Leadership behaviour repertoires in public organizations
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Francis is a public manager in a Dutch municipality. She is responsible for the transition in the built and green environment: a broad ambition that spans policy domains related to housing, sustainability, green spaces, water, and mobility. In this position, she works together with a variety of stakeholders and performs different kinds of activities. She coordinates and cooperates with line managers of departments that are traditionally organized around policy areas and expertise. Francis collects input and stimulates discussion to formulate priorities and ways of working. Hereby she involves these partners, as well as the political principals and societal actors. She makes decisions collaboratively and strives to clearly communicate the ambitions and priorities within the organization. In her role, she also keeps track of progress and decides about changing priorities and discontinuing activities. Scanning the environment for opportunities gives her more information and building partnerships with other municipalities or businesses can contribute to the central ambition. Moreover, she facilitates her team members to learn about and try new ways of working to establish a working environment open to learning. Managing expectations about flexibility and stimulating experimenting with new approaches are part of her work.[1]

1.1 Leadership in public organizations: Manoeuvring in a challenging context

At first glance, Francis seems just like a busy public manager; but appearances can be deceptive. Just take a moment to wonder: How does she deal with those different stakeholders with their own interests that are not always aligned? How does she cope with the organizational structures and environment that complicate her room for manoeuvre? This exercise illustrates that engaging in leadership in public organizations is full of challenges and requires a repertoire of behavioural

options. The example of Francis, therefore, puts forward a pressing question for public management: How do leadership behaviour repertoires take shape in public organizations?

Fresh attention for this topic is needed because widespread developments in organizing affect how leadership is embedded and takes shape in public organizations. Traditionally, the bureaucratic form of organizing has been dominant in structuring work and relationships (Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2011; van der Voet & Steijn, 2021). Typically, bureaucracy provides clear means of control and explicit lines of command, describing which tasks can be done by whom, with which means, and on the basis of which authority. Hierarchy offers a strict coordinating mechanism that couples formal positions with clear role expectations, responsibilities, and authority and also ensures unity of command. Leadership is embedded in this structure and arranged through the hierarchical structure. Managers are formally expected to take up leadership roles and are granted responsibilities and authority to enact this leadership (Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Mintzberg, 1979; Rainey, 2014). Nowadays, however, this bureaucratic structure is not the only guide for arranging leadership. In contrast, multiple overlapping forms of organizing characterize public organizations, which complicate practicing leadership.

New perspectives on how to organize aimed to overcome some challenges of the bureaucracy in creating value for the public. While these perspectives represent broad paradigms about the public sector, they also involve ideas affecting the organization of leadership. New Public Management's philosophy of 'run government like a business' aimed to address the rigidity of bureaucratic structures and a lack of attention for results (Diefenbach, 2009; Hood, 1991). Two opposing trends connected to this perspective can be distinguished. Decentralization and devolvement of formal decision-making authority and responsibilities towards lower levels aimed to strengthen a results orientation and to 'let managers manage'. Lower level managers and organizational members gained new responsibilities and sometimes also formal competencies. Simultaneously, however, the bureaucracy and the position of formal managers were reinforced by an increasing focus on managerial logic and accompanying pressure for accountability to central management (Bess & Goldman, 2001; Diefenbach, 2009; Lawton et al., 2000). The blurring of traditional hierarchical lines of authority while managers became more central in leadership created more complex structures.

Moving away from managerialism to emphasize responsiveness, ideas of New Public Governance affected organizing and leadership. This perspective highlights that policy issues in the public sector often require multiple agencies and actors to cooperate to create public value (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Osborne, 2006). What we see in practice is that specialists spread over various organizations increasingly work together across boundaries of teams, units, and organizations. Such collaborative governance constellations are a common part of organizing, running parallel to the bureaucratic structures existing in individual organizations. The hierarchical coordination of work and relationships does not necessarily apply to such parallel structures, so that a gap between existing structures of bureaucracy and the realities of cooperation emerges (Getha-Taylor et al., 2011; Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2011).

The straightforwardness of the hierarchy in designating who is responsible for leadership faded with the introduction of complementary parallel structures and a shift towards 'boundaryless' and post-bureaucratic forms of organizing (Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2011; Shamir, 1999; van der Voet & Steijn, 2021). Formerly, the hierarchy used to function as the automatic mechanism imparting clear responsibilities through formal positions and allocating leadership roles top-down following a logic of unity of command. Following the addition of new forms of organizing, the line of command becomes more complicated and/or unity of command is disrupted. Accordingly, leadership roles become partially decoupled from specified formal managerial positions in the hierarchy and more differentiation can be observed. This blurs the divide between those who lead and those who follow (Gronn, 2002; Shamir, 1999) while leaving voids and creating space for ambiguity in how leadership takes shape.

Consequently, this means that space emerges for other organizational members to play a role in organizational leadership. On the one hand, such space is created in an alternative form of top-down allocation. Some aspects of leadership are reorganized and assigned to organizational members outside the hierarchical line of formal authority by creating new types of managerial positions. Such managers have substantive responsibilities for specified goals or programmes, but it is not uncommon that they have to operate without traditional formal authority over personnel and resources from a hierarchical position. The introduction of such positions means that unity of command is disrupted and elements of distributed leadership appear (Mintzberg, 1979; Gronn, 2002). On the other hand, individuals gain more freedom to take up leadership roles and engage in leadership behaviour,

because hierarchies dictate less who can take up those roles and ambiguity in structures leaves room for manoeuvre. The combination of several layers of organizing and various types of structures provide opportunities to participate in leadership outside of formal structures, open to individual initiative (Gronn, 2002; Tian et al., 2016; Woods et al., 2004). Though formal positions may still impart responsibilities and role expectations more explicitly to hierarchical managers than to other organizational members, positions are not the only source providing responsibilities and role conceptions.

The developments in the changed role of hierarchy to coordinate work and relationships and the partial decoupling of leadership from formal structures like positions, create new challenges for leadership. In order for leadership to materialize, the emphasis shifts from the structural dimension of leadership to the behavioural dimension. As leadership becomes less bound by commanding structures, it becomes more dependent on individuals' behaviour and more is requested of organizational members in enacting leadership. Therefore, it is important to learn more about leadership behaviour and under which conditions it comes about. This dissertation examines these issues.

1.2 Literature: Knowledge and gaps

For good understanding, it is necessary to define leadership. The literature on leadership does not offer consensus on a single definition, but common elements are that it is described as an influence process with an interpersonal and goal-oriented character. This research adopts Yukl's (2008) definition, understanding leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2008, p.8). This definition is useful as it offers a lens to study leadership in light of the sketched developments. Firstly, it is open to application to a broad range of organizational members, regardless of formal position in the organizational hierarchy. Furthermore, this definition enables a focus on leadership behaviour as constitutive of the process that can span a variety behaviours in relation to various stakeholders.

Though conceptual consensus is absent, generations of scholars have studied leadership from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and with diverse perspectives on what leadership is and how it can be studied. What can we learn from this prior

work? Characteristic for the study of leadership is that leadership is in the majority of studies treated as explanation for outcomes. Typical are studies that aim to assess how leadership influences performance of organizations, teams, and individuals (e.g., Andersen et al., 2018; Bellé, 2014; Vermeeren et al., 2014); group processes such as cooperation, cohesion, and self-management (e.g., Oberfield, 2014b; van der Voet & Steijn, 2021); employee attitudes like job satisfaction, work motivation, and organizational commitment (e.g., Bronkhorst et al., 2015); experiences of uncertainty and goal, task, and role ambiguity and conflict (e.g., Bernards, 2021; Staniok, 2016); and outcomes like sickness absence and turnover (e.g., Jakobsen et al., 2021). Thereby leadership is often treated as a motivational factor in a dyadic, top-down relationship: managers and supervisors do things that their direct reports perceive and respond to with additional or more effective efforts and that increase their well-being. In particular, transformational and transactional leadership are often topic of research (Vogel & Masal, 2015), but also inclusive (e.g., Ashikali et al., 2021) and ethical (e.g., Hassan et al., 2014; Heres & Lasthuizen, 2012) leadership as well as leadership for public value (e.g., Hartley et al., 2019) draw attention of public management scholars. This research has taught us that leadership by managers affects the attitudes and behaviours of public employees, and is a valuable factor for public value creation.

While understanding what leadership can contribute is valuable knowledge, several limitations can be pointed out that are important to acknowledge in light of the sketched developments. Firstly, understanding how leadership comes about, what determines that managers adopt effective strategies, and possibly how it can be steered towards those effective forms is largely unknown. So far, there has been only limited attention for how context shapes leadership and managerial behaviour (George, Van de Walle et al., 2019; Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Nielsen & Cleal, 2011; Schmidt & Groeneveld, 2021; Stoker et al., 2019), though the importance of such research has been widely argued by many scholars in the public and generic management fields (Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Day, 2014; Osborn et al., 2014; Ospina, 2017; O'Toole & Meier, 2015; Porter & McLaughlin, 2006; Vandenabeele et al., 2014; Vogel & Masal, 2015; Wright, 2015). Understanding under which conditions leaders behave differently is necessary to apply insights about how leadership influences various outcomes more effectively. Given the complex and dynamic nature of the demands on leadership, it is relevant to examine how they respond to and balance in light of those demands. Including factors from the context as explanations for leadership behaviour and accounting for situational within-person variation can facilitate this effort.

Secondly, research tends to adopt a conception of leadership that is limited to motivating subordinates and situated in downward dyadic supervisor–employee relationships. This has two problems: this focus does not cover the varied repertoire of behaviours used in practice to address intertwined issues (Head, 2010) and it does not relate to the 360-degree nature of leadership, that also entails upward, sideward, and outward (Moore, 1995; van den Bekerom et al., 2016) influencing and facilitating. The current focus oversimplifies the challenges for leadership in practice, since leadership does not stop with motivating employees in order to tackle issues of a whole department, long term issues, or issues emerging in cross-boundary collaboration. Additionally, when leadership is partially disconnected from hierarchical positions, it is essential to go beyond these narrow conceptions, since it can be thought that formal position makes some types of behaviour and leadership behaviour in relation to some types of actors more or less likely. In order to advance theorizing on leadership more in line with the complex challenges that leaders face day to day, a more encompassing conceptualization is warranted.

Thirdly, the literature teaches us a lot about the leadership behaviour and styles of managers and supervisors in formal leadership positions. Managers, however, are not the only actors that are involved anymore and this narrow focus does not match the challenges of broader participation in leadership throughout organizations. A gap exists regarding leadership by other organizational members. More recently, calls for collective and distributed perspectives on leadership are taken up (Jakobsen et al., 2021; Kjeldsen, 2019; Kjeldsen & van der Voet, 2021; Ospina, 2017). Research on distributed leadership, often in the context of schools or health care, and shared leadership among team members starts to become more common. What we know less about is under which circumstances organizational members are willing and able to take up a leadership role and participate in organizational leadership by engaging in leadership behaviour. To answer new questions about the challenges for leadership in public organizations, steps should be taken to broaden the perspective on who engages in leadership and how leadership as a distributed phenomenon takes shape.

Finally, choices about types of research design and methods could be further diversified to facilitate the study of these substantive questions. Experiments are increasingly common in the public management literature (Andersen et al., 2017; Bouwman & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2016). While these methods have strengths in terms of internal validity and assessing causal relationships, it is known that ecological and external validity are often low. Context is generally treated as disturbance and researchers aim to keep context variables stable by designing

them out of their studies. As a result, explicit substantive attention for context within experimental studies is uncommon. This means that progress to explain leadership behaviour as dependent on context is still limited. Another way in which methods may offer opportunities for studying the questions raised above relates to how leadership behaviour is measured in survey research. Common practice is to assess leadership behaviour based on ratings provided by others (usually subordinates or supervisors). Whereas asking others to evaluate leadership by the focal person lowers the risks of social desirability and self-serving bias (Vogel & Kroll, 2019), it also removes potentially relevant information from the data. On the one hand, others may have only partial view of the focal person's activities and leadership behaviour as to possibly limit what is taken into account. For instance, a subordinate may not be aware of leadership behaviour used in relationships in upward and outward directions. On the other hand, the intentions behind the leadership behaviour are not factored into such reports. Since leadership is defined as goal oriented, the intentional element is relevant information. Though a discrepancy between intended, actual, and perceived behaviour is real (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2015; Kjeldsen & Andersen, 2021; Vogel & Kroll, 2019), insight in the intended behaviour can serve a purpose in particular when trying to explain why leadership behaviour is used in a certain way. Self-reported data provide a means to get those insight, but are largely denounced in the standing literature (Banks et al., 2021). Various uncommon methodological choices could help to address the substantive gaps in the literature identified here.

These observations are similar for the public and generic management literature on leadership. While this research departs from the perspective of public organizations and developments in a public sector context, it builds on and applies insights from both the public management literature and from the broader management and organization science fields. Although no consensus exists about the question if public organizations are significantly distinct from private organizations (e.g., Andersen, 2010; Kuipers & Vermeeren, 2013; Perry et al., 2006), we can learn from and build on work in the broader field of management and organization studies (Andrews & Esteve, 2015; Vandenabeele et al., 2014).

In sum, the insights about leadership are plentiful and rich, yet several gaps in the literature exist. Developments in the public sector impacting how leadership is organized and can be realized in public organizations prompt new questions, which the current literature is unable to answer thus far. To overcome this limitation, we need to come to a different understanding of leadership that matches the challenges

for leadership in public organizations characterized by parallel and overlapping forms of organizing and that is suitable to explain leadership behaviour in such circumstances. This requires a conceptualization that pays attention to the variety that characterizes leadership behaviour and participation by various types of organizational members and is open to differentiation between individuals as well as between situations. Consequently, questions regarding the conditions under which leadership comes about can be examined.

1.3 Research aims and questions

To address the identified issues, this dissertation aims to understand and explain leadership behaviour repertoires in public organizations. It explores individual experiences and develops a repertoire perspective on leadership behaviour to build an understanding of leadership that fits with changes in organizing. It also tests hypotheses on leadership behaviour in light of characteristics of the public organizational context to explain the manifestation of leadership behaviour repertoires. To accomplish those aims, a central research question guides the studies that underlie this dissertation:

How do leadership behaviour repertoires take shape in public organizations?

This overarching question will be answered in the final chapter of this dissertation on the basis of several building blocks. In each chapter, a sub-question is addressed to build the argumentation. In Chapter 2, the conceptual work that develops a repertoire perspective on leadership behaviour is presented. This is guided by the question: *How can leadership in an ambiguous context be conceptualized as a behaviour repertoire?* Whereas this chapter contributes to this dissertation's aim to understand leadership behaviour repertoires, the other chapters focus on the aim to explain. In two steps, an answer is provided to the second sub-question: *To what extent can aspects of the public organization context explain the use of leadership behaviour repertoires?* Focusing on within-person behavioural adaptation, Chapter 3 investigates how situational ambiguity has an effect on variety in leadership behaviour repertoire use. A different test of the relationship between context and leadership behaviour is presented in Chapter 4. Differentiating explicitly between formal managers and non-managerial employees, this study evaluates the role of

bureaucratic structure and environmental complexity in explaining how active individuals with and without formal leadership positions are in using leadership behaviours from the repertoire. Chapter 5 zooms in on leadership participation by organizational members without formal leadership positions, who are increasingly involved in leadership. To get insight in why they would engage in leadership, this study asks: *To what extent can the use of leadership behaviour repertoires by non-managerial employees in public organizations be explained by leadership identity and formal leadership experience?*

1.4 Methodology

To understand and explain leadership behaviour repertoires in public organizations, empirical research was conducted in three phases of data collection. The separate studies were designed to complement each other in order to address the two different research aims and to answer different types of questions. Therefore, several approaches were combined that vary in design and research methods. Still, the separate studies built on each other, by using findings of earlier rounds of data collection to inform design decisions about the next round. Moreover, each study included the university sector as a red thread in empirical settings. In two studies, three other public sectors were added to collect evidence that permits more robust conclusions. Given the diversity of methods combined with explicit connections between the studies, the project as a whole could be seen as mixed-methods research. The discussion below sets out which design choices were made, in which setting the research was conducted, what type of participants were involved and how they were sampled, and which methods for data collection were used.

The first research aim, understanding leadership behaviour repertoires, is best served by an exploratory design and methods for qualitative data collection to generate rich accounts of leadership in the field. As empirical setting, a typical case in terms of ambiguity and complexity – in line with the illustrating example – was chosen. These contextual characteristics highlight the need for a varied repertoire of leadership behaviours to be able to address competing demands and as such is an interesting and insightful setting in light of the challenges for leadership. The university sector is known to be characterized by ambiguity of goals, tasks, and stakeholders (Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Cohen & March, 1974; Enders, 2012; March &

Olsen, 1979). Moreover, organizational structures are complex and formal authority is not always strong for leaders. The governance structure with its rotating primus inter pares system of leadership positions creates leadership challenges in line with the sketched developments: positions, roles, and authority are not straightforwardly coupled (Beerkens & van der Hoek, 2022; Bess & Goldman, 2001; Bolden et al., 2009; Pearce et al., 2018; Seeber et al., 2015). Accounts that can provide a view of leadership as behaviour repertoire were collected from a sample of leaders in formal leadership positions in Dutch universities – (vice) deans, directors, board members; and chairs or coordinators of groups and programmes – since their positions carry expectations and requirements in terms of leadership. Participants were purposively sampled to include a variety of positions, disciplinary backgrounds, and gender to capture variety in experiences. Using semi-structured in-depth interviewing as method for data collection, participants can be asked to share their experiences and considerations, drawing on examples and elaborating when necessary to improve understanding. Since sense-making of one's situation is an important part of how people interact with the world around them (James & Jones, 1974; Weick et al., 2005), generating such rich accounts can feed the development of a conceptualization of leadership that matches the new challenges and circumstances for leadership in public organizations. A hybrid approach to data analysis was used to combine the benefits of sensitizing concepts and freedom for ideas emerging from the data.

The second research aim, explaining leadership behaviour repertoires, requires different design choices. Building on the conceptual work of the first study presented in Chapter 2, the other empirical studies were deductive and concerned testing hypotheses on causes of leadership behaviour. Explanations at the level of situations, the organizational context, and the individual are included. To examine these different types of explanations, different research designs and methods were used. Drawing on both experimental and observational survey data complement each other, which helps to draw more robust conclusions.

The study in Chapter 3 is based on a mixed-methods design that combines a within-person vignette experiment with interview data collection. The vignette experiment allowed for controlled hypothesis testing of causal relationships (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), while the interview data collection procedure provided an additional layer of insights to interpret those findings (Barter & Renold, 1999; Jenkins et al., 2010). The vignettes provide the possibility to manipulate context factors of interest in concrete scenarios. This

allows for examining variation between situations and how the same person adapts her behaviour. Building on the findings of the first study, this research was conducted in the university sector in the Netherlands. Using an "actual derived cases" approach (Shepherd & Zacharakis, 1999), accounts of interview participants in that previous study were used to develop scenarios that were realistic and relevant for the vignette participants. As participants, acting chairs, directors, and board members in formal leadership positions were sampled again. Such participants could be expected to have experience with situations similar to the scenarios, which makes the task of stepping into the shoes of the scenario's protagonist easier and, accordingly, the responses more plausible. The realism in the scenarios as well as in the responses benefits the study's internal and external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Barter & Renold, 1999; Shepherd & Zacharakis, 1999). By confining the experiment to one sector, the scenarios could refer to specific types of dilemmas tailored to the experiences of participants while other types of context variation were kept constant. In this study, all participants responded to the total set of vignettes, which facilitated a test of within-person variation, in other words: it could be tested if the same person would adapt her behaviour under different conditions.

The studies of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 are based on a survey that was conducted using an online questionnaire. This design made it possible to collect data on a large number of organizational members to test hypotheses. Moreover, a large number of concepts could be measured, so that the data could be used to examine two research questions. On the one hand, variation at the organizational context level could be analysed as well as how different types of organizational members perceive and behave in light of that context. On the other hand, individual characteristics could be measured to test individual level explanations of leadership behaviour. The sample consisted of participants employed in various public sectors. The university sector was maintained, to keep a constant between the different studies. Three other sectors were added to expand the examination and see if patterns would translate. These additional sectors were selected to generate variety in organizational contexts and assumedly variety in participants' experiences. The sample included both managers with formal leadership positions and non-managerial organizational members. This offered the opportunity to analyse differences between these groups in terms of leadership behaviour as well as how they perceive their context.

All studies make use of self-reports on leadership behaviour. This is useful in order to understand leadership from the perspective of the person engaging in leadership. How she experiences competing demands and intends to respond to context depend on that individual's interpretation. Tapping this interpretation through self-provided accounts can improve our conceptualization of leadership behaviour, since it stays closer to lived experiences and is open to variety from the perspective of leaders. Furthermore, asking those engaged in leadership themselves has the advantage of tapping a range of behaviours in relation to various stakeholders, of which parts may go unnoticed by others due to being around only part of the time. In light of the questions this dissertation addresses, such data can provide valuable insights.

1.5 Relevance

Through this empirical research, several contributions to the literature and practice are made. On a theoretical level, this dissertation aims to address the limited conceptualization of leadership common in the literature. Re-evaluation and elaboration of how we understand and study our core concepts is important, since concepts are the building blocks of theory. By developing a comprehensive conceptualization of leadership behaviour as repertoire, a potential avenue to match scientific inquiry more closely to the realities of public management in practice is presented. Another expansion of scope is proposed in this dissertation, by broadening the focus of who engages in leadership behaviour. As a more diverse set of organizational members play a role in organizational leadership, research that includes other individuals than formal leaders only can help to answer new questions. It thereby contributes insights to the discussion on distributed forms of leadership in public management.

This dissertation also contributes to the advancement of theorizing on leadership in public management by redirecting the theoretical focus to leadership as outcome. In particular, effects of contextual factors in public organizations are tested to explain leadership behaviour. While attention for context is common in public management research, limited steps have been taken to assess how the organizational context shapes leadership behaviour itself. Unlike contingency theory or best fit approaches, this is not about finding the 'recipe' that is most effective in particular circumstances. Rather, the contribution of building such

knowledge lies in understanding conditions that influence behaviour. This would complement the extensive knowledge on the effects of leadership. Adding this part could help to make better use of insights of how leadership can add value.

Methodologically, this research highlights the relevance and utility of mixed methods and within-person designs. One of the empirical studies of this dissertation is based on a novel combination of experimental and in-depth qualitative methods. The use of experimental designs is becoming more common in public management research already, but the contextual element has been largely neglected. By drawing on in-depth data to develop the experimental treatments, realism can be boosted to benefit ecological validity. Although Bouwman and Grimmelikhuijsen (2016) conclude from their review of experimental studies that public administration scholars make design choices that pay attention to experimental realism and external validity, Bertelli and Riccucci (2022) argue that more resemblance in experiments to what matters for public managers and professionals in practice is necessary for meaningful contributions. The "actual derived cases" approach (Shepherd & Zacharakis, 1999) ensures that the manipulations in the experiment involve situations that reflect familiar, ongoing, and important issues that participants deal with in their daily practice. Coupling the experimental treatment with a qualitative procedure of data collection adds a layer of in-depth elaboration to interpret the statistical analysis. This further increases the realism in the data and facilitates connecting experimental results to discussions in the literature and in the field. This mixed methods approach combines strengths to have enhanced understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Moreover, the utility of a within-person design is demonstrated with this research. The majority of research employs between-person designs, also in experimental studies (Bouwman & Grimmelikhuijsen; cf. Raaphorst et al., 2018). For research questions that focus on how individuals respond and act differently under varying conditions, however, different choices are more relevant. When one is interested in contextual characteristics that can vary between decision-making situations throughout a day, it is necessary to extract existing variety with suitable designs. Cross-sectional designs tap general patterns of individuals, which tend to obscure existing variety, and between-person experiments only capture a response to a single conditions, which does not provide a direct test for adaptation of behaviour to context. On the other hand, by exposing the participant to different conditions, within-person designs can be used to test behavioural adaptation in a direct manner. While this dissertation focuses on how leadership behaviour takes

shape, other types of questions that concern conditionality of behaviour can be served by a within-person design.

Also from a practical point of view, lessons can be drawn from this dissertation. The repertoire perspective on leadership behaviour provides a source for reflection for individuals taking up leadership roles, both with and without formal leadership positions. Being aware that one could use different types of behaviour and that leadership behaviour could be used in relationships in different directions is a first step. Next, reflection on preferred, default combinations as well options that one is less experienced, and under which circumstances these patterns are more common, could be useful to identify opportunities for further growth. Moreover, the results reveal some barriers and opportunities for engagement in leadership. For organizational members active in leadership, this could serve to reflect on how they act in different circumstances. It is also relevant for management to be aware of when changes in organizational structure, division of tasks and responsibilities, or new institutional collaborations are designed. The role of structural, situational, and environmental conditions, as well as individual motivations and skills, could be taken into account to design effective arrangements as well as to have constructive and ongoing discussions. Lastly, public organizations can derive stepping stones for leadership development from this research.

1.6 Outline dissertation

This chapter has outlined that organizational trends in the public sector create new questions about leadership, which the current literature cannot fully answer, and how this dissertation aims to contribute to this puzzle. The next chapters build an argument in several steps.

Firstly, Chapter 2 conceptualizes leadership behaviour as a repertoire to facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon in an encompassing way. By studying leadership behaviour from a repertoire perspective, the realities of leadership as combining and balancing a range of actions are better matched by measurement. Moreover, it is possible to observe variations, which is done in various ways in the subsequent chapters. This is particularly important if we want to understand the challenges for leadership in complex organizations that increasingly encompass collaborative arrangements for the creation of public value, which involves a broader range of organizational members in leadership.

Thereafter, Chapter 3 reports on a study that investigates how leadership behaviour takes shape in relation to context by zooming in on ambiguity that varies between situations. This study shows that the same person adapts her behaviour between situations with different levels of ambiguity in the presented challenges. When ambiguity is higher, it seems that leaders draw on a more narrow share of their repertoire by using fewer different types of leadership behaviour. This study also points at the important role of factors connected to the structure of organizations, since formal authority enables the use of a broader range of the repertoire.

Next, Chapter 4 follows up on these indications and relates a study that assesses how bureaucratic structure and environmental complexity affect engagement in leadership behaviour. The analyses include an explicit comparison between organizational members with and without formal leadership positions to shed more light on the issue of increasing calls for broad participation in leadership throughout organizations. It shows that both formal managers and non-managerial employees employ various leadership behaviours from the repertoire, but the former are more active in all respects. Moreover, non-managerial employees seem to encounter more bureaucratic barriers from formalization and distribution of competences and responsibilities to participate in some types of leadership behaviour. Since the analyses also show that both groups are more active in leadership when environmental complexity is higher, it offers perspective for moves towards more collective and distributed forms of leadership.

Building on the previous step, Chapter 5 presents a study that focuses on leadership behaviour of non-managerial employees without formal leadership positions. In contrast to the standing literature on leadership that studies leadership behaviour of managers, this research zooms in on a group of public servants that are increasingly involved in leadership tasks, but have primarily been considered as followers of managers. Seeing yourself as a leader, however, makes engagement in leadership more likely – an expectation supported by this study. At an individual level, such organizational members can differ in the extent to which they identify with a leadership role, for example because of previous working experience in managerial positions. This study adds to the literature that identity theory and concepts provide a useful lens to understand leadership behaviour of non-managerial public employees.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents the overall conclusions and discussion of this dissertation. The findings of the preceding empirical chapters are brought together

to answer the research question. The subsequent discussion relates theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. Furthermore, attention is paid to avenues for future research as well as limitations of this research. The chapter closes with some final thoughts about the themes of this dissertation.

Notes

1. This example is inspired by an interview with two public managers in Dutch municipalities after publication of the booklet *Opgavegericht werken* [Challenge based working] by the Association of Programme Management in Dutch Municipalities (VPNG) (van der Heijden & Kraijo, 2020; VPNG, 2021).