The Competing Values Framework: Strategic Implications for Leadership, Conflict and Change in Public Organizations

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Introduction

It is widely understood that public sector executives work in over-determined situations, balancing many, often contradictory, internal and external demands as individuals and leaders of organizations and programs. One has only to look at the many values delineated in A Strong Foundation for public servants working in the Canadian Public Service to see this challenge (Task Force on Values and Ethics, 1996). Over a score of values were identified in four overlapping categories (democratic, professional, ethical, people). Or, turn to the Management Accountability Framework to see a larger set of implied leadership values and competencies implied by the ten categories monitored by central government: policy, ethics and values, learning, results and performance, resources, people management, etc. (Lindquist 2009). As government needs and management fashions evolve, additional values and variations on old values get layered into the mix – few drop away – leading to considerable complexity in leading and assessing what constitutes good leadership. Such complexity is often recognized in competency frameworks, which typically identify a host of skills and areas of expertise identified as important for leaders. These frameworks offer an often daunting list of competencies, implying that high-performing leaders must perform well in all elements of the competency wheel. Many observers, including subordinates, in public sector organizations might see these values and demands as paradoxical, even impossible to tend to at all times, raising interesting issues and perceptions of integrity and performance.

Despite a existence of a huge and growing literature on leadership – ranging systematic academic studies to more popular writing consulting and guru-style writing – relatively little of it has found its way into writing and teaching materials for public management courses in Canada. There are exceptions, of course: we have Mintzberg and Bourgault’s Managing Publicly (2002) and two collections on leadership at the level of secretaries to cabinets at the federal and provincial levels of government (Dutil 2008) and more recently on deputy minister turnover (Bourgault and Dunn 2013), all from the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. Arguably, the Canadian lacunae reflects a more general gap in systematically treading leadership in the public administration literature at the international level. To be sure there are exceptions, such as Moore’s (1994) work on public value, Behn’s Leadership Counts (1989), and Boin et al (2005) and his colleagues examining crisis management and strategic leadership. But typically these point to generic leadership skills and disposition required of leaders and, even though many of these frameworks are utilized to explore leader performance in specific contexts along with often creative pedagogical and illustrative techniques (videos, case studies, memoires, etc.). We think there has been limited use of analytic yet practical frameworks designed to get at the challenges and paradoxes of leadership in a public sector context, when it is a major preoccupation and consideration for those recruiting, developing, selecting and monitoring leaders.

There are undoubtedly many scholars with approaches embracing multiple values and perspective on organizational challenges. Some well-known examples of frameworks include: Quinn’s (1988) Beyond Rational Management and many other publications with co-authors using the competing values framework (e.g. Cameron and Quinn, 2006a; Cameron et al, 2006b); Bolman and Deal’s (2003) Reframing Organizations framework with its four perceptual lenses; Martin’s The Opposable Mind and its focus on integrative thinking embracing different values; and Bourgon’s New Synthesis framework with essentially outside-looking-in governance value orientations on public sector leaders. Of these frameworks, only Bourgon explicitly intended to deal with the challenges of public sector governance and competency challenges. Here we focus on Quinn’s Competing Values Framework (CVF) because we believe it has the most variegated approach, encompassing leadership, organizational culture, and strategy. The CVF has been broached in the public management literature, but almost exclusively with respect to characterizing and parsing out public sector reform (Norman 2008; Talbot 2008; Lindquist...
Our goal here, however, is to explore how it can be applied to analyzing public sector strategic leadership challenges and public management education.

This paper is a first effort at bridging the CVF more explicitly to a public sector audience and setting out a research agenda and has four parts. The first provides an overview of the origins, logic, facets, and evolution of the Competing Values Framework. The second part considers why and how the CVF, which was not explicitly developed for the world of government leadership, is nevertheless useful for studying culture, management and leadership in a public sector context. The third part identifies several areas where the CVF could be extended for instruction in MPA and MPP courses, but its progenitors do not yet use it for those purposes. We conclude by reflecting on the CVF and similar frameworks, and how where future research might go.

The Competing Values Framework: A Primer

The Competing Values Framework was first articulated in various forms during the late 1980s and early 1990s by Quinn and his associates (e.g. Rohrbaugh 1981; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983). Successive versions and variations have since emerged for different purposes, along with ever-better ways to visualize the framework, its different levels of analysis, and its central insights. Interestingly, though, the later renderings of the framework – often for more specific audiences and purposes – do not offer as good accounts of the genesis and rationale for the CVF as Quinn’s earliest work. What follows here, then, is a primer on the impetus and origins of this work.

Origins: Competing Values and Institutional Change

The Competing Values Framework emerged out of considerable theoretical and empirical work carried out by Robert Quinn and several colleagues published during the early and mid 1980s (for an extensive set of references, see Quinn, 1988, 188-90). Quinn was interested in analyzing the contradictions and paradoxes of management (Quinn 1988, p.xiv-xv), as opposed to the tendency to characterize top-flight managers and leaders as rationally addressing issues and challenges, and to arrive at simply typologies to characterize their work environments. He saw top leaders and managers as better at seeing and coping with contradictions and paradoxes, often emerging as conflict, unconstructive conversations, and misalignment of leadership and managerial capacity with an organization’s strategic challenges.

Quinn could see that there were no shortage of values at play in organizations: stability, control, planning, goal-setting, efficiency, productivity, growth, acquiring resources, securing external support, readiness, adaptability, fostering cohesion, increasing morale, staff development, good communication, and good information management, with strategies such as centralization, decentralization, increasing competition, maintaining the existing system, goal maximization, continuity, consolidation, integration, and differentiation as all larger goals (Quinn 1988, Fig. 3, p.8). These competing demands and views, he saw, reflected different values of individuals and often different cultures which had become embedded in parts of and across organizations. Furthermore, these different views were reflected more generally in the academic and popular writing on organizations, management and leadership.

All of these values were potentially equally important, but depended on the context. Quinn’s notion of leaders with ‘mastery’ were individuals who could recognize and appreciate the salience of these values and understand the extent to which they need to be privileged or addressed in particular circumstances. Such mastery was a precondition for high performance. Another way to think about this was that some high performers in one context might be totally at sea in another context, and perform very poorly. In this connection, Quinn also reflected on leaders who wistfully recalled periods of ‘peak performance’ which he associated with transformative phases of organizations, but only one step in their evolution:
stabilization and developing new routines after transformation, followed by stagnation, then initiation in response to new challenges and uncertainty, in turn followed by insight and reframing, and, eventually, another round of transformation. (Quinn 1988, pp.15-23). Peak performance – encompassing creativity, insight, and execution – occurs at certain times: it is fragile, evanescent, and time-bound. Such leaders thriving in peak-performance environments, were less likely to enjoy leadership as organizational life settled down; presumably others comfortable with more stable situations, were highly discomforted with transformative change. Along the way, though, having gone through a full cycle of change, leaders may develop a sense of which managerial strategies are more effective and under what circumstances, eventually leading to a broader understanding of leadership or what Quinn calls ‘mastery’.

Quinn (1988) sets out his attempt to develop an integrating framework which could capture the value and values of all of these phases, with different mixes of paradoxes and contradictions at each point in time, and to show how individuals and organizations could better assess the circumstances and move forward. Interestingly, he juxtaposed diametrically opposed clusters of values (p.33):

- Coordination, predictability, control vs. Challenge, variety, stimulation
- Standardization, measurement, objectivity vs. Compensation, recognition, rewards
- Direction, purpose, role clarity vs. Sensitivity, consideration, support
- Productivity, impact, achievement vs. Belonging, teamwork, affiliation

Quinn distilled two dimensions around which these values were juxtaposed (internal vs. external focus, and centralization/integration vs. decentralization/differentiation), grouping them according to four different ‘information’ processing models (rational goal, open systems, consensual or hierarchical or internal process) which bring to the forefront certain objectives while de-emphasizing or blind to others.

This led to his framework with two dimensions and resulting four-quadrants of: human relations, internal control, rational goal, open systems (see Fig. 6, next page from Quinn 1988, p.51). Each of these quadrants not only captured an important tradition in organizational analysis, but each were associated with distinct organizational cultures with different values, goals, tendencies, notions of effectiveness, leadership styles, and key competencies. The names and labels have changed over the years in later publications, but minimally so.

- **Hierarchy quadrant** captures the literature on formal organization and bureaucracy, along with an emphasis on documenting, measuring, and managing information, leading to two key roles and functions: monitoring and coordinating;
- **Human relations quadrant** captures the literature on the informal organization, encouraging a supportive workplace, realizing potential and commitment of staff, and fostering teams, leading to managers as facilitators and mentors;
- **The firm/rational goal quadrant** focuses profit or goal maximization or cost minimization and is focused on performance, placing emphasis on directing, implementation, and productivity; and
- **The open systems or adhocracy quadrant** focuses on anticipating and responding to shifting external environments, valuing leaders who can embrace and guide change, consider new ways of thinking, with emphasis on brokering, influencing, external monitoring and networking skills.

These four quadrants, Quinn observed, were not just academic models, but four different sets of ‘morale’ and worldviews at play in organizations (p.42). See, for example, Fig 3.2 on the next page taken from Cameron and Quinn (2006, p.46).
Other Considerations: Innate Moralities, Abiding Tensions, Evolving Organizations

In an important observation Quinn (1988) notes that “Real organizations do not fall neatly into one or the other of these four models. In fact, the models do not contain organizations, organizations contain the models, all of them. In every organization all four models exist.”(p.42) That said, some organizations or parts of organizations – in the main – can be characterized as having more of the characteristics associated with a quadrant, particularly when contrasted with other organizations or units.

This is very interesting when leavened with Cyert and March’s (1963) view of organizations as having ‘dominant coalitions’ of groups any point in time, which presupposed diverse interests and culture at play in organizations. The CVF framework – by delineating the clan, market, hierarchy and adhocracy worldviews – suggests that there will proponents of these distinct sets of ideas about critical values, appropriate leadership, and effectiveness in every organization. Cyert and March’s early insight tells us to expect that the balance among and resonance of these ideas inside organizations will evolve. In this and later work, Quinn and others identify the phases of start-up, growth, stabilization, and reorientation (Quinn, 1988: 54-65; Cameron and Quinn, 2006: 53-59).

Indeed, Quinn (1988) states that “the four modes of thinking and organizing are tied to the four phases in the transformational cycle...People who are week in the rational-goal approach may have difficulty in the initiation phase. Those who are weak in the developmental approach may have difficulty in the uncertainty phase. Likewise, weakness in the consensual approach may lead to difficulties in the transformational phase, and weakness in the hierarchical approach may lead to difficulties in the routinization phase.” (pp.42-43). Conversely, individuals with worldviews and moralities from different quadrants will have differing degrees of comfort and notions of peak performance with each phase. The tensions among these world views are constant, with changes in leadership and recruitment, along with environmental changes, affecting the balance among them.

Conclusion: Building a Bridge for Applying CVF to Public Sector Contexts

The Competing Values Framework is fascinating because it integrates many different values and levels of analysis: it delineates values and different long-standing analytic traditions; it measures and identifies personal leadership styles; it measures and assesses group and program values in organizations; it surfaces the basis for tension, conflict and miscommunication; it invites considering the extent to which organizational culture might be congruent with new circumstances and challenges for organizations; it encourages leaders to find new balances among values along with innovation; and it shows that leaders and staff can have different notions of what constitutes success and effectiveness even when they use the same terms. It has a lot going on! The Master Manager or Competing Values Framework has become an important platform for teaching leadership and management to early and mid-career learners.

Interestingly, though, no single article, book or monograph provides a useful primer for applying the CVF to the public sector. Quinn’s (1988) Beyond Rational Management first set out the competing values framework, but no one chapter would really be good reading for a public management course – it reads more like an academic tract. Cameron and Quinn’s (2006a) Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture focuses primarily on the diagnostic instruments and provides a good review of the different quadrants, leader and culture types, and less on the underlying approach. The various editions of Quinn et al’s (1996, 2011) Becoming a Master Manager provides a great but short overview chapter on how the different traditions from organization theory are reflected in the Competing Values Framework, but the textbook is focused on developing individual management skills, the book reviews smaller instruments to measure knowledge and competency, and most of the examples are from the US private sector. Quinn’s (2004) Building the Bridge As You Walk On It is an advanced reflection and exploration of
how leaders transcend value tension and trade-offs to strike new balances and different, innovative ways to address challenges, with similarities to Martin’s (2007) *Oppposable Mind*.

All of these contributions, we believe, are salient for developing a better understanding of leadership, management and organizational change in the public sector, but there is no single written resource which conveys how this useful, flexible integrating framework is relevant for the public sector.

**The Competing Values Framework: Exploring its Potential for the Public Sector**

In many ways the value of the Competing Values Framework should be readily apparent to anyone interested in teaching and researching leadership and management in the public sector. There are certainly multiple values, different leadership and managerial styles, and considerable change and evolving challenges at play in public organizations. Like much organization theory literature, the CVF is a relatively neutral framework, which can increase personal and organizational self-awareness, but, as such, is open to criticism that it is a private-sector centered framework applied to public sector, missing a lot of the terminology, context and particular debates and tensions associated with the public sector. However, many of the ‘public sector’ values reflected in the public administration literature – such as those articulated in the Management Accountability Framework (Lindquist 2009) and by the Task Force on Values and Ethics (1996) and layered on since – have counterparts or walkover values in the CVF at different removes.

It is precisely the diversity of values found in the public sector context which makes the CVF or a workable elaboration valuable. That said, we believe that the CVF requires to be better situated – if only for resonance with experienced and early career learners – to realize its full potential. This section considers why and how the CVF is useful for diagnosing and discussing leadership, management and strategic change in a public sector context.

**Diversity of Values: Direct and Indirect Connections**

As noted above, the Task Force on Values and Ethics (1996) delineated a host of values material to public servants working for any government in a democratic jurisdiction, even if many of the values were assigned to the different broader categories they identified as useful categories (democratic, ethical, professional, people). The Task Force, like others (e.g. Dwivedi and Gow, 1999), also sought to contrast and juxtapose ‘traditional’ public administration values with those associated with the New Public Management movement, although these authors and many others would acknowledge that many of the NPM values – such as efficiency, effectiveness, lowering costs, serving the public, etc. – were not new values added to the pantheon. Rather, they were privileged as goals and often accompanied by new mandates, instruments and governance arrangements to further those values.

Many of these values could be clustered along with the different quadrants of the Competing Values Framework, which would be a good exercise for instructors to undertake with learners. A key question would be: are many of the public service values simply using a different nomenclature or are they sufficiently different that, for each quadrant, one might conceive of identifying a band which would house these distinct values but which nevertheless fit into the respective families of values associated with hierarchical, rational goal, human relations, and hierarchical/control systems?

In a course one of us recently co-taught to undergraduates, the Competing Values Framework was introduced as a succinct way to give due to and analyze different public sector reform movements over the last one hundred years. Not only were we seeking to show how public sector reform movements were influenced by more general management reform ideas, but also that, decades later, most of these
ideas have never left the public sector reform and management playing field. Indeed, not only do they all remain important but they keep on resurfacing in new combinations and under new labels or reform brands. In short, the usefulness of the CVF is that it gives due to all of these values, provides a checklist of sorts to show how balanced or skewed the reform packages are, and reminds us that we should expect that any complex organization has numerous values, goals and motivations in contention with each other, which may complement or directly challenge each other in varying degrees (Simon 1964).

**Diversity of Organizational Contexts: Scale and Breadth**

Public service institutions are not single organizations, but rather, a multi-faceted collection of diverse entities with distinct mandates and different scales of operation. As Wilson (1989) reminded us, to talk of a single culture – even to speak of a common bureaucratic culture – across the public sector, would be to make a significant mistake. In turn, though, not only will their culture and values vary across these organizations, they will also vary within them, along with notions of what constitutes effectiveness and good leadership and management. Different parts of organizations, particularly larger ones, will often have distinct goals, values and cultures, even if they have serve the same general department as well as its legislative and governance mandate.

The Competing Values Framework, and accompanying diagnostic survey instruments of individuals, can be useful for ascertaining what the people in organizations and various constituent units believe to be critical values and indicators of effectiveness, among other things. We would expect that differences in mandate, incentive systems, and patterns of recruitment (from particular disciplines or professional schools, as well as rotations in from certain departments and programs) would shape the character and culture of different kinds of units (Selznick, 1957). We would also expect that the nature of tasks and technology would also be important determinants in shaping the values and culture of units and larger organizations (e.g. Thompson, 1967; Barley 1990).

We would expect that smaller with focused mandates and focused units of organizations – such as financial services, legal, policy or communications units – might share common dispositions across organizations, despite differing mandates of larger organizations. This could be conditioned, however, by the broader mandates of the larger organizations of which they are a part. The CVF provides both a theoretical basis and empirical instrument for exploring these differences. Indeed, it helps us to begin to understand why particular functional communities or networks working across the public service might line up on one side of debates about particular policy and administrative reforms. And, as we suggest below, these differing values take on special meaning depending on who is selected to lead particular units, departments and agencies.

**Shifting Governance Contexts: Evolving Priorities, Rotating Ministers and Executives**

Private sector organizations, like governments, are steadily, and sometimes episodically, exposed to economic and technological change. Perhaps biggest difference between the sectors are the shifting political winds and changes in government, either through elections, failures, public scrutiny, scandals, etc. Such changes can lead to new governments, new prime ministers and ministers, and policy shifts. All can have significant impact on the political and administrative leadership and the profile and reputation of key departments and agencies.

Shifts in government priorities often means certain departments and agencies will be in more regular contact with the prime minister, cabinet and central agencies. An important question presents itself in these circumstances: will there be a fit between the minister’s leadership style, the deputy minister’s leadership style, the organization’s orientation and capacity, and what the prime minister and other key
ministers are seeking? If these are not reasonably aligned, or the department or agency is not led by an adroit minister and deputy minister, then the organization can rapidly be seen as unable to deliver the goods in policy or administrative terms (Tiernan special issue). One response may be to shift ministers or deputy ministers but, barring that, building new organizational capacity and structures (Desveaux et al 1994). Likewise, key ministers or deputy ministers may be rotated because of emerging government priorities and needs in other policy and administrative domains. As is well-known, these dynamics and forces lead to often considerable rotation and turnover at the top levels, political and administrative.

With rotation comes what Quinn (1988) referred to as the different ‘information-processing’ needs of ministers and deputy ministers (think of different value orientations, dispositions and cognitive styles) and, where ministers are concerned, the mandate letters of the prime minister and ideological position of their political party. Experienced public servants know that, when new ministers and deputy ministers come to their departments, they will need to shift how they prepare and deliver briefings, and report on progress. While there are other instruments for assessing cognitive style and other attributes of leaders, the CVF provides a ready framework for discussion among staff about leader style, how they naturally approach issues, and their notions of effectiveness. The executives strategizing about how to engage top leaders are important lynchpins to the rest of the organization. Beyond assessing ‘up’, they must also assess ‘down’ and ascertain whether the department or agency is sufficiently aligned and has the right capability and organizational cultures, including professional expertise, for tackling emerging challenges.

**Diversity of External Agents: Reinforcing Diverse Values**

Ministers and deputy ministers, not to mention their departments, experience ‘competing values’ in a visceral way, not only having to respond to the direction of the prime minister and government, but also to demands and scrutiny of custodians of critical values in the broader governance system (Good, 2014). These range from central agencies — such as the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Chief Human Resources Office, the Public Service Commission, and the Office of the Comptroller General, to name a few — which function as part of the executive, to external agents reporting to Parliament, such as the Auditor General, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, and more. As noted, the Treasury Board relies on a comprehensive framework for reporting by departments on: governance and strategic direction, policy and programs, people, citizen-focused service, risk management, stewardship, accountability, and results and performance (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2014).

This is not a complete list of external agents, though: we must acknowledge the many other entities that governments create to pull the government as a whole, as well as specific departments and agencies, in new directions. Think of the panoply of task forces, advisory committees, progress boards, and innovation councils which episodically or regularly meet, scrutinize the progress of the government, consider future needs and challenges, and make often very public statements about the need for change and reform. We could also include ombudsmen, advocates and complaints entities focused on the clients of services delivered by departments and agencies. There are similar but distinct constellations at the provincial level of government. These entities are advocates of certain values, often directed by governments to encourage and hector departments and agencies to move in new directions.

Public service institutions — whether as a whole or its parts — must constantly respond to a steady stream and great diversity of calls for action from a mix of institutionalized and evanescent entities in the larger governance system. Making sense of these competing demands for reform, connecting them to previous reform initiatives announced by the government, and some of the enduring themes and perspectives on public organizations, would seem an important filter and skill to develop for public servants at the entry and mid-career levels. One example this can be found in Fig. 4 from Lindquist
(2010) which sought to make sense of the wide-ranging Moran review of the Australian Public Service, which had little seeming coherence. The framework could also be used to document and categorize a fuller range of concerns and suggestions by the full host of external agents.

**Figure 4 – The APS Blueprint and the Competing Values Framework**

**Conclusion: A Flexible Integrating Framework for Assessing Public Organizations and Leadership**

The Competing Values Framework is useful for instructors and students of public management and administration because it works at many levels of analysis, focuses on different aspects of public service, and yet provides integrative glue. It is certainly no substitute for the broad and rich literature on public administration and governance, not to mention the voluminous streams of literature on leadership and public sector reform. We think its value lies precisely in original aspiration of Quinn which was to point to the competing values which leaders and managers in public organizations contend with on a daily basis in greatly over-determined situations with governments and the public expecting high performing public servants. This creates paradoxical demands not only on public service institutions, but also on specific departments and agencies, as well as on leaders and managers. That there are paradoxes in the expectations of public managers and public service institutions has been well recognized (Aucoin 1990; Dwivedi and Gow, 1990; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000), but this converts a broader insight into a finer-grained framework useful for multiple pedagogical objectives.

We think that the CVF is of value particularly for the public sector because it strikes to the essence of this challenge in a practical way for learners and practitioners, while acknowledging the enduring values
and tensions long acknowledged in the literature on organizations and management, as well as public administration. Such a framework is useful for diagnosing current culture and leadership capabilities, exploring the sources of tension and conflict, assessing current levels of performance across different parts of public organizations, and recognizing and anticipating emerging challenges, including adapting to new leaders and recruiting new teams and capabilities to address future needs and traditional needs of government responding to government priorities and traditional reporting and accountability.

The CVF and Some Key Governance Challenges

The CVF is typically presented as a self-diagnostic instrument for individuals and groups. Clearly the intent of its progenitors and advocates is to use the data and insight as basis for fostering dialogue about differing perceptions of the organization and its performance, and strategies for moving forward. The irony is that, although the framework was motivated and informed by a dynamic perspective of organizational and leader development, and by evolving tensions among competing values, it seems more static because of the very typologies it uses to categorize values, leader styles, and organization culture. What seems inadvertently de-emphasized is its forward-looking, design-orientation. We think some of the greatest potential for applying the CVF to the public sector context will involve extending it to some of the unique challenges confronting public service institutions, leaders and managers. Here we consider how the CVF can be used to engage in strategic dialogue with future and current leaders, as well as providing a point of departure for more systematic researchable topics.

New Governments and Effects on Deputy Ministerial Leadership

The coming and going of governments have always been precarious moments for public services as institutions. Prime ministers have the prerogative to not only appoint ministers but also deputy ministers (and in some provincial jurisdictions in Canada, assistant deputy ministers). Given that deputy ministers are the lynchpins between the government and the public service, such appointments send important signals about the interests of the government and what it wants from the public service. A typical line of interpretation over the last twenty years had resolved around whether deputy ministers were chosen for their policy or managerial acumen, particularly in the context of larger debates about the merits of adopting New Public Management reforms. Often wholesale judgments are made about the disposition of an entire cadre of deputy ministers, without detailed analysis of their respective skill sets and experience, the matching of their capabilities with those of the minister and their departments. We think that more systematic assessment and study could be made of such individual capabilities as well as the culture of the department in question, what the government seeks to accomplish in policy terms, and the implications for reshaping or securing forward-looking advice from the department. This might lead to more nuanced interpretations of particular choices and matches for deputy ministers.

Similar debates have recently emerged about the New Political Governance, a style of prime ministerial leadership which Aucoin (2012) has led to deputy ministers becoming ‘promiscuous partisans’, overly responsive to furthering the priorities of the government, often at the expense of the long-term health and capabilities of the public service. The evidence to support this claim is that a different kind of deputy minister has been promoted or recruited by prime ministers, but Lindquist and Rasmussen (2012) have argued that perhaps such appointments can also be seen as a buffering strategy, as a strategy for better serving the government while protecting and getting the most out of the public service.

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1 This is similar to Atkinson and Coleman (1989) typology categorizing types of policy networks, for which it is usually cited. However, the book was intended to engage readers in a dialogue about gaps in structure and capacity of existing networks and longer-term challenges confronting sectors, leading to reshaping or designing new network structures and capabilities.
The CVF could leaven this debate by suggesting that, at any time, the public service has always produced new cohorts of leaders with different value orientations at the assistant deputy minister and director general levels, and what is more important is that diversity of talent is preserved below the top rank of executives, ensuring balanced executive teams and new generations of leaders which could serve the next two governments in different ways. The worst that could happen is that future recruiting attempts to only replicate the leadership styles and dispositions of the current crop of deputy ministers, which would lessen the resilience of the public service and the potential for productive alignment with the needs of future governments in the longer term.

Anticipating and Navigating the Arrival of New Leaders
Not only do governments and ministers come and go, but so too deputy ministers and executives at the next level or two down in the bureaucracy. Over the last two decades, the fairly rapid rotation of top leaders has been a fact of public-service life, variously flowing from prime ministerial decisions, budget and reorganization decisions, leadership development assignments, and personal or performance issues. We think the CVF can be used as a basis for engaging staff on the incoming needs of top leaders as well as whether to re-balance executive or unit management teams.

When new deputy ministers or other executives are appointed or assigned, they are usually arriving with a mandate from the prime minister or top executive, is best understood in terms of what policy or service delivery directions the government seeks to direct the department towards. In other words, it is not just a matter of the leadership style of the newly appointed executive, but also the gap between current and desired state of the department and program in question. Layered onto this are the value orientation and cognitive frame of the new executive, which will require staff to assess and manage to. Perhaps even more importantly, the combination of the departure the previous executive and the arrival of a new one means that the ‘information processing’ mix of the organization or program will have almost certainly shifted, and there should be discussions about what the new balance might be, and whether that the implications for not only achieving the objectives informed by the last policy directions of the government and the assignment, but also the longer-term resilience of the unit. It seems to us that CVF would be a useful framework to guide such assessments and discussion.

Fostering and Assessing ‘Master Managers’ and Expert Leaders
One way to look at the corpus of Quinn’s work is that it has been targeted to leaders and managers at different levels of development and status in organizations. Quinn et al (1996, 2011) focuses on students or entry-level professionals, learning about the basic managerial competencies and increasing their self-knowledge, and does not really target assessing broader teams and leaders above. Cameron and Quinn (2006a) and Quinn et al (2006b) squarely target mid-career professionals, encouraging them to more deeply review their managerial experience to date as they consider moving to higher leadership roles. Quinn (1996, 2004) engage executives who often undertake deep personal transformation as part of taking organizations through transformation, directly embracing and surmounting what appear to be fundamental contradictions and challenges.

From the beginning, Quinn animated this work with the notion of the ‘master manager’, recognizing that individuals would move to different general levels of competency over the course of their careers, and, along the way, develop deeper and more complete mastery of managerial and leadership skills. While leaders might become better managers across all dimensions, they nevertheless will have innate traits

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2 Quinn (1988) is a more scholarly work, identifying underpinnings and setting out a framework that guided what followed.
and dispositions, leaders with mastery or what Marcy (2014) refers to as an ‘expert leader’ will have a greater degree of self-awareness, more situational awareness, and better ability assess and lead others, along with whatever domain knowledge they develop over time. An interesting question concerns to what extent frameworks like the CVF as well as leadership development programs in fact assist leaders in achieving higher levels of competency, and how well those responsible for talent management can monitor this through tests, reports and other mechanisms. Some governments are quite sophisticated in this regard, but in Canada our public administration scholars have not closely monitored these systems.

**Beyond Competing Values: Balancing vs. Innovation**

A key aspiration animating the CVF is to foster greater awareness among individuals and organizations about their value orientations, to make better sense of the drivers of tensions and conflict, and to lay the foundation for more productive strategic dialogue. One level of response lends itself to working with staff to increase understanding and surfacing the mix of values, which can lead to more enlightened strategies, such as striking a reasonable balance among values or sequencing the attention of leader-managers in organizations, reminiscent of Steinbruner (1974) and Irving and Mann (1977), and a vast literature on decision-making, social psychology, and psychology.

Such accommodations and strategies are no small feat, but fundamental challenge and change, where contradictions and stresses on public organizations are deeper, usually requires more transformative strategizing. Quinn’s (2004) later work suggests that, for top or expert leaders, recognizing competing values and understanding the uncertainty and shifting ground as organizations move from one state to another, are only the first steps in preparing their organizations to address critical value tensions and paradoxes. Quinn (2004) and Martin (2007) argue that transformative leaders confront paradox, contradictions or apparent value trade-offs and, working with colleagues, embrace uncertainty and complexity to find new balances and distinctly different strategies, either by reframing the challenge, using new technology, etc. – or what Martin would call ‘integrative thinking’. The CVF would provide a basis deeper interpretation of case studies in public sector innovation, and a better understanding of the often significant shifts which have to be made in how governments and public service leaders must shift their thinking in order to make headway on significant political, policy and service-delivery challenges.

**Concluding Remarks: Teaching Applications and Future Research**

This paper sought to introduce readers to the Competing Values Framework as an important example of an integrating framework focused on leadership and organizational dimensions of public administration which allows for diagnosis, strategic thinking, and practical tasks such as more closely identifying needs, selecting leaders and teams, and assessing performance. We also sought to show a framework which, as developed is agnostic about the broader institutional context, can be situated and better utilized for the special circumstances and complexity of public sector organizations.

To date, the CVF has largely been invoked in the literature by scholars trying to capturing the various values animating public sector reform movements (Norman, 2008; Talbot 2008; Lindquist 2010; Gill et al 2011), which is intriguing because it was originally developed to educate and develop leader-managers. We have no doubt that many colleagues responsible for teaching leadership and management in public administration programs have relied on the Master Manager or Competing Values Framework, but, if their experiences are similar to our own, it can be difficult to persuade students that a ‘private sector’ framework is equally salient, if not more so, for more complicated public sector environments. We hope

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3 It might also lead to reclaiming Lindblom’s (1968) insight that the dialectic between political interest and technical expertise can lead to new levels of understanding than if either party was left to their own devices.
this paper this paper can help make the case and situate the use of those materials. We have argued that although the Master Manager format is useful for undertaking personal assessments, diagnosing organizational culture, and locating where organizations are in change cycles, the framework can be more liberally used to develop key professional skills:

- evaluating – even notionally – the orientation of leaders of entire organizations and specific units, and the extent of fit between the current and future needs of the organization or unit;
- considering whether leadership teams are reasonably balanced, even if they need to be skewed in certain directions because of their task structure or need to move in new directions;
- encouraging leaders to better engage colleagues about key issues and to recognize different individual dispositions as well as program and unit cultures, which in turn imply different notions of what is important, what constitutes effectiveness and good performance, etc.
- stimulating public servants to better anticipate the consequences of changes in government and top leadership, not only for shifting priorities and notions of performance but also for what kind of leaders might get promoted and the implications for re-balancing and re-orienting executive teams and building resilience and capability for the longer term.

These suggestions, of course, come in addition to a wide array of exercises, instruments, and insight that are already part of the Master Manager and Competing Value Framework arsenal of books. They seek to bridge that work to the public sector leaders and managers.

Finally, we note that this paper, though focused on public administration education, does point toward future direction for research, including empirical studies of many of the items we covered, particularly whether such frameworks and instruments do increase awareness and competency. We also think that the CVF might serve as as a point of departure for more systematic analysis of innovation cases and public sector reform initiatives. There is also interesting work to be done with linking the organization-centered CVF to more governance-and-society-centered integrating frameworks such as Bourgon’s New Synthesis for Public Administration (2011), which look at government and public-service institutions from the outside-looking-in. This presents an interesting conceptual challenge, and one well worth taking up.
References


