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Leadership behaviour repertoires in public organizations

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Widespread developments in organizing affect how leadership is embedded in public organizations. The link between leadership and formal positions in the hierarchy becomes less straightforward, since collaboration across organizational boundaries and flexible arrangements parallel to bureaucratic structures are increasingly common. Leadership is further complicated by the typical reality of unclear or competing goals, tasks, and stakeholder interests. Since navigating in such an ambiguous and complex context often requires a variety of leadership behaviours, this dissertation introduces a comprehensive perspective on leadership as a repertoire of behavioural options. Based on four empirical studies, this dissertation examines how leadership behaviour repertoires take shape in public organizations. By adopting a repertoire perspective, this dissertation underlines that leadership behaviour takes on many forms and is used in a variety of directions in relation to multiple stakeholders – by both managers and non-managerial employees – and indicates that use of the leadership behaviour repertoire can be explained by variation in situations, organizational context, and individual attitudes and experiences. These insights contribute to contemporary challenges for leadership in public organizations in theory and practice.

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