implementing a new project. There were also components of individualized consideration that were visible to the team through empathy by not only internal leaders, but by external stakeholders. Many of the interviewees mentioned this sensitivity and empathy as a team characteristic but with the realization that the task at hand was monumental and there was a job to perform.

## **Research Question 2**

RQ2: How did the leadership characteristics of both organizations influence the project team's ability to deliver services at each phase of the project?

RQ2.1: Did one organization's leadership team dominate the partnership's integrated team? If so, how?

The unique aspect of a public private partnership that is illustrated with this case study is that the public organization is the sole funder of the initiative and activities. The public organization becomes the driver of the project timeframes, communication protocols, and financial oversight thereby creating an initial imbalance from the onset as the majority role holder in the partnership. Members from the CNSI organization project team did not respond to requests to participate so this topic cannot be explored in depth but many of the participants who were interviewed indicated that the majority of the responsibility of implementing the system resided with the State of Maine team. Further exploration of this topic should be done at a future time to understand the imbalance in roles and the impact it can have on a project team.

**Research Question 3:**

What leadership characteristics, positive or negative, were visible to the project team that influenced the overall project team on the partnership initiative?

R3.1: Of those characteristics, which were more dominant, the positive or negative? How were they impactful to the team?

The characteristics identified by the team as visible are described in Table 8. It is important to note that this project had three phases: the initial go live of the CNSI developed system, the ongoing remediation attempts to resolve the issues from the CNSI implementation, and the ultimate replacement system developed by Unisys implemented by the State of Maine. Early project leadership characteristics noted by the team were strongly weighted to the negative.

Table 8

*Observable Leadership Characteristics*

Leadership Characteristics initially with CNSI implementation	Abrasive
	Disconnected
	Lack of recognition
	Silo'd
	Politically focused
	Overwhelmed
	Casting blame
	Ineffective

As leadership was replaced, reorganizations occurred within the State, and new talent was brought to the team, the descriptors of the leadership culture begin to turn positive even though this was a time of intense remediation efforts to solve the system issues and criticism leveled at the State of Maine team remained extremely high.

Table 9

*Evolving Positive and Negative Aspects*

Positive	Negative
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Candor in Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Spread thin
<input type="checkbox"/> Truthful	<input type="checkbox"/> Inaccessible
<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Had to overcome perception of ineptness

Negative aspects were still observed but related to overcoming the early perceptions of the State's ability to fix the system. One external stakeholder indicated that they knew that the project team was working very hard, but it was difficult to measure any substantial progress largely due to the severity of the issues regarding cash flow to the providers.

#### **Research Question 4**

RQ4: How would the participants of the PPP describe the partnership culture?

RQ4.1: How did the leadership team influence the culture that was observed by the participants?

It was apparent that the participants recognized the unprecedented impact the failure of the CNSI system had on the ability of the team to be successful when initially joining the project team. Each participant interviewed joined the project at differing intervals in the lifecycle of the implementation which included participants who were involved prior to the implementation through the successful implementation of the Unisys system giving the researcher a unique perspective into the time elapse of leadership approaches both pre, during, and post implementation. The team members referred to the initial culture during, and subsequent, to the implementation of the software as 'a firestorm' or as a pure 'crisis management' environment while the initial system failure continued to plague the providers by impacting their cash flow and ability to service the State of Maine Medicaid beneficiary population.

Upon the arrival of new leaders and new team members, the emphasis on clear, truthful communication became a priority for the project team allowing for the identification and escalation of risks to become more organic for the team. Many participants referred to the impact that the Commissioner of DHHS had upon their collective work environment by modeling transparent communication approaches, direct feedback, and the focus on the greater good of the population in need.

External participants also noted the improved communication over time and the concerted effort it took to meet with the stakeholders, however, it was noted that being an external stakeholder meant that it wasn't always clear that there was progress being made in the initial months subsequent to the implementation of the CNSI system. This may have been a downstream impact of the initial lack of recognition of how serious and systemic the issue was which led to ineffectual communications and actions in those early months of operationalization of the CNSI system. This observation would make sense given the project's team all-consuming focus on trying to fix the issue with multiple releases, rather than assessing the totality of the system limitations in those first early months of go live.

### **Summary of Findings**

The observations of the project team and external stakeholders illuminated the impact that the leadership, both formal and informal leaders, had on the culture of the project team.

The environmental factors that were created through the failed implementation of the CNSI system were unique and impactful to the team which required a leadership model which would allow the team to focus on the impacted stakeholders who were relying on the team for their ability to resolve the short term issues of cash flow impacts, to the longer term plan to replace the system to ensure the State achieved the critical accreditation by the Federal Government. Chapter Five will leverage these observations and findings to offer recommendations on how to improve PPP's where multiple organizations are involved with developing a singular mission.

## Chapter Five: Recommendations and Implications for Social Change

### **Introduction**

My objective in conducting this study was to gain an understanding of the impact that a leadership team can have on participants in a PPP and to understand in what ways their leadership approach influences the project team and stakeholders to achieve the charter of the PPP. This interest was borne of several highly publicized failures of PPPs in recent years such as the Healthcare.gov website and the Air Force's failure to implement the Expeditionary Combat Support System which involved PPPs as well as a myriad of stakeholders who were impacted by the failures. These failures create enormous burdens to taxpayers who bear the costs of failed partnerships as well as to the marginalized constituencies who are the targets of social program deliverables.

In this Chapter, I will summarize the findings of the research questions, offer recommendations for future research opportunities, and synthesize the information gathered throughout the course of the study to offer implications for social change that would be impactful to the community of interested stakeholders.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The themes that emerged throughout the course of the study from the source documents from which the qualitative data was extracted and the interviews were strongly related to several key areas that will be aligned below with the four primary research questions.

### Research Question 1 Themes:

What leadership characteristics (i.e. servant, transformational, or transactional leadership characteristics) are present within the public and for-profit leadership teams that are observable by the integrated project team? Based upon the themes that emerged via the historical artifacts and interviews, the dominant leadership characteristic that emerged were those of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) attributes that were present within the PPP as observed by the integrated project team.

The servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) themes that emerged are detailed in Table 10.

Table 10

#### *Servant Leadership Level I Themes*

<b>Servant Leadership Themes</b>	<b>Level I Themes</b>
Servant First	
Others before self	Medicaid population was priority
Community builder	Strong understanding of stakeholders
Humility	Deep sense of responsibility
Stewardship	Service to the community
Elevates others	Team was empowered
Development of Others	
Spiritual	
Develop others	Empowered
Moral	
Ethical	Honesty was priority
Empathy	
Compassionate	Concern for disenfranchised population
Supportive	Daily Meetings
Perceptive	Understood Environment
Persuasive	Politicized environment
Listening & Understanding	
Trust	Dependent upon one another for success

Collaborative	Desire to work with internal and external stakeholders
Seeks alternative opinions	Strong collaboration but able to make final decision
Intuitive	Understanding of ramifications of system failure
Attentive	Established internal communication levers

The secondary theme that emerged from the qualitative data was that of Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978) which in large part was visible early on in the implementation and operationalization of the CNSI system. These transformational characteristics were seemingly necessary to re-group and re-form the project team during the first twelve months subsequent to the implementation when the issues seemed insurmountable. Those attributes were as follows:

Table 11

*Transformational Leadership Level I Themes*

<b>Transformational Leadership Theory</b>	<b>Level I Themes</b>
<b>Idealized Influence</b>	
Hope	Gave team hope that they would solve the issues
Futuristic	Understood need for replacement system
Elevate Others	Understood need for key individuals to be visible
<b>Individualized Consideration</b>	
Individual Support	Aware of toll project was taking. Supported team.
Sensitivity	Understood that team needed to be rallied

**Inspired Motivation**

Clear Sense of goals	Early identification of severity of issue
Listens to all views	Considered many inputs but not all views
Optimistic	Developed positive outlook to inspire the team
Challenging	Unwavering in belief that the team could solve the issue

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**Research Question 2 Themes:**

How did the leadership characteristics of both organizations influence the project team's ability to deliver services at each phase of the project?

As noted in Chapter 4, the impact of the financial owner of the project being the public organization cannot be underestimated in a PPP as impactful to the culture and relationship amongst the entities. As previously noted, PPPs are formed in large part to infuse innovation in a public organization and to share risk across entities. In this particular PPP, the public organization was funding the project, which can create a master/servant type of relationship. Also as noted in Chapter 4, CNSI did not respond to requests to participate in this study, so a limitation of the study is understanding their perspective of the implementation. All of the participants, however, identify the software's inability to adapt to the Medicaid environment as a key component of the failure of the initial system.

**Research Question 3 Themes:**

What leadership characteristics, positive or negative, were visible to the project team that influenced the overall project team on the partnership initiative?

As noted in Chapter 4, the themes were in a state of evolution over the course of the project. These evolving themes were able to be captured through the various participants who were involved at varying phases of the initial CNSI implementation all the way through to the Unisys implementation. Many of the team members mentioned the first year after the implementation as being solely focused on crisis management with state reorganization and budget cuts in the midst of a system launch failure. The negative leadership themes during that time were noted by the participants as disconnected, abrasive, and employees being stretched too thin.

With the reorganization that occurred at the leadership levels and the subsequent remediation efforts, the terms became more positive and themes such as transparency, trustworthiness, and honesty emerged. It is important to note that the servant leadership themes that emerged were important to the team members as they gave meaning to the job, sometimes with high personal sacrifices, and allowed the participants to commit to the team and to the State.

#### **Research Question 4: Themes**

How would the participants of the PPP describe the partnership culture?

Interestingly, the members of the PPP largely assigned positive terms to the partnership culture as there seemed to be an awareness that the system was not capable of processing the claims and there was a burgeoning understanding that the members of both the public and private organizations were working their hardest to remediate issues. There were allowances made in terms of assigning blame to individuals versus assigning blame to a system.

In large part, the remediation of the system, by virtue of the requirements, fell mostly on the State of Maine team once the CNSI system had been launched. There also was a burgeoning awareness once the CNSI system had to be replaced that the teams had to continue to work together successfully while the new system was being built.

Participants did mention how they were careful not to blame CNSI for the failure in order to maintain a positive working relationship, but several participants noted that the addition of consulting firms began eroding their ability to be involved in the decision making.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As noted in Chapter 1, the limitation of this study is that the case study selected was an individual PPP and therefore the results should not be extrapolated widely to other PPPs. The findings of this study are limited to public and private leaders who participate in PPPs. Due to the nature of the case study approach, the findings should not be generalized to all public and private partnerships but rather utilized to support the development of curricula through the identification of new approaches to leadership in future PPPs.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

Due to the financial investment and costs that are involved with PPPs and the negative impacts that can arise from a failed PPP, it is recommended that future study continue on the leadership attributes that lead to a successful partnership by studying either successful or failed partnerships.

Although the word partnership can connote that two entities are involved, the reality is that PPPs may now involve a public organization and multiple private organizations to deliver a range of work, which increases the complexity for leaders who must manage the overall partnership. As identified during the literature review in Chapter 2, there is a gap in research that is focused on leadership styles and approaches as deployed in a PPP both from a quantitative research perspective and from a qualitative research method. As observed throughout the course of the study, PPPs contain a host of complex dynamics that include unbalanced organizational relationships, political pressures, and complicated mission objectives that all contribute to a unique environment in which project teams have to operate. Each of these highly complex dynamics could also be studied individually to better understand their impact on PPPs and their ability to successfully execute their charter. Future studies would support the development of both professional training and curricula that can be employed at PPPs proactively.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The scale of PPPs has grown over the last decade while their complexity and mission objectives have increasingly led to a myriad of challenges in delivering the objectives of the partnership. In traditional public and private partnerships, the public organization is typically the funding mechanism for the entire partnership. The funding that the PPP receives is allocated through legislative mechanisms, which can create budget shortfalls for other organizations that administer social programs.

The losses of taxpayer dollars as seen in the State of Maine case study, Healthcare.gov, and the failed Airforce system implementation are staggering in their amounts and may result in budget constraints impacting other social programs' abilities to deliver critical services to marginalized populations. Even more dramatic can be the impact to the stakeholders who need to rely on the successful implementations for which the PPPs are responsible that cover infrastructure, technology, and service oriented projects.

The successful implementation of a PPP can lead to fiscal responsibility of taxpayer funds that could be better utilized to fund additional social programs rather than wasted during failed implementations and remediating the failed projects. As the United States and other countries encounter further budgetary challenges, it is imperative that these PPPs are successful not only in implementation but in their execution of the mission they are charged with carrying.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the PPP environment and specifically the State of Maine case study that was discussed throughout the course of this dissertation. Chapter 2 explored the literature surrounding PPPs and leadership styles and ultimately identified a gap in studies surrounding leadership and teams that are involved in a PPP. This gap identified that little research has been done on the leadership framework that is deployed in a PPP. Chapter 3 outlined the approach to the study and how the research questions would be addressed through a qualitative case study approach leveraging the State of Maine claims system implementation.

Chapter 4 went on to summarize the findings that were yielded as a component of historical artifacts and artifacts that specifically related to the State of Maine Medicaid system implementation. Chapter 4 outlined the data analysis approach that was utilized to identify key themes that were characteristic of the leadership team that led the State of Maine implementation of the claims system. Finally, Chapter 5 offered recommendations for future studies and implications for social change.

Leadership influences are without a doubt important facets of future collaborations amongst entities to create a successful environment of trust and transparency that will support the effective delivery of social programs and projects whether they are technology, infrastructure, or service oriented in nature. In many cases, the PPPs are supported by taxpayer funds which should make everyone invested in their successful operationalization as society relies more heavily on their services and projects in the years to come.

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## Appendix A: Email Invitation

Dear Participant (Name will be inserted),

My name is Mary Ludden and I am currently a scholar at Walden University working on completing my dissertation. With the increasing number of partnerships between public agencies and private organizations, understanding leadership characteristics that will help support the program team during difficult implementations can be leveraged for future organizational leadership programs and institutional management curriculum to prepare leaders for the dynamic environment they will encounter. As a member of the team that worked with the State of Maine and CNSI on the implementation of the MMIS system in 2005, your experience and insights related to leadership characteristics within a public and private partnership are invaluable to this scholarly study that will potentially be utilized to help future public and private partnerships. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one hour interview session via conference call or in person where questions pertaining to leadership will be posed for your consideration to help the researcher understand the leadership characteristics you observed during your time on the project.
- Review the notes taken during the interview to ensure the researcher has accurately reflected your feedback and comments.

I hope you will consider participating in this study to share your observations with me on this important topic. Please contact me at [mary.ludden@waldenu.edu](mailto:mary.ludden@waldenu.edu) if you are interested in participating.

Sincerely,

Mary Ludden

Walden University Student

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

### **Transformational Leadership Questions:**

1. How were critical assumptions used in the partnership reexamined to question whether they were appropriate?
2. In what way did the leaders talk about their most important values and beliefs during the partnership?
3. During the project, how did the leaders seek differing perspectives when solving problems?
4. How did the leader express their optimism about the future?
  - 4a. How did the leader create a compelling vision of the future at the onset of the project and throughout the course of the project?
5. What was your experience like as far as the leader instilling pride in the team members for being associated with him/her and the project?

### **Servant Leadership Questions:**

6. In what ways did the leader consider others' needs and interests above his or her own?  
Can you share specific examples?
7. When the project encountered challenges, how did the leader appear to handle the issues when confronted with the obstacles?

8. In what ways, did the leader exhibit a sense of a higher calling to motivate the team through those challenges? Do you have specific examples?
9. In what ways, were the leaders able to articulate to the team a shared vision to give inspiration and meaning to work?
10. As the project encountered challenges, how did the leader react when criticized? Were they able to focus on the message not the messenger?
11. As the program evolved over time, were you able to observe leadership characteristics that inspired you to lead others by serving? Are you able to describe a specific example?