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**From Warriors to Wingtips:  
The Leadership Transition of Retired Officers  
into the Public Sector**

by

Lynn M. Eldred

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

2000

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **FROM WARRIORS TO WINGTIPS: THE LEADERSHIP TRANSITION OF MILITARY OFFICERS INTO THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**For personal and financial reasons some retired military officers seek second careers in the public sector. In entering local government, they are leaving a unique organization, and encountering a very different organizational culture.**

**This study used grounded theory methodology to identify the key military leadership strategies and behaviors learned by military officers and to examine their applicability to local government. It focused on eleven retired naval and marine officers who served twenty or more years, attained a rank of lieutenant commander or major and above, and had worked in local San Diego government at the mid-management or executive level less than six years. Findings were triangulated with literature and other research.**

**Participant data described rapid leadership development as a military priority shaped by early responsibility, education, mentoring and command experiences. Leadership practices include using a contingency leadership style, firm discipline, a controlled environment, straightforward communications, training and development, values, camaraderie building, a command presence, standard operating procedures and centrally-mandated change.**

**Retired officers needed to adjust some military leadership practices to respond to the organizational systems and culture of local government. In addition, each encountered**



**stereotypes of retired military officers that affected their image and capacity to influence their organization.**

**The retired officers interviewed identified strategies that aided them in succeeding in the public sector. These included: using a coaching style to lead staff, following up on directives, actively managing performance, adopting a less direct communications style, improving employee selection and development, creating ownership, actively working to change systems, building influence and political relationships, introducing change by influence, consciously developing their reputation and countering stereotypes of military officers.**

**Some retired officers used strategies that were less successful. These included: using a direct communication style, using military jargon, assuming compliance, accepting and criticizing the status quo, developing an inner circle, expecting the executive to initiate career development and direct change, becoming frustrated, and failing to react to stereotypes.**

**To Donald my partner, cheerleader, counselor and domestic support system.**

**and my sons and creative inspirations, Erin and Colin.**

**My regrets for every missed moment with all of you.**

## **PREFACE**

**My thanks and acknowledgement to:**

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Overview**

The face of local government in the San Diego area is shaped in part by retired military officers who are attracted to local government employment for personal and financial reasons. While military organizational culture, training and experience provide a strong basis for building leadership skills, some of the resulting leadership practices may be unique to military needs and not suited to the culture of government organizations, i.e. the public sector. In this study, the experiences of retired military officers working in local government in the San Diego area will be examined to assess the extent to which leadership strategies and behaviors practiced in the military are transferable and applicable to leadership situations in local government.

#### **Background of the Problem**

Since 1990, over 30,000 members of the armed forces have retired annually from active duty (Veterans Preference, 1997). A study by Barnes (1984) showed that many military retirees settle in areas where they once served. In addition, Veterans Administration reports show that one-third of veterans retire to California, Florida and Texas, and these retirees generally settle in large cities and close to military facilities.

San Diego has the third largest retired military population of any metropolitan area, measured at 40,500 in 1992 (Snyder, 1994).

The movement of military leaders into positions of leadership in government is a phenomenon noted over forty years ago by C. Wright Mills (1956). According to the 400,000-member Retired Officers Association (TROA), this phenomena continues today. TROA identified government as one of the key areas for post-military employment (TROA, 1996, p. 9; Col. B. Buse, Director of Officer Placement, TROA, personal communication, February 2, 1998).

At this time, there are no reliable informational sources on the number of retired military currently employed in local government nationally or in the San Diego area. There are conditions, however, which encourage employment in the public sector. Many retirees (defined as those with twenty or more years of active service) are attracted to working in local government, since there are financial incentives for working in the public sector. For example, veterans may combine their service years with public employment years in computing retirement (Gordon, 1997). Unlike the federal government, state and local governments have no restrictions against *multiple compensation* – receiving a government pension while earning a federal salary. In addition, local governments' hiring policies are more favorable to veterans than federal policies (Jacobsen, 1990). Thus, there are concrete reasons for retired officers to enter local government employment.

There are also non-tangible reasons for officers to enter government service. The prospect of leaving the military is intimidating to many retirees as it represents a major life transition (Jacobsen, 1990; Savino & Krannich, 1995; TROA, 1996). Government

employment can offer a comfortable transition to retiring military personnel as there are some surface similarities between the public sector and the military. As Jacobsen noted:

In some ways government employment is the least disturbing form of career transition you can find. A familiar-looking treasury check arrives every payday, the working environment is reassuringly familiar, and except for the quirks of the civil service system and the change in uniform it's almost as though you never retired (Jacobsen, p. 93)

Public employment can cushion the shock of entering civilian life. Thus, there are clear financial and emotional incentives for retiring officers who continue their work careers to enter local government.

Higher-ranking military officers (e.g., Lieutenant Commander and above in the Navy) typically have work histories reflecting high-level responsibility for complex operations, large staff and extensive budgets. With such strong work records, they often qualify to enter the public sector at mid-management to executive levels – levels of high positional leadership. Yet, military leaders are leaving a unique and deeply-instilled culture that has been central to their adult lives, and moving into positions of high leadership in the public sector which – while having some surface similarities – has a very different organizational culture.

Studies show that retiring military personnel receive little or inadequate transitional support and are often ill-prepared for the passage to civilian life (Webb, 1990; Whelan, 1981). One factor may be that this major life transition occurs in mid-life (generally in the early forties to fifties) when other life transitions may be occurring. Another factor complicating this transition may be due to some of the social structures

and aspects of military life learned over twenty years of military service that are not easily adapted to the corporate or civilian world (McClure, 1992; Masterman, 1988).

As retiring officers may devote between ten to twenty-five years to their second careers, successfully translating the valuable lessons in leading organizations gained from their military experiences to their civilian careers is critical to their effectiveness as public sector leaders.

### **Significance of the Study**

With the end of the Cold War and subsequent military downsizing, military officers are retiring in high numbers. It is reasonable to assume that some of these retirees will seek employment in the public sector, bringing their experience, skills and beliefs to a new organizational culture. The military's Transition Assistance Program (U. S. Department of Labor, 1998; Veterans' Employment and Training Service, 1995) focuses primarily on career assessment and job search skills, and does not adequately address the issues of assessing and adapting to new organizational cultures. In a study of 122 retired naval officers done by Webb (1990), retirees criticized the military's transition program for failing to address the differences in managing and leadership between the civilian and military environments. The majority of the books and articles written about retired military entering civilian employment address the strengths such individuals bring to the workforce, but fail to address the very real issue of transition and adaptation (Bowers, 1996; Carrison & Walsh, 1999; Jacobsen, 1990; TROA, 1996; Whelan, 1981). This research project did not discover any transition assistance or executive coaching provided by public sector entities in the San Diego area to new

employees transitioning from the military. One may conclude that retired officers have had to rely on their own wits or the support of associates and mentors to analyze and adjust to a new leadership role in a new organizational culture.

During fifteen years as a public sector manager, this researcher has witnessed some former military officers who have successfully assumed leadership roles in the public sector, and some who have struggled in their endeavor to take on their new roles. These observations raised questions about whether there are unique aspects to the military experience that assist or hinder in fulfilling leadership responsibilities in public bureaucracies.

This research is, in part, a result from a pilot study done in the spring of 1998. The preliminary data, based on four interviews with retired military officers holding leadership positions in the public sector, revealed that some military leadership behaviors did not always translate to the public sector. The indication is that retired officers may have to adjust some military practices and concepts to be successful as public sector leaders. Identifying these practices and concepts may have broader implications for:

- assisting retired military officers to successfully assume leadership positions in local government;
- improving military transition assistance programs for retiring officers;
- improving orientation and new employee support given to retired officers entering the public sector;
- and, more broadly, identifying general adjustments necessary for retiring officers to be effective leaders outside military settings.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the key military leadership strategies and behaviors learned by retired officers, and assess their transferability to leadership situations in local government. This study will employ a grounded theory approach based on qualitative interviews of recently-retired military officers currently employed in local government in the San Diego area.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions explored in this dissertation came from the themes that emerged from a pilot study done in the spring of 1998. The research questions are as follows:

- What are the key leadership strategies and behaviors learned and practiced by military officers?
- Which of these military strategies and behaviors are transferable to leadership situations in local government?
- What military strategies and behaviors are not easily transferable to leadership situations in local government?
- What adjustments assist retired military officers in transitioning into leadership positions in local government organizations?
- What are the implications for assisting newly-retired officers seeking to integrate into local government organizations?

The experience of retired officers will provide the richest data source for this information. The data collected will be analyzed and synthesized into a grounded theory – where the significant themes revealed by the data are examined for their relationship to the core



issue being researched. The data relationships are deepened by a review of relevant literature. The data and literature form the basis of the resulting theoretical structure.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Any researcher brings a set of assumptions to any study. Responsible research acknowledges and refers to these assumptions, both to stay focused on the underlying purpose of the research and to perform an ongoing check to ensure the assumptions do not color data interpretation. The assumptions behind this study included:

1. A large number of military retirees seek second careers.
2. Local government is an attractive second career option due to the economic incentives and the familiar aspects of government structure and operations.
3. Officers with twenty or more years of experience develop a perspective on leadership which is uniquely flavored by their experiences and practices as military officers, embedded in the strong culture of the armed forces and further reinforced by their mentors in the service.
4. Unique differences exist between military and public sector organizational cultures.
5. Some military strategies and behaviors may not translate well to the public sector.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are key terms used in this dissertation.

#### **Leadership**

There are a variety of definitions of leadership, delineated in more detail in Chapter Two. For the purpose of this study, leadership is defined as a social process.

occurring in a time of organizational change or stress, wherein leaders and followers work in concert to mobilize the human, material and intellectual resources needed to achieve a defined purpose.

Leadership is a multi-faceted phenomenon. The nature of the situation drives which aspects of leadership come into prominence. For example, in an emergency, a directive or command approach more effectively mobilizes resources in a rapid, consistent manner. In a policy environment, a collaborative approach involving stakeholders is more appropriate. Currently, the public sector is engaged in its most significant time of change since the Progressive Era. There are proposals and pressures to adopt more businesslike practices, reform the civil service system and privatize services. Such change efforts require public sector leadership that is: transformational (Burns, 1979), informs and involves staff and stakeholders (Heifetz, 1994), defines and articulates its core values (Senge, 1990), and takes a collaborative approach that values diverse input (Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Chrislip & Larson, 1994).

### Leaders

This researcher recognizes that organizational leaders may be found at every level of an organization, regardless of position, title or job duties. For the purpose of this research, only positional leaders will be studied. Military leaders have been defined as commissioned officers, O-4 and above. Public sector leaders are those holding mid-management or executive positions, as designated by their organizations' internal position classification systems.

### Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

*Gemeinschaft* describes a type of organization steeped in tradition, with strong values and beliefs, distinct levels of authority and well-defined individual roles. Strong loyalty and group cohesion characterize such organizations, e.g., the military services.

*Gesellschaft* describes more traditional, rational-bureaucratic organizations that are directed by goals, such as government agencies (Tonnie's, 1887/1957). Tonnie's writings on *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* influenced Max Weber's work on bureaucracy (1946).

### Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a complex concept. Wise (1994) noted that organizational literature listed nearly eighty components of organizational culture. The following theorists are most aligned with the researcher on the notion of organizational culture. Schein (1992) defined it as the basic assumptions shared by members of an organization. It encompasses the observed behaviors, norms, dominant values, philosophy, rules and climate of the organization. French and Bell (1974) identified both formal components of organizational culture (including the goals, technology, structure and finances) and informal components (interactions, group norms, feelings, attitudes and values). Organizational culture cannot be viewed as restricted to specific organizational components. It is infused and crosses over all organizational aspects. As Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1993) viewed it, "Organizational culture is not just another piece of the puzzle, it is the puzzle. From one point of view, a culture is not something an organization has; a culture is something an organization is" (p. 126).

### Public Sector

The public sector consists of government organizations at the local, state and federal level. The local public sector includes cities, counties, joint-powers authorities and special districts. Special districts are government entities established to provide a specific service supported by a designated funding stream e.g., fire districts, flood control districts and water authorities. Joint powers agencies address broader community issues and are composed of representatives of multiple government entities, e.g., port authorities, government associations, and coastal authorities.

### Fit

Fit describes the integration between the individual and the organization (Argyris, 1964). Fit addresses the question of whether or not an organization can provide proper and sufficient motivators to satisfy an individual employee's needs and whether that employee can adapt to the job requirements and organizational culture (French, Caplan & Harrison, 1982).

### Role

A role is the set of behaviors an organization expects its members to perform. A role defines the purpose of one's position, how that position is linked in the organization, the expected behaviors or norms and how those behaviors are connected to organizational values (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

### Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when an individual is uncertain about what behaviors, norms and values are expected in the organization (Burke, 1982). Role ambiguity can contribute to individual stress, particularly when the individual fails to understand the

implicit norms. This can produce a resistance to change (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964).

### **Definition of Military Terms**

The following are key military terms used in this dissertation. listed in alphabetical order.

#### Captain's Mast

A term, deriving from the ancient tradition of piping the crew to assemble in the vicinity of the main mast to witness punishment. It is a hearing conducted by the commanding officer to determine appropriate disposition of alleged offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Appropriate disposition may result in referral to trial by court-martial, award of non-judicial punishment (NJP) by the commanding officer or dismissal of the charge. Captain's mast is customarily preceded by an investigation into the circumstances by the executive officer.

#### High-Ranking Officers

The ranks for officers in the Navy and Marine Corps eligible as participants in this study include senior and flag officers. The comparisons in rank between the Navy and Marine Corps are contained in the following table:

Navy	Marine Corps
Admiral (paygrade O-10)	General (paygrade O-10)
Vice Admiral (paygrade O-9)	Lieutenant General (paygrade O-9)
Rear Admiral (paygrade O-8)	Major General (paygrade O-8)
Real Admiral (lower) (paygrade O-7)	Brigadier General (paygrade O-7)

Navy	Marine Corps
Captain (paygrade O-6)	Colonel (paygrade O-6)
Commander (paygrade O-5)	Lieutenant Colonel (paygrade O-5)
Lieutenant Commander (paygrade O-4)	Major (paygrade O-4)

Paygrades O-5 and O-6 are termed *senior officers*. Paygrades O-7 and above are called *flag officers* in the Navy or *general officers* in the Marine Corps.

### The Institutional-Occupational Continuum

The Institutional-Occupational continuum is the theory proposed by Charles C. Moskos, that military organizations in this country are moving from a traditional institutional model with normative values of duty, honor and country, strong organizational identity and a status system based on rank and seniority. In the institutional military, the organization plays a paternalistic, controlling role that extends to the spouse and family members. Moskos sees the services moving more toward an occupational military where individual commitment is driven by more market forces such as compensation and benefits, and less by an identification with the organization and one's role within it. In the occupational organization, individuals identify more strongly with their occupation (horizontal identification) than with the organization itself (vertical identification). There is growing reluctance on the part of spouses (who often have their own careers) and children to accept the extensive volunteer and social duties traditionally expected of them (Moskos, 1977, 1986, 1988).

### Military Retirees

For this study, military retirees are defined as individuals who have served 20 or more years in a branch of the armed forces and who receive retired pay.

### **Abbreviations Used**

The military uses a large number of acronyms and abbreviations that facilitate brief and precise communication within the services but are unfamiliar to much of the general public. The following is a list of those abbreviations used in this work.

---

#### **Ranks and Paygrades**

CO	Commanding Officer
XO	Executive Officer
CPO	Chief Petty Officer (paygrade E-7)
E-9*	Master Chief Petty Officer
E-7	Chief Petty Officer
E-4	Third Class Petty Officer

#### **Military Terms**

CB	Construction Battalion
NJP	Non-judicial punishment administered at Captain's Mast
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps, a university-based commissioning source for officer candidates
SOP	Standard operating procedure
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice, similar to the civilian Penal Code

\* The complete list of petty officer ranks ranges from E-4 to E-9.

---

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

The population of this study will be confined to retired Navy and Marine Corps officers, who served 20 or more years and attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander or higher in the Navy or Major or higher in the Marine Corps. The participants must have been retired six years or less and have worked in a managerial or executive position in local government in San Diego County.

While many individuals in an organization act in leadership capacities, this study dealt exclusively with those in positional leadership roles. As many of the participants came from unfamiliar organizations, it was not possible to accurately identify individuals who fulfilled leadership roles outside of their formal positions.

A limitation of the study is that the pool of participants was composed entirely of white males, reflecting somewhat the demographics of the military branches during their service as officers. The results, therefore, may not reflect the experience of women and non-white high-ranking military officers.

The researcher has no military background and has thus relied on the repetition of similar themes and experiences (data saturation) and the expertise of committee members and subject matter experts to confirm that the data are sufficiently grounded to supply the basis for a theory.

This research focused solely on the self-described experiences of retired officers. It, therefore, does not necessarily address the effectiveness of the retired officers in their leadership roles in the public sector as perceived by others. Such a study would require the input of subordinates, peers and superiors (i.e., 360 degree feedback) as well as long-term observation of the participants in their roles. This approach was initially considered.



but rejected during the proposal phase due to the difficulty in gaining permission and access to such data.

Finally, the grounded theory method focuses solely on the core element being researched; therefore, other themes revealed in the data gathering were not explored if they did not relate to leadership.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

Chapter One provided a summary overview of the dissertation, along with background information on the key terms, limitations and assumptions of the study.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature, focusing on the core issues underlying this study. The literature review examines the common threads and differences between the organizational cultures of the military and of public bureaucracies. It also considers the nature of major life transitions, such as retiring from the military after twenty or more years and beginning a second career. Finally it discusses the nature of leadership and its role in guiding public organizations through the current climate of significant organizational change.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology of this study. It addresses the rationale for selecting a grounded theory approach and describes the process for the research, interviews and data analysis.

Chapter Four contains the descriptions of the participants and the research results concerning military leadership, focusing on the central themes.

Chapter Five contains the research results related to applying military leadership strategies and behaviors to the public sector.

Chapter Six presents the findings and the recommendations for future research. In this chapter, the central themes from the data are woven into a grounded theory that describes the nature of military leadership as described by the participants and what aspects translate well to the public sector. This research will hopefully inspire further inquiry.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter provided a brief explanation of the purpose of this study – identifying the lessons in leadership learned by retired military officers and examining their experience in transferring these principles while serving in leadership positions in local government. It summarized the economic and personal reasons for retired officers to enter public sector employment and cited results from a pilot study, which suggested that not all military leadership strategies and behaviors translate well to the public sector. This chapter contains a focused review of the related literature thus providing a more comprehensive examination of this subject.

An underlying assumption of this study is that, while government and military organizations share some common history and characteristics, there are also substantive differences between the cultures of the military and the public sector. What follows in this chapter is, first, a review of the development of this nation's public and military bureaucracies. The focus is on the common roots of the military and the government bureaucracies; the political attitudes that shaped them; their growth in scope and professionalism; and the formation of their formal structures in the era of reform. Secondly, this section contains separate examinations of their informal organizational cultures and highlights some of their differences in cultural type, values, goals, missions,

and citizen input as well as current organizational challenges. Next, there is a review of the primary issues of career and life transition, followed by an examination of the current change environment facing military officers transitioning to the public sector. Finally, there is an examination of the nature of leadership and its central role in managing public sector change.

### **The Intersection of Public and Military Bureaucracies**

There are strong parallels between many of the formal aspects of military and government organizations because they share common roots as the first large-scale organizational structures. The key “modern” management concepts originated in ancient governments and military operations: the Egyptians developed centralized systems (1600 BC); the Chinese wrote about planning, directing and controlling principles (1100 BC) and standard operating procedures (500 BC); and the Greeks (325 to 175 BC) wrote about hierarchy, delegation, job descriptions, and motion studies (George, 1972).

According to Rickover (1971):

Bureaucracy antedates modern democracy by centuries. It persists in our society because no one has yet invented an instrument equally efficient in performing tasks – on a continuing basis – that require coordination of the efforts of large numbers of people, with different kinds and degrees of professional expertise relevant to the job at hand, especially when their work must be closely intermeshed. (p. 150)

The hallmarks of contemporary public and military bureaucracies were outlined by Max Weber (1946) as centralized functions, standardized roles, unity of command, centralized

decision-making, standard operating procedures, closed boundaries, and reliance on hierarchical authority. Thus, for centuries, there have been parallels in the formal aspects of government and military organizations. The differences between the two are more pronounced in their informal culture.

There are existing parallels between this country's public and military bureaucracies that go back to their roots. The principles of colonial government and society were: "divided political power, local autonomy, civil control over the military, and fear of power" (Carp, 1984, p.14). The dominant colonial issues of religious and regional differences fueled the development of isolated, fragmented local government. Local political leaders were generally from wealthy families and many served unpaid, establishing an expectation that government service was a noble obligation and that government functions should cost little (Carp, 1984). Colonial opposition to the British founded a suspicion of centralized authority – whether administrative or military (Beach and Carter, 1997). The writings of John Locke (1690/1986) and others were used to support the creation of a small government with limited power. A fear and mistrust of the military is evidenced in the Continental Congress's refusal to grant the military the proper authority to feed and clothe its forces – resulting in ragged and starving Colonial troops that went from town to town both fighting and begging supplies. The founders preferred military sacrifices to expanding both the power and the scope of government and the military (Carp, 1984).

The first era of national government, roughly 1789 to 1829, saw public administrators as the guardians of the new democracy. Washington spoke of "fitness of character" as the criterion for those in government employment. Family background,

education, honor and esteem were the basis of what Frederick Mosher calls, "the government of the gentlemen," where landed gentry formed the pool of possible employees (Mosher, 1982, pp. 58-60). Class was the basis of both government and military service, wherein the positional leaders were from the aristocracy and public service was regarded as an honor and obligation. Military service itself was often considered a family tradition (Van Riper, 1971).

Thomas Jefferson, a strong opponent of a standing army, was an unlikely champion of the creation of the first military academy, West Point. However, Jefferson was deeply concerned with the exclusive Federalist/aristocratic makeup of the Army. He created West Point to draw middle class and Republican factions into the military in order to guard against creating a military that was an exclusive body, which enforced the interests of the wealthy (Crackle, 1987).

Opening up public service to the common man was a notion promoted by Andrew Jackson. He based his actions on two principles: a view that government "by the people" meant that "the people" ought to work in the government, and a belief that government work was so simple in nature that it did not require an established administrative workforce:

The duties of all public officers are, or at least admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance: and I cannot but believe that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally gained by their experience. (quoted in Richardson, 1897, p. 1012)

In Jackson's view, it was better to exchange some degree of professionalism to ensure against a government administered by the elite. This notion of sacrificing efficiency for the sake of other objectives has been central to public sector conflicts during subsequent eras. Jackson's intent of a government of the common people became known in the late 1800's as the "Spoils System." Political patronage existed at all levels of government, but particularly within city politics where ward bosses dispensed political jobs and favors as rewards (Huberman, 1960). In addition, a great number of the bureaucratic positions turned over with each election, resulting in disarray and a loss of institutional knowledge within government agencies (Van Riper, 1971).

Jackson and some of his successors had a similar disregard for the military. While the territory of the United States tripled in size within 50 years after the War of 1812, its military was slashed (Porter, 1994). The military fell into disarray prior to the Civil War, due to poor support. Public anti-government sentiment was documented by de Tocqueville (1848/1945) who noted that Americans chose to keep their government poor and unfunded to keep it from becoming too strong.

At the time of the Civil War, there was an army of just over 16,000, almost 90% of which was stationed on the western frontier. There were three million militia on paper, though the President could only call up units for a maximum of three months, and their training consisted largely of "annual picnics." (Dupuy & Dupuy, 1960, p. 23). The military promotion system was staid and careers moved at a "meticulous crawl." Future leadership positions relied on "avoiding innovation in personal life or in military duties" (Mills, 1956, p. 183). The Navy had only 90 craft, many of which were wooden sailing ships. Only forty-two were in commission and none of the fleet were modern armor-clad

vessels used by European fleets (Dupuy & Dupuy, 1960). The early years of the Civil War highlighted the poor preparation and performance of the military as well as the weak national loyalty of the servicemen. Of the 1,036 Army officers and 1,300 Navy officers, 286 and 322, respectively, resigned -- mostly to join the Confederate forces (Op. cit.).

The Civil War had showcased some of the inadequacies within the military and government administration. The government's spoils system practice of appointing political allies to administrative positions allowed politicians to exercise substantial control over both the design and the implementation of policy, further broadening the power of politicians to use their offices for patronage. By the late 1800s, there was political corruption at all levels of government, with scandals such as Teapot Dome and Tammany Hall demonstrating that public jobs and services were available for money and political support (Huberman, 1960). Government administration was largely in the hands of bureaucrats selected more for political cronyism than for professionalism (Ingraham, 1995; Mosher, 1982).

The post-war Navy was clinging to an old mission focused on protecting commerce, and consequently could marshal little political support outside of wartime. By 1881, the United States Navy's fleet was considered inferior to the Chilean Navy (Clark, Stevens, Alden & Krafft, 1927). With the writings, lectures and political influence of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the Navy turned from a reactive focus on commerce protection to embracing a new mission -- creating a battle fleet that would make the United States a geo-political force in the era of "Manifest Destiny" (Hagan, 1991).

As the new century approached, it was broadly recognized that the large scale and complex issues of an increasingly industrial nation with international interests required a



professional and ethical administration in both the military and the government (Ingraham, 1995; Mosher, 1982; Nelson, 1982).

Public outrage over government corruption and ineptitude grew to where, beginning in the 1850's, large public protests were held to reform the personnel system. The movement for a professional civil service system followed the reform model promoted by Alexis de Tocqueville in Europe. Reform efforts were fought by some local and national politicians in the United States (White, 1935). The assassination of James Garfield in 1881 by Charles J. Guiteau, a disgruntled civil servant who sought a better job in the presidential administration, galvanized the American government reform movement. Abolitionists and Progressives (who led one wing of the movement to establish a professional and non-corrupt public administration) adopted a high moral tone focused on *ethical* reform: "The abolition of the spoils system . . . [is] second in importance only to the abolition of slavery" (from a 1893 speech by abolitionist Wendell P. Garrison, quoted in Nelson, 1982, p. 121).

At the same time, the scientific management movement was pulling reform in the direction of *efficiency*, defined as the use of business practices and expertise (Nelson, 1982). The proponents of scientific management argued that government functions required trained professionals who made decisions and otherwise performed their tasks in accordance with "autonomous, abstract standards" (Nelson, 1982, p. 125). One of their key proponents was Woodrow Wilson who called for the establishment of a profession of public administration based on the principles of business (Wilson, 1887).

Abolitionists, led by Henry Adams, Wendell Garrison, Charles Schurz and others were committed to government reform because such political actions as the Kansas-

Nebraska Act challenged the morals of government by strict majoritarianism. They spoke of reintroducing the ethical government seen during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Nelson, 1982). The reforms they championed established: strict purchasing and contracting regulations, standard operating procedures and competitive, merit-based selection and promotion systems. Such reforms involved strict procedures and multi-layered checks and balances to guard against corruption and favoritism. The systems created were *intentionally inefficient* because their proponents saw ethics as the greater good:

The question whether the Departments at Washington are managed well or badly, is in proportion to the whole problem [of corruption] an insignificant problem after all. Neither does the question whether our civil service is as efficient as it ought to be, cover the whole ground. The most important point to my mind is, how we can remove that element of demoralization which now the prevailing mode of distributing office [political nepotism] has introduced into the body politic. (Charles Schurtz, in a speech to the United States Senate, January 27, 1871, quoted in Nelson, 1982, p. 121)

The scientific management proponents introduced the business models of creating smaller institutions (agencies), narrow scopes, specified job duties, specialized functions, and separate accounting systems (Nelson, 1982). These systemic reforms in personnel, procurement and budget affected both administrative government and the military.

### Personnel

One of the most significant government reforms of the Progressive Era was the Pendleton Act of 1883, which sought to remove political patronage from the personnel system and protect the rights of public employees. Based on the British model, it forms

the basis for all contemporary public personnel systems – jobs are specifically defined; positions are advertised publicly; candidates are evaluated by pre-established criteria; and employees are selected based on merit. Further, the system protects employees from dismissal without cause (Van Riper, 1971; White, 1935). These federal efforts were precursors of personnel reform in key cities and states as well.

Most of the forces for the Civil War, World War I, and the Spanish American wars came from volunteer militia (Mills, 1956; Stillman, 1996). There were problems with the leadership and technical expertise of some generals and admirals who were promoted based on seniority or political connections rather than merit. Secretary of War Elihu Root spearheaded military personnel reform on the heels of the Pendleton Act. Root established a unified personnel system and education requirements for officers (Mosher, 1982; Stillman, 1996).

Personnel reforms occurred in advance of unprecedented growth in government and the military. Public bureaucracy grew during the Progressive Era, New Deal and World War II eras in response to increasing citizen demand for services. The growth of the military parallels this general government expansion (Porter, 1994). At the turn of the century, the military branches consisted of the War Department and the Navy – both established in the 1780s. With the entrance of the United States into World War II, the modern military bureaucracy was born. Between 1941 and 1945, over twelve million men and women served in the armed forces and 147 bureaucratic agencies were formed to serve the war effort, including the Selective Service. The National Security Act of 1947 created the Department of Defense, the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency. Other military agencies were formed to administer military humanitarian efforts

such as The Marshal Plan as well as efforts related to the developing Cold War (Stillman, 1996).

### Budgeting

The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 was the first reform in public budgeting. It took a rational approach to budgeting and pursued standards of efficiency by focusing on the expenditure side (Schick & Harry, 1982). Subsequent attempts at budget reform were a response to the complexity and cost of military weapons and Cold War programs (Schick & Harry, 1982; Stillman, 1996). They were often first initiated in the military, then applied to general government.

Recognizing that the long-term development of complex and costly weapons systems required the highest quality in decision-making, Secretary of Defense (1961-1965) Robert McNamara instituted what he viewed as rational approaches to budget and program evaluation. He believed that his system – Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS) – would control the process and would lead to “correct” decisions emphasizing “cost-effectiveness analyses” in managing the military (Roherty, 1970).

Many criticized McNamara’s cost-effectiveness approach as discounting combat readiness and the protection of the forces and his focus on very specific objectives as failing to examine the larger question of mission – as evidenced in his decisions during the Vietnam War (Hadley, 1986; Palmer, 1978; Roherty, 1970). McNamara’s practices and the PPBS system also brought civilians and political appointees further into decision-making roles in the military (Hadley, 1986; Palmer, 1978) which has subsequently demanded more political skills from its uniformed leaders (Wilson, 1989).

The budget and program evaluation reforms of the last thirty years – such as PPBS, Management by Objectives (MBO) and Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) – all followed this same rationalistic approach and opened the door to political involvement in decision-making and micro-management of programs (Schick & Harry, 1982; Stillman, 1996). These reforms occurred in both the military and public sectors.

### Contracting and Procurement

The United States government has contracted for goods and services since the Revolutionary War. Charges of overpricing, excessive overheads, fraud and nepotism have plagued contracting since its inception (Carp, 1984). In the 1880s, the Progressive reformers challenged favoritism in the granting of contracts, that led to the development of parallel systems within both the military and administrative government: competitive procurement, precise contract specifications and sealed bids (Kettl, 1993). The hallmarks of the reforms in personnel, budgeting, contracting and procurements are still in place after nearly 100 years.

Clearly, there are similarities between government and military bureaucracies. They share fundamental structures and practices common to most large-scale organizations. They share the public's concern over their role, their power and their cost. They share a common history in their rise in complexity and professionalism. They share common systems of personnel, budgeting and procurement resulting from the reforms introduced in this century. These similarities between administrative government and the military are principally in what French and Bell (1974) identified as the *formal* aspects of organizational culture; the differences between these organizations lie largely in the *informal* aspects.

## **The Nature of Military Culture**

Organizational culture is a system of backgrounds, norms, values and beliefs that are shared among group members (Schein, 1992). French and Bell (1974) include in their notion of organizational culture the formal or overt features of an organization (goals, technology, structure, and finances) as well as its informal aspects (interactions, group norms, feelings, attitudes and values). Military sociologists and historians have examined the informal aspects of military culture.

### The Navy's Organizational Culture

The roots of the United States Navy originated with the Revolutionary War over the necessity of protecting commerce. Problems with Barbary pirates led the reluctant Constitutional Convention in 1787 to establish the federal authority to create a navy, over the objections of those concerned with the cost and who felt it gave too much power to the central government. The controversy was carried to Congress, which finally established a navy in 1794 (Hagan, 1991). While West Point was founded in the 1700s under Jefferson to teach battle strategy and tactics, the United States Naval Academy was not founded until 1845 – Navy culture held that seamen learned at sea, not on land. The changing technology (steam propulsion) forced a change in philosophy, as the need for a more developed engineering background was recognized (Clark, et al, 1927; Hagan, 1991). The role of the Navy changed with the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, (1890/1987), redirecting the Navy toward developing large warships and engaging in fleet-centered combat and large-scale operations. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the United States Navy has faced a re-examination of its “battle group” strategy.

since, for the first time, no other country seems capable of assembling a credible naval threat (Hagan, 1991).

The Navy has several distinct communities or subcultures including: the “brown shoes” (aviators), the “black shoes” (surface ship sailors) and felt shoes (submariners). The commanding officer of an aircraft carrier is traditionally an aviator. There is an historic, intra-service rivalry among these communities, revealed in debates on how to best implement the Navy’s overall mission (Hadley, 1986; Halperin, 1974). Officers with “brown shoe” background fight for appropriations for more aircraft and carriers, while “black shoe” admirals seek more surface ships (Halperin, 1974). Despite these subcultures, the Navy retains an integrated personality because of its mission (Hadley, 1986).

With its seagoing missions, the Navy is unique among the services. The amount of travel makes it the least insular (Hadley, 1986) and the essence of the ship experience gives a unique independence to naval officers:

Onboard ship, hierarchy is powerful and actions are constantly monitored, but *among* ships there is a freedom of action and degree of isolation from the rest of the military (and society at large) that is much greater than what a typical army officer experiences. (Wilson, 1989, p. 58)

The shipboard experience is self-contained, and the actions of senior and flag officers are not monitored and scrutinized to the degree that land-based forces are. Thus, the Navy’s high-ranking officers operate in an environment of relative independence, flexibility and isolation. Naval officers generally put in more time away from their families than those

in the other services, yet many avoid Pentagon assignments – perhaps because the naval officer values autonomy (Hadley, 1986).

### The Marine Corps' Organizational Culture

The Marine Corps is part of the Department of the Navy and constitutes the land component of sea combat. The Continental Marines served in the Revolutionary War and were disbanded until officially established in 1789 to fight the Barbary pirates (Moskin, 1977). Initially, the Corps was the least-funded service, often threatened with extinction by Congress and was frequently caught in a turf war between the Navy and the Army (Krulak, 1987). It evolved into an expeditionary force that prides itself as an elite corps willing to undertake the dirtiest, most dangerous duty. As retired Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, USMC, wrote:

In a century and a half evolved an elite, almost mystical institutional personality. Partaking variously of pride, aggressiveness, dedication, loyalty, discipline, and courage, this complex personality was – and is – dominated by a conviction that battle is the Marines' only reason for existence and that they must be ready to respond promptly and effectively whenever given an opportunity to fight.

Finally, they came to accept, as an article of faith, that marines must not only be better than everyone else but different as well. (Krulak, 1987, p. 3)

The Marine Corps has a strong organizational culture unmatched by few private or public sector organizations. As an amphibious force, its culture also differs from the Navy's. Marine officers are subject to much more control and oversight than their counterparts in the Navy (Hadley, 1986). As with other service branches, the Corps struggled as an



organization after the Vietnam War, but refocused itself on combat readiness in the late 1980s (Ricks, 1997).

### Informal Military Organizational Culture

While each service has a unique culture, there are also shared aspects of military service – informal military culture. Informal military culture relies on community and organizational identity as the glue that binds it. Ferdinand Tonnies (1887/1957) referred to this type of organizational form as *gemeinschaft*. Such organizations are distinguished by their strong, common beliefs and values, deep traditions, well-defined roles, traditional forms of authority and strong cohesion. The traditions of the modern military pre-date the formation of nation-states. In his seminal work on the military, The Professional Soldier, Morris Janowitz (1960) identified the post-feudal roots of the modern armed forces, when loyalty to one's lord was transformed to loyalty and service to one's country. Serving as a military leader was a calling and obligation of the aristocracy.

Its contrasting organizational form, *gesellschaft*, characterizes an organization which is created to achieve a specific end. These organizations – such as government bureaucracies -- fit the rational, machine model and are driven by instrumental values (Weber, 1946). Shils (1981) in his work on tradition in society, wrote that the rise of bureaucratic rationalism beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an attempt to move away from tradition which was seen as binding individuals. Government was seen as the agent of rational change:

Government alone . . . is counted upon to act rationally, to disregard old ways and to choose those means which will attain the desired ends with a minimum of

waste . . . . No other institution has powers over the entire range of society: government alone can make the entire society rational. Otherwise society would be in a chaos arising from the rational self-seeking actions of individuals or it would be a thicket of irrational, traditional rules, or it would be both at the same time. (Shils, 1981, pp. 288-289)

Government has both the resources and power to move societies away from what is conceived of as an excessive attachment to traditions and old ways and toward rationality. The military, while also embracing rational organizational practices, retains its long-enduring orientation toward authority, standards of conduct and commitment to values. The military actively seeks to preserve the traditions of its institution, amidst societal pressures toward legal-rationalism.

Modern military sociologist Charles C. Moskos (1977, 1986, 1988) further developed this concept in his *Institutional-Occupational* organizational continuum that is used extensively in military literature (Appendix A). As an institutional organization, the traditional military is driven by its core values, identified by military sociologists as duty, honor, self-sacrifice and country (Janowitz, 1960; Nye, 1986; Dunivan, 1994). Members see their careers as service, a calling, sometimes a family tradition. Individuals have a strong identification with the institution itself – i.e., a *vertical identification*. Military members as well as their spouses and families are an integral part of the military community. The organization is very paternalistic in its relationship with members, controlling large aspects of their lives (Moskos, 1988).

The building of organizational identification and unit cohesion is essential in an organization where individuals must be willing, when necessary or on command, to

ignore instincts of self-preservation and put themselves in harm's way. New recruit orientation is a key tool for instilling military culture -- what Strauss and Corbin (1990) called *context*. One tool used to build cohesion at boot camp and officer training is *basic training*. According to McCloy & Clover (1988), the goal of basic training is to "deindividualize" or break down individuals, and then remold them so they bond them as a unit. Schein (1965) observed that:

Organizations socialize their new members by creating a series of events which serve the function of undoing old values so that the person will be prepared to learn new values. This process of undoing or unfreezing is often unpleasant and therefore requires strong motivation to endure it or strong organizational forces to make the person endure it. (p. 6)

During this intense, often unpleasant experience, cooperation and group behavior are rewarded. The end of basic training is marked by a rite of passage that signifies bonding and acceptance into the group (McCloy & Clover, 1988). Initiation rituals help identify those suited to military life. The willingness to adopt an institution's identity suggests that many are likely to have high affiliation needs (McClelland & Burnham, 1976) which helps support military camaraderie.

The strongest example of this is in the Marine Corps. Marine boot camp uses lack of sleep, total adherence to a rigid application of rules (including the proper way to hold a cafeteria tray), dependence on the drill instructor, repetition and increasing difficulty, danger and unpleasantness of tasks to build institutional identification. Boot camp culminates in "Warrior Week" where cadets "enter as civilians and come out as Marines" (Ricks, 1997, p. 132). The goal of Marine boot camp is to instill unquestioning

obedience, a sense of history and identification, and a Marine standpoint. Ricks (1997) followed and interviewed Marines through basic training. Key changes the Marines themselves noticed were their new sense of identity and camaraderie with other Marines, and their changed view of civilian life, which now appeared "obnoxious," lacking "politeness" and "nasty" (p. 231). The Corps, perhaps more than the other services, seek to set its members apart as an elite and bonded corps, with a separate identity intentionally forged by the organization.

Military officers may have undergone basic training if they were promoted through the enlisted ranks. Other paths to commissioned officer status are the military academies, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), the Reserve Officer Corps (ROC), and Officer Candidate School (OCS). Each of these involves varying degrees of immersion into military culture. Formal military education trains officers in military norms: both in their tasks and in how to transmit military values (Peck, 1994).

Colonel William D. Henderson, USA (1985), a combat commander and instructor at the National Defense University, defined camaraderie as that phenomenon occurring "when the small group, the organization and the leader come together," ensuring that the group functions cohesively (p. 9). According to Henderson, the military builds camaraderie through the following: mission, policies and resources that support the small unit, and "structural characteristics [which] de-emphasize individualism within the soldier" (p.10). The goal is to induce the individual to see his/her unit as the *primary group* (p.162).

The hierarchical structure of the service defines duties and roles, but also sets the structure for command and obeying orders. The military has a blend of teamwork and

unquestioned adherence to commands. A pamphlet written in 1899 underscores the value the military places on obedience. "A Message to Garcia" relates a story of a man accepting responsibility to deliver a message to someone only known as "Garcia" located somewhere in the mountains of Cuba, without hesitation or question:

My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is at home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions . . . The hero is the man who does his work – who carries the Message to Garcia. (Hubbard, 1899, p. 3)

Over 100 million copies of the pamphlet are said to exist, giving it the largest circulation of any document in the world. Its popularity within the military points to the value the military places on unquestioned obedience and the importance of carrying out orders.

Significant organizational changes in the armed forces which began in the 1950s (Janowitz, 1960) were tremendously accelerated in the post-Vietnam era of the 1980s and 1990s. The traditional military culture has been challenged by fundamental changes in the role of the military from its conventional war-fighting missions of combat readiness and unit cohesion toward more peace keeping and humanitarian missions (Dunivan, 1994; Moskos, 1977). The transition to all-volunteer forces (AVF) and the broad expansion of civilian staff has shifted the military away from its traditional role as a "vocation" toward an "occupation" (Moskos, 1977, 1986, 1988). The change in racial composition of the forces and the broadening roles of women in the military have challenged the military's reliance on homogeneity to create unit cohesion (Dunivan, 1994). In addition, the technological complexity of the weaponry and equipment requires both more organizational and cross-unit dependency. It also gives line commanders

control of significant firepower, which has forced a shift of the locus of control downward within the organization (Demchak, 1991).

This shift in military culture is addressed by Moskos (1977, 1986, 1988), who stated that the military is shifting from an institutional (*gemeinschaft*) model toward a more occupational (*gesellschaft*) model. Increasingly, there is more self-interest on the part of recruits and personnel who are attracted to more immediate benefits such as pay, training and assistance with a college education. Compared to the 1960s, the personal lives of those in the service are more separate from the institution – off-base residency, outside employment (by both members and spouses), less involvement of spouses, etc. Individuals have more of a horizontal identification with their profession, e.g., engineers, computer technicians (Moskos, op. cit.). Military personnel are seeking more of a voice in their work and their careers. At the same time, the civilian defense workforce is expanding while the military is downsizing, which further pushes the military culture toward occupationalism (Moskos, 1988). Officers in the services during this period experienced significant organizational change.

Another significant change in the military is the growth in importance of technology. One of the strengths of the military is technological development. Space technology, micro-circuits, computer and software architecture, robotics, simulation and modeling, fiber optics and superconductivity are just a few of the military technological developments which have advanced scientific and commercial arenas (Demchak, 1991; Stillman, 1996).

According to Demchak, (1991) the introduction of *complex technology* has changed the military. There is a higher knowledge requirement, increasing the training

investment and the cost of turnover. Expenses have increased, which can produce risk aversion as the cost per individual weapon platform increases dramatically. More occupational specialties are needed, creating interconnected groups that do not fully understand the capabilities and functions of each other. The complexity has increased to where malfunctions are less predictable creating more uncertainty. The movement toward complex technology creates a loss of internal expertise and unit self-reliance and more reliance on vendors and manufacturers (Demchak, 1991). The organizational dangers are that the technology can drive the mission (Wilson, 1989) and limit flexibility and adaptation while increasing control (Demchak, 1991).

#### Military leadership development

*The biggest mistake in my life was taking a military education.*

- General Robert E. Lee, quoted in Janowitz, 1960, p. 230.

Establishing group norms requires: 1) set beliefs about what is appropriate and required behavior for group members; 2) a commonality of beliefs among the majority of members; and 3) visible, institutional support for the belief, generally through a process of rewards and sanctions (Katz & Kahn, 1978). As discussed earlier, the military uses its orientation and education system to create a *gemeinschaft* organizational culture of defined group norms, group identity and instilled values.

The education of career officers is a continuous process that extends over the entire career. There are established education and experience expectations of those who attain senior officer status, sometimes referred to as "ticket punching." Promotions are often dependent upon length of service, specific experiences (both command and staff assignments), military schools and a graduate degree, as well as having a high-level mentor and acquiring visibility (Moore and Trout, 1978). In the 1970s, the services

revised their formal evaluation and promotion system (Peck, 1994). The importance of the evaluation has increased as downsizing has reduced the number of high-ranking positions. The “up or out” system requires that individuals be selected for promotion in accordance with a strict time standard in order to remain on active duty.

The real teaching of military leadership occurs in two places. The first is the educational opportunities given to promising officers which usually involves technical education and formal military schooling that provides the basis of norms for the officer corps (Peck, 1994).

The second source of development is the special role of senior officers in mentoring junior officers. A key task of senior officers is the development of the next generation of senior officers. By coaching, via assignments and through example, senior officers attempt to instill the importance of chain of command, loyalty, carrying out orders, and moral responsibility (Montor, McNicholas, Ciotti, Hutchinson & Wehmueller, 1987).

Janowitz (1960) identified three types of military leaders: the heroic leader, the military manager and the military technologist. While technology is cutting edge in the armed forces, the heroic leader is still held in the highest esteem. Legendary military heroes fall into two categories: the traditionalists – managerial types such as Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, and George Marshall; and the iconoclasts such as Frances Marion, U.S. Grant, Jeb Stuart, Douglas McArthur, Hyman Rickover, Billy Mitchell, Ernest King and Holland M. Smith (Janowitz, 1960).

So while the military values and rewards obedience and compliance with standard operating procedures (SOP's), its organization and culture value the rebellious archetype.



Many of these hero leader figures brought innovations in tactics and technology to the services, fitting Weber's notion of "charismatic authority" which displaces the static and traditional and then becomes the establishment itself (Weber, 1946; 1947). Yet, as the military becomes more dependent on technology, the role of the military manager increases. Combat performance, however, generally carries more weight in promotions.

In summary, the key features of military informal culture include strong values and beliefs, traditions, defined roles, a strong organizational identity, a chain of command and emphasis on loyalty, unit cohesion and camaraderie. This culture is instilled in officers through the formal education process, through experience and through the mentoring by senior officers.

### **The Culture of Government Organizations and the Role of Public Administrators**

It is erroneous to say that there is a single government organizational culture. Government is a network of distinct subcultures – such as environmental agencies, law enforcement, social services and health (Ban, 1995; Wilson, 1989). Yet, there are some aspects concerning the nature of government that affect the culture of public agencies, regardless of level, location or mission:

America has a paradoxical bureaucracy unlike that found in almost any other advanced nation . . . . We have a system laden with rules; elsewhere that is a sure sign that the bureaucracy is aloof from the people . . . . We also have a system suffused with participation . (Wilson, 1989, p. 377)

While the military is part of the government, there are key differences between the organizational cultures of public agencies and the military.

A review of the literature revealed that the essence of public sector organizational culture is an historic and continued tension centered in these key areas: conflicting values, changing missions and vague goals; a fragmented, mechanistic structure; a personnel system centered on patronage versus merit; a neutral versus activist role for its administrators; and a budgetary system based on resource efficiency (rationalism) versus programmatic outcome (politics). Modern government was forged within the context of these tensions in the era of scientific management. The strength of that legacy remains almost 100 years later.

### Conflicting Values, Changing Missions and Vague Goals

Goals are central to an organization, defining both the identity of the organization and what it does. They determine the boundaries for its members and its relationship with other organizations. (Thompson, 1967). An organization's values guide its direction, decision-making and priorities. Public organizations have traditional values that are often in competition with each other: efficiency, the public good, effectiveness, ethics, social equity and responsiveness. In the military, the values of duty, honor and country converge. In government, its key values are often in conflict.

Presidential advisor and theorist Luther Gulick promoted "efficiency as axiom number one in the value scale of administration" during the 1930s and 1940s (Gulick & Urwick, 1937, p. 192). *Efficiency* ensures that public monies are spent well and focuses on productivity measurements (Brudney & Morgan, 1988). One of the problems in discussing efficiency in a government setting according to Dalton and Dalton (1988) is that there is no agreement on what "efficiency" is. Different approaches to efficiency – maximizing outputs, managing inputs and processes, and supply and demand – have been

used to measure productivity in government (Dalton and Dalton, 1988). The method of evaluating efficiency can shift for political reasons or with the frequently changing trends in government budgeting systems. As Wholey noted (1983), government agencies often select efficiency measurements that easily generate numbers rather than utilizing measurements that are most important for managing performance and results.

While Gulick promoted efficiency as the primary value for government, the *public good* would appear to be the value most aligned with the mission of government. There are two problems in using the public good as a basis for decision-making. First, the public good can be difficult to define. Some see the public good in utilitarian terms (Locke, 1690/1986; Mill, 1863/1951) – as that which maximizes benefits for the most people – while others see the public good as that which advances us as a civic society (Bellah, 1992; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1991) or as that which benefits society's poorest (Rawls, 1967). Secondly, the public good can conflict with efficiency. Government entities often design intentionally inefficient programs to promote a public good – such as in the 1980's when government agencies were mandated to use a new, more expensive and poor quality product (recycled paper) to create a national market.

*Effectiveness* means that programs achieve their intended results. Determining the effectiveness of government programs is a challenge, as most social programs have long-term results that are difficult both to measure and to analyze for causal relations, e.g., improving education, making neighborhoods safer, improving the health of children, etc. The challenge of measuring outcomes makes it difficult to control and improve processes (Wilson, 1989). This is further complicated by the condition that most

programs have multiple outcomes (Dalton & Dalton, 1988). Effectiveness considerations may, at times, indicate that more money be spent to increase results or to reach more people, when efficiency measurements point to making another choice – e.g., concluding that identifying and immunizing the last 3% of children carries too high a cost. These quality versus quantity conflicts often occur in budget debates.

The ethical standard of government service is not just to act within the law, but that actions be above the *appearance* of impropriety. *Ethics* has taken primacy over efficiency in the design of the civil service system and the contracting and procurement system. These systems were designed with *intentional* inefficiencies considered to be worth the price to ensure ethical government – such as the multiple steps of the employee selection process and the redundant checks and balances in the procurement system which safeguard against nepotism. American government has historically chosen an approach of legalistic and procedural controls (rules and fear of punishment) over one promoting ethical values (Ban, 1995; Bellah, 1992).

*Responsiveness* addresses how well the government reflects the will of the stakeholders. The problem with the democratic safeguard of participatory democracy is, as James Madison noted in Federalist 10, there is no single will of the people:

[When] you take in a greater variety of parties and interests: you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens: or if such a motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other.

(Hamilton, Jay & Madison, 1788/1961)

The United States is, by design, a pluralistic system with competing interests and this ongoing competition “define[s] the alternatives of public policy” (Schattschneider, 1975, p. 138). In Madison’s time the “variety of parties and interests” were solely white male landowners. Today, they include the complete spectrum and full complexity of society.

Particularly since the 1960s, *social equity* has been the driving value behind some government programs addressing race and gender issues. The New Public Administration movement (Waldo, 1971; 1984) argued that government administration has an activist role to play in engineering opportunities for the less advantaged. In government, social equity concerns can take precedence over efficiency considerations such as when policies designate a specific percentage of contracts for minority and women-owned business versus to the lowest bidder.

Competing values coupled with vague missions allow the focus of public agencies to shift with political considerations. For example, an environmental agency can find its mission change from strictly enforcing regulations to making an area more business-friendly. At other times, vague direction from elected officials leaves administrative staff with broad discretion but also positioned to receive the blame for poorly perceived social programs (Yates, 1982). These competing values and vague mission and goals are a key difference between the organizational cultures of the military and the public sector.

#### Public Administrative Structure – Fragmented and Mechanistic by Design

The approach to public administration was strongly influenced by scientific management theorists and government consultants, Fredrick Taylor (1916/1987) and Henri Fayol (1916/1987). Their approach was further developed and articulated by British military officer Lyndall Urwick and Luther Gulick (1937) who were advisors to

Franklin Roosevelt. They adhered to the classic "machine model" of bureaucracies with centralized structures, unity of command, and specialization of functions. Gulick brought these principles to his work on the Brownlow Commission in 1937, which overhauled federal agencies into separate functions determined by purpose, process, clientele, material or geography to maximize efficient delivery of services.

This led to agency proliferation on every level of government – from federal down to local government – and resulted in a pluralistic bureaucracy that promotes agency competitiveness (Dahl, 1956; Dilulio, Garvey & Kettl, 1993; Yates, 1982). This fragmentation among agencies persists today, reinforced by funding policies that promote agency rivalries and a proliferation of programs that address the same issues. It contributes to duplication of services provided by a confusing array of agencies involved in a single function (Dilulio, et al. 1993; Yates, 1982). Collaboration and joint action are complicated by the multiple agency approvals needed to carry out action (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). The result is the opposite of efficiency and rationality.

Some of the standard behaviors of public organizations include protecting one's turf, prolonging existing programs indefinitely and avoiding controversy (Yates, 1982). To conserve their power, public bureaucracies often cling to old missions, maintain narrow, agency-focused perspectives, and rely on standard operating procedures and traditional alliances when the times call for new strategies and reaching out to new constituencies (Allison, 1971; Dilulio, et al. 1993). Agencies may respond to the need for new programs by simply creating new procedures (Yates, 1982). Thus, the structure of government contributes to a fragmented, competitive approach to problem solving and a proliferation of procedures and regulations. While there is certainly some competition

and rivalry among the branches of the military, the dominant drive within all military branches is to support the defense of the country and the assigned mission.

### Public Personnel Systems -- Patronage Versus Merit

The roots of the public personnel system are in the scientific management notions of “breaking down the work of an organization into narrowly defined positions, each with clearly delineated responsibilities” (Ban, 1995, p. 193). The products of the public personnel system are: a proliferation of job classifications, rigidity in a manager’s staffing options, lengthy hiring processes and an expectation of a lifetime career as noted by White, writing in 1937: “By a [government] career service, I mean a life-work, an occupation which one normally takes up in youth, with the expectation of advancement, and pursues until retirement” (p. 7). Traditional practice within government has been to promote staff from within so there is both institutional history and the motivation of a career ladder (Ban, 1995; White, 1937).

There are aspects of government service that are attractive to security-motivated individuals – the prospect of career employment, benefits, a guaranteed pay scale and job protection. A concern within the public sector is also attracting staff oriented toward innovation and risk-taking. The ongoing issue is how to motivate staff toward high performance when there is little tie between pay and performance and when it can take over a year to terminate an employee with civil service protection for poor performance (Ban, 1995; Dilulio, et al. 1993).

Pugh (1991) wrote that government is a unique blending of “bureaucratic ethos” focused on organizational efficiency as good government and “democratic ethos” focused on values of citizenship and social equity. Perry and Wise (1990) hypothesized that there

may be motivational needs centered around values of service which draw individuals to careers in the public sector. Ting (1997), using data from the Survey of Federal Government Employees conducted with over 56,700 federal employees in 1991-1992, found that “the notion of serving the public had no effect on the job satisfaction of public employees” (p. 320). He also found commitment to public organizations was interrelated with job satisfaction, but could not establish a causal relationship.

Gabris and Simo (1995) surveyed 150 employees from the private, public and non-profit sectors and found that public employees had the lowest job satisfaction rate. They also found no significant difference in levels of motivation toward community service among the three sectors. Neither of these studies found any evidence of a public sector motivation, nor did the researchers identify any such evidence in their review of other research efforts, though there is admittedly limited research in this area. Thus, while there are certainly public employees who are drawn to government employment based on the notion of service, there does not appear to be the same “service to your country” attraction in public employment as there is in the military.

#### The Role of Public Administrators – Neutrality versus Activism

In the 1880s, Woodrow Wilson called for the establishment of public administration as a profession, emphasizing scientific business practices and the separation of politics and policymaking from administration. Administrators were to act based on rational analysis while elected officials gave legislative and policy direction based on political considerations (Wilson, 1887). Utilitarian phrases such as “maximizing benefits” guided administrative decisions (Rosenbloom & Ross, 1994).



Herbert Simon (1947) and Dwight Waldo (1948) critiqued both the neutrality principal and the scientific management approach. Simon wrote that administrators could not make rational, neutral decisions because they were limited by incomplete information, particularly regarding consequences, and by their own capacities to absorb the amount of information relating to complex social and political programs. Operating under conditions of what he termed “bounded rationality,” administrators needed to also rely on values as a basis for decisions that would benefit the public. Both Waldo and Simon criticized “economy” and “efficiency” for failing to provide sufficient direction as operational values. They also viewed hierarchy and centralization as at odds with the democratic principles of access and responsiveness. Simon concluded that, operating in a political environment with limited information, public administrators could, at best, produce “satisficing” public policies – ones that satisfied political leaders and were sufficient to address some aspects of programmatic needs (1947).

The neutrality debate continues today in the area of policy implementation. The difference is between those who hold that public administrators should strictly implement and evaluate programs in keeping with the original intent of the authorizing legislation (Lowi, 1979; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981; Thompson, 1975), and those who believe public administrators need the authority to address pragmatic implementation and to be responsive to their customers (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Majone & Wildavsky, 1979; Wilson, 1989). According to Lindblom & Woodhouse:

Policymaking often proceeds through trial and error, and the street-level bureaucrats who work with a program every day are in a much better position to observe feedback and perceive what is not working than are elected officials far

removed from the scene. Information generated in the process of implementing programs constantly pushes policy in new directions, and administrators rather than top officials are the primary implementers, monitors and interpreters of the trials, errors and error corrections. (1993, p. 63)

Politicians, special interests and administrators form what Sabatier (1988) has called the "Iron Triangle" of public policy, which operates on competing perspectives. Special interests promote their parochial views. The role of bureaucracy is to take the long-term view of problems, yet it also protects its own turf and interests (Wilson, 1989; Yates, 1982). Politicians are responsive to the current situations by legislating policy and (at times) by micromanaging implementation. As such, they are often at odds:

Understandably [government bureaucrats] see themselves as experts in their fields, yet many of the constraints on them are the work of people they regard as uninformed amateurs [legislators and other politicians]. . . . If people outside government think they are the victims of irrelevant obligations and prohibitions, they should see what those inside have to put up with. . . . (Kaufman, 1977, p. 26)

The conflicting perspectives of different agencies involved in a single issue as well as civic input further complicate the situation of public bureaucracies, though this is critical to the democratic process:

Although one can easily make sport of the public sector as "chaotic" and "disorganized," those features can contribute to government's openness and effectiveness in the broadest sense of increasing the popular support for a regime. (Golembiewski, 1985, p. 17)

The pulling and hauling of the conflict is intended to bring balanced perspective to issues. As a result, public administrators work in a daily atmosphere of competition and conflict where citizens have ready access to their organizations. In contrast, many military officers who are not stationed “within the beltway” in Washington DC are distanced from congressional pressure and defense industry lobbying.

### Public Budgeting and Decision-Making: Rationalism or Politics?

Charles Lindblom (1959) took Simon and Waldo’s critique of rationalism further. He recognized that government decisions are based on limited information and on political will – what he called “the science of muddling through.” Thus, administrators are operating in an arena of responding to short-term political conditions with incremental decisions. Programmatic direction is adjusted on an ongoing basis, both to gauge outcomes and public political reactions.

Inspired by Lindblom, Aaron Wildavsky (1974) debated the rationalist approach by incorporating *incrementalism* to perceptions of public sector budgeting. Wildavsky argued that budgets are political not rational documents. Budgets essentially reflect incremental changes based on what is amenable to change and what will stir a minimum of attention and controversy. Because individuals are cognitively limited, stated Wildavsky, incrementalism serves the public good.

Wildavsky’s view is born out in the actions of government. In reality, public agencies and programs, once established, take on a life of their own and are difficult to disband, regardless of their contemporary usefulness (Kaufman, 1976). As Wildavsky found, public managers have identified successful ways of avoiding cuts, enhancing programs and increasing funding in a budgeting process that he observed is more game

than rationality. In practice, the plethora of agencies makes it difficult to coordinate and integrate programmatic efforts, and operating in an environment of limited resources helps create interagency conflict (Wise, 1994).

This is an area where public agencies and the military culture are very similar. The military shares this incremental approach to budgeting, and there are military weapons and programs funded past the time of their strategic usefulness. The military is also bound by the limitations of knowing and analyzing all the factors critical to decision-making. Further, the different branches of the service are at times competing for the same budget allocations, and replicate programs unnecessarily.

### **Differences Between Government and Military Organizational Cultures**

The military has a strong organizational culture that pre-dates the creation of the United States government. The centrality of hierarchy/chain of command is a mainstay in this culture where orders are generally obeyed. Administrative agencies have multiple authorities with overlapping jurisdictions. The "iron triangle" of the legislature, government agencies and interest groups ensures that there is no certainty of which will prevail. Every decision, every policy is political and the process is public. Directives are obeyed because of the power currently possessed by their initiator. Directives may not be adhered to because of the discretionary power of agencies and the independence of staff.

The mission in the military has traditionally been clear – to protect and defend the nation and its interests. The goals of specific operations are generally related to this overarching mission. This clarity has diminished in recent years with the undertaking of more humanitarian missions and limited engagements such as Somalia and Bosnia. Yet,

the missions and goals of the military are more specific than those of governmental agencies, where missions are quite broad and often change with the election of new legislators and the shifting of power among interest groups. Public sector goals are not clear to staff when the enabling legislation is vague, when the goals change with political fortunes or when conflicting values further muddy the true goals of a program and even communicate to staff that there are no true goals to a program. While military officers have generally experienced the completion of missions and perhaps some level of victory, public programs are ongoing and results are difficult to measure. The public arena prevents the effective implementation of controversial programs, and public administrators must settle for "satisficing" (Simon, 1947).

Military personnel can recite the values of duty, honor and country. These values are instilled in basic training and reinforced throughout a military career. Other public agencies must juggle the shifting values of efficiency, effectiveness, the public good, ethical government, social equity and responsiveness. Traditionally, the public sector uses a legalistic, compliance approach to ensuring its employees adhere to policies, directives and ethical practices rather than infusing values in its staff.

Many military personnel were attracted to join and remain in the service because of a sense of patriotic duty and because of the culture and values of the organization. There is a strong organizational identification, loyalty and sense of camaraderie within one's unit and with other members of the service branch. There are varied attractions to public sector employment: a sense of public service, job security and stability and good benefits. There is generally a stronger identification with one's profession rather than the organization. Military discipline is far stricter than the civil service system.

Ferdinand Tonnies identified two types of organizations: *gemeinschaft* where tradition and strong organizational identity build a strong, cohesive organization and *gesellschaft*, where the organization exists to carry out a specific function. While the modern military is transitioning to more of a *gesellschaft* organization, it remains largely true to its traditions. Despite some changes in the military, there remain key differences between the organizational cultures of government agencies and the military.

While government shares bureaucratic structures and the notion of public service with the military, the informal cultures of the two sectors are quite distinct. Government operates in an open, visible arena with extensive citizen and legislative involvement. Its informal culture is that of a more rational, occupational bureaucracy (*gesellschaft*). These differences may affect the transition of military officers into the public sector.

### **Transition to the Public Sector**

Career changes represent a significant adult transition, especially when there is a "role shift," which sociologist Naomi Golan (1981) defined as "relinquishing one set of social rules and taking on another" (p. 19). When individuals are challenged by a transition, they may experience difficulty in separating from the past, in making and carrying out decisions and in weathering adjustments.

The issue of "fit" – integrating the individual and the organization – is a key issue in organizational effectiveness (Argyris, 1964). The concept of "fit" addresses whether or not the job can supply sufficient motivators to satisfy the employee's needs and whether the employee has the abilities to adapt to the job requirements (French, Caplan & Van Harrison, 1982). A lack of fit between the person and the work environment is an

important predictor of strain in the individual (French, 1973; French, Rogers & Cobb, 1974; French, Caplan & Van Harrison, 1982).

Organizations are a system of roles that are communicated and clarified via approval, disapproval, rewards and sanctions (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The process of socialization to a new organization is learning the “norms, values and role behaviors” expected of organization members in certain positions (Klauser & Groves, 1994, p.191). *Role ambiguity* occurs when the individual is uncertain as to what is expected in the organization (Burke, 1982). In retiring from the military, retirees are leaving familiar roles that they have accepted since entering the service. Many retired military officers settle into jobs very similar technically to those in the military. However, entering the civilian workforce may present significant role ambiguity as the retiree is unfamiliar with the new organization’s culture, or even its basic ground rules (Jacobsen, 1990). If the ambiguity is unresolved, an individual can experience stress over his/her role in the organization and become resistant to change, especially in periods of uncertainty (Kahn, et al. 1964).

The success of individuals in transitioning into a new organization depends on their tolerance for ambiguity and their high need for affiliation, which causes them to seek out those contacts that can teach them the informal culture of an organization (Klauser & Groves, 1994). For a successful transition to occur, “the will to change has to overcome an impulse to restore the past, to resist the change” (Golan, 1981, p. 16), but a frequent consequence of role stress is an attempt to return to the past. Research has shown that an individual in role stress during change and transition will more often revert back to earlier behaviors and attempt to preserve the past (Kahn, et al. 1964; Marris, 1974). Further, Glass (1977) found that among Type A personalities – which describes

many military officers – there was a stronger need to control their environment as a response to role ambiguity.

The transition from military to the public sector environment is potentially a stressful one. Retirees are leaving behind a unique cultural environment they have experienced for over twenty years and entering a significantly different culture. Those having difficulty in making this transition might respond by trying to recreate military structures and practices in their new work environment. Leadership can alter the culture in an organization through modeling, rewards or sanctions (Bass, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Schein, 1992).

A gap between the individual's expectations and the realities of the organization can also affect job satisfaction (Kahn, et al, 1964). Many retiring officers experience an initial loss of salary and level of responsibility in their civilian career transition. The transition preparation they receive from the military and their orientation upon entering the public sector may play a crucial role in their successful adaptation and career satisfaction. Unfortunately, the curriculum of military's Transition Assistance Program (U. S. Department of Labor, 1998; Veterans' Employment and Training Service, 1995) focuses primarily on career development areas such as skill assessment, resume writing, interviewing and job search skills. The program does not adequately address the issues of assessing and adapting to new organizational cultures. In a study of 122 retired naval officers done by Webb (1990), retirees criticized the military's transition program for failing to address the differences in organizational expectations of the military versus and civilian sectors.



No study was found addressing the differences between military and public sector organizational cultures. The majority of the books and articles written about retired military entering civilian employment address the strengths such individuals bring to the workforce, but fail to address the very real issue of transition and adaptation (Bowers, 1996; Carrison & Walsh, 1999; Jacobsen, 1990; Savino & Krannich, 1995; TROA, 1996; Whelan, 1981). This research project did not discover any transition assistance or executive coaching provided by public sector entities in the San Diego area to new employees transitioning from the military. One may conclude that retired officers have had to rely on their own wits or the support of associates and mentors to analyze and adjust to a new leadership role in a new organizational culture.

Significantly, this major career transition is occurring at mid-life. There are some researchers who maintain that personality dynamics are fairly constant through adulthood (Costa & McCrae, 1989). Others (Erickson, 1982; Gould, 1980; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Peck, 1968) have found mid-life to be a potential time for personal reassessment and sometimes crisis. If a mid-life transition is already occurring, a career transition can produce additional stress and complications (Levinson, et al. 1978). As the public sector is currently in a state of flux and disruption, this could increase the strain on transitioning officers.

### **Reforming, Reinventing and Reducing the Public Sector**

Government has never been under greater pressure to innovate. Call it *reinventing*, *reengineering*, *paradigm shifting*, or plain old *change*, the bottom

line remains the same: government must produce more with less and satisfy the customer while doing it. (Light, 1994, p. 63)

The public sector has recently been under intense criticism to reform. There are system-wide efforts to make government more business-like by focusing on customer service, empowering employees, reengineering processes, introducing market factors such as incentive pay, bonuses and competition, and dismantling public bureaucratic systems such as civil service, competitive procurement and program budgeting (Goldsmith, 1997; Kettl, 1993; 1994; Osborne & Plastrik, 1997).

The tax reform movement, e.g., Proposition 13 in California, and the election of “outsiders” such as Presidents Carter and Reagan were the early signals of a broadening dissatisfaction with government (Ban, 1995; Eggers & O’Leary, 1995). According to Kettl (1994), the perceived failure of the social programs of the 1960s and the well-publicized scientific failures (e.g., Three Mile Island, the Challenger disaster) contributed to a decline in faith in experts and technology to solve problems:

The problem was not just a failure of government, although problems in some areas were manifest. Rather, the public was less confident that any strong power, public or private, could understand or cope with the huge uncertainties surrounding public problems. (pp. 28-29)

Growing public dissatisfaction with government’s ability to solve problems became a mandate for change. Osborne and Gabler’s Reinventing Government (1991) became a best seller and spawned a movement. Osborne and Plastrik (1997) defined reinventing government as:

the fundamental transformation of public systems and organizations to create dramatic increases in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability and capacity to innovate. This transformation is accomplished by changing their purpose, incentives, accountability, power structure and culture” (pp. 13-14).

Osbourne and Plastrik outlined five key strategies for government reinvention which have been embraced at the federal level by Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review (1993) as well as by state and local reform efforts.

The “core strategy” is similar to Peters and Waterman’s (1982) formula to “stick to the knitting” by focusing on core competencies. In a throwback to Woodrow Wilson, it argues for a separation of legislative policymaking from bureaucratic policy implementation. The “consequences strategy” embraces managed competition for agencies to force efficiencies and performance incentives for employees such as bonuses, merit pay and gainsharing. The “customer strategy” introduces accountability by allowing public customers a choice, and implements customer quality-assurance practices from the private sector. The “control strategy” focuses on lifting internal systemic barriers particularly in recruitment, appointments, retention, discipline, promotions, procurement and budget. The “culture strategy” is an organizational development approach to changing government culture from a hierarchical monopoly into flexible, responsive, efficient organizations.

The key changes proposed focus on instituting business practices, forms of privatization, a customer service orientation, broader citizen involvement and input, and a new public personnel system.

### Running Government More Like a Business

Part of the drive to run government more like a business is frustration over the ineffectiveness of some social programs. Part of it is a classical capitalism belief in competition as the key to efficient organizations:

The absence of competition has a devastating effect on efficiency. With some heroic exceptions, government has performed as one would expect a monopoly to perform: with little innovation, little regard for customer welfare, and escalating costs . . . . We know the productive power of competitive markets. The challenge is to extend markets throughout government. (Eggers & O'Leary, 1995, p. 97)

There are some benefits to introducing the private sector model into government. Managed competition has created rewards for innovation and risk taking and some competitive efforts have profoundly streamlined public operations and saved substantial tax dollars (Goldsmith, 1997; Osborne & Plastrik, 1997). As risk taking is not generally rewarded in the public arena (Golembiewski, 1985), competition can force dramatic reengineering.

While it is difficult to measure the outcomes of social programs, government can often benefit by adapting private sector evaluation systems. Traditionally, government has measured what is easy to measure (Wholey, 1983). Government budgets also focus on inputs and expenditures rather than results. Identifying and using true efficiency measurements would improve management and performance in government organizations (Brudney and Morgan, 1988).

What Eggers and O'Leary fail to take into account are the differences in the roles of government and business. According to Riddle (1988) and Dilulio and associates

(1993). government is not subject to market pressure but political pressure. Supply and demand do not work in an environment where demand for services far exceeds what citizens are willing to pay in taxes.

Business practices, moreover, do not provide all the necessary solutions. One practice that has improved some government programs is taking a multi-agency, multi-discipline approach to the complex problems of society (Kettl, 1994). The success of such an approach often depends on non-competitive, collaborative practices across agencies and merging funding streams. A prime example of such initiatives are family-focused programs involving social service, schools, police, mental health, probation, employment and public health agencies.

#### Privatization and Public/Private Partnerships

Privatization in government can take many forms. It may involve: transferring assets to the private sector (e.g., airports and landfills); ending a government monopoly in providing a service (e.g., private jails and fire departments); complete outsourcing; and introducing a public and private competitive bidding process (or "managed competition") where government employees bid against private companies to win a contract and retain their jobs (Wise, 1994).

The argument for privatization is that private competition creates pressure to seek efficiencies. Competition between government and private providers (e.g., school vouchers) can create incentives for quality service and shrink costs (Goldsmith, 1997; Osbourne, & Plastrik, 1997). Those arguing for outright privatization do not see the issue as reinventing government, but as cutting government (Eggers & O'Leary, 1995; President's Commission on Privatization, 1988).

The real problem is really threefold. First, government is too big. Second, government is too centralized. Third, *government management is embedded in politics, and is therefore inherently limited in efficiency.* (Eggers & O'Leary, 1995, p. 150)

The small government movement is mired in both sincere efforts to improve government and political trends with their roots in Mill, Locke and Jefferson. Public sector leadership is caught in the middle.

In truth, the United States has contracted for services since the Revolutionary War. The Progressive reformers challenged favoritism in the granting of contracts in the 1880s that led to the system of competitive procurement, precise contract specifications and sealed bids. Proponents see advantages to private contracting for public services: freedom from regulations imposed on public organizations, the ability to specify and control services, freedom to implement performance incentives and ability to dismiss low-performing contract employees (Goldsmith, 1997). The call to increase the contracting out of public services is being criticized by those also examining the problems in government contracting (Dilulio, et al, 1993; Kettl, 1993).

There are some challenges in government contracting due to the differences between the public and private sectors. As previously noted, government does not operate in a market situation. Supply and demand are not effective as public "market" forces. There is a limitless demand on government services. Secondly, government often requires unique services. On the local level, there is often a lack of qualified bidders. Thus, once a relationship is established, government agencies seek to retain a specific vendor even at the expense of the "arms length" relationship historically established to

guard against favoritism. Third, the requirements of competitive bidding means there is no guarantee that performance will lead to a renewed contract. This creates incentives for government contractors to maximize profits in the short term by cutting corners and by under-performing (Kettl, 1993). Finally, government also provides services that are often difficult to measure (Wilson, 1989). It therefore often focuses on measuring the input side of its contracts, such as number of staff hours provided or clients seen, rather than quality of the outputs and results achieved (Kettl, 1993).

Aside from market imperfections, there are strategic concerns in contracting that public sector leaders must consider. There is a danger that contracting can result in a loss of expertise within government. Government agencies can lose their capacity to manage, oversee and evaluate their contractors (Kettl, 1994). Secondly, widespread contracting can result in what Kettl called, "government by proxy," where the contractor is – without true accountability – responsible for representing the public interest and for responding to stakeholders. Government becomes distanced from those it is to serve (Dilulio, et al. 1993; Kettl, 1993).

#### Changing to a Customer Service Orientation

Citizens are dissatisfied with a "monopoly" attitude by public agencies. As the sole provider of some services, government agencies have historically focused on the inputs of their programs – the amount of resources expended – rather than the satisfaction of their customers. In fact, the word "customer" was seldom utilized in government just ten years ago. Now government agencies are re-defining their service in terms of satisfaction, examining not just *what* is delivered, but *how*. Agencies are seeking feedback, utilizing surveys and other new measurements (Osbourne and Plastrik, 1997).

The customer service paradigm has produced some landmark changes in agencies such as courthouses and motor vehicle departments that formerly designed operations for their internal convenience, but the customer focus is not an easy fit for all of government.

Part of the challenge in transforming to a customer-driven operation is that government has multiple customers with conflicting agenda. The direct service recipients seek responsiveness; partners in service provision (other agencies, private social service agencies) seek effectiveness; those doing program oversight (legislative staff and elected officials) seek accountability and taxpayers seek efficiency (the best use of their money) and responsiveness. It is unclear how public agencies are to balance the different measurements as well as the different customer goals (Dilulio, et al. 1993). In a "satisficing" environment, no customer is truly satisfied.

Additionally, some government agencies have a difficult time translating their roles in enforcement or technical areas into the new language of public service providers. For example, is the prisoner the "customer" of a jail guard? Some in the public sector have criticized the customer orientation for promoting individual benefit (what is good for the individual) rather than partnership and public/private collective effort (what is in the interest of society) (Barrett & Greene, 1998).

### Broadening Citizen Involvement

In the public sector, according to Golembiewski (1985), success is measured in political terms. A goal in citizen involvement is the "doctrine of equality" (Yates, 1982) which is expanding the number and breadth of the stakeholders at the table. Citizen access to public agencies has been broadened through citizen oversight committees, public hearings and regulations that expand access to information such as open meeting



laws (Anderson, Newland & Stillman, 1983). Broader public input can improve the identification of problems and options and improve decision-making (Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Elmore, 1982). Unfortunately, the professional “guild” mentality of some technical experts can lead to discounting citizen and legislative input (Golembiewski, 1985; Yates, 1982).

The result of expanded citizen access is that more stakeholders bring more issues to the table. Input from the external environment expands the organization’s boundaries. The agency response is to broaden its mission, and expand its programs, rules and processes (Yates, 1982). The organization may also be compelled by political decisions to take on non-core tasks which dilute talent and resources (Wilson, 1989). These broadened organizational boundaries add complexity to leadership tasks such as decision-making.

#### The Changing Relationship of Government and its Employees

To be a successful, modern bureaucracy, government organizations must shift from being compliance organizations that rely on rules and policies to direct and control its employees, to becoming organizations that promote independent decision-making based on shared values and ethics (Wilson, 1989). Key to this is the human resources system.

The tradition of government employment is stability and job security. Since the reforms of the Progressive Era, there has been a “covenant” relationship of sorts between government and its employees. In exchange for long service and compliance with rules, government employees worked within a system where: the classification system defined their job and promotion ladder; the step advancement system rewarded their longevity of

service: the hierarchy defined their responsibility: and the civil service system protected them from capricious employment actions by political leaders and appointees. The public personnel system is cited by many as a key problem in transforming government organizations:

The civil service system is the crux of government's most enduring performance problems. There is a need to reduce or, where possible, eliminate personnel rules and work regulations that sap public employees' productivity, making careers in public service unattractive to talented, energetic potential candidates. (Dilulio, et al, 1993, p. 64)

The scientific management belief in specialization of jobs and the progressive belief in standardization of personnel procedures to remove discretion and favoritism may have worked a century ago when the goals of government were simpler. Public personnel management has been broken for decades.

Now there is a movement to rebuild the human resources system with a mix of proposals: *broadbanding*, which collapses multiple job classifications into a single broad job description with a wide band of pay; performance-based pay systems; incentive systems such as merit pay and gainsharing; decentralization of human resources systems; and flatter organizations with authority given to work teams. Some radical initiatives have eliminated civil service rights entirely (Walters, 1997).

The potential of managed competition, outsourcing and layoffs has broken the covenant of job security, affecting employee morale. The government is now the only sector in the nation with rising unionization. So, while many government agencies are

changing, there often remains a need to rebuild employee trust to create an atmosphere that will support, not fight, organizational change (Ban, 1995).

Public personnel reforms also need to consider the broader goals of governments. Contractors often save money by paying less in wages and benefits and by relying on part time contract or temporary workers (Goldsmith, 1997). As government has a larger interest in the viability of the local economy and the creation and retention of living wage jobs, hiring low-wage contractors can conflict with the larger interests of government entities (Marcelli & Joassart, 1998).

The proposals to change government carry both promise and problems. Some of the complaints about the public sector are endemic to large organizations, others are unique to democratic government:

All complex organizations display bureaucratic problems of confusion, red tape, and the avoidance of responsibility. Those problems are much greater in government bureaucracies because government itself is the institutionalization of confusion (arising out of the need to moderate competing demands); of red tape (arising out of the need to satisfy demands that cannot be moderated); and of avoided responsibility (arising out of the desire to retain power by minimizing criticism). . . . Many, if not most, of the difficulties we experience in dealing with government agencies arise from the agencies being part of a fragmented and open political system. (Wilson, 1989, pp. 375-376)

Given the realities of public administration in a participatory democracy, organizational change can be challenging.

### **The Difficulty of Organizational Change in the Public Sector**

According to Golembiewski (1985), there are factors about the structure and habits of the public sector that make organizational change difficult to facilitate. Structurally, there are multiple authorities (the “Iron Triangle”) and multiple avenues of influence. There is continual interplay and shifts in power among the legislature, executive branch, agencies, courts, media and special interests. The chain of command also has competing identities and interests – labor/management, career service/political appointees, technician/manager, etc. The election-term focus of many politicians steers efforts toward quick results, creates rewards for risk-averse behavior, and alters program goals with electoral change (Golembiewski, 1985). These factors diminish the chances of agreeing upon a decisive plan for change.

The practices of government also limit the success of change efforts. The multiple layers of review and approval inhibit delegation and the development of innovative practices. The need for standardization and legal compliance steers public organizations to cling to past practices. The need for security and secrecy restricts open communication within the organization. Finally, public leaders have fewer resources, less control over management of their staff and less rewards for innovation (Golembiewski, 1985). These factors make it easier to maintain existing structures and practices than to perform the difficult work of transformational change.

### **Leadership**

Public sector organizations are clearly in a time of transition, uncertainty and organizational change. The very nature of government and what it ought to do (its

mission and core functions) is under public debate. With increased privatization, growing citizen involvement and the changing employment relationship within the civil service system, government is fundamentally changing. It is necessary for government to go from a culture of compliance to a culture of performance. There are disagreements as to whether leadership can change organizational culture. Perhaps leadership alone cannot do it, but I would argue that leadership has a central role in the success of such an effort.

The risk of turning to leadership is that there is no universally accepted definition of leadership (Burns, 1979; Rost, 1993). Rost outlined the historical trends of the twentieth century views of leadership. The *great man* theory espouses that leaders are great men who shape history through their actions and intentions – espoused as early as Plato’s notion of the philosopher-king (1956). Leadership involves knowing the proper path, and obtaining the control and authority needed to ensure followers do the wishes of the leader (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Charismatic views of leadership (Conger and Kanungo, 1989) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) are offshoots of the great man theory. These are leader-centered views, wherein the leaders shape the vision, values, goals and direction of the change. In a similar vein, trait theory (Bass, 1985; Stogill, 1974) focused on identifying the common traits that good leaders shared. This was prominent in the 1950s and 1960s, and reemerged in the 1980s.

*Group theory* focuses on leadership as a facilitative process particularly involving divergent views. It promotes broad input within groups in contrast to the control aspects of the great man theory. In the 1940s, it addressed small groups: contemporary group theory encompasses the importance of forging consensus among stakeholders (Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Chrislip & Larson, 1994).

*Behavioral leadership* examines what behaviors in combination constitute leadership. Many of these theorists shared a normative approach that established a “one right way” that constituted good leadership such as McGregor’s Theory X and Y (1960) and Blake and Mouton’s managerial grid (1964). But this normative approach did not retain its dominance in leadership theory. The experience of the sixties demonstrated that there was a wider variety of human and group behavior. The *contingency/ situational theory* of leadership held that the leader had to change styles, depending on the circumstances (Fiedler, 1967; Hershey and Blanchard, 1988).

The 1980s was a confusing period as many basic societal assumptions were challenged including national superiority. Having failed to win a war and been held hostage literally and economically in the Middle East, the country sought new directions for leadership. A profusion of literature on leadership was produced, much of it having little to do with actual leadership. Leadership was *organizational “excellence”* (Peters and Waterman, 1982); it was – drawing from the work of Weber (1947) – *charismatic* (Conger, 1991; Conger & Kanungo, 1989); it was *doing management well* (Bennis, 1989). The field returned to *trait theories* (Kouzes and Posner, 1987) and tried to identify the great man or woman who could lead.

This begs the question, if there is no single vision of leadership, what vision most closely fits with the needs of the public sector? James McGregor Burns (1979) produced one of the seminal scholarly works on leadership and set the stage for others to follow. He took a multidisciplinary approach utilizing psychology, history and political science to examine leadership. Burns defined leadership as “the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other

resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p. 423). Burns distinguished between two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is a reciprocal process that includes bargaining or exchanging one thing for another. Leaders and followers are involved in a limited relationship centered on exchanging support, goods, money, etc. The relationship ends when the transaction is over. This definition recognizes that there are situations in an organization when members must work toward a goal assigned by another layer of an organization and there may be varying levels of personal commitment to that goal. Burns saw this as the typical leadership in bureaucracies. Transformational leadership involves influencing change by addressing the wants, needs and motivations of the followers and well as the leader in an effort to achieve a common purpose. Such leadership occurs within a condition of conflict and change. What makes transformational leadership unique, however, is that it elevates both the leaders and followers. *The public sector is in the midst of profound change and requires transformational leadership.*

As Heifetz (1994) wrote, the most difficult challenge to leadership is posed by situations requiring “adaptive change” when there is no clear “technical fix” (p. 75). In such situations the “authority must look beyond authoritative solutions” and inform and mobilize others toward a solution rather than directing change (p. 87). According to Heifetz, one of the key tasks of leadership is to pace the change to keep the stakeholders from being overwhelmed and disheartened as well as to provide a “holding environment” when necessary to provide a buffer.

Examples where this has not occurred are within the County of San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District where short-term, outside executives entered the organization, unilaterally mandated change and triggered incredible staff resistance. In the case of the County, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) formed “tiger teams” that excluded affected departments and stakeholders, sidestepped citizen input and ignored state legal requirements for union involvement. While the CAO improved the County’s bond rating, he also triggered lawsuits, and instituted a flurry of simultaneous reengineering, process automations, downsizings, outsourcings and managed competitions. The CAO found a more lucrative position in the private sector within two-and-a-half years, leaving behind an organization torn with labor unrest and low morale.

The San Diego Unified School District hired a superintendent with no experience in education. He excluded District staff from the improvement process, hiring outside consultants to draft a reform program. His failure to involve teachers and administrative staff led to a wave of resistance by the very staff tasked with implementation his changes.

*The public sector faces change that is directed from the political realm and special interest groups and requires leadership that will honestly inform employees of what is coming, involve them in the process and expend influence to guide and pace change at a survivable rate.*

Bass (1985), Rost (1993) and Yukl (1989) saw leadership as an influence relationship among leaders and followers. Change in the public sector cannot be successfully imposed from the outside or from the “top down.” *Successful leadership in the public sector must involve influence rather than coercion.*



To change the organizational culture requires leadership to cultivate a shared vision (Selznick, 1957; Senge, 1990) and to clarify and articulate the organization's values. Values are the guideposts for large-scale change as well as daily decision-making. Leadership can affect organizational culture by what it articulates, pays attention to, rewards, punishes and models (Bass, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Schein, 1992; Tichy and Devanna, 1986). *With a history of competing values and a political arena continually shifting directions, the public sector needs leadership that defines, articulates and lives the mission and values of the organization.*

Affecting change in a shared-power arena requires collaboration (Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Government agencies must seek and be responsive to the views of elected officials, a host of interest groups and to its own staff. Involving a broad, non-traditional, heterogeneous group of stakeholders can better define problems, identify more options and improve the decision-making (Etzioni, 1986; Kanter, 1983; Morrison, 1992). *Successful public sector change needs collaborative leadership and a belief in the value of diversity.*

While there is no universally-accepted definition of public sector leadership or leadership in general, the nature of what is needed to successfully steer public organizations through the coming turbulent period is more evident. The public sector is a unique entity, composed both of its formal structure and its organizational culture. Some structural and cultural aspects are shared with the military and some are unique. For military officers currently transitioning into leadership positions in the public sector, the key question is which of the military leadership practices and beliefs they carry with them will be effective at this critical time of systemic change as well as personal change.

### Summary

This review of the literature revealed that both the military and public bureaucracies in this country have a shared history. Since its origins, the nation has feared a military and a government that were too large or too powerful. The size, authority and public perception of the military and of public agencies have risen and fallen somewhat in tandem. In addition, both sectors shared parallel reform efforts in the areas of personnel, budgeting, purchasing and procurement. There are some differences in their formal cultures: the military has a strict chain of command and hierarchy while public agencies have overlapping jurisdictions and discretion in carrying out assignments.

The differences lie primarily in the informal culture of these two organizations. Informal military organizational culture encompasses strong traditions and the core values of loyalty, cohesion and camaraderie – a *gemeinschaft* culture – with some differences between the Navy and Marine cultures. Public agencies generally operate as rational bureaucracies – a *gesellschaft* culture. The key differences identified between the organizations are in the areas of: clarity of values, mission and goals; inter-agency rivalry, fragmentation and competing missions; public service as a motivator; and the predominance and influence of special interests, citizens and elected officials.

The differences between these two organizational cultures may cause difficulties for military officers transitioning to leadership roles in the public sector. The challenge of this transition is compounded by the fact that it is occurring in midlife, that the transition assistance provided by the military does not prepare officers for these issues and that significant change is occurring in the public sector.

The central reforms sought in public organizations are to adopt business practices. to privatize some functions and services. to adopt a customer-service orientation. to expand citizen involvement and reform the civil service system. The type of leadership needed in the public sector today is transformational leadership that involves and informs staff. paces its rate of change. defines and is driven by values and seeks a collaborative approach to organizational change involving diverse stakeholders.

The literature review revealed that there has been little examination of the differences between the cultures of military and government bureaucracies. and that there is a lack of knowledge about how the lessons of military leadership (its strategies and behaviors) translate to the public sector. The next chapter will address the methodology used to study these issues and the actions taken to construct a theory of this phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the key military leadership strategies and practices learned by retired officers and determine their transferability to leadership situations in local government. The first chapter provided an overview of the dissertation, along with background information on the key terms, limitations and assumptions of the study. The second chapter reviewed the core literature related to the organizational cultures of the military and public bureaucracies, the nature of major life transitions and a discussion of leadership and its role in guiding public organizations through the current climate of significant organizational change. This chapter describes the research methodology of this study – the history of the project, the rationale for selecting a grounded theory approach and the research process of interviews, data analysis and triangulation.

#### **Overview of Methodology**

This research project utilized a grounded theory approach to investigate the leadership strategies and practices learned in the military and how well these lessons translated to the public sector. The data were collected by interviewing recently-retired Navy and Marine Corps officers (at paygrade O-4 and above) who worked in mid-

management to executive positions in the public sector. Some of the methodology of the study was selected as a result of a pilot study done in the spring of 1998. The goal of the study was to interview between ten and fifteen subjects. Subjects were located by contacting the human resources sections of twelve cities, the county, seventeen water districts and the Port Authority. At larger entities such as the County and the City of San Diego, the human resources sections of the specific departments were contacted separately. The researcher also ran a notice in the local publication of the Retired Officers Association (TROA). Participant interviews were centered on, but not limited to, a standard list of questions. These core questions were based on the results of a pilot study done in 1998. Interviews generally lasted between ninety minutes and three hours. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed for patterns and trends. The data were utilized to create a grounded theory that was triangulated with qualitative and quantitative literature on military leadership and government organizations.

### Pilot Study

In the spring of 1998, the researcher did a pilot study that involved interviewing four retired military officers who worked in local San Diego government: two who retired from military service within the past two years and two who had retired and subsequently worked in the public sector for more than five years. The primary goals of the pilot study were to identify the leadership strategies and practices learned in the military and to investigate whether the retired officers perceived that these lessons were transferable to their positions as local government leaders. Secondly, the pilot was a test of methodology: to determine whether a qualitative approach would yield adequate

data, to determine what populations were appropriate sources of data and to uncover appropriate core interview questions.

The participant interviews revealed some beginning elements of a grounded theory on military leadership and its applicability to local government organizations. In particular, the data uncovered some areas of difference between the cultures of the military and government sectors that required adjustment on the part of retiring military officers entering the public sector. The participants identified differences between the *context* of the sectors and the *conditions* in which the two sectors operate -- what Straus and Corbin (1990) called *intervening conditions* (pp. 101-104). These contexts and conditions require different *strategies* on the part of those in leadership positions in the military and the public sector.

Specifically, key differences between military and public sector cultures were identified in the areas of: clarity of mission, amount of control and decision-making authority of positional leaders, the amount of camaraderie and independence among staff, the nature of staff and organizational loyalty, the nature of authority within the organization, and the dominant communication style. This study explores the importance of these issues while remaining open to discovering additional factors.

The process of the pilot study itself affected the methodology of this project. The pilot study identified potential areas of difference that form the basis for this research. The spring 1998 interviews suggested that recent retirees had a richer perspective on the applicability of military leadership concepts and behaviors to the public sector than did those who had been retired longer. Thus, the pilot has shaped the criteria for the selection of participants for this study. Finally, it also served to suggest questions that successfully

probed for the deep meanings in the experiences of military officers in leadership roles both in the service and in the public sector. (See Appendix B.)

Reviewers of the pilot study commented that there are key differences in the *experiences* of officers in the different service branches. At their recommendation, the scope of this study has been limited to the Navy and the Marine Corps as they are the most prominent service branches in the San Diego area. As the Marine Corps is a part of the Department of the Navy, this researcher expected to find some similarity between the experiences of Marine and Naval officers.

This project was organized in several phases to adequately address the research questions. The first phase involved locating retired military officers in middle management and executive positions in local San Diego government. The second phase involved interviews with these retired military officers to identify their perceptions of key military leadership strategies and practices and how well these apply to leadership situations in local government. The third phase involved comparing these factors with other research done with military officers (e.g., Ulmer, 1997; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1982) for possible triangulation.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design, Phase 1 – Locating Participants**

Locating retired military officers fitting the participant profile working in San Diego local government presented a challenge. The human resources (HR) directors of eleven cities, seventeen water districts and the Port Authority were contacted directly. They were sent a participant profile and asked if their entities had hired any mid-managers or executives within the last six years who were retired military. As these

entities generally had less than 250 employees and less than 20 managers and executives. it was relatively simple for the HR directors to determine if anyone fit the profile. The directors then either provided the necessary contact information or contacted the potential participants themselves to gauge their interest in the project before supplying their names and work phone numbers.

At some of the larger entities (the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego), the HR directors of departments where the skills and background required were a strong match for military background (e.g., engineering, information technology, facilities management, human resources, security, financial management, planning, budgeting and purchasing) were contacted directly to determine if their staff contained potential participants.

The researcher placed a notice in the newsletter of the local chapter of The Retired Officers Association (TROA) soliciting participants for the study. In addition, County Office of Veterans Services and the Veterans Center were also contacted to identify potential participants.

#### Research Design. Phase 2 – Participant Interviews

While much of early leadership research involved quantitative methodology (summarized in Clark and Clark, 1990), the very nature of leadership may best be addressed by a qualitative approach (Conger, 1998; Parry, 1998). In this study, the research questions concerning the leadership strategies and practices learned in the military were researched using the grounded theory method first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Data were gathered through interviews with individuals who fit the participant profile. Participants were asked some of the core questions (see Appendix B).



though the format was not limited to these questions. The researcher probed for deeper meaning and explored tangential themes that arose during the interview process.

Interviews generally lasted between ninety minutes and three hours. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed in total. The data were analyzed through a multi-level coding process involving: open coding to initially labeled themes within an interview transcript; axial coding to uncover and define themes and categories; and then theoretical or selective coding to uncover the relationships and connections among the categories and to construct a theory grounded in the data. Military leadership strategies and practices and their applicability to the public sector emerged from the relationships revealed during data gathering and analysis.

There are numerous definitions of leadership. However, there are common themes that appear in much of leadership literature. Leadership scholars often describe leadership in terms of *influence* rather than coercion (Bass, 1985; Rost, 1993; Yukl, 1989). Leadership is often seen as a transformational process (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1979; Rost, 1993) that occurs in an environment of change (Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Rost, 1993). Thus, while there is no universal definition of leadership, it can be argued that leadership is seen as a social *process* that involves influence within a social system (Yukl, 1989).

A qualitative approach better addresses social phenomena than quantitative methodology (Geertz, 1983), and may be particularly suited to examine a phenomenon such as leadership (Conger, 1998; Parry, 1998). Grounded theory was explicitly designed to examine basic social processes (Glaser, 1978) such as the instilling of a culture. Much of qualitative research is based on the in-depth interview, or what Kahn

and Cannell (1957) called “a conversation with a purpose” (p.149). In the interview process, the researcher opens herself to the texts of the participants which constitute a “thick description” (Geertz, 1983, p. 42) of their life experiences.

A solid qualitative study requires that a methodology guides the data collection and analysis, and that the variables identified in the study and their interactions be deeply embedded in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The grounded theory approach, pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), attempts to *integrate* the various categories and their properties uncovered in the research into a theory. This method seeks the *connectedness* of ideas and thus lends itself to a systematic study of phenomena (Charmatz, 1983). The grounded theory approach uses qualitative research as a basis for generating theory.

In grounded theory, the data gathering and analysis occur simultaneously as an interactive process, described by Glaser (1978) as *theoretical sampling*:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is *controlled* by emerging theory, whether substantive or formal . . . Through comparing the data as it (sic) is collected, the researcher *creates* more abstract levels of theoretical connections. In short, theory is gradually built up inductively from the *progressive stages* of analysis of the data. (pp. 38-39)

The researcher concurrently interprets data, sharpens his/her analysis and improves the data collection. Thus, the product and process of the research emerges from the data.

rather than from theoretical frameworks. In this project, the pilot study sharpened the data collection process, shaped some of the interview questions and generated some initial categories for data analysis.

In grounded theory methodology, there is generally no preset number of participants or length to the study. Interviewing continues until *saturation* of the data categories is reached. Theoretical saturation, according to Glaser, occurs “when in coding and analyzing, both new properties emerge, and the same properties continually emerge as one goes through the full extent of the data.” (1978, p. 53). Saturation is achieved when new subjects provide repetitive information and little new data are revealed.

Data are verified through further observations and by reading beyond the confines of a single discipline, e.g., military sociology. Literature provides what Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed a “theoretical sensitivity” which engenders more insight in a researcher and develops a broader capacity to interpret the data. The goal of the research is a further interpretation of *process* rather than a final truth, because sociological processes and culture are in motion (Charmatz, 1983).

The data are analyzed through a process called *coding*. Coding is creating categories for the interpretation of the data. It is a multi-step process. In *initial* or *open coding*, transcripts are read and reread to break down the data into discrete phenomena. In this research project, line-by-line coding was used. The phenomena are given initial labels then reviewed and placed into categories. Themes are revealed, though they may not make sense as part of a system. The coding may also reveal new areas of inquiry not originally in the researcher’s conceptual frame. *Axial coding* is a second level analysis

that groups data, builds categories and defines what they are and are not. This level often identifies the central theme of the data, the context in which it occurs and the intervening conditions that affect the strategies. *Theoretical or selective coding* conceptualizes how the categories relate to each other and to the core category or central theme. This is the process that generates theory (Charmatz, 1983; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) developed the specific methodology for grounded theory used in this project. There is a *core category*, the phenomenon to which all the categories relate, and *causal conditions* that are the events and incidents that lead to the *phenomenon*. The phenomenon occurs within a *context* (such as organizational culture), may be affected by *intervening conditions*. These conditions are managed by *action* or *interaction strategies* that lead to *consequences* which in turn may lead to *new causal conditions*.

### Research Design. Phase 3 – Triangulation

The transferability of military leadership strategies and practices to the public sector was investigated by participant interviews and by examining both quantitative and qualitative literature on the organizational culture and recent developments in the public sector. The emergent military leadership data were analyzed for a fit with the literature on government organizations. Thus a *mixed method* or *multimethod* approach was employed in this project.

A common rationale for a multimethod approach is the acknowledgement that every research method has characteristic strengths and weaknesses. Combining methods allows building on the strengths of each method while compensating for the flaws and

limitations of individual methods (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). The qualitative data gathered in this study have been analyzed against existing studies concerning leadership behaviors of military officers. A multimethod approach was used for *triangulation* and *complementarity* purposes (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

*Triangulation* consists of using different methods to address the issue of “rival causal factors” – whether another variable may be producing the result measured (Denzin, 1970, p. 28). Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrist (1966) and Morse (1991) stated that using multiple methods can give researchers more confidence in their findings. *Complementarity* is examining different facets of the same phenomenon. Bryman (1988) offered as an example that “quantitative research can establish regularities in social life while qualitative evidence can allow the processes which link the variables identified to be revealed” (p. 142). In this case, the comparison of this study’s results with quantitative findings may broaden the understanding of the categories.

Some qualitative researchers critique mixed method research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Yet, grounded theory has a strong connection with quantitative methods through the background and influence of its co-developer, Barney Glaser. In addition, grounded theory researchers – because they aim to *build theory* with *generality* via qualitative methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23& 24) -- may have an obligation to seek solid triangulation, which a multimethod approach can provide.

### **Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability in Qualitative Research**

Evaluation presents one of the ongoing unresolved issues in qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified four key perspectives among qualitative researchers. The *positivist* view is that the criteria for quantitative and qualitative research should be the same. Both should consider internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity with the aim of verifying hypotheses. *Postpositivists* maintain that there should be similar criteria for qualitative research while maintaining that hypotheses cannot be proved, but only shown to be probable. *Critical theorists* – who emphasize action or *praxis*, and transformation – focus on societal structures and historic context. *Constructivists* focus on deep understanding of texts and reconstruction of the multiple realities of the participants and discuss the authenticity and the trustworthiness of the research. This group includes the feminist scholars who encompass empiricist, standpoint and cultural/ethnic studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Some researchers reject the notion of evaluation as antithetical to the nature of qualitative research (Smith, 1987). Others propose that an entirely new set of criteria needs to be established for evaluation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Many of the discussions concerning qualitative evaluation center on differences in epistemology and ontology. Unfortunately, the polemic over qualitative evaluation has not brought consensus on approach and methods by either quantitative or qualitative researchers (Shaddish, Cook & Leviton, 1991). It is this researcher's opinion that the lack of generally recognized evaluation standards for qualitative research may have contributed to what some see as reluctant acceptance of qualitative research by some quantitative researchers and journals (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Bryman, 1988).

The approach taken in this project is to produce results that set a direction for change. As such, an underlying concern is adopting solid research methods that are acceptable to those interested in this research, notably retired military officers. It may be more difficult to present persuasive qualitative findings to those with backgrounds in the hard sciences, such as engineering and information technology. In order to both reach this audience and follow good qualitative practices, I have chosen to utilize the approach of Hammersley (1992, p. 64) who wrote that qualitative research should be evaluated on whether: 1) it generates theory; 2) it is "empirically grounded and scientifically credible" 3) its findings can be generalized and reproduced; and 4) it accounts for the researcher's effect and the research strategy. To these ends, this study uses grounded theory methodology, examines validity, reliability and generalizability and addresses researcher bias and effect.

It has been my intent to incorporate bridging words into this qualitative assessment to better reach my target audience, as recommended by Michael Patton (1997) who wrote:

To stay out of arguments about objectivity, I talk with intended users about balance, fairness, and being explicit about what perspectives, values and priorities have shaped the evaluation, both the design and findings. (p. 282)

To address the potential concerns of its audience, the design of the methodology used in this research includes some features seen in quantitative research. The hope is that such methodology will produce results that are more likely to be accepted and utilized .

## Validity

Johnson (1997) is one theorist who advocated incorporating quantitative concepts into qualitative research. Johnson used *descriptive validity* to address the factual accuracy of the researcher; *interpretive validity* to describe how accurately the participants' views, experiences, intentions and thoughts are reported and understood by the researcher; and *theoretical validity* to address the degree to which the research theory or theoretical explanation elucidate the data. While some qualitative theorists would certainly object to the use of Johnson's quantitative terms, I align myself with those who agree that the concepts of validity and reliability are important to address, using the procedures unique to qualitative research (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Johnson further suggested enhancing descriptive validity through the use of reflexivity (ongoing self-review and critique), negative case sampling (seeking data that do not fit the theory), and multiple observers to reduce researcher bias. This research has used field notes (Punch, 1994; Van Manen, 1990) both to document participant observations and as a tool for reflective practices. In addition, interviews involved probing for negative examples from participants to reduce the opportunities for "shaping" the content of the interviews.

Johnson (1997) also recommended use of verbatim quotations and participant feedback, or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called "member checking" to enhance interpretive validity. Verbatim quotations have been used liberally throughout this dissertation. In addition, participants were afforded the opportunity to review interview transcripts and request changes if they felt their beliefs and experiences were not



accurately reflected. Johnson cautioned that participants alter transcripts to put themselves in the best light. Transcript alterations were to be reviewed with committee members when there was any question regarding the possible motivation for such changes, though this did not occur.

Finally, Johnson recommended enhancing theoretical validity by any of the following methods: spending sufficient time with subjects, doing field observations, using theory triangulation (Denzin, 1970), negative case sampling, and peer and colleague discussions. In this study, the researcher was not afforded the opportunity to do field observations with the participants. Research practices employed, however, allowed interviews to extend without a prescribed time limit, incorporated theory triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative studies, and utilized dissertation committee members and subject experts for peer review.

#### Reliability in Qualitative Research

Reliability in research addresses the accuracy of the researcher's methods of measurement, particularly aimed at whether or not results are replicable. Replication can increase confidence in a study's findings (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Yet, this presents a problem in qualitative research, which is based on varied lived experience and relies on recollection and interpretation. Its reliability depends on the quality of "the human instrument" (Merriam, 1988, p. 171).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that qualitative researchers should focus on the internal validity of their methodology, which they linked to reliability. They further stated that researchers should use terms like "dependability" and "consistency" (p. 288) rather than "validity."

To enhance the dependability of their work, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) recommended that researchers examine and discuss their assumptions about the research topic, utilize triangulation, and create a written audit of their data collection, category development and decisions. Well-constructed field notes, they concluded, aid others interested in replicating the study.

These three methods – a discussion of researcher assumptions, triangulation and field notes – were utilized in this research project.

### Generalizability

Generalizability is related to theoretical validity. The generalizability of qualitative research is often considered suspect because it utilizes small samples and non-random sampling techniques. In addition, some qualitative researchers are opposed to generalizability. Clifford Geertz (1983) wrote that qualitative theory generated must “stay close to the ground” (p. 56) addressing the culture one has studied. “The essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them” (Geertz, 1983, p. 56).

A more expansive approach was taken by Wolcott (1995) who stated that: “Every man is in certain respects a) like all other men, b) like some other men and c) like no other man” (p. 173). He wrote that generalizability could be warranted in some circumstances. Morse, on the other hand, saw theoretical results applying “to all similar situations, questions, and problems, regardless of the comparability of the demographic composition of the groups” (1999, p. 5).

Merriam (1988) identified the following four historic approaches to generalizability in qualitative research. Cronbach (1975) described all research as being *working hypotheses* that are continually revised and changed by additional research involving different communities and circumstances. Erickson (1986) found that qualitative research produces some *concrete universals* – wherein the lessons of one situation instruct us about others. In the *naturalistic generalization* approach (Stake, 1978), the researcher or evaluator assists the stakeholders in seeing how other research may apply to their own circumstances. This is similar to *reader or user generalization* (Walker, 1980) where the writer provides enough information to allow readers to draw their own conclusions about the applicability of research findings.

There is little agreement among grounded theorists concerning generalizability. Charmatz (1983) argued that the theory generated fits the situation studied, while Glaser (1978) stated that the researcher should seek a theory that transcends the situation studied through the use and integration of disparate sources.

This research project does not seek to find a single truth but rather to offer multiple representations of the military leadership experience and transition to the public sector and then examine how those experiences are linked to formulate a theory.

## **Participants**

### **Selection of Participants**

Proper selection of participants aids in any study's credibility. The participant profile encompasses individuals who: retired from the military with 20 years or more years of service, commanded staff in both operational and non-operational activities, and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander or above in the Navy, or Major or above in

the Marines Corps. These selection criteria are intended to identify participants: who are relatively well-steeped in the military organizational culture in terms of experience, education and training; who were shaped by both the field and the bureaucratic aspects of the military; and who achieved some career success and, thus, may be positive about and value their military experience. Participants must have retired from the military within the past six years and have worked in local government in the San Diego area with the expectation that this group may still have a recent perspective on both military and local government experience. The initial intent was to obtain between ten and twenty subjects who met the selection criteria.

The population has been specifically defined, and the methods used to locate participants were designed to cast a wide net to identify participants within the San Diego area. The population interviewed represented the recently retired military community working in local government. There is no evidence that the population interviewed is unique to the San Diego area, thus it is possible research results may be generalizable.

#### The Relation between Researcher and Participant

There is a debate among qualitative theorists regarding the appropriateness of an outside researcher examining a community in which she is not a member. This is based on the constructivist theories that see reality as constructed individually rather than existing objectively (Heidegger, 1962). These constructions can be loosely held by individuals or groups and are based on social phenomena and experience (Guba and Lincoln, 1984). Some argue that the texts of participants are deeply embedded in their unique cultural context, and therefore only researchers who share the life experience of the participants can both: 1) access the deeper layers of this experience through a

common bond and 2) adequately interpret these data. Thus, the role of the researcher is to interact with participants during the investigation based on their uniquely shared or *standpoint epistemology*. Many women, non-white and immigrant researchers (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1991; Smith 1987) hold this position.

In part, this view springs from the reaction of non-majority communities to being “studied about” and is an effort to reassert their unique voice and perspective. As African-American feminist bell hooks wrote:

Often this speech about the “Other” annihilates, erases: “no need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. . .” (1990, pp. 151-152)

A critical element in standpoint epistemology is to restore the authentic voice of non-dominant communities who have traditionally been studied through an outside cultural lens resulting in an outsider’s interpretation and judgment on the participants and their communities (Denzin, 1997; Fine, 1994). The potential for “betraying” the participants in a research project is always there. According to Miles & Huberman: “It is probably true that, fundamentally, field research is an act of betrayal, no matter how well intentioned or well integrated the researcher. One makes public the private and leaves the locals to take the consequences” (1984, p. 233). Fundamentally, the researcher is always an outsider, trying to entice participants to reveal more and more of themselves.

The ethics of entering a research situation as an outsider can begin to be addressed by avoiding deceptive models wherein subjects are not informed of either the true nature

of the research or the position of the researcher and by adapting a collaborative approach to research (Punch, 1994). In a collaborative model, subjects are fully informed and are partners or “stakeholders” in uncovering the processes being examined (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

In the case of this study, the retired officers were fully informed of the nature of the research and protected through the ethical review process performed by the Human Subjects Committee of the University of San Diego. The Committee reviewed and approved the proposed research methods prior to the data gathering portion of the dissertation process.

One of the dissertation committee members is a retired Navy Captain with organizational development experience in the private sector who assisted with reviewing the content of the interviews and subsequent theory building for relevance with his own knowledge of the military. In addition, a retired senior officer, an active duty officer and a civilian Navy retiree with almost 30 years of service served as subject matter experts in reviewing the military aspects of the research.

This study involved a phenomenological approach and, as the researcher has no personal military background, she had to open herself to understanding the military leadership experience through the words and on the terms of the interviewees (Van Manen, 1990). The participants’ texts formed the basis for the analysis. The researcher’s non-military background necessitated requesting clarification and explanation of military terms and processes. This prompted participants to reflect more deeply and uncover meaning as they sought to translate military culture into civilian terms.

The essence of the research is a dialogue into the nature of leadership in the military. In this area, the researcher is acknowledged to be an outsider, an "other," and fulfilled the roles of inquiring, recording and compiling the data, then integrating it into a theory. In reviewing the applicability of the experiences and theories of military leadership to local government, the researcher straddled the border of "outsider" as a civilian, and what Fine (1994) calls "outsider within" as a researcher with fifteen years experience working in government organizations. In this area, the researcher could access organizational experiences of how the actions of retired military officers have and may appear to their civilian colleagues within the public sector.

#### Protection of Subjects

Participants in the study are volunteers identified from the pool of retired military officers working in local government. They signed a consent form that informed them of the process and of their rights. (See Appendix C.) Three key precautions were taken to protect the subjects of this study. First, the identity of the participants remains confidential. Pseudonyms have been used and the participant descriptions are general enough to conceal identities. Secondly, all participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interviews to ensure that their identities remained confidential and to ensure the transcript reflects their intended meaning. Finally, all tapes and transcripts have been kept in a home office and will be destroyed one year after the research was completed. All of these precautions were reviewed and approved by the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects of the University of San Diego.

### **Limitations**

The demographic profile of the participants is largely white males. While the racial and gender makeup of the armed forces has become more diverse, the population of this study entered military service over twenty years ago. The profile of the study's participants is analogous to their cohort group.

The requirement that participants be retired six years or less narrowed the number of potential participants who fit the study's profile. During the search to locate participants, many candidates for the study fit all of the criteria except for retirement time. This element of the participant profile, however, was important to finding participants with a fresh perspective on the transition from the military to the public sector.

The research was limited to positional leaders and did not study the experiences of those performing informal leadership roles. It was also limited to the perspective of those interviewed. The data do not account for the views of those working with retired military officers regarding how well they have made the transition to the public sector and their leadership effectiveness.

One of the limitations of qualitative research is that any attempt to interpret and explain the data is, by necessity, taking a reductivist approach (Geertz, 1983). Grounded theory in particular requires the researcher to focus on the core category. Grounded theory does not presume to create a comprehensive theory, only to explain a phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher must set aside information that does not relate to the core category. Such data may be utilized for another study (Glaser, 1978).



Finally, the researcher's lack of personal military experience, albeit while contributing a governmental organizational perspective, has no doubt placed some limitations on the breadth of interpretation and analysis. To this end, the researcher invites those with military background and public sector experience to utilize this study as a basis for further study and dialogue on this topic.

### **Summary**

This chapter described both the methodological process and the rationale for selecting the process. It reviewed main theoretical approaches to validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research and defended the approach taken in this study.

A qualitative approach was chosen because it is generally better suited to the investigation and analysis of a social process such as leadership influences. The intent of selecting a grounded theory methodology was to generate a valid theory that is credible and of use to other researchers as well as to retired officers. The data were triangulated with qualitative and quantitative literature on military leadership and government organizations for triangulation and complementarity purposes.

The methodology of this study was examined for validity, reliability and generalizability. Validity was addressed through the use of reflective field notes, interview techniques that probed participants for negative examples, verbatim quotations, participant review of transcripts and triangulation. Reliability was addressed by reviewing researcher assumptions, triangulation and field notes. The results of the research may be generalizable because there appears no evidence that the retired military population in San Diego has unique characteristics that would affect the results, and

because the research explored a multi-faceted view of military leadership and transition experiences.

The goal of this research has been to produce results that are credible to the potential audience, which includes retired officers. The credibility of grounded theory research, according to Glaser (1978) is based on: whether the data *fit* the categories; whether the evolving theory is *relevant* in that it explains, predicts and interprets what is happening; and that the theory is *modified* to account for additional research and changes in the social processes studied (pp. 4-5). The selection of methodology hopefully fulfills the criteria for reliability.

The next chapter will present the data gathered, the categories revealed by the data analysis and the resulting theory. In addition, the theory will be reviewed against the existing research and literature on military leadership and public sector conditions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Overview**

The first chapter provided an overview of the purpose of this research – to study the leadership strategies and practices learned by military career officers and their perspectives and experiences regarding the applicability of military leadership to their subsequent careers in the public sector. The second chapter reviewed relevant literature dealing with areas of the organizational cultures of the military and the public sector, life transitions, the nature of organizational change and current change trends in public sector organizations. The last chapter discussed the methodology used in this study: the pilot study that was a precursor to this research, the rationale for selecting a qualitative research approach and grounded theory methodology, and a description of the research steps and protocol.

This chapter will describe the actual research process, the data analysis process, the key themes identified in the participant data, the relationship of the data categories and a description of the emergent theory on the nature of military leadership.

#### **Detail of the Research Events**

The research design described in Chapter Three contained a theoretical framework for good qualitative research. What follows is a description of the research

experiences: the process details and the researcher's practices. This section also includes descriptions of the participants – sufficient to present their *standpoint*, while protecting their identity.

### Theoretical Sampling

As noted in Chapter 1, the participants interviewed for this study were retired military officers who served twenty or more years in either the Navy or Marine Corps, achieved a rank of Navy Lieutenant Commander or Marine Corps Major and above, had been retired less than six years ago, and were working in local government at a mid-management or executive level in the San Diego area. One of the main challenges of this research project was locating participants who fit such a narrow profile. The initial three participants were located with the assistance of other retired officers. The County Office of Veterans Affairs supplied other leads. Initially, the intent was to locate additional participants by giving presentations at the executive and mid-management meetings of local government agencies. However, one of the human resources directors of a local city volunteered that she could easily review the records of the mid-managers and executives hired within the last six years and identify any who met the criteria. She suggested using this method with other entities having smaller work forces to expedite the research process and minimize the organizational impact.

This process worked well with every public entity contacted except for the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego, which have 17,000 and 9,000 employees respectively. Neither maintains data on employed veterans by classification level. In these cases, the personnel of specific departments within these two entities were contacted directly. The departments were selected because their core tasks matched some

of the technical proficiencies found in the military such as engineering, information systems, environmental management, purchasing, contracting, finance and human resources. Over 90% of the public organizations contacted assisted the researcher.

In each case the human resources directors were sent an overview of the study. (See Appendix D.) In some cases, they preferred to contact any potential participants themselves to gauge interest, rather than supply the name and work phone numbers of staff without obtaining their permission. It is not known, therefore, if any potential participants refused to forward their names. Each person who spoke with the researcher agreed to be interviewed. In all, eleven participants were found who met the criteria.

#### Description of Participants

The material that follows is based on interviews with eleven white, male retired military officers over forty years of age. Each spent between 20 to 30 years in the service. Six are graduates of the Naval Academy. All but three of the participants served in combat or in forward areas. Two are retired marines and the rest are retired naval officers. The sample includes three aviators, two ship commanders, six engineers, and one submariner/aviator. All were retired less than six years at the time of their interviews and worked in mid-management or executive positions in local government.

Pseudonyms are used throughout this paper. The participant descriptions are as follows.

“Bob” was drafted after three years of college. He chose to join the Marine Corps as a pilot. He flew almost 400 F-4 combat missions on his first tour in Vietnam and helicopter missions on his second tour. Bob had a diverse military career lasting over 25 years. He served as a captain in aviation squadrons, directed aircraft maintenance and flight training operations, was executive officer of two air bases, worked in advanced

weapons research and development. was personnel officer for a large command and worked on contingency planning for joint forces operations. One of the plans he worked on was used in Operation Desert Shield. In his five years since retirement, he worked briefly as a corporate and charter pilot, then became director of a regional airport.

“Dan” was in the Navy nearly 30 years and served in both Vietnam and Desert Shield. He led construction battalions (known as CBs) and worked in public works, facilities maintenance, contract management and construction. He had the opportunity to be on the leading edge of some of the military’s major changes in recent years. He had one of the first male/female CB battalions and also took the women in his unit into combat regions in Desert Shield. He had worked for a local environmental agency for less than two years.

“Frank” is an engineer who served in the Navy nearly 25 years. He had both combat and field experience and commanded construction battalions. In his early twenties, after completing ROTC, he was given command of over 250 men in Vietnam. His largest command was over 2400 military and civilian personnel. He oversaw the construction of buildings, bridges and other major projects, leading some projects in forward areas including Central America and Africa. He had one assignment leading a Marine rifle battalion. At the time of the interview, he was working in local government as head of a design and engineering operation. He left government before the conclusion of this research for a private engineering firm. He had worked less than two years for local government.

“George” attended the Naval Academy and became a Marine Corps aviator in the post-Vietnam era serving nearly 25 years. He was a helicopter pilot and also served as a

flight school instructor, commanding officer of a squadron, aviation safety officer and ground safety officer. He earned Master's Degrees in Management and Environmental Management. He claims to have had a "quiet" career as an aviator. He was on combat alert for less than six months but never flew in combat. As he stated, "No one ever shot at me." He had worked in management for a local environmental agency less than two years.

"Les" was in the Navy for 30 years. The bulk of his first 23 years were spent in shipboard assignments. He worked briefly in Washington in defense communications, then finished his last six years in shore assignments. He closed his career as the commander of one of the Navy's largest bases. At one time his staff numbered 1100 personnel. He attended Annapolis and the Naval Postgraduate School, earning a Master's Degree in Communication Management. After retirement, he became a shipping and import operations manager in local government where he had been working less than a year at the time his interview was conducted.

"Paul" attended the Naval Academy, receiving a degree in Civil Engineering. During his career of over 20 years, he worked as an engineering officer onboard ship, served as an admiral's aide, directed facilities management operations, managed construction contracting, led a construction battalion and directed a base closure project. While administrating construction contracts, he supervised a mixed staff of both military and federal civil service. He had directed a project and contract management unit in the public sector for about two years.

"Ralph" joined the Navy in anticipation of being drafted, and was trained as an electronics technician. He served on a nuclear submarine as an enlisted man, where he

attained the rank of third class petty officer (E-4). His ship patrolled in the Atlantic Ocean, staying submerged for as long as 72 days. He was selected for Officer Candidate School and was commissioned an ensign. He is the only one of the participants to have been selected for officer training from enlisted ranks. He became an aviator and trained in helicopters. He taught at helicopter flight school, managed helicopter maintenance operations at sea during two assignments, directed anti-submarine warfare groups and served on the staffs of four admirals. He had worked in airport management for over three years.

“Sam” attended the Naval Academy and served in the Civil Engineer Corps. He led a CB battalion in Vietnam. He eventually led a total of three battalions, directed a nuclear defense research and development project, served as an admiral’s aide, ran public works operations, directed a CB school, managed construction projects and coordinated contract administration. He served nearly 30 years and received three engineering degrees while in the Navy. He was a public works director in local government for almost five years, but resigned and went to work for a private firm before the conclusion of this study.

“Steve” served 20 years in the Navy in construction, contracting and public works. He was a direct appointment, joining the Navy after attending college in the post-Vietnam era. He did not attend Officer Candidate School, but rather attended a six-week officer training program. He spent 18 of his 20 years directing federal civil service employees. He never served in a forward area or aboard ship. He joked, “I know very little about ships, other than they tie up to piers and we have to [provide facilities] to



them.” He is a public works director and had worked in local government for about two years.

“Ted” had his first command as a junior officer, leading a minesweeping unit in the Mekong River in Vietnam. He is unique among the participants in that he did not have a veteran chief petty officer to assist him in his first leadership assignment. Afterwards, he left the Navy briefly (for less than a year) and then returned because he “missed the esprit de corps.” In his thirty-year career, he commanded a guided missile destroyer and two amphibious squadrons. He had only two shore assignments. His education is in Engineering and Systems Analysis. He also trained a number of women junior officers though none served under him aboard ship. He had worked in the public sector for over three years at the time of his interview.

“Will” led a construction battalion in Vietnam and continued to serve in the Civil Engineer Corps in construction battalions, public works, facilities management and contract management. He served on an admiral’s staff and as executive officer of a base. His career spanned over 25 years. He had worked for just over five years in the public sector at the time of the interview.

#### Limitations of the Participant Pool.

All the participants are white males, which is reflective of the majority of the officers in this cohort. Only one submariner was located. As previously noted, all the participants interviewed were Navy Lieutenant Commanders and Marine Corps Majors or above. No flag officers that met the criteria were located. Just two of the participants were in the Marine Corps.

Table 1: Personal Profile of the Retired Military Officers By Years of Service, Attendance at the Military Academy, Area Warfare or Staff Specialty and Service in Combat or a Forward Area

<i>Fictitious Name</i>	<i>Years in Service</i>	<i>Naval Academy</i>	<i>Warfare or Staff Specialty</i>	<i>Combat or Forward Area</i>	<i>Years in Local Government</i>
Bob	24-27	No	Aviator	Vietnam	5-6
Dan	28-30	Yes	Civil Engineer	Vietnam & Desert Shield	1-2
Frank	24-27	Yes	Civil Engineer	Vietnam & other areas	1-2
George	24-27	Yes	Aviator	None (on alert)	1-2
Les	28-30	Yes	Ship & base command	Vietnam	>1
Paul	20-23	Yes	Civil Engineer	None	1-2
Ralph	28-30	No	Submariner Aviator	Yes. Extended Patrols	3-4
Sam	28-30	Yes	Civil Engineer	Vietnam	5-6
Steve	20-23	No	Civil Engineer	None	1-2
Ted	28-30	No	Ship & base command	Vietnam	3-4
Will	24-27	No	Civil Engineer	Vietnam	5-6

### **The Data Analysis Process**

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) the *theoretical sensitivity* of grounded theory research is enhanced by ongoing contact with related literature to shed meaning on the data being collected and by a rigorous analysis throughout the research process. During this research project, field notes were taken on an ongoing basis that identified commonalities across the interviews, new emergent patterns, questions concerning apparent errant data, possible connections to research and literature and contrary information across some participant interviews. At times, these field notes shaped subsequent interviews, identifying additional concepts to pursue. One such concept concerned stereotypes that retired military experienced in the public sector. This subtheme was not an original field of inquiry but was raised in one of the interviews and proved to be a rich area for investigation with subsequent participants. The field notes also assisted with coding and analysis.

Each interview was taped and transcribed verbatim. Over 400 pages of transcripts were analyzed line-by-line for themes and coded initially for substance and concept. A second level of coding – *axial coding* – was used to group data. Then *theoretical coding* was performed to identify relationships. In each case, the words of the participants were sources of coding labels. Concepts and key quotes were grouped by theme clusters, and complex ideas were placed within multiple clusters.

Preliminary maps of the concepts and theme clusters were created and color-coded on large chart paper. Some of the precepts of “mindmapping” (Rose, 1985) were utilized to draw connections, relationships and patterns between the data concepts. Ultimately, a wall of chart paper began to reveal the enfolding theory.

### **Analysis of the Data: The Organization of Key Themes**

There are two separate grounded theory analyses contained in Chapters Four and Five. The first addresses the phenomenon of *military leadership*; the second is the phenomenon of *the applicability of military leadership principles to the public sector*. Both these analyses are based on the experiences of the retired military officers interviewed for this project and triangulated against other qualitative and quantitative data.

Five key theme areas emerged on the core concept of military leadership: 1) leadership development, 2) leading people, 3) leading processes, 4) decision-making and 5) leading change. The key theme areas that emerged on the core concept of applying military leadership principles to the public sector are described in the following chapter. Each of these themes related to conditions within the organizational context and involved specific strategies and structures.

### **Description of the Key Themes of Military Leadership**

The core category of military leadership is a complex phenomenon. To describe military leadership as a singular entity is to simplify its nature at the expense of meaning. The goal of qualitative research is to attempt a "thick description" of the chosen category (Geertz, 1983). To access its core requires acknowledging the breadth of experience that is military leadership. The research method used in this work is grounded theory, which encompasses tracing relationships among data categories discovered during the research process to build a theory. The basic relationships that build the structure of a grounded theory, as identified by Straus and Corbin (1990) are: the central phenomenon studied,

the causal conditions, the context, any intervening condition, corresponding structures and strategies, and the consequences. From here new causal conditions are likely to emerge, affecting the phenomenon or creating new phenomenon. These are not linear relationships but interwoven systems. The consequences in this case are the leadership lessons learned by officers. This experience has not been the same for all the participants, so, while the lessons described here may not be shared by all, they are intended to represent a broad picture of the phenomenon of military leadership.

#### Causal Condition: The Possibility of Combat

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), causal conditions are “the events or incidents that lead to the occurrence or development of a phenomenon” (p. 100). In the military, the causal condition is the possibility of combat. The traditions have evolved and the structures and practices of the military have been created to prepare for this prospect. According to Paul, “It’s said that the military doesn’t do anything except go to war and train for war. You can argue that just about everything we do in the middle – from peace time to war – is training.”

Each participant agreed that, generally speaking, military leadership practices vary, depending on whether the unit is involved in an operational or administrative assignment. An operational assignment might involve combat, a training exercise, a submarine patrol, a construction project in an unsecured area and a shipboard or foreign deployment. An administrative assignment might involve facilities management, civilian-military construction, research and development, or ship repair and refitting. Regardless of the immediate setting, an officer must always have the knowledge and

confidence that his staff will obey orders despite the danger level. Les explained that in an operations environment:

I don't want them to hesitate . . . when [I'm] saying "I want you to take this ship in here where they're shooting at you and stay there for about twenty minutes while firing some guns. Then I want you to bring it back out without hurting anyone. I know how to do that. And I want you guys to trust me, to do the things I say, when I say, and we'll all get out of this together."

The reality, potential and training for combat are the shaping events of military leadership. This need for faith in the obedience of one's troops and in their commitment to carrying out the mission is at the foundation of military tradition, philosophy, structures and practices.

### **Theme One: Military Leadership Development**

As mentioned in the review of the literature, there are three key strategies used to develop officers in the military – schooling/training, mentoring and experiences. A key condition that affects leadership development is the ever-present potential for combat. The realities of combat mean that the military must prepare its junior officers to take the place of a fallen commander quickly and with little notice. The military also establishes structures and protocols so relatively inexperienced officers can take command when necessary. Each of its three development strategies plays a role in this preparation.

#### **Education and Training**

Initial military officer education programs, such as the Naval Academy or Officer Candidate School, attempt to instill the strong values and beliefs of the military culture

and the norms of behavior expected of officers (Peck, 1994). The Navy, some feel, places less emphasis on formal leadership training because it has traditionally held that leadership is learned on the job. For example, its Naval Leadership program at the Naval Academy has been led by a Lieutenant Commander with a Bachelor's Degree. In contrast, a Colonel with a Doctorate leads the program at West Point. Additionally, unlike the Army and Air Force, the Navy has no research center devoted to leadership (Lt. Cdr. W. Hall, Annapolis, personal communication March 20, 1998). The primary leadership preparation for Navy and Marine Corps officers is through their mentors and through experience, the so-called "school of the ship."

#### Military Leadership Mentoring

The Navy and Marine Corps identify mentoring as a key leadership development tool. This was confirmed both in the literature (Montor, et al, 1987) and by each of the participants. They were unanimous in their view of mentorship as key to their leadership development.

One of the standard questions asked during this research was for participants to describe one of their role models and, if possible an incident that exemplified their leadership. Their stories are described below and summarized in Table 2.

Ralph cited the first chief petty officer he served under as an enlisted man on a nuclear submarine. This CPO had considerable technical knowledge, set high standards and was well respected by his men. "My respect for him was so high the last thing I would want to do would be to disappoint him." Ralph explained that this CPO expected that all members of the team would work avidly to earn their dolphin insignia quickly, designating him or her as qualified submariners. He described how the CPO's

expectations became the submarine team's expectations. "The crew would stop a movie if someone was in there who didn't have qualifications, throw him out and tell him to study. . . . You wouldn't be reading in the library for entertainment either." The CPO created an infectious attitude that motivated achievement.

Dan told of his first assignment in charge of a squad created from men "offered up" from different companies. His squad was rife with discipline problems and drug use. He turned to his chief petty officer (CPO): "He was a Korean War veteran. He had a bulldog face, a pot gut. [He] smoked too much, drank too much and cussed too much." During their nine-month deployment, Dan had what he identified as his best lesson in leadership:

I had 120 men and the bulk of them were misfits, cast-offs and rejects from all of the other parts of the battalion . . . the last of the Vietnam draftees . . . and I was as green as grass. I learned more in nine months working with him than in four years of ROTC or with any other officer I ever worked with . . . We started out as the dregs. And for a lot of these guys, the reason they were so crappy is [that] no one had ever taken the time to look after them, or talk to them, or take care of them. . . . We gave these guys intensive TLC and at the end of the deployment they were the best . . . . It was nothing short of phenomenal.

Dan stated that the lessons he learned from his CPO were: to communicate expectations and standards, to reward performance, but not mediocrity; to take care of your people and to demonstrate that care by learning about them as individuals and to be innovative and individual in how you reward them. Frank also cited his first CPO as his leadership model: "If you listen to these 25 and 30-year veterans, you'll get things done."



Both ship commanders identified senior officers who kept their composure under pressure as their models. Les told of a commanding officer who handled danger while remaining calm. He described two incidents: one in which a ship was in great danger of running aground and another while under fire off Vietnam. "There was almost panic in the voice of everybody on that bridge except for the commanding officer . . . the man never lost control . . . He had the [total responsibility] if something went wrong, and yet he was the calmest person in the operation. That left an impression."

Ted cited a captain who could "maintain his patience and his cool" in high-tension, rapidly-changing situations. His captain not only had self confidence, but maintained trust in his junior officers: "He wasn't jumping in and grabbing control when I made an order that might not have been the optimum one. He was coaching rather than taking charge and I learned a lot through him." His second example was a captain who had an alcohol problem, but had a tremendous rapport with his crew. He was a former enlisted Marine "who was able to go down and mingle with them, talk with them, make them feel [that], even though he was . . . [senior to them] in terms of rank he was not superior as a human being. He was just another man." Ted said that not all senior and flag officers could establish such rapport with staff.

Many of the civil engineers cited supervising officers as their models. Sam cited an admiral he worked for who would constantly test his junior officers and push them to think critically. He would ask their opinions and test them with questions, thus encouraging their analytical skills. The admiral gave him challenging assignments and allowed him to observe high-level meetings and at times asked him to speak. It appeared to Sam that the admiral felt "I could contribute and add some value," which bolstered his

self-confidence. He also discussed a captain who “exuded personal confidence” and paid attention to the small details, such as burned out light bulbs. Sam observed that when the base executive officer (XO) paid attention to details, so did his staff.

Paul explained that his first commanding officer provided “a vision for the command.” He stayed involved in the work but “did not micromanage or ask those kinds of detailed questions that were my responsibility.” In one particular instance he put the success of a mission before his career and lobbied up the chain of command against a policy that was damaging to operations. Because of his commitment and ethics, Paul stated, “I’d absolutely have followed him anywhere.”

Steve cited two models. One was a captain who stayed involved with his staff. He counseled all levels of staff, created a recognition program and required his officers to promote training and maintain individual development plans for each staff member. He also took his officers off site for one day a month to build teamwork: “I didn’t believe in it, to be honest with you, . . . but the team functioned together, worked together, got to know one another in a very informal forum. . . . They became much more ready to work with each other.” Steve has since replicated the individual development plan strategy in his own organization and is working on organizing team-building sessions. His second example was a female captain who was perceived as “grinding everyone into hamburger because of her work ethic.” She urged her senior officers to take on more than they thought they could. She pushed them toward improving their personal organization and productivity. The lesson she left with Steve is “don’t be afraid to take on a lot.”

Some had difficulty in naming a specific role model. Bob could not recall a particular mentor, but stated he was drawn to two types of models – aviators who

demonstrated superior technical ability and officers who “looked sharp handling people.” Will could also offer no specific examples, but admired leaders who could speak well in public. The stories about leadership mentors are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Personal Leadership Mentor Stories: Leadership Mentor(s) and Command Context, Example of Leadership, Lesson in Leadership Identified

<i>Name</i>	<i>Mentors</i>	<i>Leadership Example</i>	<i>Lesson in Leadership</i>
Bob	Aviator (combat) Officer (ashore)	Superb aviator Could handle people.	Different leadership needed for different tasks.
Dan	1 <sup>st</sup> CPO* (CB* unit in Vietnam)	Took unit of 120 “misfits” and turned them into the best unit in 9 months.	How to work with people. Make them feel important. Innovative, individual rewards.
Frank	1 <sup>st</sup> CPO (Vietnam)	How to handle people.	Vague
George	General	Used authority wisely. Communicated well. Displayed values.	Care about people. Lead by values.
Les	2 Captains (shipboard)	Handling ship in danger and in combat.	Command presence. Staying calm, in control.
Paul	Captain (Civil Engineer)	Lobbying for program up chain of command. Made right decisions.	Command presence. Articulate vision.
Ralph	1 <sup>st</sup> CPO (submarine)	Set high expectations for staff to pass qualifying test.	Technical knowledge. Set high expectations. Build cohesion.
Sam	Captain (CB unit)	Would point out burned out light bulbs.	Notice the large and small things and so will your staff.
	Admiral	Tested verbally; gave responsibility.	Develop self-confidence.
Steve	Female Captain (Civil Engineer)	“Ground staff into hamburger.”	Personal organization. Push yourself.
	Captain (Civil Engineer)	Held teambuilding days. Required training plans.	Build camaraderie. Take care of staff.

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Ted	Captain (shipboard) Captain, (USMC enlisted)	Tense situations. Let junior officers learn. Built rapport, mingled crew.	Command presence. Don't micro-manage. Don't act superior. Manage by walking around.
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For many of those interviewed, their first chief petty officer or supervising officer was a key mentor. The first CPO can help the new junior officer stay afloat in his or her first command. Some of the warmest leadership mentor stories related were about the veteran CPO taking the young junior officer under his wing, while allowing the new officer to still look good in front of the enlisted staff. As officers gain more experience, they are better able to coach petty officers, creating the potential for two-way mentorship development.

Senior officers had the most influence in the areas of command presence and decision-making. These senior officers provided both examples of leadership and developmental experiences for their subordinate officers.

Assignment rotation in the Navy is generally every two to three years. This provides officers with the opportunity to serve under a number of senior officers and observe a variety of leadership practices. Steve mentioned that he had worked many assignments with two captains overseeing the project. As a result, he had worked with 32 different captains, giving him a wide exposure to leadership practices. Most stated, like Ted, that they had worked under some "truly great men" and valued the tremendous models of leadership they were exposed to. About a quarter of the participants mentioned that they had also witnessed some negative models. Ralph offered that poor

leadership also provides teachable moments: "You learn [not only] what works [but] what doesn't."

### Developmental Experiences

As Paul discussed, development of junior officers is a responsibility of both the chief petty officer and the senior officer. One of the key leadership development strategies for young officers consists of providing a structure for increasing levels of responsibility. The initial assignment, however, is often a huge responsibility. For example, right out of college, with no prior supervisory experience, Frank and Dan each were in command of construction battalions of over 220 men in forward areas. Ted was overseeing treacherous mine sweeping operations in the Mekong River with no CPO or other officer to assist him. As Frank saw it, these experiences discouraged those who were not comfortable taking on the level of responsibility required by a military organization:

The experience of coming right out of college, being thrown right into that leadership role and having to develop that trust and confidence of the subordinates probably [had] the biggest impact on me. Most of us [held jobs] going through high school and college but never with that amount of responsibility . . . but the military throws you in. A lot of people end up getting out after four years because they don't like it, or they want to try something else. But I kind of survived and was really excited about my responsibility.

The military experience may select those who crave and value responsibility. Almost every participant described a similar process in which senior officers provided more structured decision-making experiences, but quickly began to provide increasingly more

general direction, leaving more decision-making responsibilities with the junior officer. Steve found that the more tasks he took on, the more responsibility and independence senior officers gave him. He credited this with developing his work ethic and his leadership style. Sam and Paul felt such experiences developed self-confidence. Conversely, every participant mentioned his dislike of micro-management, and how particularly painful it was to go from a captain who recognized and rewarded one's capabilities with increasing authority and responsibility to one who micro-managed.

A second development tactic that senior officers use is bringing their staff into higher level decision-making processes, even if only at the observer level. Many participants related stories of commanding officers who brought issues to meetings for the junior officers to discuss. Often the CO already had a decision in mind, but wanted to provide junior officers with a forum for developing critical thinking. Participants described superiors who would question them about the rationale for their decisions, to further hone their analytical skills and ability to command.

Military leadership development focuses on preparing officers to take command quickly and with little notice in a combat situation. These officers may be young and inexperienced. The participant data revealed three structural conditions designed to foster military leadership development: education and training, mentoring and developmental experiences. Coupled with these conditions are the actions and strategies summarized in Table 3. The intended result of military leadership development process is to instill the cultural values, beliefs and norms, develop the skills needed to lead staff and develop decision-making capabilities. The possibility of combat necessitates a quick initiation to leadership responsibilities. While some principles are taught in military

education settings. the main portion of leadership development takes place through mentoring by senior officers and petty officers and by the accelerated developmental experiences provided by senior officers. A summary of military leadership development is in Table 3.

Table 3: Description of Subtheme of Military Leadership Development

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
Must prepare to take over command without notice	Education and Training	Common initiation. ongoing career development.	Instill values, beliefs, behavior norms, leadership principles.
Youthfulness of many junior officers (as young as 22)	Mentoring	CPO's and sr. officers expected to develop junior officers.	Guide, role models, how to lead crew, decision-making.
	Developmental Experiences	Immediate responsibility. Responsibility as a reward. Included in decision-making.	Develop critical thinking, confidence & decision-making.

The leadership development approach perhaps most unique to the military is the practice of assigning immediate responsibility to very junior officers. The participants were unanimous in attesting to the significance of this experience in their development, and several noted that early leadership responsibilities tended to "weed out" those officer candidates who were not comfortable with authority. Also noteworthy is that each participant discussed his dislike of micro-management. It appears that the military leadership development experience culls individuals who seek and thrive on responsibility

## **Theme Two: Leading People**

The possibility of and preparation for combat has shaped the structures, practices and principles of leading people in the military. Despite their varied experiences, the participants interviewed exhibited a strong, shared outlook on leading individuals, suggesting there is a dominant approach within the military. The subthemes identified in the interviews include: the contingency style of leadership, the nature of staff, the perception of the leader, motivating staff and building teamwork and camaraderie.

### The Strategy of Military Contingency Leadership Styles

The participants identified two objective circumstances that determine what type of leadership style is appropriate. They defined these circumstances as 1) an operational environment, e.g., combat, a training exercise, a submarine patrol, a construction project in a forward area, shipboard operations, foreign deployment; or 2) an administrative environment, e.g., a shore-based assignment, a civilian-military construction project, a research and development program, a ship repair and refitting assignment. Operational and administrative environments place different demands on the crew. As Ralph viewed it, an operational assignment requires “a lot of physical and mental performance [and] a lot of dedication to some immediate stressful challenges.” An administrative situation, however, more closely mirrors a civilian setting.

Most of the interviewees described a contingency view of leadership in the military, where the circumstances determined what style was appropriate. Paul, who had no direct combat experience, saw just a small distinction between combat and managerial environments: that combat simply requires an officer to make quick judgments with ease and to keep “focused on the big mission.” Frank, on the other hand, drew the most



distinct lines between the two types of leadership. He also had the most colorful description of the operational leadership style, what he termed the “kick ass, take names” style (hereafter called *KATN leadership*). This involved giving orders and using threats if necessary to gain total compliance. The KATN leader was “the guy everyone hated,” yet in combat or field situations, his men would have “the deep [fox] holes and the proper camouflage . . . no questions asked.”

Frank described a dualistic view of leadership – a leader could threaten or coach staff. Those officers who could change styles were successful in any environment. Those who were limited in their leadership tactics were not effective in all settings. In his view, the KATN leaders were a disaster in construction settings. Their men had low morale, worked poorly and “did nothing but grumble and get into trouble.” Conversely, those officers using solely a coaching style had high-performing teams in construction settings but in an operational environment, according to Frank, their staff “would have shallow fox holes and skimpy camouflage and they’d be asleep on watch because the coach wasn’t threatening.” The ideal officer could adapt styles to fit the setting. Frank had spent a substantial amount of his career commanding blue-collar CB units, often overseas. He mentioned experiences in Vietnam, Central America and Africa where his units had to post guards around the clock while completing strategically important projects. These experiences may have contributed to his sharp delineation between the leadership needed in the two settings.

Ralph, perhaps due to his submarine and helicopter experience, emphasized technical expertise and team coordination:

At sea, high technical operations often in the middle of the night require a dedicated, concerted commitment to get the job done and to deal with people very directly. You expect a lot of independence from them and coordination and you expect it immediately. There are times when there's trouble on the ship, rain, low fuel . . . . Guys have to know what to do immediately and do it. That's what all the training is about.

His view of the role of leadership was to have and be able to inspire the kind of technical expertise and coordinated performance that preserves lives. He described submarine drills called "scrams" where the crew would handle screaming sirens and alarming readings, not knowing if they were involved in a drill or a real equipment failure that could result in an irreversible flooding of the ship. Later, as an aviator, he led helicopter squadrons in night anti-submarine maneuvers in the middle of the ocean. Such experiences led him to view operational leadership as producing high technical performance, sharp physical and mental dedication and a "dedicated, concerted commitment." Will, in contrast relied primarily on administrative skills in the Civilian Engineer Corps.

Les stated that in a shipboard environment, a leader expected orders to be obeyed without hesitation. Shore command provided the experience of working "more like a business type environment." He saw ship command as leadership and shore command as management. The ability to command staff and get results was different on shore as well:

When I was at sea, and I would say "Right full rudder," I could watch the bow of that ship turn to the right and know where I was going. When I [was] ashore and ordering "Right full rudder" and I'd wait and wait for something to happen with

this organization. [I] reach a point where . . . I don't care which direction it goes.  
just turn somewhere! Show me the bow is moving!

Nearly every participant confirmed that the style of leadership they used in the military was determined by the circumstances. This view is echoed in military literature: "The leadership style required in combat or the field is different because there is an overriding need to both protect the troops and to accomplish the mission" (Henderson, 1985, p. 164).

Interestingly, both Marines mentioned the stereotype of the authoritarian military leaders – whom George referred to as "the screamers." They both agreed that officers solely using that style were ineffective. Bob described several assignments where he had been brought into a unit to do "damage control" in the wake of an authoritarian CO. As Les described, being flexible and in control of one's leadership style was a command asset, especially if the troops knew one was capable of using a tough, authoritarian style:

I'm a sarcastic son-of-a-bitch sometimes. I can be intimidating when I want to be, but I can control that and, quite frankly, sometimes it comes in handy and I use it that way. But my personal style of leadership is walking around and asking questions . . . [and using] some common sense.

George referred to this tactic as consciously "yelling for impact, but never out of anger."

Ralph was the only participant to describe an incident involving a physical confrontation. He had "chewed [an enlisted man] up one side and down the other" in his quarters for making derogatory comments about other sailors' wives. The man had reacted by refusing to guard him during a social basketball game. Ralph responded by physically hitting the man open handed in the chest and swearing at him in front of the

whole crew. He felt that only “a very direct response [would] get him back on track again.” He felt that such a strong impact was required to get the sailor out of the rut he had fallen into.

Those who felt a KATN style was necessary agreed: 1) it can be used in the military in a way it could not be used in the public or private sector and 2) the knowledge that it can be used helps ensure orders are obeyed. It provides a balance to more common coaching styles. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: Description of Subtheme of Leading Staff, Contingency Leadership

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
Operational environment	KATN style	Demanding, possible threats. Set & expect high standards. Demand orders be followed.	High mental & physical performance. handle stress. Obey orders without questions. Accomplish strategic mission. protect troops.
	Technical expertise	Set and demand high standards. Model technical proficiency.	Increase technical expertise. Accomplish mission.
Administrative environment	Coaching style	Plan, coordinate, involve, and inform.	Accomplish programmatic mission.

The nature of leading staff in the military is not a strict choice between styles.

Operational and administrative environments place different demands on the staff in terms of performance expectations.

It is tempting to draw a parallel between the operational and administrative environments and the leadership and management distinction outlined by many leadership scholars (Rost, 1993; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Zaleznik, 1977). This is not

valid, as it is certainly possible to practice and observe leadership in administrative settings involving significant change and collaborative efforts.

### Nature of Their Military Staff

Frank, Paul, Dan and Ted all commented on how their military careers gave them the experience of managing widely diverse groups from every walk of life. All of the participants described the youth and inexperience of many of those under their command as a condition that they had to address. Steve remarked that most of the enlisted he commanded were under 25, had little life experience away home, often had high school educations and “needed to be watched 24 hours a day.” George described his experience as the commanding officer of a remote desert base as a time he “lived cringing over the young Marine, 18 years old, who wanted to go out and do something stupid . . . I felt totally responsible for these individuals.” The age, naiveté and immaturity of many subordinates places an “awesome responsibility” on military officers who control aspects of both the personal and professional lives of their crews

Complicating the situation is frequent personnel rotation. In general, military members change assignments every two to three years. Many of the military leadership strategies and structures address the challenge of creating cohesive, technically-capable units out of many youthful, inexperienced, diverse and continually rotating personnel. Some of these strategies are: selecting out, controlled environment, straightforward communications, training and development, values and standard operating procedures.

### Selecting Out.

The military does some initial “weeding out” of staff in boot camp. Bob, a retired Marine, cited the importance of the initiating rituals of boot camp in identifying those suited to military life:

That’s the reason they start skimming your hair off and requiring you to have shined boots, for requiring you to be able to bounce a quarter off the covers on your rack [bunk]. It’s kind of a rude awakening to a lot of people, and a lot of people rebel and never adjust to it. But that’s what they [the military] want to do. They want to identify that person who’s not going to be adaptable so they can get them out and focus on the people who can adapt and be effective.

Frank agreed that “those who don’t fit the system get sent home” during boot camp. A second way people are selected out is through the re-enlistment process. Officers, according to George, must “get tough, make the calls early and preclude re-enlistment” by writing honest performance appraisals and administering discipline. He described the leadership role in such circumstances as “balancing the *real strong guy* with the compassionate side. The true leaders can do both.” The goal, in Dan’s words, is to retain those people with “the right stuff.”

### Controlled Environment.

There are certain structures and practices that assist in building a cohesive unit. Among those cited by the participants are combat, foreign deployment, the shipboard experience and training/field maneuvers. Such assignments give those in command control over the essential elements of an individual’s life. As Dan stated, “you eat, sleep, do everything with this same group.” In such circumstances, the troops are separated

from their families, giving the leader a more powerful role. This is especially true on ship. Les described the interdependency of the shipboard relationship:

I would be a lot more involved with my subordinates on a shipboard environment where [we're] going to spend six to eight months at a time away from families and where it's going to be just us. They're going to rely on me. I'm going to rely on them.

On deployment, the leader has much more control over staff – what movies they watch, when they work, when they sleep, when they cut their hair. Ralph described a submarine crew as the ultimate “captive audience.”

This controlled environment gives the officer a unique opportunity to build camaraderie, unit pride and a common bond. Dan attributed the control of the operational environment as critical to success in his first command. He and his CPO dramatically reversed the poor performance and personal behavior of a unit in nine months in a situation where he and his CB unit were together 24 hours a day. Thus, the control military officers have over their units allows them to better build teamwork and to have more effect in managing the work performance and personal behavior in their crews.

#### Straightforward Communication.

The youth and inexperience of many of the enlisted staff may be a contributing factor to the use of straightforward, direct communication in the military. Orders are followed – literally. Paul summarized the importance of clear, direct communication:

You have to make sure people hear what you're saying and you have to be careful in your communication . . . you make a comment about how you would like to see things done and that's exactly how they're going to do it.

Vague or misleading directions can bring the wrong results. Dan related an episode that shaped his communication style. He had taken over a command as a new junior officer and had 90 performance evaluations to do. He asked the CPO to write up one evaluation for him to review. He was pleased with the format and type of information the CPO included in the evaluation. He complimented the Chief and told him "make them all like this." For three weeks the CPO typed the evaluations on a manual typewriter with carbon paper. The CPO then turned in 90 evaluations with exactly the same wording. The military environment forced Dan to adapt his communication style to what was expected within the organizational culture.

Another reason for straightforward communication is the importance of being honest with staff in order to develop the trust needed. There is a stereotype of command and control communications in the military, but Les distinguished between communications in an operational setting versus everyday communications. As a commander, he wanted to communicate decisions and his rationale to staff whenever possible, so they were better informed, and would also develop trust in his decision-making. Finally, it is also an expectation that officers be careful and judicious in their comments – often communicating on a "need-to-know" basis. As Paul stated: "In the military you have to be careful, because a side comment . . . could easily kill someone."

#### Training and Development.

Every participant mentioned their personal belief and commitment to the importance of training and staff development. As Paul stated, training is the military's "number one budget and operational priority." In the military, the rigorous training prepares the younger members of the force to quickly take on specific technical



responsibilities and allows for some members with mediocre educational backgrounds to improve and take on responsible roles. The consistency of the training also allows for staff to be rotated frequently while retaining quality and consistent performance. Each position has a required set of coursework. Some have specific qualifications and credentials that must be earned. Steve worked in commands where each individual had a development plan in addition to the training requirements of their current position.

The military training program appears to have shaped the leadership views of the officers interviewed. Notably, nearly half of the participants mentioned their own experience with continuous professional development as a key reason they remained in the military.

#### Leading by Values.

Participants were asked what caused individuals to go against human nature and place themselves in harm's way to make what Paul termed "the ultimate sacrifice." There were two principle areas of response. The first had to do with the core values of the military – duty, honor, self-sacrifice and country which are instilled during the initiation process and reinforced throughout one's career (Janowitz, 1960; Nye, 1986; Dunivan, 1994). Sam believed that an understanding and commitment to these values comes from the military experience:

It's the development of an understanding of history, making people feel patriotism and to have a love for what the country stands for. . . . I don't think that most people join the military because [these values] naturally exist within them already.

While these values are introduced during basic training, it is the military officer who models and reinforces them during throughout one's career. The leader himself is the second factor cited as contributing to developing a willingness to risk one's life.

### Perception of the Leader

Crucial to the notion of military leadership is the confidence and trust that the unit must have in its leader. Obedience comes with rank. As Will described it, military rank "carries the weight ... the respect." Officers "have got it to start with. It's sort of theirs to lose." The potential for combat requires that the individual members must be willing to put their lives in the hands of the person in command. Military officers can readily rely on the compliance of their subordinates. They have the opportunity to build upon the respect and develop deeper loyalties through their actions. The participants described command presence, trust in decision-making ability and loyalty as the factors critical to the unit's perception of the leader.

### Command Presence and Ability.

Les defined command presence as knowing "the person is a leader just by the way the person carries himself, [by] the way they act." Ted saw it as "an aura . . . where others feel comfortable you're in charge, wherever you are." An aspect of command presence is the physical bearing of the officer – the uniform, personal neatness and grooming, etc. But command presence is more often found in the individual's actual manner. The phrases repeatedly used by participants were "in control" and "calm under pressure." Ted told a story of how his mentor could handle any situation – and remain in his captain's chair on the bridge:

It amazes me the self-control he had and the confidence in his own abilities to be able to do [anything while] just sitting there and I can't think of when he ever allowed the ship to be unduly risked. He was just able to do it in a manner that [showed he] was very much in control and very calm, very capable.

Ted described another captain he met during a ship inspection: "When he got on the ship's intercom to talk, the sailors stopped; they listened . . . . When he spoke, God spoke." Les and Paul also cited examples of command presence when describing their personal mentors.

The technical knowledge and physical ability of the leader is one aspect of developing confidence in a leader and ties into the notion of leading by example. On a nuclear submarine, according to Ralph, the officers needed to display sufficient in-depth technical knowledge to assure personnel of their own safety. This positioned them to demand a similar commitment to technical proficiency from their staff. The personal flying abilities of the leader determined the respect given by subordinates in an aviation unit, according to Bob. In contrast, Will said that in a CB unit, "I've never thought that the technical knowledge was the important factor in our business. It was really the administration or the management of organizations that was important."

Military leaders need to model that they can and are willing to do what their unit does in both technical and physical tasks. When taking on a new ship command, Ted would make it a point to go into the engine room and turn wrenches with the crew. Ralph described the extremely competitive and physical athletic games he organized with his units. George mentioned that Marine officers were expected to go on ten-mile runs with their troops carrying fully-loaded packs – and to finish at the front:

Participation from me was a big thing that increased their loyalty. . . . We would run once a week as a unit and it was important that not only myself as the CO, but every other Department Head was out there. . . . If you`re making the run and leading the run . . . it builds the esprit de corps . . . . They enjoy seeing you out there. It just builds the excitement and everyone appreciates it.

He would also join his crew in the menial tasks involved in preparing for inspection. In all, an "in control" deportment, technical ability, physical ability and personal involvement of the officer all contributed to the officer`s "public" image with the crew.

These lessons appear to have remained with nearly all the participants interviewed. All but one participant had an extremely neat office. Ten of the eleven participants appeared to remain in very fit condition.

An officer joining a unit is granted inherent respect, based on rank. As Will put it "it`s yours to lose." The officer can also lose the respect of the crew by such actions as fraternization, allowing the crew to be disrespectful and excessive drinking. Officers can and should socialize with subordinates as long as they maintained the decorum of their rank and position.

#### Trust in the Leader`s Decision-Making.

The officer in command has the ultimate responsibility for decisions. The military unit must believe that the leader has the capability to make quality decisions and to provide for their well-being and safety. Sam, among others, used the process of briefing and educating his staff in non-critical times to build their confidence in his decision-making abilities:

I felt that I had this responsibility to share with them the “why” [of what] we were doing, not just the “what.” . . . My thought process was, if we ever do get attacked or we get in a situation where [I] have to give orders, I believe that these people will follow me a lot better if they have developed a confidence in my judgment . . . . When the bullets start flying, if I say “Do this or that,” I don’t have time for them to question me. I don’t have time for them to disobey me.

Demonstrating decision-making ability builds loyalty and confidence in the leader and consequently improved combat readiness.

#### Loyalty.

A military maxim repeated by each interviewee was “take care of your troops.” The military leader needs to demonstrate a commitment to both looking out for the interests and protecting the safety of staff to earn their loyalty in return. Paul described the symbiotic relationship of loyalty between the officer and enlisted:

I mentioned that you had to get the confidence of the people you led. That confidence came from them knowing that my biggest asset wasn’t the machinery, it wasn’t the equipment, it was the people who run that ship. And you treat the people accordingly [as] a much higher priority.

Frank found this relationship to be one of the most dynamic aspects of his military experience: “One of the biggest thrills of being in charge is that they rely on you for that [protection].” Taking care of your crew can involve personal counseling, family support, providing rewards and recognition, looking after their comfort, encouraging their development, granting them additional authority and responsibility, getting resources and support for the mission, and much more. Many of the participants cited examples of this

concept of “taking care of your people” in their examples of leadership mentors, and described the personal satisfaction they had gotten from guiding a crew member through a troubling moment in his or her life.

Coupled with the notion of ensuring the safety of the unit is maintaining discipline. An officer who ignores discipline problems puts everyone else in jeopardy. As Frank stated: “There’s no room for those who don’t obey orders.” The theme repeated by all who discussed discipline was that it needed to be fair and consistently applied to all. Each participant had been involved in serious discipline hearings in the military. One had dismissed over 50 sailors and another had presided over more than 200 sessions of Commanding Officer’s Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP), known in the military as the Captain’s Mast. All agreed that an officer’s willingness to take action against those who violated rules was important to building loyalty and unit cohesion.

#### Motivating Staff

Recognizing and motivating staff is regarded as a core responsibility of military officers. A repeated theme raised by participants was that recognition was tied to the role of the leader in setting high expectations, communicating them and promptly and consistently rewarding top performance. Participants cited a host of recognition tools available to officers: letters of commendation, parties, time off, awards, pay, medals and others. Dan felt that recognition strategies were one of the most important things he learned in his thirty years as a military officer:

People always want recognition. They want to feel that they’re important. . . .

One thing I learned was that you’ve got to be innovative. You just always have to

look at the buttons to push on people. You just can't use the same code [with everyone].

The military also offers training and promotional opportunities as incentives. Paul viewed it as "in the military, you're only limited by your own capacity to do good work." Enlisted staff can rise to senior officer ranks, as in Ralph's case.

There were different views of the self-motivation of enlisted staff. Paul discussed the high self-motivation of staff. Whereas Steve, Ralph, Dan and Sam felt officers had an ongoing need and duty to "push" people to be their best. Ralph cited a case where a sailor who was a poor test taker refused to take a promotional test that he had failed several times before. Ralph ordered him to take the test and personally worked with him on test preparation. The experience of watching that sailor pass the test and go on to a fine career with future promotions remains one the proudest accomplishments of Ralph's career.

#### Building Teams: Camaraderie and Unit Cohesion

In a close operational environment, individual and team motivation are intertwined. The leader's standards and expectations can become transferred to the entire team, and an impetus to please the leader can become peer pressure. Ralph described how this happened on a submarine when some crewmembers pressured others to study for their qualifying tests. In Ralph's experience, when the leader sets high expectations and rewards achievement, "that kind of attitude is infectious and improves the whole organization overall."

Critical to managing military staff is building camaraderie among the troops. Colonel William Darryl Henderson, a combat commander and instructor at the National

Defense University, defined camaraderie as what exists “when the small group, the organization and the leader come together” ensuring the group functions cohesively (1985, p. 9). According to Henderson, the military builds camaraderie through its informal culture (mission and values) and through structures that support the unit. The goal is to have individuals identify with their unit, de-emphasize their individuality and be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their crew. Experiences in boot camp and in operational environments, e.g., shipboard, field exercises and foreign deployment, are structures previously discussed that help build unit cohesion.

Ted described building unit cohesion as “the challenge that I took on everyday of my military career.” In a shipboard environment, he would, like Bob, make certain he spent time working alongside his men. “I always wanted to portray that I was not better than them. I just had a different position. I was not afraid to get my hands dirty.” He would also meet with new members of the crew and promote to them that, “This is your home. . . . I want you to feel like this is yours.”

It is more difficult to maintain that type of unit cohesion in an administrative setting such as in a shore facility. There were several strategies offered by the participants to maintaining cohesion in such an environment. Ralph and Frank discussed using competitive events to generate ongoing unit pride and identity – Ralph employed athletics and Frank used inter-unit competitions. Others structured social events and gatherings. Les’s strategy was to be as visible on shore as one would be on board ship:

Be visible, get around. Let people know you’re still out there, you’re still in charge and you’re still concerned – and what your concerns are. Often people would be more than happy to do what you want, [but] they don’t know what it is



you want, because it's getting filtered. . . . People are more than willing to charge down that line you want them to go as long as they know what it is you want, and that you're not changing day to day.

This relates to the practice of direct, straightforward communication valued within the military. Clarity of mission ensures that direction is clear within so large an organization. The officer needs to communicate each individual's role within that mission. Without a clear understanding of the mission and priorities the staff go in a host of directions and there can be no unit cohesion.

An additional aspect of building camaraderie is for the unit to know they have the support of their officers. For example, when bureaucratic mandates and directives coming from down the chain of command have a potentially negative impact, the leader may have the opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to "take care of the crew." Les described some occasions in administrative settings when he had argued against implementing a bureaucratic procedure that was detrimental: "Sometimes the role of a good leader is to . . . say, 'Look, this is stupid. . . . You're tearing my people up. I can't keep doing it this way,' and stand up and say 'No.'" He added that one did not advertise "taking on" the chain of command but that the unit "senses" when it has happened and that enhances loyalty.

Despite differences in their service areas, there was remarkable consistency in the strategies and practices described concerning leading people in the military. The main themes identified centered on the operational/administrative environments, the nature of staff, the perception of the leader, motivation, and building teamwork and camaraderie.

The key conditions that affect these conditions, the strategies used to address them and the leadership lessons learned are listed in Table 5.

Table 5: Description of Subtheme of Leading Staff

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
Operational environment	KATN style	Demanding, possible threats. Set & expect high standards. Demand orders are followed.	High mental & physical performance, handle stress. Obey orders without questions. Accomplish strategic mission.
	Technical expertise	Set and demand high standards. Model technical proficiency.	Increase technical expertise. Accomplish mission.
Administrative environment	Coaching style	Plan, coordinate, involve, and inform.	Accomplish programmatic mission.
Staff: some young, lack experience, poor education. Continual staff changes.	Select out those who can't adapt.	Boot camp. Honest performance appraisals. May not let re-enlist. Discipline.	Be honest in appraisals. "Make the tough calls" – deal with discipline problems.
	Controlled environment	Paternalistic system. Do everything together.	Build camaraderie. Turn around behavior.
	Communication straightforward state reason. judicious.	Orders followed literally. Trust leader. People can be hurt.	Communicate clearly; speak directly. Demonstrate your decision-making. Need to know
	Training and development	Quickly productive. Make up for poor education. Consistency despite rotation.	Make training as #1 priority; provide continuous career training.

Table 5. Leading Staff. continued

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
Willingness to go into harm's way.	Shared values.	Instill at orientation. Leader models & reinforces.	Lead by values.
Willingness to go into harm's way; to follow leader.	Command presence. calm. High technical ability. Physical ability. Maintain demeanor.	Perception: leader is in control, knows job and will keep staff safe.	Appear calm. Maintain demeanor. Display abilities: work along side staff; stay fit. Respect is yours to lose.
Put life in leader's hands: Decision-making	Display quick & decisive ability; rational process.	Build crew's confidence in leader. Perception: we are in good hands.	If people trust your judgment they will obey.
Put life in leader's hands: 2-way loyalty	Build loyalty.  Discipline  Motivation	Counsel all; be involved with family. Reward & recognize top performance. Be fair & apply to all. Take action to protect crew. Set high expectations; communicate & reward; Promote for merit;	Take care of your people.  Discipline builds loyalty and obedience.  People need to be pushed. Recognize individually. Reward & promote on merit.
Willing to place self in harm's way for the unit	Camaraderie and unit cohesion	Values of unit identity. Structures: deployment, social events, sports, and competition. Be visible; demonstrate support for staff.	Use events and structures. Demonstrate support. Work along side staff.

The participants identified common core lessons in leadership, which they gained from their military experience. These lessons were shaped by the existing conditions facing the military and by the structures and strategies developed within the organization.

### **Theme Three: Leading Processes**

Standard operating procedures (SOP's) are one of the strategies that facilitate organizational consistency within a context of regular change in positional leaders and personnel. Paul summarized the philosophy of standard procedures as: "The guy who is implementing that procedure today could be dead tomorrow. Somebody has to take it up from where they did."

SOP's are written procedures that exist for every common process from maintaining a boiler to ordering supplies. One participant related how he had taken over an assignment the day his new ship got underway – a very complicated process. He "went by the manual" and left port with no complications. Military SOP's are an aspect of the military bureaucracy that one had to learn to adjust to according to Frank:

Every piece of paper had to be blessed all the way up so that there are forms for everything and everything had a form . . . . We were given a certain amount of authority and you learned to live with it. . . . It's those people who really got frustrated with that who got out. . . . I found I could adapt.

While all participants agreed that SOP's were absolutely essential in a combat situation, there were differing perspectives on their role in daily administrative functions. The civil engineers interviewed displayed a "softer" commitment to sticking to SOP's than did the ship commanders, the submariner and the aviators. Paul and Steve – neither of whom

have combat experience – both talked at length about how success in the Civil Engineering Corps relied on going around the procedures. Steve described how he had at times circumvented procedures, yet still worked within the system:

I was constantly having to go around processes . . . [that] didn't provide speedy enough, quality enough or cheap enough results. I learned early on [about] the big difference between law and rules – arbitrary procedural rules, you know. Stepping over the line of the laws or statutes was one thing – you couldn't break those . . . but if [a procedure] was in the way, find a way around it.

Paul also discussed the distinction between procedures and law. He saw SOP's as largely assisting enlisted staff by clearly laying out what needed to be done and helping them perform the tasks necessary to contribute to the mission regardless of whether they understand the "big picture."

#### A Leadership Decision: When to Break the Rules.

Each participant was asked to remember a time that he had made a decision to go against the rules or procedures, to describe the incident and explain his rationale. Not every participant could recollect or was willing to discuss such an occasion. Below is a summary of the incidents related.

Bob discussed a low point in his career when there had been major cuts in the aircraft maintenance budget. He was overseeing a program where his crew was stripping down planes for spare parts, working seven days a week and was still behind in repairs. He became so frustrated that he turned in his resignation. A general met with him to negotiate what it would take for him to stay. Bob was concerned that the record of his attempted resignation "would be like having VD in your file." The general assured him

that any such information would disappear. Bob did not make the decision to remove the information but supported it.

Dan brought up a case where one of his petty officers, an E-7, was convicted of Driving Under the Influence (a DUI). The standard procedure was to put the conviction in the person's evaluation. Dan decided not to because the individual was a "tremendous" petty officer, had (in Dan's view) learned his lesson and would never again be promoted with a DUI in his record. As a result he eventually became a senior chief petty officer and "was considered one of the best senior enlisted in the Navy."

Frank related how he was ordered to take 250 men to Somalia for a construction project – prior to the outbreak of the recent civil war. The ambassador had told the State Department that the men could not carry weapons. Frank sent three men to do some assessment prior to the mission. His men were ambushed several times and had to bribe their way out of the situations. He re-contacted the State Department and told them his unit would need to be armed. The ambassador replied that this would be "too confrontational." Frank stood up to the State Department and the ambassador and refused to send his unit under those conditions. He was willing to end his career over the issue. He ultimately won the support of his superior officer and his unit did not go.

George provided an example of when he was involved in a joint Navy and Marine Corps exercise. Each had given him conflicting directives on the number and type of aircraft to include. He concurred with the Navy because the decision involved a safety issue concerning the amount of space available on deck. As a result, "I was chewed probably the worst I've ever been . . . [I made] the right decision, but it still didn't help."

In this case, George was willing to face the wrath of his Marine commanding officer to protect his flight crew.

Les gave examples of being in a field command and receiving mandates to begin new administrative programs after taking a cut in staff. To focus his limited crew on the critical tasks, he began to challenge some of the blanket administrative policy requirements such as launching a smoking cessation program:

You would either pick up the phone or write a letter . . . and say "NO!" I used to love to do that, because I found after awhile that nobody wants to take on the guy, the leader in the field. Because no matter how big the bureaucracy is, when you get right down to it, they really do think in the Navy that the guy who is the commander on the ground somewhere is the first line, is the guy who knows what's going on. . . . I found that . . . when you say "no" often times nobody realizes there's nobody in a position to say "Wait a minute, you can't say 'no'" because nobody back there knows who's in charge.

Les found it necessary to focus on the mission, and not to dilute and exhaust his resources on non-essential programs. Ted, also a ship captain, made comments very similar to Les's: "There just weren't enough man-hours in a day, wasn't the level of skill available to meet them all. . . . You're left doing selective compliance."

Paul described a case where higher command had told his unit to construct some paint floats with weathered, inferior materials. They completed the project and the customer rejected it. High command told them to require the customer to use it. Paul, as a junior officer with message release authority, sent a message directly to the admiral's office without first informing his commanding officer who was "more concerned with his

ability to make captain than with his battalion.” When word of his action had gotten out, the CPO told him that “right now you have 400 people out here who, if you left the Navy right now to start your own construction company, would line up and sign up right now.” The admiral intervened and made the needed changes as a result of Paul’s message

Steve mentioned two incidents. One was when he spent money improving some 1000 housing Navy units even though the base was scheduled to close in three years and the directive from Washington was to not spend money on such bases. He and his captain agreed that the state of the housing was deplorable and was affecting the home life and personal security of the families. They improved the housing because “you’ve got to take care of your people.” In the second incident, he needed to complete a strategic construction project in 18 months at a cost of \$1 million. The standard procedure was to create a request for a military construction project that would take about five years. Instead, Steve divided the project into segments under \$200,000 – which could be authorized locally. He received approval for his small projects from local controllers and field level officers. Three months later the contracting office in Washington contacted him. He was told that he had broken contracting law and that “people have been thrown out of the Navy for doing this.” Steve explained the endorsements he’d gotten for these projects and left the contract officer with the impression that “he was going to have a lot of people to deal with” if he interfered with its completion. Steve often had to be creative with project funding, but stated that, in this case, it could have ended his career, “I came close, I came real close on that one.”

Ralph, Will and Sam did not recall specific incidents. Will stated that, in general, he followed procedures, “I’m a pretty conservative person.”



Table 6 summarizes the personal stories of the participants related to going around standard procedures and their rationale for taking such action.

Table 6: Personal Stories of Going Around Procedure or Rule: Description of Incident. Rationale

<i>Fictitious Name</i>	<i>Description of Incident</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
Bob	Put in resignation over stripping planes for parts and working staff seven days a week.	Maintenance quality and <u>safety</u> being compromised. <u>Take care of your people.</u>
Dan	Did not record DUI conviction on officer's performance evaluation.	Individual had learned his lesson faced end of career. <u>Take care of your people.</u>
Frank	Refused to send unit unarmed to Somalia despite directive from ambassador and State Department.	<u>Safety</u> of his unit. <u>Take care of your people.</u>
George	Conflicting service directives. Followed Navy orders & scaled down the aircraft involved in an exercise.	<u>Safety</u> issue – not place too many aircraft on the ship.
Les Ted	Refused to implement some administrative directives.	When low on staff resources do the requests critical to the <u>mission</u> . Do not overtax <u>staff</u> on non-essential tasks.
Paul	Sent letter to admiral over his commanding officer informing him of likely project failure.	High command staff making poor decisions and his commander was not looking out for the <u>project</u> .
Steve	Upgraded military housing though base was to be closed. Violated contracting law by dividing \$1 million project into smaller ones.	Poor housing – affecting families. <u>Take care of your people.</u> Project was time sensitive and strategically important. <u>Support the mission.</u>
Ralph. Sam, Will	Did not cite an instance.	

The three reasons repeatedly cited for circumventing SOP's were: taking care of your people, safety and supporting the mission. Paul's story was the only one that appears to fall outside of these reasons. The paint floats under construction were not strategic. His story did not adequately portray his rationale for violating chain of command, and his report of the reactions of the enlisted staff suggest his actions had a negative impact on organizational loyalty.

Interestingly, those responding to this question from the Civil Engineer Corps were more cavalier about procedures than the other participants. This could be because their work is most commonly managing projects and contracts. Those who had been in combat expressed a stronger commitment to the role of SOP's. Dan emphasized that ignoring or going around the rules was dangerous:

You know, it's not like M\*A\*S\*H and McHale's Navy . . . because the rules are there for a reason and when you start bucking the system . . . someone will get hurt, something will happen. Normally when there are disasters they can be traced back to people who didn't follow the established procedures and rules, and in the end someone gets hurt or killed and it's not a pretty sight. So you have to ask yourself what's the risk for.

A military leader works in an organization steeped in tradition and structured by standard operating procedures. Yet, the leader must be prepared and ensure the staff is prepared for immediate deployment. As such, the military could be looked at as operating as an organization of stability working within a context of uncertainty. Standard operating procedures contribute to both providing stability and enabling operations to continue

under the most unpredictable and stressful circumstances. A good military leader adheres to SOP's, but also makes judgment calls about when to go around them.

#### **Theme Four: Decision-making**

One of the stereotypes of the military leader is that of an autocratic individual directing all aspects of the operation. To the contrary, the military is committed to developing leadership capabilities vertically within the organization to create a system where leaders are interchangeable and replaceable. This is critical to prepare for combat situations where an officer may suddenly need to assume a command. As such, it seeks to quickly build the decision-making capacity in its officers.

One of the features of military leadership development stated previously is granting officers responsibility early in their career. Frank reflected on his early experience: "Most college graduates, I think, start out slowly and work their way up. But the military throws you in . . . I kind of survived and was really excited about my responsibility." A good senior officer teaches decision-making to junior officers by granting increasingly more decision authority, giving feedback on those decisions and by sharing the rationale for command decisions.

Those officers who remain in the military for a career have had the opportunity for broad decision-making experience and to be a part of command decisions. Each participant described instances where he relished the opportunity for challenging command assignments and, conversely, also described chaffing under a senior officer with a propensity to micro-manage. When Steve, for example, reflected on his most challenging assignment in the military, he was especially pleased that his team

accomplished its mission with virtually no direction from up the chain of command. The military system of increasing responsibility and feedback is designed to build the self-confidence of officers, the quality of their critical thinking and the speed of their decision-making. All three of these are required in a combat setting.

The style of decision-making is not autocratic, nor is it consensus. The participants described experiences where, as junior and senior officers, they were exposed to the critical thinking process, they were given broad authority over their work and they were often brought in and consulted on true command decisions. But, the individual in command, as Sam described it, controlled the final decision:

Everybody knows in the military organization that the buck stops with the commanding officer – he is to set the tone and direction for the whole command. Now he does that with . . . other senior officers, discussing and most of the time mutually deciding what this direction is going to be. And he relies upon his individual experts like his civil engineer or his doctor and chaplain or whatever, to provide him with advice and guidance in the particular field. But overall, if something goes wrong, it's the CO's fault. And he knows that and so does everybody else. So they know – and this is where power comes from – that power is distributed to all of the rest of us so long as we use it to follow the same direction, but we have some influence in setting that direction.

Authority and discretion are granted to those who demonstrate their abilities through their accomplishments and who follow the direction set by the commanding officer. Relying on the obedience of subordinates is just as critical in the officer ranks as it is with the

enlisted. The officer in charge must know that when a critical situation arises, subordinate officers will obey orders without question.

As previously discussed, it is also essential that crew have the confidence in the officer's judgment and decision-making ability to follow orders unquestioningly. This involves several factors related to the perception of a leader: command presence, quick decision-making and quality decision-making. In administrative settings, an officer can structure situations so that the crew can witness the decision-making process and thus gain confidence in the officer's leadership abilities. A summary of the data on developing decision-making within military officers is contained in Table 7.

Table 7: Description of Subtheme of Decision-making. Condition: The Possibility of War

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
Leader may need to be replaced quickly.	Develop decision-making.	Early responsibility, gradually increasing. Responsibility is a reward	Final decision is CO's. Input, not consensus. Relish independence. Dislike micro-management.

The goal is to build the confidence and loyalty required ensuring that orders will be followed. Paul used a bit of humor to characterize military authority: "There's really no room for consensus. There are in a military system really only about five answers to any question. And that's 'Yes sir; No sir; No excuse sir; I'll find out sir; Aye, aye sir.' Nothing in there said 'Why?'"

### **Theme Five: Managing Change**

All of the participants were in the service during periods of great organizational change. The post-Vietnam War era has been a period of reviewing, reflecting and re-examining the mission and direction of the military. Some of the major changes taking place during this time include: focusing more on humanitarian and peace-keeping missions, transitioning to an all-volunteer force, becoming a more multi-cultural force, broadening the role of women, struggling with the issue of gays and lesbians in the military, changing the makeup of the fleet and introducing increasingly sophisticated weaponry. Being a part of facilitating that change was a shaping experience for the participants.

One of the unique aspects of change efforts in the military is that they often come as top-down directives or from outside the organization. The Navy's response to the ensuing scandal after women were assaulted by male officers during the 1991 Tailhook convention is an example of how the military often implements change. In this case, the Navy declared a "zero tolerance" policy against sexual harassment, had the public affairs office of an admiral's staff develop training and mandated that training for all staff (Mason, 1995).

Ted gave another example of an organizational change he was a part of -- changing the attitude and practices regarding alcohol use. As a ship captain, he did not have a role in setting the policies. He implemented directives that, for example, required that half of the beverages at social functions be sodas. He also enforced discipline policies regarding drinking and modeled moderation to his crew. The military had the control mechanism and practice of complying with orders to assist in driving the policy

directives. As with any organizational change, he stated, it took years to change the actual attitudes. In both these cases, the role of the commanding or executive officer is in monitoring compliance rather than as a participant in developing the approach to change.

The military instituted a number of process improvement initiatives in the last two decades, many related to total quality management (TQM). This effort assisted in improving processes, broadening participation in decision-making and seeking consensus. There were many improvement programs introduced within the military within the last decade. Three of the participants reflected a cynicism toward these change efforts, referring to them as “the flavor of the month.” The military’s approach to change is summarized below in Table 8.

Table 8: Description of Subtheme of Leading Change.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
Managing change.	Change strategies motivated by events.	Top-down directives: officer does implementation. Utilize controlled environment.	Follow & implement organizational change. Variety of programs can be seen as “flavor of the month.”

What is significant about the nature of organizational change in the military is that it is generally directed from Washington, with local commanding officers largely tasked with carrying out the implementation. Some officers participated in process improvement efforts modeled after such programs as TQM. Responses from participants indicated that there was some degree of cynicism toward the variety of improvement programs instituted in recent years.

This chapter first described the actual research and data analysis processes. It also contained the key themes identified in the participant data, the relationship of the data categories and a description of an emergent theory on the nature of military leadership. The nature of military leadership is driven by the necessity of preparing for potential combat. The participant data revealed five key themes: leadership development, leading people, leading processes, decision-making and leading change. Rapid leadership development is a priority in the military where an officer may, on little notice, have to take command. As such, responsibility is given early and skills in leading staff and making decisions are developed through education, mentoring and command experiences. Shared concepts on leading people include using a contingency leadership style, firm but fair discipline, controlling the environment, straightforward communications, focusing on training and development, leading by values building camaraderie and developing command presence. SOP's are valued as providing consistency across the organization and in the face of ongoing staff changes. Finally, much of the organizational change is centrally mandated.

In the next chapter, the data will be examined to reveal the applicability of military leadership strategies and practices to the public sector organizations. In addition, this theory will be triangulated with existing literature and research on the military and public sector in the final chapter.



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE KEY THEMES OF THE APPLICABILITY OF**  
**MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**Overview**

The first chapter established that the purpose of this research is to examine the leadership beliefs and practices learned by career military officers and their applicability to the public sector. The second chapter reviewed relevant literature on the organizational cultures of the military and public sector, career transitions, the nature of organizational change, and current change trends in public sector organizations. The third chapter discussed qualitative research, grounded theory methodology and the specific research steps and protocol used in this study. The fourth chapter examined the data gathered concerning the leadership perspectives and practices learned in the military and proposed a construct of military leadership based on grounded theory methodology.

The goal of this chapter is to identify the similarities and differences in the organizational context, conditions and structures between the military and the public sector as experienced by this study's participants. Highlighting any differences does not suggest that they are challenges that retired officers cannot adjust to. The intent is to identify both these challenges and any strategies that retired officers utilized to adapt to these differences or utilized to improve the public organizations they joined. The last

chapter will compare the data to relevant literature and examine the implications of the findings for leadership and for the public sector.

### **Causal Condition: The Movement of Military Officers to the Public Sector**

The transition of retiring military officers to a civilian career represents a significant life event. They leave an organization that has been a central part of their professional and social lives for 20 to 30 years. Transitioning officers enter a new organization, perhaps with some similarities, but certainly with many differences from the unique culture of the military. This chapter explores the experiences of the eleven participants taking on leadership roles in the public sector. It focuses on the applicability of leadership strategies and practices learned during their military careers, and discusses which of these strategies and practices assisted them in facing the challenges encountered in their new positions as mid-managers and executives in local government.

The interview data revealed four key subthemes – leading public sector staff, organizational relationships, leading public sector processes, and encountering stereotypes of retired military officers – which are discussed in the following sections. These military leadership strategies and practices will be examined to determine how they meet the current challenges of public sector leadership.

### **Transition to the Public Sector**

The participants interviewed had a wide variety of experiences in leaving their military careers and entering public sector employment. There were different reasons cited for entering the public sector. Three chose government employment because they felt closer to public service values than to the values of the business world. As Dan

stated: “Public service, honesty, integrity are those traits valued here . . . In the private world they always work toward bottom line and profit.” Ted also was drawn to the mission of continuing to serve the public. He knew he wanted to work in government when he retired, and entered a Master’s program in Public Administration to prepare himself. Four specifically stated they refused to work for defense contractors, to avoid what they saw as conflicts of interest.

Others, particularly those from the Civil Engineer Corps, found government to be a natural transition because the work of managing large scale construction contracts, public works or facilities operations was so similar to their work in the military. Finally, some entered the public sector because a personal associate in a government agency had contacted them about applying for a job opening. Three of the participants were steered toward a job by former commanding officers.

Both of the two aviators now working in airport management – Bob and Ralph – had difficulties in finding employment. At the time of their military retirement, their skills were not in demand in the private sector and defense contractors were downsizing. Bob found the memory of the job search particularly painful, even five years later: “So here I was ‘a trained killer’ and those jobs with military contractors weren’t there. It was a rough transition until the airport opened up.” George, a marine aviator, found work quickly, but admitted that he devoted a great deal of energy during his last year of military service to job hunting and preparation: “I was probably not the best marine that year because I just don’t think you can do your military job [adequately] and [simultaneously do] a job search.” Ted, a retired ship captain, had a difficult job search: “I sent out 50, 60 resumes and did not get one bite!” He decided to work as a volunteer

intern with a local government agency to try to make contacts. At a particularly low point in his job search, he was turned down for a volunteer position because he had too much experience. George, Paul, Will and Les on the other hand, had jobs before they left the service. All but three participants found employment within six months. In general, the civil engineers had an easier job search.

There were varied assessments on the ease of the transition. Les had found just dressing for work to be stressful: "I've got to pick out a shirt and tie that match that aren't khaki or blue and white – and to this day I have trouble with that." He has also had to break the code of corporate dress:

I got hired in August. I went out and bought a bunch of clothes. One of the things I have always worn is short sleeves. I start to notice in meetings that everyone is wearing a long sleeve shirt. I'm thinking to myself. "You know, there's probably something here. There's a reason for this." So finally I cornered a retired admiral who sits on a board with me and he told me. "Short sleeve shirts are shop foremen. Long sleeve shirts are CEO's." Well I never heard that said before, so I learn as I go along.

For Les, this was one of the experiences that brought home to him that he was in a new culture, and that he had to look for signals and cues on appropriate behavior. Frank had a similar revelation when he had to counsel a female secretary about wearing low cut blouses to the office. During his over 25 years in the service, he had never had such a discussion.

Not every participant could relate such a moment and some denied when asked directly that there were significant differences between the public sector and the military.

Dan, Paul, Sam, Steve and Will all mentioned that they had worked extensively managing federal employees which gave them valuable experience in leading civilian staff and with a government civil service system. Dan remarked that about half of the jobs he oversaw in the military were done by federal employees or by civilian contractors, so he “didn’t have an identity crisis” when he entered local government. Dan began by saying that he’d had “a very easy transition” but reversed himself after some reflection and acknowledged that he had faced some adjustments, admitting, “No transition is ever easy.” Paul was emphatic that there were no transition issues for him: “People can’t believe I came from Annapolis. . . . I’m a little unique because of my Civil Engineer Corps background. I’d say my hardest transition was that I didn’t have my hat on my head.” George considered one particular aspect of his military experience helpful in making the transition: “In the military we change jobs every two to three years. The mere fact that I left one job and was coming to a new one was not strange.” Will believed that changing jobs frequently in the military taught him how to enter an organization and affect change.

Early in the interviews and during the initial phone contacts, many of the retired officers stated that they had not had transition issues. There appeared to be a certain amount of denial at least initially about the difficulties experienced in working in the public sector. For example, Sam remarked that he and other Civil Engineer Corps officers probably had an easier time entering the public sector and that pilots probably had the more difficult transitions. Yet Sam was one of the two participants who left the public sector because of frustration. Paul repeatedly commented during the interview

that he had experienced no transition issues, and yet he was by far the most critical of public sector staff, processes and leadership.

Whether or not they were willing to directly acknowledge it, each participant ultimately described differences between the two organizations and some strategies they utilized to manage these differences. The interview data identified the key issues of the transition to the public sector as leading staff, organizational relationships, leading processes and encountering stereotypes. The next sections discuss these themes, the organizational context (structures and processes) that affects them and the strategies the participants used to manage them.

### **Theme One: Leading Staff in the Public Sector**

Leading staff in a government agency presented some different challenges for the participants. They faced rules and structures different from those in the military. There are now set working hours, and salaries are a budgeted item. Public sector managers must operate within the parameters of the Federal Labor Standards Act and a civil service system. All but one of those interviewed now worked in a unionized agency. Re-enlistment options have been replaced by expectations of “lifetime employment” by many public employees. Participants also noted that they had experienced differences in the staff, workforce mobility, employee expectations, communication styles, training and education levels and teamwork in the public sector.

The rules and the culture of the public sector exclude some of the practices used in the military. For Frank, entering the public sector meant recognizing “the ‘kick ass, take names’ part of [leadership] can’t work here. So you have to drop it completely.” He

moved to leading full-time with the coaching and teamwork skills he learned in the military. Ralph too, discussed abandoning the more intimidating methods he sometimes drew upon in the military. He had related a story about pushing and swearing at an enlisted man whose behavior was egregious and drew the parallel to the public sector: "Can you imagine [if I had done that] in the civilian sector with unions? I'd be fired." (However, Ralph's use of physical force would also not be condoned by the services.)

Many of the participants made a connection between leading public sector staff and leading in a military administrative environment. Among the leadership strengths they cited from their military careers were their experiences in leading diverse groups and building teamwork. Participants identified some differences in what Strauss and Corbin (1990) called the "organizational contexts" of the military and the public sector that affect leading staff. These key differences included: the nature of the staff, the classification system, staff retention, commitment to training and development, teamwork and camaraderie, managing performance, communication styles, executive leadership and values and ethics.

#### View of Public Sector Employees

None of the participants made any blanket statements about having a preference for leading government versus military work units. According to Steve, there are "really outstanding performers" and "troubled employees" in both sectors. But there were some general differences noted between the two. Both Steve and George commented that the government staff members were generally older, more independent from the organization and more savvy in workplace issues than was the case in the military. George noted that public sector employees want to know how policy changes are going to affect their

retirement, their taxes and their deferred compensation. He rarely got those kinds of questions from his marines:

In the civilian community, I think people are wiser. You take an eighteen-year-old in the military. They're not thinking benefits. The military is taking care of that individual. All they have to think about a lot of times is are they doing their job, staying out of trouble and, hopefully to some degree, being successful. . . .

Whereas out here people are thinking benefits, thinking their paycheck. We just do not have the same control over people out here. One thing I had to learn [was] . . . to treat people differently than I would in the Marine Corps. I think they're just a little smarter and sharper out here.

The Corps and the armed services in general have a paternalistic culture where members felt more trust that they were being taken care of. George found that his government employees wanted changes explained to them, particularly when policy changes affected their paychecks and benefits. After a recent contract negotiation, he was deluged with questions about its impact on employees' deferred compensation plans and their 401(k)'s. He ultimately scheduled a series of staff meetings where he had to answer some complex financial questions. "You had to address them at a different level than you would in the military." He initially made the error of just issuing a written notification of changes, but had found that memos generated rumors. He now has more meetings to keep people informed: "It may not build loyalty, [but] it just keeps them from getting the negative attitude." He observed that there was less trust between government managers and line staff than between officers and enlisted.



As George noted, public sector leaders have significantly less control over their staff than do military officers. Frank joked that: "There's just getting used to the fact that everyone has a choice where to eat and where they go home at night." Some participants volunteered that there was a moment that highlighted the difference between the two organizations. For George it was as simple as realizing that, to get all the employees to turn in a form, he couldn't just order them into a room and issue pencils. For Frank, his counseling session with a female secretary about inappropriate office attire demonstrated to him the limits of his influence as a public sector manager. He could no longer order what people wore and when they got haircuts. The progressive discipline system defined the multiple steps he needed to take to initiate formal action against an employee. Coaching, counseling and influence skills were now his primary tools for shaping the behavior of staff when, in the case of proper dress, the threat of action is remote.

One of the areas that demonstrated this lack of control was in gaining compliance – simply getting individuals to do what they were instructed to do. Paul, who leads a professional group of engineers, architects and project managers was "shocked" that some staff did not follow a directive he gave them three times. He found this a stark contrast to the military where: "If I gave [a direct] order, it happened." He has learned to follow-up on assignments he gives. This has been a source of frustration for him, as he feels "if you direct that something be done, you should have 98% confidence that it's going to happen." He added that he has confronted one staff member and suggested he leave the organization if he can't follow directives.

Paul was one of the most critical of civil service employees. He found many public employees to be “cynical” and resistant to change. He commented that, rather than support change efforts, they seemed to be waiting them out with a “this too shall pass” attitude. He was disturbed by individuals who seemed to lack commitment and to be disconnected from the organization’s values. He watched for “the smaller indicators” such as whether a person’s desk was cleared by 4:01 p.m. each day and whether he or she submitted mileage reimbursement requests for as few as three miles:

I try to take a view of loyalty, commitment and public good – all those things. I look at those indicators, and they’re small, but I roll those into some other job performance issues, and I tend to doubt whether that person is committed to the values 100% . . . . They’re the person (sic) who’s most likely not promotable, who won’t advance very quickly in the organization.

There were different views expressed on the nature of public sector employees, ranging from “more sophisticated” to “lacking commitment.” While acknowledging the bright spots in their organizations, both Paul and Ralph expressed frustration with some of the staff they had inherited.

Many of the participants who served in the Civil Engineering Corps, had managed large numbers of federal civil service staff, particularly on public works and contract management assignments. Steve, for example, remarked that he had spent 18 of his 20 military years managing federal, blue collar workers. Some participants who had experience with the federal system expressed a somewhat cynical attitude toward government workers and processes, and fatalism toward what could be accomplished within government. Steve remarked that he faced some “low motivation,” stereotypical

behavior from some of the federal government employees he managed and had difficulties in getting results within the civil service system. Dan amusingly characterized the processes within the federal government as following the motto, "We'll do no job before its time." The concern over the effects of these experiences is whether they will translate into an acceptance and expectation of mediocrity in the government agencies they now lead.

#### Lack of Flexibility: The Civil Service Classification System

Participants also expressed frustration about the public sector human resources systems that limited their ability to address personnel and staffing issues. Some addressed the lack of flexibility and restrictions within the classification / personnel structure of civilian government organizations. As Ralph described it, in the military, people did whatever needed to be done to accomplish the mission. As an airport manager, he now has restrictions:

There are limitations [here] on your resources. . . . You don't encounter those kinds of things in the military, you know. If you have something that needs to be done, if it's heavy, physical work and the guy's an Electronics Technician or an Electrician, you can still assign him to do that. We do whatever we have to do to support our detachments and our commitments. . . . Here, people come back and say, "That's not . . . in my classification. I'm going to call the union."

Ralph has had to handle disagreements with the union over job assignments. He says his manager has coached him on reviewing job descriptions with employees "step by step, item by item and tell them what the expectations are." The most important lesson he has learned since coming to the public sector is to "document everything."

Paul faced a problem where the system had not kept pace with the actual work done. He had staff working at jobs that have evolved, while the job description, title, and pay have not:

There are some pay issues [in] civil service that the military didn't have to deal with. We just took all the responsibility – as much as they could give to you. What you got paid didn't matter. Now on the civilian side, that salary is a big [issue] for folks. We have some pay discrepancies within the organization now with some people having incredible accountability and responsibility and not getting paid as much as people who have less. I'm not so sure I can fix that myself, but I can be an advocate.

After two years of his lobbying, the centralized human resources system only implemented some of the classifications and pay changes Paul saw as necessary. For both Ralph and Paul, the inflexibility of the system affected the work product. In Paul's case, it also affected his ability to take care of his people. Despite their frustrations, neither has attempted to affect change in the HR area. George and Dan have found that they have adopted the strategies available within the context of the public sector and worked on reorganizations within their work units. Dan also has focused on selecting quality staff, an option he did not have in the Navy where "you have to play the cards you're dealt. At least [here] you get to pick your cards."

#### Staff Retention: The Culture of Lifetime Employment

An interesting insight of some of the participants is the view that the culture of lifetime employment within the context of a small organization is unhealthy for both the organization and the individual. Dan is working to change that in his organization:

You need to be bringing in good people in at the bottom of the organization, working them up through the ranks, and then shooting them out to the side to go either to another department or go out to the private sector. I mean, that is a healthy organization. An organization where everyone stays put, and there's no change or mobility, that's sick! It's just gonna die. What [I'm] trying to do is change the thinking.

Dan wants upward mobility and development to become a value in his organization.

Both Steve, Will and Dan all viewed the military practice of moving staff every two to three years as positive because it accustomed people to change.

Dan observed that the continual staffing changes also brought fresh perspective into the unit, combating the "we've always done it this way" syndrome. He is trying to change the stagnation in his current organization by introducing a new paradigm that staff turnover is positive. He is training his managers not to hire people who are seeking just to "stay here until [they] get a gold watch." During a recent reengineering effort, he created a team that designed alternative career paths – a plan he's very proud of because he feels it will make a difference for individual staff and for the long-term health of the organization.

The high turnover rate of enlisted within the military also prepared officers to cope with staffing changes where the loss of a single employee was regarded as routine. Will noticed that in his agency, "when somebody who is doing a good job wants to leave here, everybody gets all excited and [feels] the whole world is falling apart and [wonders] what can we do to make [them] stay." He took the position that the organization should end the practice of trying to keep existing staff by reclassifying positions to raise salaries.

but rather pay for the proficiency level needed. He regards moving around during a career as “part of how you get ahead in life.”

Some participants saw the government culture of lifetime employment as a detriment to both public organizations and their individual staff. A few of the retired officers have acted to change some of the selection and promotion practices as well as the pay and career development structures within their organization to infuse new ideas into their organizations and enhance employee morale.

### Training and Development

Another difference noted between the military and the public sector is the commitment to training and development. Frank observed that government employees are often better educated than military enlisted personnel, but that the military staff receives more ongoing training. The military’s philosophy is to train a talented person for a position; government’s philosophy is to hire a person who already has the education and skills for the job. Frank found it a “different challenge” trying to get an older, more experienced workforce to apply school education received decades ago to a changing work setting.

Other participants were more critical of the failure of government organizations to adequately train their staff. Paul estimated that comparable military members receive ten times the ongoing training of public sector employees. He found many professionals “inadequately trained for what they are doing and probably not even understanding the job they are supposed to be doing because [it] had changed” since they were hired. Nearly every participant mentioned skill and training deficiencies in their workforce, with few budget resources allocated to keep staff up-to-date in their fields.

Will was the exception: he found a good level of technical proficiency in his organization. He focused on expanding computer training, introducing customer service training and creating a leadership academy within his organization. Now all individuals receive training annually. In contrast, Dan and Ted work in organizations with no significant funds for training. Both are trying to establish small-scale, in-house offerings.

Paul, Dan and Sam expressed disappointed over the absence of a leadership development strategy in their organizations. Sam pointedly stated that, "Somewhere along the line, upper management and leadership lost the focus that it was their responsibility to develop the managers and leaders beneath them to someday take their jobs." Paul related that he currently has no internal candidates to fill a high-level position in his organization managing about 30 professional technical staff:

There's absolutely nobody qualified within the organization right now to fill the position . . . . [It's] shocking actually. . . . That tells you that you have an awful lot of followers and nobody trained or equipped to be a leader. That's not good for an organization.

The lack of an upward mobility program for members can lead to organizational stagnation as people remain in the same position for years, which can also affect morale. Dan and Will initiated leadership development programs to begin to address this.

This also means that military officers transitioning to the public sector may encounter a "shallow bench." The CO's team is simply not there for them to use as a sounding board for ideas and decisions. Paul was attempting to create what he calls his "inner circle" – a group composed of staff who display a good work ethic and "have the goals and the objectives" of the organization at heart:

I tend to pull them in probably closer than other folks. I would probably talk to them about issues where a lot of managers would not. I use them as sounding boards and reality checks. I may be describing things to this person that I probably shouldn't. It may involve other people. It may involve opinions, personal opinions . . . [to] have that level of [candor] that you sometimes miss as an executive working within a department.

Paul noted that the government did not have restrictions on fraternization. This left him freer to expand his circle wider than he could in the military. His description of his "inner circle" suggests that he may face future issues concerning breaches of confidentiality and disparate treatment – two serious issues in public sector personnel practice.

Several senior participants who retired at the rank of captain, left a command with a team of commanders, lieutenant commanders and lieutenants, many with Master's degrees, eager for decision-making authority and supported by veteran chief petty officers seasoned in managing people. They entered organizations with a very slim management or supervisory staff. Some retired officers, who entered small agencies or small city governments, transitioned into organizations where the entire support staff was a clerk and a few supervisors. They left a team of executives; now they have to do it all.

#### Building Teamwork in the Public Sector

The military has institutions and practices that build teamwork, e.g., boot camp, overseas deployment, operational assignments and competitions, that are not available within the public sector. Each participant was asked how one could build teamwork in a public sector setting. Some common themes emerged from their responses. Primary



among them was identifying goals, communicating them and creating systems that rewarded and valued the goals. Frank acknowledged that it is difficult to build teamwork in the current downsizing environment within his agency:

You have to be loyal to your people, or they won't be loyal to you. Obviously, if you want their trust and their confidence, want them to be a decent team, you want them to be loyal. If they know you want to get rid of their jobs, or you won't protect them . . . If they know that, you'll never get anything done.

Frank and Dan both voiced that the "bottom-line" business rhetoric currently popular with some elected officials and public sector executives is counter to building teamwork.

Both Frank and Steve advocated a leader-centered view of teamwork based on strong communication. Frank believed the leader's willingness to share information was important to building a team in the public sector. For Steve, the role of a leader is "to be honest with your people at all times" and "share the reason for decisions." This will build trust and loyalty in the leader and, in turn, develop trust in the organization.

Ted strove to create a climate in his public works organization where individuals see the organization as theirs – similar to the climate he created on his ships. He delegated authority to his supervisors over their divisions and made it clear that his role was to support them:

I emphasized this from day one when I became the director. "That's your division. Whatever happens in it is yours. I want to be informed. If you need decisions, I expect you to make them. Give me the right information and I will [support you]."

He was “blessed” with good supervisors who welcomed their added responsibility and authority. He saw the supervisors in turn, take the same approach with line staff. Consequently, he witnessed a change in the motivation and the performance within his organization: “The level of maintenance of public properties and of public goods has improved substantially. I’m routinely astounded at how many of these guys, even at the entry level. . . . have taken their jobs with such pride.” He firmly believed that “building a sense of ownership” is key to building teamwork in the public sector as it was aboard ship. In addition, he introduced lunchtime quarterly social events for the entire department to build more camaraderie.

Recognition of top team performance was also a key strategy discussed. Will, for example, included teamwork on performance appraisals and created a quarterly team recognition award to supplant the individual awards the organization traditionally gave. While not having the same structures that the military provided to enhance teamwork, many of the same practices participants learned in the military – such as communicating goals, sharing information and creating a sense of ownership – are also effective in the public sector.

### Communication

A direct communication style is often used in the military because 1) it is critical in combat that orders are clear; 2) directives tend to be followed literally so it is important to eliminate ambiguity in instructions; and 3) specific directions require less judgment from young and inexperienced enlisted members. This very direct style of communication can distance a retired officer from others and can cause conflicts. Bob observed that “people in the civilian atmosphere . . . aren’t used to dealing with people as

straightforwardly as we're used to dealing with people." He admitted that his blunt communication style, especially in his initial days, caused problems with staff and customers.

Several of the retired officers have run into difficulty because of their direct communication style. One participant related a story about a staff meeting where he had discussed the substandard performance of an individual, without naming his name, but gave enough detail so people knew who the individual was. He defended this approach as an effective way of sending a message to the employee, however, he was subsequently contacted by the employee's attorney. Some of the participants related incidents that indicated the direct and blunt communication style learned in the military brought complications with customers, the union and in one case, an employee's attorney. Bob acknowledged that he has adjusted his style. Dan also mentioned that he has received some criticism about his pointed sense of humor and remarked that some staff search for issues to criticize management. He now "thinks twice" before speaking. He also found it frustrating that he had to speak carefully around discipline and counseling matters. Sometimes, he said, he just wanted to say: "'Get a life. Get a grip on yourself. If you don't like it, get another employer.' But instead, we have to pussyfoot around."

A second communication issue cited by participants was the need to "lose" their military jargon. Almost half the participants commented on how they needed to consciously guard against reverting back to military phrases and acronyms. Steve joked about an incident when he was trying to lead a discussion with some of his executive team: "I used the expression, 'Can you get a strawman put together on this issue?' Then I came to realize that no one at the table knew what the hell what I was talking about.

They all had a totally different guess of what a 'strawman' was." When Steve first joined the organization as a deputy director, one of his peers used to challenge him publicly when he used military jargon by asking him, "What do you mean by that." It made Steve sensitive to how jargon could confuse his staff, set him apart from others and give him what he termed "the ex-Navy rap."

George acknowledged that he struggled to stop saying "yes sir" and "no sir." George's manager, who is younger than he, reacted uncomfortably to such Marine Corps formalities. The retired officer has consciously worked to become more informal so that he would be more easily seen as part of the team rather than as the only retired Marine on staff. Sam found he had to get used to the informality of co-workers and subordinates who called him by his first name.

A majority of the participants found that they had to change to a more "civilian" communication style. This encompassed adopting a less direct and blunt style, avoiding military jargon and speaking less formally to their superiors.

#### Managing Performance: Discipline and Recognition

A standard feature of the military discipline system is ensuring that the crew knows the rules and that leaders apply them consistently and fairly. NJP rests a great deal of authority on senior officers. This is in sharp contrast to the typical public sector organization that operates within a civil service system.

Paul felt that, as a military officer he could work with "the whole person" when there was a performance or discipline problem. Officers counseled staff on personal issues, worked on family problems and really got involved to "put this person back on course." Whenever a matter had to be elevated to Captain's Mast, Paul felt he had "failed

in some way.” In his experience, individuals with problems sent “early signals.” The leader’s job was to watch for and intervene early: “You want to inject yourself [right away] to get this person back on course. And so you put effort into this person, as much as you possibly can.” In the public sector by contrast, he can focus solely on work performance. He saw few avenues for affecting some of the personal issues that might be at the core of an employee’s problem.

It is worth noting that many of the participants shared stories about working intimately with troubled staff and their families in the military. Making a difference in the lives of individuals was repeatedly cited as one of the most rewarding aspects of a military career. Within the public sector, managers cannot order members to utilize an employee assistance program [EAP] and a manager will not be given any information about the nature of EAP-related issues without a signed legal waiver from the employee. Thus, the manager is hampered from addressing the real issues and is left to operate within the lengthy, cumbersome civil service process.

Dan bluntly stated that the civil service discipline system is an impediment to building teamwork and loyalty in public sector organizations. He cited two extreme examples in his organization. He raised questions about an employee who had demonstrated bizarre behavior. The Personnel Officer informed him that he could not take action because the person was not “technically mentally ill.” He also objected to an employee who made negative statements against the agency head at a televised public hearing. Dan was shocked that the employee was allowed to testify against his superior and then return to his desk the same day: “To me the disciplinary system and civil service need to be totally reorganized. You’re never going to get [cohesion and loyalty]

unless you start dealing with these people who have legitimate problems.” Both George and Ralph felt that some employees used “open door” policies to go around the authority of their supervisors. They felt this undermined discipline and authority.

Participants agreed that the civil service system was an ineffective tool for monitoring staff behavior. Dan expressed that civil service hearings were, “frankly, unpredictable.” Often, he observed, “it’s a roll of the dice.” Paul criticized the discipline process for simply taking so long and requiring so much effort by supervisors. He added that it was easier to discharge an offender in the military than to terminate an employee in his organization. As a result, he observed, many public sector managers take no action with problem employees: “People find it easier to pass that problem off on somebody else . . . promoting him up or reassigning him out of the division.” Sam witnessed public sector managers who were unwilling to take action and who made excuses and exceptions for their employees: “I had been spending time with the people in my department in individual discussions and counseling . . . but none of the other departments did. Instead, they were always finding reasons to justify why [each] was a special case.” In all, those retired officers having experience with the public sector discipline system found it frustrating and ineffective.

George, the only participant who works in a non-union agency, discussed how he and the agency director used the reorganization process to “get rid of people who were not working as a team.” He said that his military experience made it easier for him to do the reorganization: “I have a little bit easier time calling a spade a spade if someone [isn’t] producing or we don’t need the position.” George’s situation is unique, however. In a unionized environment, seniority drives the layoff procedure.

The second part of managing performance is recognition. The principles of recognition – giving prompt feedback that is meaningful to the individual, rewarding behaviors significant to the organization and rewarding based on merit – are universal, regardless of the organization. What is different between the public and military sectors are the recognition tools available. The military has a variety of recognition options including commendation letters, time off, awards, pay and medals. In the public sector, intrinsic awards are available but pay increases are generally automatic based on time in a classification. Some agencies are considering going to a “pay for performance” model, but many of those now in existence are blanket programs where all employees share equally in any payouts regardless of individual performance. None of the participants worked in an agency with a merit pay system.

Dan questioned some of the blanket recognition programs that give cash awards to an entire department regardless of individual effort. He viewed them as “encouraging mediocrity instead of rewarding those who bust their rear ends.” Several stated that they would like to have the authority to grant pay differentials to top performers instead of relying on the “step increase” system that rewards time in a position.

Both Ralph and Paul commented that their organizations relied too much on formal quarterly recognition events that they felt were too general and too distant from the actual performance to be effective rewards. Ralph was more openly critical of the recognition practices in his organization. He witnessed recognition given to employees who were known to be mediocre performers because, it appeared to him, that everyone gets some recognition within the group regardless of their actual accomplishments. “The whole charade makes me uncomfortable,” he observed.

Participants generally found the existing systems within the public sector to be ineffective for managing performance. Some stated that they were more willing to work with problem staff than were their counterparts.

Summary: Differences in Leading Staff Between the Military and the Public Sectors

Retired officers entering the public sector bring with them a depth of experience in leading staff. They have often managed work units of over 1000 people and at times have been responsible for the very lives of their crew. It is necessary for them, however, to make adjustments when assuming leadership positions in the public sector. Some of these adjustments are driven by the differences between the members, the expectations and the organizational systems of the military and the public sector, outlined in Table 9. The primary categories of difference include the members of the organization, the style of communication expected, the classification system (particularly the role of job descriptions), approach to staff retention, level of training and development, methods for teambuilding and systems for managing performance.



Table 9: Differences Between the Military and Public Sectors in Leading Staff

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Public Sector</i>
Nature of Staff	Diverse, many young, inexperienced.  Trust between officers & enlisted. Control over staff: follow orders.	Many older, more experienced, concerned with pay, benefits & retirement. Labor/management relations.  Independent: do not always comply with directives.
Communication	Direct, specific. "Need to know" principle.	Negative reactions to straightforward communication: jargon: formal style.
Classification System	Staff will "Do what needs to be done." Flexible job duties.	Established (sometimes out of date) job titles, job descriptions, pay rates. "Not my job" syndrome. Unresponsive HR system. No managerial latitude.
Staff Retention	Use induction, performance reports and re-enlistment system to "weed out." Move staff every 2-3 years:	Organizational stagnation: lack of mobility. Pay to keep individuals regardless of job duties.
Training and Development	Training a top priority; continuous development: stay current in field.	Mixed levels of training – some very poor. No leadership development. "Shallow bench."
Teamwork/ Camaraderie	Built into system – overseas deployment, dependency, paternalistic system, cross-department shipboard teams	Lack of established structures that promote teamwork.
Managing Performance	Work with whole individual: NJP; making the tough calls: fair & consistent discipline creates loyalty. Wide variety of recognition options. Merit-based rewards.	Limited focus and effectiveness: cumbersome civil service system: inconsistent enforcement. Some delayed, undeserving, and blanket awards.

These differences often require some adjustment or adaptation on the part of retired officers. As discussed, some of the strategies and practices adopted are successful and others are less effective. These are outlined in Table 10.

Table 10: Leading Staff in the Public Sector: Effective and Less Effective Strategies and Practices Employed by Retired Officers

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Nature of Staff	Many older, more experience, concern for pay, benefits & retirement.	Choices.	Meetings; open and frequent communications.	Information bulletins; problems with spreading rumors.
	Labor-management relations.	Adversarial labor relations.	Open communications.	
	Independent; do not always comply with directives.	Limits of discipline system.	Follow-up.	Assume directives will be followed.
Communication Norms	Negative reactions to straightforward communication; jargon; formal style.	Staff unaccustomed to direct style. Stereotypes.	Communication style adjusted. Eliminate jargon & formality.	Direct style affects customer & staff relations. Jargon, formality create barriers.
Classification System	Established (sometimes out of date) job titles, job descriptions, pay rates; "Not my job" syndrome.	Civil service system; some unresponsive HR systems; no latitude for manager.	Lobby & work within HR system; improve selection; re-organization.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.

<i>Subthemes (continued)</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Retention	Lifetime employment; lack mobility; pay to keep individuals.	Organization in stagnation; turnover as negative.	Change attitudes: turnover is good; promote mobility; pay what post is worth.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.
Training and Development	Most poor levels of training. No leadership development. "Shallow bench."	Expectations that staff know the job.	Increase training. Add leadership/ career development programs.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.
Teamwork/ Camaraderie	Lack of established structures that promote it.	Downsizing environment.	Communicate goals, delegation, instill sense of ownership; team recognition; social gatherings.	Inner circles.
Managing Performance	Limited focus: not all managers enforce rules.  Unearned and "blanket" awards.	Limited effectiveness –civil service system.  No merit rewards.	Work with own staff regardless of other managers. Reorganization.  Use rewards available.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.

The broad experience retired officers gained in the military assisted them in leading public sector employees. Officers seasoned by command positions are experienced in building camaraderie and in employee motivation. They are also practiced in utilizing discipline to shape performance. In particular, they bring a strong commitment to staff development and an understanding of the assets new members introduced into an organization. Participant data revealed that retired officers needed to adjustment some

military practices to effectively manage civilian staff. These adjustments were driven by differences in the organizational cultures of the two sectors such as the makeup of the workforce, the limitations of the civil service system and the constraints of the pay and classification system. Participants did not handle the challenge in the same way. They identified some personnel management practices that were more successful than others. Finally, some of the retired officers had to abandon some practices such as reliance on KATN leadership, jargon and military formality in order to be more effective in the public setting.

### **Theme Two: Organizational Relationships**

The second subtheme identified from the data addresses relations with other departments, agencies, the chief executive and the elected officials. Many participants cited some of these areas as the most challenging faced in their civilian career. The public sector environment is significantly different than the military chain of command where roles and behavioral norms are defined. Government also must provide its services in an arena of politics, citizen input, interdependent agencies, and multiple stakeholders. The participants identified differences between the two sectors, primarily in the following areas: relations with staff members, peers, one's immediate manager, and the executive leadership; the political process; amount of discretion; decision-making; and values and ethics.

#### **Relations with Staff Members**

In the military, status and respect tend to come with position. For example, members of the service could reasonably make assumptions about the background,

experience and competency of a commanding officer. As Will related:

The position is what carries the weight if you will, more so than the individual. If the person is a commanding officer, from day one they get all the respect, all the loyalty, and the allegiance . . . to start with. It's sort of theirs to lose. . . . Whereas in other organizations, I think you probably have to earn it first.

In the military, officers can reasonably expect to inherit the cooperation and respect of their subordinates at the onset of a new command. New leaders in the public sector probably enter the organization with no reputation to assist them in taking charge and, in the case of organizations in turmoil, may confront cynical or jaded members who expect them to fail. Dan entered a public organization as the new deputy director. The director had just been replaced and the agency was being downsized and reorganized. He found some individuals that were skeptical and others that were openly confrontational:

"[These] other people just constantly look[ed] for chinks in the armor . . . for reasons to find fault. . . . I am not used to having everything challenged."

Dan said that the verbal challenges to his authority were important moments in his transition to government. These moments helped him realize that he would need to adjust his behavior. He said he now picks his words more carefully around some staff members. He cited an instance where he was joking with one of his support staff and said that if he didn't get an assignment done he would have to "clobber" him. Another individual then accused him of workplace violence: "So I learned from that point on, I had to just watch what I say." Public sector leaders work under the scrutiny of staff members and have to carefully earn their respect and loyalty.

Several participants also mentioned that they had difficulty with their organization's "open door policy" which they felt allowed staff to, in Ralph's words, "circumvent the chain of command." Ralph felt that allowing line staff to go directly to high levels of management was intimidating to managers who had to make unpopular but necessary decisions. He proposed that open door should be limited: "Managers should be reasonably available through proper channels to talk about a concern. You can't afford to have someone just walk in, knock on the door and circumvent lower management."

Participants observed that managers and executives in the public sector are not automatically accorded the same respect they are given in the military. Staff can also use existing open door policies to circumvent the authority of their superiors. These both are indicators of a larger issue addressed in the previous section – public sector leaders do not have the same control over subordinates as do leaders in the military. Many of the supportive relationships and structures retired officers worked under in the military do not exist within local government or in the commercial sector.

### Relations with Peers

The military tries to build executive teams focused on fulfilling their mission. Individuals are trained from the onset of military experience that the unit takes priority over individual concerns. Sam sought camaraderie with his peers – the executives from other departments – expecting "them to be sincere about what was going on within their respective departments and generally interested in providing mutual support." He found little genuine discussion of shared issues, a lack of support with internal services such as filling positions and ordering computers and a lack of trust among department heads.

I spent a lot of effort in trying to develop within my department a sense of direction and purpose and a sense of commitment . . . but I felt we didn't get the same thing back [from other departments.] . . . I would have vacancies and it would take six to nine months before we could get a recruitment on the streets.

He found the executive teambuilding sessions "hollow" because afterward participants returned to passing the buck and finger pointing at each other: "After it was over, people went back to exactly what they were doing before. No one ever learned anything." The lack of teamwork and collegiality is one of the reasons Sam left the public sector.

While Sam's experience was not fully shared by all, most participants felt that their public sector agencies did not have close camaraderie. Will identified the lack of camaraderie as the most difficult aspect of his transition to the public sector:

[I miss] the camaraderie of what we call the wardroom . . . I miss that, because in civilian organizations it's almost as if it's not even desired. People, when they leave work, want to get the hell away from it and get away from the people they work with. Whereas in the military we were used to – especially when overseas – [our] own little community.

Despite multiple attempts, Will was able to organize only one social gathering in nearly four years. Ted has successfully created some camaraderie through leading by example. He began sponsoring quarterly staff lunches, often a cookout, within his own organization. Other departments have joined in organizing the cookouts, improving interdepartmental relations and broadening teamwork across departments.

Sam found that there was a lack of interdepartmental support from his colleagues, other department heads. He found that functions he relied on like human resources and

planning had a “your priority is not my priority” approach. Each department head went in separate directions, sometimes ignoring the direction of the chief executive. At times, according to Sam, “it seemed like you had six cities in one.”

Although Ted met with some success in building teamwork by holding social events with his own work unit and eventually other departments, other retired officers noted the lack of camaraderie and collaboration among peers as another difference between the military and public sectors.

#### Relations with Immediate Manager

In the military, the commanding officer is responsible for the development of subordinate junior and senior officers and is expected to be a mentor. The CO holds ultimate responsibility for the safety of the crew and for accomplishing the mission. The role of a subordinate officer is to support his or her commander in that mission. Sam expressed that this was still his job, whether in the public, private or military sector. George spoke more extensively about what he termed the “senior-subordinate” nature of his relationship with his boss, articulating views that were clearly shaped by his experience as a Marine:

My military background does not allow me to question too much. . . . [My manager] is in the authority position. You don't really question that. You hope he knows what he is doing. If he doesn't, you're eventually going to question it or you're going to leave.

George's attitude that “the boss is the boss” originates in the concept of chain of command, and the core value of obedience. He saw his approach as more productive than the reaction of many other managers who “don't understand and get upset if their



recommendation isn't followed. . . . Because of the military I don't [get upset]. He's the boss. He makes the decision. I accept that. Now let's go do it." What is interesting about George's relationship with his manager, is that it is a complete contrast with the actions Dan and Ralph described wherein some line staff members questioned, criticized and went around their superiors. It is arguable whether unquestioned acceptance of the boss's direction fits with a civilian organizational culture and, more importantly, is the best approach for producing quality decisions in a public environment where so many stakeholders provide conflicting input.

Ralph felt his manager failed to take an active role in her staff's development: "I don't feel like there's an attitude [here] of helping people who are interested and capable of moving up." He cited an incident where he repeatedly asked his manager for information on the process for getting a certain professional certificate. He finally got the information from one of his peers. Almost none of the participants have had any significant professional development opportunities since entering the local government, in stark contrast to their military experience.

Two of the participants – Ralph and Will – specifically expressed their dissatisfaction with the assignments given them by their manager. Both felt they were required to do too much mundane administrative work and were working below their capabilities. Consequently, Will initiated his own special projects such as creating a leadership development program and organizing a team to draft organizational values.

#### Relations with Executive Leadership

There are two other key components of the chain of command in the public sector. The first of these is the chief executive of the public entity – the City Manager.

Port Director, Chief Administrative Officer, etc. – whose role and authority approximately equate to that of the commanding officer. In the military, the commanding officer sets the tone and direction for the organization and delegates the authority to direct its implementation to the executive officer and others. Each participant discussed some of the “truly great officers” he had worked under. Over half expressed disappointment and criticism with the public sector executives and their staffs.

Steve worked under a chief executive who promised sweeping changes. Steve anticipated that the executive would bring exciting, inspirational leadership to local government. In practice, he abused staff in private and in public meetings. Steve was disillusioned to see fear being used as a management technique and contrasted the experience to Navy captains who “generally counseled you in private.” Paul also criticized his chief executive office for not supporting departments in public meetings:

I’m constantly amazed that somebody at [that] level would criticize this department in an open arena in front of other groups. That does absolutely no good whatsoever! That comes from people who have no understanding of what loyalty and commitment is.

While all the participants recognized that they now operated within a public political arena, none of those who raised the issue of public chastisement appeared to be able to condone or forgive it. Some of the harshest criticism of government organizations came in this area. Like Paul, none of the officers who witnessed it or experienced it saw any benefit in it. As leaders who had for decades practiced summoning staff for a private “chewing out,” they could not excuse public and sometimes televised scoldings.

Military commanding officers bear responsibility for the actions of all their subordinates. Some participants expressed disappointment that public sector executives would assign blame rather than assume responsibility, especially in a public forum.

### The Political Process

The second key component of the public sector chain of command is the legislative body – the City Counsel, Board of Supervisors, Water Authority Board, etc. There is no direct equivalent in the military. Congress passes the legislation that affects the budget and, in a broad sense, the programs within the military. The Department of the Navy sets policy and defines the programs and aspects of program implementation. In the military, however, there is a formidable administrative barrier between the officer and members of congress. It is a severe breach of protocol for an officer to have direct contact with a member of congress. Few officers have direct contact with the Department of the Navy unless on assignment in Washington. There is, more frequently, great physical distance between the legislature and the individual officer. By contrast, nearly all of the participants now have at least weekly contact with elected officials. Many identified this as the greatest change they encountered upon entering the public sector.

Will, Steve and Ted found understanding the political process – placating elected officials and their staff, understanding the power structure, writing reports and letters “to win the support of five very different people” and managing the public input process – to be their biggest learning challenge. Steve explained that in the military, it was clear who had the decision-making authority: “Here, there are a lot of political ramifications [with every project].” Dan, in contrast, found it the most exciting aspect in his new career:

Here, you're closer to the flagpole . . . We have an opportunity to interact and respond directly to the [elected officials] who then, in turn, decide to make policy. Whereas in DC, we were so far insulated from those who make the decisions . . . [this is] a little more exciting.

George's adjustment involved getting accustomed to the reality that fully half his time was now spent in preparation for legislative hearings. His legislative body went beyond policymaking and became involved in the day-to-day operations of his organization. Steve found the process of writing and docketing legislative proposals to be very confusing: "You can adopt the attitude that it stinks and you don't want to deal with it, and then you don't get anything done. Or you can try and master it." One of his earliest assignments was to write a legislative proposal eliminating staff positions based on a new reengineering procedure that required a written finding of "economy and efficiency." He sought help, only to find that no other department had done it before. Steve had to write and publicly defend the findings and face stiff opposition testimony from employee groups. Early in his public career, he was thrown into a high profile political project with little support.

Sam observed that politics could have a divisive affect on the teamwork of the department heads: "They were all concerned about making sure that they stood in a good light with the city council members rather than really doing a good job of . . . making this a great city."

Public managers can actively work within the political structure to build relationships and establish trust. Two of the participants stated that they had joined committees outside their normal job duties to build relations with elected officials who

influenced their programs. One, for example, served on a city childcare committee chaired by an elected official on his board.

Part of the public political process is also dealing with the interplay of citizens and constituents. Ted had been assigned to deal with a problematic citizen who had a long history of encroaching on public parkland adjacent to his property. Drawing upon the values of citizen involvement, Ted met with the individual repeatedly and ultimately they signed an agreement on the appropriate use of the public land. Ted, proud of his success in negotiating a reasonable arrangement, was shocked when the legislature threw out his agreement:

He'd been a problem enough in the past that they were not willing to be patient with him or accept his word. . . . [They] said "We want you to put a fence around him so he can't move onto the park." [The citizen] just went white and got angry and won't speak to me to this day. You know, I had spent probably two months in negotiations and was feeling pretty proud [about the agreement]. . . . It was a learning experience on how [public] decisions get made. You don't have the same latitude that you did when you were the commanding officer of a ship. And it takes a whole lot longer.

Ted felt he acted on public sector values, but the legislature acted on their own past history with the individual. He received a lesson in politics and in the limitations of his own role.

Participants had mixed reactions to working within the political process. Most admitted they found it challenging and some enjoyed their expanded influence. It may be that those who are more goal and outcome oriented derive less satisfaction from

operating within the public sector arena. The variety of stakeholders and political maneuverings complicates and delays the decision-making process.

### Amount of Discretion

Paul recalled that his military commanding officers generally had broad experience in his technical field. As junior officers, they had once done his job, so they understood the issues. As COs, they would check on the progress and direction of projects but, overall, demonstrated faith in the capability of subordinate officers to do their job. In the public sector, Paul finds his division being bombarded with requests to justify his decisions and directives from administrators who do not understand his work:

You get hit with an excessive number of questions or direction in many cases that is counterproductive. I can't tell you how many hours I spend a week on things . . . that are of absolutely no value in accomplishing the mission of our organization . . . because they don't understand and we're having to explain to them instead of them maybe operating on faith. . . . Let them focus more on keeping us equipped – giving us the budget or the support we need in terms of personnel.

Elected officials and public sector staff are usually generalists. They do not have subject matter experts on their personal staffs in all technical areas. Department heads and managers must build a relationship and establish trust to be effective in the policy-making arena. This is in contrast to the military where expertise and reputation came with rank and were “yours to lose,” as Will put it. For Paul, who self-described himself as “outcome oriented,” it was frustrating to be working under people who questioned his judgment and seemed to assume his actions needed justification.

### Decision-making

Decision-making skills are essential in military operational settings. From the onset of their careers, officers are given broad authority. The combination of mentoring and experience is designed to develop increasingly higher orders of analytical and decision-making capabilities and confidence. As discussed earlier, the delegation of expanded authority is a reward for officers. In addition, there is a premium placed on quick decision-making under stress. There were two common complaints about decision-making in the public sector: the slow process and indecisiveness, and the micro-management by executive and legislative branches.

The public process expands the layers of those involved in decision-making. Citizens, lobbyists, public interest groups, unions, the press, other agencies, executives and elected officials are all entangled in the public policy process. Les voiced his frustration:

[Overcoming the] inertia in a large organization is harder ... for somebody who spent a lot of time as a leader, making things happen in a small combat organization. That can get frustrating real fast, and you have to kind of transition it and start to understand how to make the organization move.

Paul found the layers of involvement led to a "paralysis in the system." The process itself delayed decisions to the point, in his observation, that some public sector managers had just stopped making critical decisions. He also sensed a hunger among the staff members "for someone to make a decision. And it really doesn't matter what the decision is. Just make one. Just tell me where to go." He was personally disappointed in

the frequent second-guessing of his decisions, especially by parties who did not have the requisite technical knowledge.

Frank, who subsequently left the public sector, found a lack of excitement in government work: "The critical decisions seem to be taken from you here. Whereas when I was in the military, I was always required to make those decisions, right now." Sam, who also left government during the scope of this study, chafed under a system where the executive gave directives, rather than setting a general direction and allowing his department heads implementation authority. Others recognized the uniqueness of their military experience and adapted to new challenges. As Ted viewed it:

I think there was more satisfaction in the Navy because there was, most of the time, a real sense of purpose. . . . There were real lives on the line, real decisions made. They were significant. . . . But I enjoy this job and I enjoy the tasks that have been given me, putting them together and seeing them come out reasonably well . . . and I enjoy working with the guys and seeing them take charge.

Ted has worked to adjust to getting satisfaction from both accomplishing tasks and developing his employees. The political and public input process is a reality that public sector leaders have to accept and utilize.

### Values and Ethics

The military culture is one with shared values of duty, honor, country and service, which are instilled from the onset at the academies and in officer training programs. The public sector values of efficiency, effectiveness, public good, responsiveness and social equity are less clear and sometimes in conflict. Dan, Ted and Paul all stated that they had entered the public sector because they wanted to continue their public service. Dan



viewed local government as having “the same goals or ideals in terms of public service, honesty and integrity.” He did not feel that these values were absent from the business world, but that in the private sector “they always work toward the bottom line, the profit and I’m not sure they always adhere to ethics the way [government] employees do.”

Paul and Sam both expressed their disapproval of the ethics they witnessed in the actions of colleagues. Paul was disappointed in the values he found at all levels of the organization, but especially those displayed by management:

I’ve seen people [holding prominent] positions who were obviously self-centered, who felt, “I’m here to make me look good. I’m here to build a power base.” . . .

[Navy personnel] seemed to have a very strong focus on the goals and objectives of the organization, not personal goals and objectives which I found to be the general state [here].

He was particularly disturbed by the history of ethical violations within his agency. One deputy director had served jail time for taking kickbacks from a multi-million dollar contract. Such actions, he felt, create a cynicism within the staff concerning leadership’s dedication to the values of public service.

Sam was disappointed in department heads who, it appeared to him, valued their personal status with the local elected officials over the good of their agency and the public interest. He was also quite surprised at their non-compliance with directives from the executive. He cited the example of a policy on disciplining employees for excessive vehicle accidents: “I was the only one of all of the department directors who enforced the policy . . . It’s part of the structure of the military [that] if you have these kinds of policies, you enforce them.” He viewed such actions as contrary to the public good.

Values and ethics were not mentioned by a majority of the participants. Their importance appears to vary with organizational circumstances. But shallow leadership values constituted a disturbing issue to those who found the practices within their respective organizations in direct conflict with their military experiences.

Summary: Differences in Organizational Relations between the Military and the Public Sectors

The participants identified differences between the organizational relationships within the two sectors. The military has formal relationships contained within the chain of command structure. The public sector less formal norms, and operates primarily within power and influence relationships. These differences are summarized below in Table 11.

Table 11: Differences Between the Military and Public Sectors in Organizational Relations

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Public Sector</i>
Staff Relations	Respect comes with position. Confidence of staff. Respect is "yours to lose."	Must build own reputation. Possible cynicism of staff.
Peers Relations	Mission is primary. Camaraderie of wardroom.	Lack of camaraderie and internal support.
Relations with manager	CO has ultimate responsibility. Role is to support CO. CO is in charge of officer development.	Support boss. Lack of training and development opportunities. Mundane assignments.
Relations with Executive Leadership	Praise in public, chastise in private. Knows your job. Command presence.	Exec criticizes at meetings and public hearings; assigns blame; probably does not know your job.

Table 11. continued

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Public Sector</i>
Political Relations	Insulated from congress and top management.	“Close to the flagpole.” Competition among department heads. Citizen involvement.
Amount of Discretion	Broad discretion. Trust in judgment. Give general direction.	Micro-management. Others don’t know your job. Multiple questions and requests for information.
Decision-making	Broad authority. Make life and death decisions. Quick decision-making. Responsibility its own reward.	Limited authority. Involvement of many stakeholders. Slow, indecisive process. Micro-management.
Values and Ethics	Clear, shared values.	Conflicting values. Some individual orientation rather than public good.

There are more players in the public sector arena. All the retired officers now had regular contact with elected officials and some also had regular contact with members of the public. These retired military officers must now operate within an organization where they are not automatically granted the respect of their position – either by their staff, peers or superiors. This can surface in such ways as a lack of compliance by staff, minimal support from their immediate manager, lack of camaraderie and teamwork with regard to their peers, and micro-management by executive staff and elected officials. This could be one of the more difficult adjustments for retired officers as camaraderie and unit cohesion are infused in the military environment. More specific details are contained in Table 12.

Table 12: Organizational Relations: Effective and Less Effective Strategies and Practices Employed by Retired Officers

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Staff Relations	Need to establish reputation. People question leader. "Open door" avoids chain of command.	Less control over staff. Cynicism of some staff.	Consciously build reputation. Communicate carefully. Follow-up.	Assume you have a positive reputation and cooperation.
Peer Relations	Lack of camaraderie and internal support.	Separate work and personal lives. Focus on own department.	Hold events. Outreach.	No follow-up. Accept status quo.
Relations with manager	Support boss. Lack of training and development opportunities. Mundane assignments.	Multiple stakeholders complicate decisions. Historic lack of training and development.	Find own development opportunities.	Don't question boss. Wait for development opportunities.
Relations with Executive Leadership	Criticize at meetings and public hearings. Feelings of being disrespected.	CEO staff probably does not know your job.	Build influence relationships.	

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Political Relations	Insulated from congress and top management.	“Close to the flagpole.” Competition of department heads. Citizen involvement.	Enjoy influence. Build relationships. Join political committees.	Avoid. try to insulate self from the process.
Political Process	Multiple approval levels. Competition among department heads.	Multiple stakeholders. Public processes. Takes longer.	Enjoy influence. Build relationships. Join political committees.	Avoid. try to insulate self from the process.
Amount of Discretion	CEO staff doesn't know the job. Many questions and information requests.	CEO and elected officials' staff are generalists.	Develop relationships and trust. Build reputation.	Become frustrated.
Decision-making	Limited authority. Slow, indecisive process. Micro-management.	Multiple stakeholders. Others make critical decisions.	Accept change. Build influence relationships. Satisfaction from the work itself.	Become frustrated.
Values & Ethics	Not always clear. Some “me” orientation.	Conflicting public goals.		

Some of the more successful strategies cited by participants center around using influence rather than positional power. This was effective in both developing successful relations and gaining more discretion and decision-making authority – both traditionally important to the job satisfaction of military officers. The other important strategy was in

consciously developing a personal reputation with staff and not relying on leading by position.

### **Theme Three: Lack of Policies and Procedures**

All but one of the interviewees mentioned the lack or poor quality of policies and procedures in their local government agencies. This is the area where many of them felt they had either made the greatest impact within their workplace or where they found considerable frustration. Paul has found the lack of policies and procedures “incredible” particularly in the area of planning and managing capital projects. In some cases procedures did not exist, in others they were “on the shelf rather than being followed.” He is accustomed to the strict guidelines of federal contracts. In his public agency he has discovered what he sees as a disturbing ignorance of contracting law and of certain standard procedures that establish a buffer between the contractor and contract administrator.

When joining his agency, Bob found favoritism and inconsistency in the application of rules at the airport. He brought over some of the procedures he found to work in military air facilities to the general aviation airport he now manages. He initially found some resentment by both staff and customers to the structure he created:

I was pretty soundly disliked when I first got to the airport [for] imposing structure. I didn't try to rush it too fast in my mind, [but] to some people it was too fast. . . . I may not be particularly liked by a lot of people but I think I'm well respected because of what I've accomplished.

He believes he's built credibility and earned the grudging support of some flight and charter businesses because, despite a significant increase in air traffic, he is running a safer airport with the same staffing level. Will introduced an integrated budget review and streamlined the legislative agenda process within his organization. Ralph instituted an improved system for fee collections and computerized certain functions.

Ted reported some success in improving processes where he works. He set up a public works preventive maintenance schedule within his department. More broadly, he has introduced project planning to many of his fellow department heads. In a example of good change management, Ted began by modeling the use of written plans within his own department, then volunteered to do plans for projects that reached across agencies. He needed to use persuasion, influence and example to convince his fellow department heads of the importance of a project plan and of adhering to project schedules: "I have no leverage to say 'You have to do this at this time.' And so I have to be patient [and ask] 'When are you going to be able to do it. I can't do my part until you finish yours.' Or 'Do you need me to help?'" The department heads' attitudes shifted and they now look to Ted for project planning: "It's now something people expect that I'm going to do." He now has developed plans for most of the agencies' annual events. Ted regards this as one of his more significant accomplishments in the public sector.

Steve related how he had used an improvement team to lead an initially skeptical group of surveyors and regional planning staff through a process of reducing the total cycle time of the plan checking procedure by two-thirds. He utilized the TQM processes he had learned in the military. He believed that employee involvement was key to both the successful strategy and successful implementation.

Sam believed that he was brought into the agency to help develop processes. He did so within his own department but, unlike Ted, did not influence the operation of the agency as a whole. He worked directly with the chief executive officer, but felt nothing was ever implemented:

He would spend a lot of time talking to me about it. We met weekly, privately, the two of us. We talked through issues and he agreed with all of those issues – but he never quite ever found time to take direct action on some of it, to make . . . [the necessary] changes.

It is difficult to assess the reasons for success or failure in implementing organizational change. Perhaps Ted's approach of modeling and influencing better fit the nature of a public sector organization. He successfully won over colleagues he recognized he had no control over. Sam described a military-like approach of working through the chain of command, expecting that the commander would take action and his officers would follow the directives – similar to the military approach. His agency's executive may have been reluctant to impose change when, as Sam witnessed, the department heads ignored directives they did not want to implement. In contrast to military practice, there were no significant consequences for disobeying a directive.



Table 13: Policies and Procedures: Differences between the Military and Public Sector; Effective Strategies and Practices for Public Sector Improvements

<i>Military Phenomena</i>	<i>Public Sector Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Exist for everything. Standardized across the organization. Generally adhered to.	Lacking in many areas. Applied inconsistently. Less developed than in federal contracting. Not always consequences for non-compliance.	Lesser priority. Existing policies and procedures are often out of date or "on the shelf."	Bring in practices from the military. Introduce through influence and modeling.	Discuss solely with the chief executive and rely on him/her to implement.

Every participant cited the lack of consistent policies and procedures as a difference between the two sectors. This is perhaps the area where they experienced greatest success in transitioning to the local government. Almost every participant could point to tangible improvements they had made to their organizations by introducing some of the best practices they had learned in the military. Not all participants described how they had successfully introduced new practices into their organization. Those who did, cited examples of influence, involvement and modeling processes, rather than implementing change from a position of authority.

#### **Theme Four: Encountering Stereotypes of Military Officers**

One of the subthemes that emerged during the interviews described the stereotypes of military officers that participants encountered when they joined the public sector. The stereotypes involved both the assumptions of co-workers about retired

officers and the filter through which co-workers viewed their actions. Dan reflected that increasingly fewer members of the public have had active military experience or personally know someone who has served in the military. Thus, for many, the media shapes their image of military officers:

I think people tend to think military officers are rigid, possibly alcoholic, not very smart . . . Captain Binghamton of McHale's Navy, the "Officer and a Gentleman" type [from "Emerald Point" or "JAG"] . . . or the psychotic, pinhead,

Neanderthal, "kill-em-all-and-let-God-sort-'em-out" mentality.

Dan cited an incident that took place while he was new to the job. An employee asked him in apparent seriousness if he had been trained in psychological warfare and was he going to use it on the staff. No one else related so extreme an incident, but everyone questioned about the issue felt they had encountered stereotypes about retired officers. Some have been more successful than others in contending with negative stereotypes. George knew there were concerns about whether or not he could work with women and with a director who was younger than he. He has worked deliberately to show he could team with other organizational members.

Sam found retired officers were perceived as "haughty," "unchangeable" and only knowing only how to give orders. When he tried to introduce some improved procedures, other department heads saw as him and "bureaucratic and rigid." Sam felt they used his ex-military status as a rationale for not implementing his ideas.

Steve believed the "ex-Navy rap" centered on having cliques and "a secret handshake of some kind." The most common misperception he encountered was that former military all think alike and "don't know how to deal with civilians." He had to

make an effort to relay his experience in managing a civilian workforce. He mentioned, as did others, that consciously trying to remove military jargon from his work conversations was important to moving beyond the stereotypes. The jargon not only interferes with communication, but sets retired officers apart from other staff. Several officers using jargon in a meeting for example can reinforce the clique image.

Will felt he had been regarded as a “hatchet man,” “stiff,” and “set in my ways.” His preferred management style is to lead by example, but he felt that the stereotypes “make that a little more difficult for me.” His practice of thoroughly reviewing all correspondence was perceived as a failure to delegate. His attempt to revise an existing dress code to incorporate the organization’s practice of “casual Fridays” backfired on him, he believed, because of his ex-military status: “I defined . . . some things that were inappropriate [e.g., bare midriffs, shirts with improper language] and suddenly I’m labeled as the guy who’s trying to make everybody dress alike.” Putting standard practices in writing reinforced his ex-military image and interfered with his attempts at organizational change.

Two of the aviators who had difficulties in establishing second careers expressed dissatisfaction with their current level of pay and responsibilities. Both felt that the public sector did not understand their military experience and what they were capable of. Ralph related how his manager had taken him to a briefing she was giving to the assistant executive officer of their government entity. “I was supposed to have been impressed,” he stated. But Ralph, who has been on the staff of four admirals, was not intimidated by speaking before local government executives. He was not impressed by the performance

of his department head, nor did he feel he had been able to persuade his organization of his experience and capabilities:

I spent 20 years as a manager in the service. Often that's not understood [nor is] the level of responsibility and expertise that you have . . . There's no appreciation for military officers and what they've done, no understanding of that . . . within the civilian sector.

In an incident he found particularly humiliating, Ralph had to appeal after his application for an executive position was rejected for lack of experience. He was accustomed to having a military superior who supported his career development and did not find such support in the public sector.

Each participant encountered some stereotypes of retired military officers when they transitioned to the public sector, summarized in Table 14.

Table 14: Encountering Stereotypes of Retired Military Officers: Effective and Less Effective Strategies and Practices

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Stereotypes include: rigid, bureaucratic, not very bright, clique-ish, trained in psychological warfare. Experience of retired military not understood or recognized.	Less public contact and direct experience with the military. Rely on media image. Not given appropriate assignments or commensurate pay Barrier to implementing change.	Avoiding military jargon and formality. Conscious efforts to counter stereotypes. Take on higher level assignments. Educate co-workers and demonstrate abilities.	Actions that reinforce stereotypes, e.g., using jargon, issuing too many written policy directives. Rely on superior to give out assignments.

These stereotypes hampered their effectiveness as public sector leaders. The key to handling the stereotypes is to be aware of them and make concerted efforts not to reinforce them. Retired officers with managers who do not understand or value their background have the option of managing their own development opportunities, demonstrating their abilities or seeking a new work environment.

### Satisfaction and Disappointments in Public Sector Employment

There are positive and negative aspects to each workplace. The fact that two of eleven participants left the public sector during the course of this study and two others hinted that they would be looking for other employment, however, suggests that satisfaction and disappointment with public sector employment is an area worth examining. Most of the areas of satisfaction mentioned concerned personal accomplishments. Nearly every participant in this study expressed disappointments. Some were stated as personal disappointments in terms of career limitations. Others addressed some of the structures and practices found within the public sector.

Bob and Ralph, both aviators, had difficulty in finding steady employment initially after retirement. Bob, who committed to keeping his family in the San Diego area, was dissatisfied with his salary and knew he could improve his finances by leaving the area. He was compensated though, by the nature of his job: "I still get to smell jet fuel every day." He was also proud of the improvements he implemented in the areas of streamlining operations and improving safety. Ralph expressed more bitterness about his position. He characterized the leadership style within his agency as "micro-management," "insincere" and "unsupportive." While he oversaw a much-needed standardization of helicopter flight procedures and improved parking and record keeping,

he was dissatisfied with the amount of review he faced and with the level of assignments he was given. He has witnessed the agency's failure to recognize employees and to promote their advancement – including his own. "I don't feel that there's a prevailing attitude of helping people that are interested and capable of moving up."

Frank, who left the public sector, enjoyed his staff but missed the excitement of the military and the "criticality of decisions." He felt that within the political framework of government "the critical decisions seem to be taken from you." The slow pace of decision-making also frustrated him.

Will was somewhat dissatisfied with the "mundane" nature of his administrative functions. His director handled most of the political and legislative work, leaving Will to oversee daily operations. He found improving processes and working on two projects – developing organizational values and developing a leadership training academy – to be the most satisfying aspects of his job. He found the daily administrative assignments somewhat tedious, and frankly stated, "I wouldn't expect to be doing this the rest of my life." In addition, he regretted the lack of camaraderie and socialization in his agency. Unlike his experience in the military, the executives and managers separate their work and personal life. He also found that stereotypes of military officers hindered staff from getting to know him.

Sam also had issues with the lack of camaraderie in the public sector and he cited this as one of his reasons for leaving. He did not witness an appreciation of common goals, mutual support and teamwork among his entity's department heads. He felt stereotyped as rigid and bureaucratic by his colleagues and felt they used his ex-military status as an excuse to oppose his ideas. He could not get the needed internal support

services from other departments and felt it was unfair that they all received the same compensation – from a department with five employees, to his public works department which was the largest. He was disappointed that the executive did not follow through on committed changes and gave specific directives rather than general policy direction. He held little hope that the situation would change. He did not mention any areas of public sector employment that brought him satisfaction. He later took a job with a private firm.

Paul was pleased to be in an organization dedicated to public service and felt he had a lot to offer. However, he also expressed a series of disappointments with the public sector. He was troubled by the lack of policies and procedures, particularly in technical areas such as contract and project management. He viewed the staff as under-trained and some as lacking commitment to the goals of public service. The inflexibility of the classification and civil service system hampered his ability to manage staff. He seemed most frustrated by the thin support and even public criticism of public managers from the executive layer, their level of micro-management, their failure to make timely decisions and their lack of faith in the judgment of division and department heads. When he examined the entire picture, he felt he did not have the same ability to do his work as he did in the Navy. “I look back at the Navy and [realize] we were good. I mean we were really good because [of] the policies, the procedures, the skill level of the people.”

Les was very positive about working for his agency. He enjoyed his high level of responsibility and felt that his agency was “on the cutting edge of local government.” He was comfortable in his new career because the work was similar to his Navy experience. He found some of the same procedural challenges in both sectors – “archaic” policies that no one had looked at for ages and conflicting policies from different agencies. George

had no significant disappointments. He believed that his agency could benefit by incorporating some of the military practices in the areas of standardizing policies and procedures and developing clear communications practices. It is noteworthy that both Les and George are working at agencies that are currently fairly stable.

Initially, Ted had a rough career transition, taking classes and doing volunteer work in local government until he found a job managing an environmental program and was subsequently selected as a department head. He expressed no disappointments with the public sector and had sought to work in an area of public service. He contrasted his two careers and reflected that the military experience was striking because it involved life and death decisions. But in his view, "That career is over and I'm satisfied it happened. . . . This is my new career and it has its own goals." He stated that he enjoyed the challenges of running his department, and has worked to build good relationships with his colleagues and staff. He was proud that the overall conditions of public facilities had improved under his direction. He has also successfully introduced project planning to his peers.

Steve was also satisfied with his new career. He began as a program manager and received a significant promotion to department head. Steve could point to his accomplishments in improving the plan checking process (reducing cycle time by 75%), a renewed agency focus on customer service and an expanded training program. His main disappointment was with the chief executive officer and his staff. He was disturbed by their willingness to chastise departmental staff in public and found some of their practices as counterproductive to building teamwork. Both Ted and Steve advanced rapidly once entering government employment.



Dan was pleased to be working in an agency that shared his commitment to public service and found that he especially enjoyed operating within the political arena. His key disappointment was in his entity's failure to take care of its people by establishing career paths and upward mobility programs which he tried to address in a recent reorganization. He found the human resources practices frustrating, especially the classification and discipline systems. When he joined the public sector, there existed what he viewed as an "archaic" bonus system that "pitted worker against management." It has since been replaced. Finally, he critiqued a new public agency diversity initiative as "20 years behind the Navy's."

A summary of the areas of satisfaction and disappointment participants encountered in public sector employment is summarized in Table 15.

Table 15: Disappointment with Public Sector Employment: Description of Areas of Satisfaction and Disappointments with Public Sector Employment

<i>Fictitious Name</i>	<i>Satisfaction with the Public Sector</i>	<i>Disappointments with the Public Sector</i>
Bob	Accomplishments: improved airport operations and safety. Climate: Still gets to smell jet fuel.	Compensation: Poor salary compared to other areas of the country.
Dan	Political arena is exciting. Accomplishments: reorganization, creating career path. Values of public service.	Human resources, classification, civil service systems; lack of career mobility; worker vs. management; shallow diversity program.
Frank	Enjoys working with staff.	Political structure: slow decision-making; critical decisions made by others. Job lacks excitement.
<i>Fictitious Name</i>	<i>Satisfaction with the Public Sector</i>	<i>Disappointments with the Public Sector</i>
George	Accomplishments: improved administrative procedures.	None

Les	Organization is "on the cutting edge." Similar nature of work to the Navy; responsibilities are exciting, important to local area.	None
Paul	Has skills needed by organization. Values of public service.	Lack of policies and procedures. Some staff untrained or lack commitment to goals and values. Inflexibility of civil service system. Executive level micro-manages, is critical, non-supportive, indecisive, lacks faith in staff.
Ralph	Accomplishments: standardized helicopter flight procedures; improved parking and records procedures.	Low salary. Executive micro-management; low level assignments. Lack of support for career development, recognition and mobility.
Sam	None given.	Lack of camaraderie, common goals, & teamwork. Stereotypes of ex-military blocked initiatives. Compensation system. Executive is directive, lacks follow-through.
Steve	Accomplishments: improved plan checking procedures, customer service and employee development. Promoted to position with considerable authority.	Executive criticizes staff publicly.
Ted	Accomplishments: public facilities are in better shape, improved plan project planning. Values of public service. Promoted to position with considerable authority.	None.
Will	Accomplishments: improved budget and agenda procedures and improved training.	Mundane assignments. Lack of camaraderie. Stereotypes of ex-military affect work and relationships.

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Most of the areas of satisfaction expressed centered on accomplishments, which is

consistent with the goal and outcome orientation of the military culture. The fact that two

of the eleven participants have left public employment and two others said that they intended to apply for other jobs suggests that the level of dissatisfaction with public employment ran high among this group. The areas of dissatisfaction included inadequate compensation, a cumbersome civil service structure, centralized decision-making, micro-management, lack of leadership support for career development, lack of peer camaraderie, lack of mobility and mundane, routine assignments. With the exception of poor compensation, these are all areas that run contrary to military culture. Among those who have left or stated they were considering seeking other employment, the following areas were cited as the most disappointing in their current jobs: the task assignments, the amount of discretion, the public sector decision-making process, their relationship with their manager, peer camaraderie and salary. It is also noteworthy that Frank and Sam, who both left government employment, did not cite any concrete accomplishments in their public careers.

Perhaps the ability to separate one career from the other is a significant contributor to the success of taking on a leadership role in a new organization. One observation made during this research concerned the way participants decorated their government offices. Most displayed vestiges of their military career. Some had most of their wall space dedicated to their military memorabilia. A few displayed tour books and one even had an anchor in his office. Ted, Steve and Dan had nothing from their military days in their offices. As Dan stated, "That is the past. This is where I work now."

### **Data Analysis: Approaches to Change**

Almost universally, the retired military officers interviewed identified a number of differences between the military and public sectors, summarized in Appendix F. In the area of leading staff, participants cited differences in: the nature of the staff they led, communication styles accepted, the flexibility of the classification system, expectations and practices related to staff retention, commitment to training and development, organizational structures that promoted teamwork and camaraderie and the approach and structures for managing performance. In the area of organizational relations, participants noted differences in their relations with elected officials, executive leadership, their own manager, their peers and their subordinates. There were also differences in the amount of discretion allowed, the breadth of decision-making and the extent shared values permeated the organization. Finally, there was a difference in the extent and role of standard operating procedures between the military services and the public sector.

During the course of the interviews, some participants volunteered strategies and shared experiences, which demonstrated their success in adapting to and improving their new organizations. These data are summarized in Appendix G. In the area of leading staff, successful strategies included: expanding organizational communications; changing to a more indirect communication style; eliminating military jargon; following-up on directives; working within the restrictions of the classification/civil service system; promoting mobility and staffing changes; expanding training; developing teamwork by clarifying goals, granting authority to staff, promoting social events and recognizing team efforts; and committing to honestly evaluate and recognize staff. Strategies that were not successful were: issuing information bulletins rather than direct contact, assuming staff

would follow directives, using a direct communication style and military jargon. accepting and criticizing the status quo and developing an inner circle.

In the area of organizational relations participants found that consciously building their reputation, holding events, taking charge of their own development, building influence and political relationships, and accepting the limitations of their authority and decision-making were successful strategies. Less effective actions were failing to follow-up with staff, accepting the status quo, waiting for managers to initiate developmental opportunities and becoming frustrated with the involvement of multiple parties in decision-making and the limits of personal authority in public organizations.

In the area of policies and procedures, participants who proactively introduced relevant practices from the military, particularly by utilizing influence and modeling programs were successful. Relying solely on the chief executive to take action was not effective. Participants also found they had to be aware of the stereotypes held about military officers and had to consciously work to counter those stereotypes, to educate their co-workers and to demonstrate their abilities.

Initially there were some participants who stated that they had not faced any transition issues in leaving the military and entering public sector leadership positions. Yet the participant data revealed that there were some areas where retired officers needed to make adjustments from the practices they learned in the military to respond to organizational differences in the nature of the staff, communication styles, the civil service/classification system, employee retention, training and development, building teamwork, managing performance within the civil service system, organizational relations at all levels, the political process, the amount of discretion, decision-making,

values and ethics, and policies and procedures. In addition, each encountered stereotypes of retired military officers that affected their image and capacity to influence their organization.

The officers utilized various strategies and practices to adapt to the unique aspects of the public sector. The variety of answers recorded presented does not represent the entire range of approaches, nor indicate the most effective approaches. They do indicate a breadth of experiences. In the next chapter, this data will be triangulated against other writings and studies concerning military and public sector leadership. The data will also be examined for their implications for the military, for retiring officers entering public sector careers, for public sector organizations and for the study of leadership.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Overview**

This study is organized into six sections. The first chapter provided a general overview, outlined the background of the problem, stated the purpose of the study, described military and public sector organizations, life transitions and contemporary change issues in government agencies. The third chapter discussed approaches to qualitative and grounded theory research and described the specific methodology used in this study. The fourth chapter contained the research data pertaining to military leadership and the fifth chapter contained the data related to applying military leadership behaviors and strategies within local government organizations. This chapter contains an overview of the entire research project, describes the research findings, triangulates these findings against other literature in the field, and describes the study's implications for military organizations, for retiring officers entering public sector employment, for local government agencies and for the field of leadership studies. It also contains recommendations for future research.

## **Review of the Study: Its Purpose, Related Literature and Methodology**

### Purpose of the Study

During 15 years of working in local government, this researcher has observed the prevalence of retired officers holding government leadership positions within the San Diego area. As discussed in the first chapter, there are both personal and financial factors that draw retired military personnel to local government employment (Gordon, 1997; Jacobsen, 1990; Savino & Krannich, 1995; TROA, 1996). Data show that many retirees settle in areas where they once served (Barnes, 1994). San Diego County has the third largest retired military population in the country (Snyder, 1994). Areas with a large military presence such as San Diego County, therefore, would expect to find larger numbers of retired military in government employment. Because of their extensive military experience in directing large-scale operations, many retired officers qualify to move directly into high-level positions in local public sector organizations. In entering local government, these individuals are leaving a unique organization, which has generally dominated both their work and social life for twenty or more years, while encountering a new organizational culture with many differences.

Some retired officers interviewed for this study moved to their new careers with only a few days of transition. None received assistance or orientation that addressed transition issues from either the military services or local government organizations (U. S. Department of Labor, 1998; Veterans' Employment and Training Service, 1995). It appears that retiring military officers largely rely on themselves or personal contacts to assist in this transition. This researcher has observed both officers who do well and



succeed in translating the knowledge and experience they garnered in the military to their new organizations, as well as others who are less successful.

The purpose of this research is to examine the key military leadership strategies and behaviors learned by retired officers and determine their applicability to leadership situations in local government. As stated in the introduction, the research focus of this dissertation (emerging from a pilot study done in the spring of 1998) centers on identifying: the key leadership strategies and behaviors learned and practiced by military officers; the strategies and behaviors that are transferable and those not easily transferable to leadership situations in local government; the adjustments that assist retired military officers in transitioning to local government leadership positions; and the implications for assisting newly-retired officers entering local government organizations and for future research.

#### Summary of the Literature Review

The second chapter contained a review of the literature relevant to this study. The literature showed parallel historical trends in the development of military and public sector bureaucracies in this country. Both sectors have faced ongoing concerns over the scope of their role and authority, and have had legislative bodies use funding limitations and regulations to restrict their power. There were parallel developments in the growth of their professionalism and of the complexity of their missions. Finally, they continue to share similarities in their formal, organizational cultures, particularly in their personnel, budgeting and procurement systems.

The literature on military organizational cultures revealed differences in the cultures and subcultures of the service branches. The naval culture includes an element

of independence, flexibility and autonomy which springs from its seagoing mission (Hadley, 1986; Halperin, 1974; Wilson, 1989). The Marine Corps is a self-described unique, elite force which regards itself as the branch willing to take on the most dangerous duty in battle (Krulak, 1987; Ricks, 1997).

The military services also have a shared culture. The military culture contains deeply-rooted values and traditions, which are primarily camaraderie, unit cohesion, loyalty, chain of command, adherence to orders, strong organizational identity, defined roles and moral responsibility (Henderson, 1985; Hubbard, 1899; Montor, et al. 1987). The military is facing challenges as it transitions from a traditional, institutional culture to a more occupational culture (Moskos, 1977, 1986, 1988). Changes within the military are also being forced by advanced technology, more humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, increasing diversity, all-volunteer forces, the issue of gays in the military and the broadening role of women (Demchak, 1991; Dunivan, 1994; Stillman, 1996). The traditional, informal organizational culture of the military services is evolving within a climate of some uncertainty.

Government organizations share centuries-old bureaucratic roots with the military services (George, 1972; Rickover, 1971) as well as the organizational features of centralized functions, standardized practices, defined roles, set boundaries, centralized decision-making and unity of command (Weber, 1946). They differ largely in their informal culture.

The public sector is characterized by multiple and conflicting values which include efficiency, the public good, effectiveness, ethics, responsiveness and social equity. The missions of government agencies change with political trends and they

strive to attain social goals which are difficult to define and measure. By contrast, the military's mission has traditionally been to protect and defend the nation. Military missions are often specific and achievable, while the government arena, with its conflicting stakeholder interests, leave public leaders with merely a hope of "satisficing" these needs (Simon, 1947). By design, administrative government embraces multiple agencies with overlapping jurisdictions, promoting interagency competitiveness (Dahl, 1956; Dilulio, et al, 1993; Yates, 1982). While there is some competition among the service branches, military organizations share the common mission of national defense.

Public employees also have more independence within the civil service system than do members of the armed forces. Government administrative leaders operate in the public arena, and deal regularly with elected officials, citizens groups and the media – all of which constrict their authority, independence and ability to make decisions.

The literature on career change addressed the stress of these transitions (Golan, 1981), which are further compounded when occurring at mid-life (Erickson, 1982; Levinson et al, 1978). Role ambiguity is a key change faced when moving to a new organization. One positive and effective reaction to career transition is to seek assistance from those within the organization (Klauser & Groves, 1994). Individuals can also react to transitions by attempting to recreate the past (Kahn, et al, 1964; Marris, 1974) or by becoming dissatisfied with their new situation (Kahn, et al, 1964)

Finally, the literature on contemporary public sector organizations identified the current change trends of adopting more businesslike practices, introducing market forces into government services, privatizing and/or developing more public partnerships with businesses and nonprofits, changing to a customer service orientation, broadening citizen

involvement and reforming the civil service system (Ban, 1995; Dilulio et al. 1993; Eggers & O'Leary, 1995; Goldsmith, 1997; Gore, 1993; Kettl, 1993; 1994; Osbourne & Gabler, 1991; Osbourne & Plastrik, 1997.)

Change in the public sector, though, is difficult because of multiple stakeholders, a proliferation of agencies with overlapping jurisdictions, power dynamics, short term political concerns of some elected officials, risk-aversion to attempting change within the public view, legal concerns and lack of rewards for innovation (Golembiewski, 1985). In the view of this researcher, the public sector requires transformational leadership which will inform and involve organizational members, use influence rather than coercion, lead from a base of strong missions and values, seek collaboration and value diversity in order to face such profound change within the constrictions of the public environment.

#### Summary of the Methodology

As discussed in the third chapter, a qualitative approach was selected as best suited to examining social processes such as military and public sector leadership (Geertz, 1983). Grounded theory methodology is viewed by some scholars as a better way to examine leadership (Conger, 1998; Parry, 1998) and can, at times, generate a theory which is generalizable outside the group of participants (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The validity, reliability and generalizability of the theory generated was enhanced through the use of field notes, verbatim transcripts, peer review and by seeking triangulation of the data in other qualitative and quantitative studies. There is no apparent rationale for concluding that the retired military population in the San Diego

area has any unique characteristics, which would prevent the results from being generalized outside of the group of participants.

The research questions and core interview questions used in this study evolved from a pilot study done in the spring of 1998. That pilot study involved only four participants, and revealed that some differences could exist between the leadership strategies and behaviors successful in the military and those that were successful in local government organizations. In this study, all local cities, the Port District, the County and all water districts within San Diego County area were contacted to ascertain if they had any mid-managers or executives who were retired naval or marine officers who had served 20 or more years, had achieved the pay grade of O-4 or above and had been retired less than six years. In all, 90% of the agencies cooperated in the search for participants, as did local veterans offices.

Eleven participants were found who met the criteria. All were interviewed and tape-recorded. Their transcripts were coded verbatim and these data generated the theory of military leadership and its applicability to the public sector.

### **Discussion and Triangulation of the Findings**

This section summarizes the findings of this study and examines those findings against other related studies and writings. The purpose of triangulation is to examine if the findings are unique to the participants of the study or if they are sufficiently supported to offer a theory generalizable to the larger population of retired officers. Unfortunately, there has been little research done on officer leadership outside of the Army and the Air Force. No definitive rationale could be uncovered for this, though it is thought by some

to be related to the tradition that naval officers are developed at “the school of the sea.” Some studies done in other service branches that may lend some insight are referenced.

### Grounded Theory of Military Leadership

The fourth chapter examined the data gathered concerning the leadership perspectives and practices learned in the military and proposed a construct of military leadership based on grounded theory methodology. (See Appendix E.) The research revealed that the phenomenon of military leadership is shaped by the possibility of combat. This continual preparation for combat has formed the organizational culture and led to the development of specific structures, practices and strategies within military organizations. There were five specific subthemes identified by participants: military leadership development, leading people, leading processes, decision-making, and leading change.

#### Leadership Development.

Two key organizational factors affected leadership development – the possibility that an officer might need to quickly assume command in a combat situation and the youthfulness of many junior officers. Both created the need to rapidly develop leaders which is done through education and training programs, mentorship and developmental experiences. A review of relevant literature revealed that the services utilize basic training or other forms of orientation to instill organizational identity and values into its members (Janowitz, 1960; McCloy & Clover, 1988; Ricks, 1997). The training, experiences and mentoring continually strengthen and reinforce the military way of life (Montor, McNicholas, Ciotti, Hutchinson & Wehmueller, 1987; Peck, 1994). The Navy.

in particular, has traditionally held that the true development of officers happens on assignment, via mentorship and experience.

All participants were mentored by senior officers. In the experiences of some – particularly those who had their first command in Vietnam – a veteran chief petty officer also played a critical role in their development. These role models assisted the young officers in learning how to lead a crew, developing critical thinking and decision-making skills, building their self-confidence and developing a command presence. The regular assignment rotation gave the participants the opportunity to serve under many different CO's and XO's, allowing them to witness a wide variety of leadership styles and their effectiveness. Two recent studies confirm the importance of mentorship. In a survey of junior officers in surface warfare, respondents cited mentors as one of the most important factors in their development and in their decision to continue in the service. Another survey of nearly 700 retired flag officers found that 67% reported having significant mentors, with a fifth of those relationships lasting over 20 years (Johnson, Huwe, Fallow, Lall, Holmes & Hall, 1999).

Typically in the military, officers are immediately given broad responsibility– far more than they would generally receive in the private sector – then are coached and guided into handling increasing levels of responsibility (Ulmer, 1998). The participants observed that those who are not comfortable with broad responsibility do not remain in the service. Each interviewee mentioned his own dislike of micro-management. This dislike of micro-management was confirmed by the Navy's recent attitudinal survey of surface warfare officers in 1999 (Crawley, 2000). Accordingly, those interviewed

experienced the importance of leadership development and of mentorship for communicating and continuing military leadership strategies and behaviors.

### Leading Staff.

The subtheme “leading staff” was the most detailed of the study. The context or conditions which affected leading people included: whether the officer was leading in an administrative or operational environment, the youthfulness of most enlisted members, the variance in education backgrounds, the continual staff rotation, and the need to know that members of the unit would put themselves in harm’s way.

Most participants stated that they had adopted a contingency style of leading staff. In an operational environment, they expected that orders would be obeyed, they were more demanding, they expected high technical performance, and they felt they could adopt a more direct, severe tone with the crew if required. In an administrative setting, there was more opportunity to use a coaching style, to spend more time explaining and informing members and giving the rationale for decisions. No study was found addressing this issue with naval or marine officers, though this contingency approach was confirmed by the Center for Creative Leadership’s work with Army generals (Ulmer, 1998). In his writings, Ulmer, a retired lieutenant general, also critiqued the Army’s performance reporting system for placing too much focus on operational leadership at the expense of developing administrative leaders.

The youthfulness and variance in education levels of the staff led to both the practice of weeding out those who did not fit in with military life while working intensely to develop those who remained in the service. According to participants, those who do not fit the military are culled through boot camp, or through the appraisal, discipline or



re-enlistment processes. The paternalistic structures within the military also give officers more control over their members. Participant data identified a military communication style characterized as very direct to ensure orders are clear and easily understood. Smith-Jentsch, Johnston, and Payne (1998) in their research on tactical communications for the Navy's identified the following elements of appropriate operational communication: proper phraseology, clear meaning and elimination of excess "chatter." confirming the teaching of a direct style of military communication.

There is also a strong emphasis on training and development and standard operating procedures to accommodate staff rotation, compensate for uneven educational backgrounds and ensure consistency. The lessons learned are that discipline and honest evaluations are important, that communication should be clear and direct, that continuous training is critical and that training can help the individual fit the position.

The potential for combat necessitates that crews must be willing to place themselves in harm's way. The data revealed that this hinges on shared values, trust in and loyalty to the leadership and camaraderie within the unit. As previously noted, military organizations instill shared organizational values in boot camp that are reinforced continually by the structures, traditions and their commanding officers. According to former Secretary of Defense James Webb, "A leader who does not have the respect of his people, whose people do not believe he is operating from a system of values, will find that his words are considered meaningless by the people he is leading" (quoted in Montor, et al, 1987, p. 10).

The phenomenon of command presence – which participants defined as presenting an image of control, self-confidence, proper demeanor and technical ability –

contributes to the trust members have in their leader to protect them. This concept is echoed in the writings of Carrison and Walsh (1999) who addressed the “moral authority” of Marine Corps leadership:

While all officers have the legal authority to command, the moral authority to lead is not granted by a diploma from Officers Candidate School. Moral authority is developed in private, with one’s conscience, and on display in public, in the day-to-day dealing with the men under one’s command. . . . The officer with moral authority may find that his men will go far beyond the call of duty, perhaps to their deaths, upon his order. (p. 122)

Thus, an officer cannot depend on rank alone, but must be conscious of developing a trust and reputation with the crew. Being involved on a personal level, disciplining in a firm but fair manner and rewarding people for their performance were cited as behaviors that also build loyalty. Unit camaraderie – a principal well recognized in military tradition and discussed in multiple works on military sociology (Henderson, 1985; Ricks, 1997) – was raised as another critical component of leading staff. Officers interviewed felt that camaraderie was enhanced by many of the military organizational structures such as foreign deployment, unit competitions and social events.

In summary, military officers learn the importance of leading by values and by example which includes developing a command presence. They learned the importance of taking care of the staff as a group and as individuals and of developing unit camaraderie and teamwork.

#### Leading Processes.

As previously mentioned, standard operating procedures (SOP’s) are the strategy

used by the services to provide consistency in the work product and to accommodate the inexperience and youth of many of the new recruits as well as the continual rotation of personnel. SOP's are strictly adhered to in an operational setting. It is a leadership decision as to when or if to go around or against SOP's. Almost every participant could cite an instance where he had knowingly violated a procedure or directive. Participants related that such actions were justified when it was necessary to take care of your people or for the sake of the mission.

No corroborating hard data could be found on this subject, though Colonel Phillip A. Johnson, a military judge advocate, wrote in an essay on the topic:

There is not one among us who has served any appreciable time in the armed forces without personally witnessing numerous violations of published orders and regulations. I daresay we have not always reported such violations. I would even venture to say that in our day most of us have committed a few. (Johnson, 1987, p. 126)

Thus, others shared the experiences of the participants with regard to SOP's in the service.

#### Decision-making.

Because the leader may need to be replaced quickly, it is important that officers develop decision-making abilities early in their careers. Internal structures such as early command assignments and mentoring both develop these skills and establish the need for increased authority as a group norm. This desire for autonomy was confirmed in the recent attitudinal survey of surface warfare officers where they named micro-management as their primary dislike (Crawley, 2000).

Participants described the chain-of-command, decision-making structure within the armed forces, where input is often sought, but command decisions are final and obedience expected. The need to display a command presence to the crew also encouraged some of the participants to value quick, definitive decisions. In their works on recent developments in tactical decision-making, Cohen, Freeman and Thompson (1998) and Kozlowski (1998) noted that the Navy previously taught a classical form of decision-making stressing problem solving and statistical probability in finding the optimal tactical decision. Newer naval technology requires officers to process large amounts of information at rapid rates. New decision-making models are focusing more on emergent problems, continually changing situations and adaptive skills (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 1998).

Many of the military officers interviewed described a personal decision-making style based on the classical form. Barber (1990) and Ulmer (1998) looked at separate data from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Measure, but both found that over 70% of military officers were in the thinking-judging (TJ) grouping, compared with 31.5% among men nationally. The TJ group tends to favor rapid, analytical decisions (McCaulley, 1990). Both groups were largely Army officers. Ulmer concluded that these data and others gathered from the Center for Creative Leadership, suggest that operational experiences create "expectations for prompt, discernible, measurable results" (p. 19). Officers interviewed learned to display decision-making capabilities to their staff and to value the authority to make decisions. Some may have learned a disposition toward quick, decisive judgments.

### Managing Change.

The participants served during a time that included the post-Vietnam period. They were part of significant organizational change in terms of redefining the mission, structures and processes of the service branches. Large-scale change in the military – because of its size – is generally directed from central policy-making bodies and then passed down through the organization, as in the case of addressing sexual harassment after the tailhook scandal (Mason, 1995). The experience of most of the participants interviewed was in supporting and implementing top-down change. Their experience in implementing change was further characterized by their ability to utilize the controlled environment to mandate specific practices and activities. The continual series of improvement efforts during their time of service appear to have made some participants jaded toward change programs. Others related positive experiences with TQM/TQL teams. The lessons learned in the military about leading change include following top-down directives, using quality management techniques, using the controlled environment and expecting constant changes.

Figure 1 shows a model of the grounded theory of military leadership. The behaviors and strategies learned and practiced by military officers, as identified by the study's participants, are broken down into the subthemes of military leadership development, leading people, leading processes, decision-making, and leading change. Several studies are relevant to these findings.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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Whiteside (1985) interviewed 750 Navy ship captains, officers and crew about the behaviors and practices of junior officers on “well-run ships.” While the term

**Figure 1: Model of the Grounded Theory Military Leadership**



“leadership” is not specifically used. the study is tied to the business of commanding a ship and offers both superior and subordinate viewpoints. The key factors reported in the study were building cohesion, demonstrating loyalty and support of the captain. raising issues, asking questions, giving the captain positive and negative news. taking initiative and accepting responsibility for team performance.

Gullickson and Chennette (1984) interviewed 21 senior officers about the characteristics of six excellent surface ships. Factors which related to the leadership included: good communication up the chain of command, good discipline with a focus on reforming problem sailors and removing those that would not perform. a dedication to at least three hours of training weekly, high standards, involvement without micro-management, common vision and values, intense command interest and continual concern for each individual. While not identical in their findings, both these studies conform to the data of this study regarding a grounded theory of military leadership.

While there is no definitive source on military leadership, the strategies and behaviors identified by the participants are supported by military research and writings. Reviewers of this study with military backgrounds – while not sharing all of the experiences noted in Chapter Four – confirmed that the data were a credible portrayal of military leadership.

### **Grounded Theory of the Applicability of Military Leadership in Public Sector Organizations**

The research findings contained in Chapter Five addressed which of the military strategies and behaviors were transferable to leadership situations in local government

and which were not. The intent also was to identify any methods that retired officers utilized to adapt to the differences between military and local government organizations or to improve the public organizations they joined. The data revealed four key subthemes: leading public sector staff, organizational relationships, leading public sector processes and encountering stereotypes of retired military officers.

### Leading Staff

The subtheme of leading staff was the most complex. Participant interviews identified the following context factors existing in the public sector which affected leading staff: the nature of the staff, communication norms, the classification system, concepts about retention, training and development, teamwork and performance management systems.

### Nature of Staff.

Participants characterized the staff in their public sector organizations as generally older, worldlier and more concerned with the details of their compensation and benefits. They found the leader-follower relationship complicated by the independence and discretion of staff, in contrast to the more youthful enlisted members who generally followed directives. Many witnessed a lack of trust between labor and management in government, which at times was compounded by an adversarial approach to labor relations. Some found negative and cynical members which confirms the findings of Gabris and Simo (1995) in their study comparing public, private and non-profit employees. The researchers found that the public sector had the lowest job satisfaction rate (at 78%). The public employees in the survey overwhelmingly considered the private business as the best employment sector.



Retired officers interviewed found they needed to spend more time in personal communications with their staff members, and recognized that they did not have the same trust and reputation that came with their rank in the military. Public sector employees did not necessarily follow their directives, and participants found they had to repeatedly follow-up to be certain their instructions had been carried out.

Some officers felt there was less commitment to public service among government employees than in the military. Service is a core value in the armed forces confirmed by Barber's (1990) values study with 270 attendees at the Army War College. Participants in the values rank ordering exercise identified "a sense of service" as their fourth most important instrumental value.

There is conflicting information on whether the public sector attracts individuals with a commitment to service. Perry and Wise (1990) have hypothesized that individuals who wish to affect public policy and give service to their community would be motivated toward public employment. However, Ting (1997) analyzed data from the Survey of Federal Employees (which surveyed 56,767 federal white-collar employees) and found no correlation between job satisfaction and commitment to service. Gabris and Simo (1990) found that the top reasons for choosing public employment were the challenge (55%), the convenience (17%) and the money and job security (nearly 12%). There was no evidence of a service commitment among public employees: "Whatever kernel of public motivation exists initially as an independent variable effecting [sic] career choice, seems to dissipate rather rapidly among the public employees in our sample" (p. 51). These results may not readily be extrapolated to all public employees, however, as the

sample size was small and taken from agencies in only two cities. In summary, there are no hard data on the strength of public employees' commitment to government service.

### Communications.

Communication norms were another area of difference. Direct, straightforward communication, necessary for clarity and decisiveness in the services, can appear too harsh within the civilian world. Utilizing a blunt, direct style offended some employees and, in the case of one participant, led to a grievance. Using military jargon clouded understanding, reinforced stereotypes and risked separating retired officers from others in the organization. Retired officers found that consciously changing to a less direct style and abandoning jargon and military formalities – like saying “yes sir” – improved communication in their new jobs. Retired naval and marine officers in a study by Webb (1990) also responded that military communication hindered them in transitioning to civilian organizations.

The issue of communication is of critical importance to leadership. Schein (1992) identified language as one of the four key factors in defining and creating organizational cultures. It helps to construct, interpret and disseminate the mental modes within an organization. Language is key to communicating vision and managing meanings within the organization (Bennis, 1989; Senge, 1990).

### Classification, Retention and Staff Development Systems.

There were three systems discussed by participants that affected their ability to lead staff. The first, the civil service classification system, restricted their ability to freely assign tasks and to compensate individuals for duties actually performed. The retired officers interviewed, accustomed to an organization where members did what needed to

be done, found the system hampering and frustrating, particularly when challenged by employees that an assignment given was not their job. Some participants met with success by trying to improve selection, through reorganization efforts and by working within the constraints of their human resources system.

The second system identified was the norm of lifetime employment in government. Some participants found their new organizations largely composed of long-term employees with little career mobility – conditions they felt contributed to organizational stagnation. Some also found existing attitudes that turnover was negative and practices which paid individuals more simply for remaining with the organization. They contrasted this to the military where continual staff rotation was normal and, they felt, renewed the organization and brought in fresh ideas. Successful strategies in this area were to change the organizational norm to see the benefits of turnover, to promote upward mobility and career ladders – regardless of whether it led people to move outside the organization – and to set pay rates based on the worth of the position. The participants' experiences with the civil service system and the culture of lifetime employment are consistent with scholarly and historic writings (Ban, 1995; White, 1935) and are addressed in detail in Chapter Two.

Almost all the participants found inadequate training programs, few career ladders and a lack of leadership development and succession management programs. This was one of the areas where their military background provided models that were easier to transfer to the public sector.

In all three of these areas, resigning oneself to accepting and criticizing the existing situation was ineffective.

### Teamwork.

The military has established structures that support the development of camaraderie, morale and teamwork. Maintaining unit cohesion and camaraderie is a daily priority for officers (Montor et al, 1987). None of the participants found any existing structures within their government agencies for building teamwork, and those operating in a downsizing environment found ever-greater challenges. Several participants utilized their military experience to establish and communicate clear goals, trying to assist their new organizations in working better as a unit. Defining tasks and roles, then granting more authority at the supervisory and front line level helped some work units develop a sense of ownership. Other retired officers used team recognition strategies and social gatherings to develop teamwork. Creating an inner circle as an elite team within the work unit was a practice that may have promoted more separation than camaraderie.

### Managing Performance.

Civilian managers have less control over staff than do military officers. Many participants criticized the civil service system and the public sector rewards system as ineffective for managing performance. They were now restricted to focusing solely on the work performance issues, whereas within the paternalistic systems of the military, they had the authority to work with the whole person, including their families. They felt the multiple steps and long processes of the discipline system allowed problems to grow before they could be effectively dealt with. The rewards system limited the incentives and merit awards they could offer employees. Participants commented that some established public managers were reluctant to use the discipline system because of its

ineffectiveness and consequently tolerated poor performance, a point confirmed in Ban's examination of the federal service (1995). Some retired officers, however, stated that they were establishing standards, documenting and disciplining those with poor performance, regardless of whether their managerial peers chose not to. One used reorganization to eliminate poor workers. Retired officers expressed that they found it important to use the rewards available to them creatively.

### Organizational Relations

The second key subtheme identified by participants was organizational relations. This encompassed relations with staff, peers, one's manager, executives and within the political arena. These relationships affected their level of decision-making authority and raised differences in approaches to values and ethics.

#### Relations with Staff, Peers, Managers, Executive Leadership and Elected Officials.

In the military, respect, to some degree, accompanies rank. The participants transitioned from an organization where status and reputation were "yours to lose" to one where reputation had to be earned. Most experienced having their decisions questioned and their instructions disobeyed. Some subordinates used open door policies to circumvent their authority or looked for reasons to find fault with them. A few retired officers characterized their staff as cynical toward change efforts. Effective strategies for working with staff were to consciously develop a positive reputation with individuals, to communicate directives carefully and to follow-up with staff. It was problematic for retired officers to assume they had a positive reputation and the automatic cooperation of their employees.

Many of the participants missed “the camaraderie of the wardroom” – close peer relations and internal support. Some experienced this as part of the separation and competition of agencies and programs in the public sector noted by Dahl (1956), Dilulio and associates (1993) and Yates (1982). They also observed more of a separation of work and social life in the civilian world. Some successfully built peer relations and hosted social events. Retired officers in Webb’s study (1990) also reported that the civilian sector was less collegial and trusting than the military. Some participants faced situations where there was little support or cooperation from other managers. One retired officer cited this as his reason for eventually leaving government service.

The military services place a high priority on continual development and the CO takes an active role in providing developmental assignments and in broadening the authority of capable officers. Most of the participants found a dearth of training and career development in the public sector. Those who were successful sought their own opportunities. Some found their assignments were mundane compared to the military and that critical decision were made elsewhere in the public environment.

In the military, the executive officer is familiar with the technical operations he or she oversees. It is fairly common for the chief executive of a public organization to have little technical knowledge concerning most of the operations. Consequently, success for high-level administrators relies on building strong relationships with the CEO. Nonetheless, some retired officers experienced public criticism by the CEO. Accustomed to the “praise in public, criticize in private” norm within the military, they were shocked and disappointed at this feature of public organizations.

Some of the study participants objected to the continual questions and requests for information received from the offices of the CEO and elected officials that disrupted their workflow. In addition, the “second guessing” and failure to support the agency’s recommendations were termed frustrating and often counterproductive. Retired officers, accustomed to broad authority expressed their disappointment with micro-management by those with positional authority, but without technical expertise.

Little individual decision-making authority existing within a public political system characterized by multiple stakeholders, competing agencies, slow processes and incremental rather than decisive action (Golembiewski, 1985; Yates, 1982). Critical decisions are made by elected officials or by the chief executive. This reflects the historic tension about the role of the public administrator, and whether this role should be that of a neutral administrator or a partner in policymaking (Lindbom & Woodhouse, 1993; Lowi, 1979; and others). CEOs and elected officials may use strict oversight to curb administrative power (Rourke, 1984; Selden, Brewer, & Brudney, 1999).

Recent research confirms that elected bodies in some jurisdictions are becoming increasingly involved in the detailed aspects of programs. Nalbandian (1999) studied a group of local city and county managers in 1988 and again in 1999. The public administrators reported that elected officials were becoming more involved in the programmatic and implementation details. Nalbandian’s study also found that many governing councils contained special interest and anti-government members.

Bressner (1999) surveyed city managers and mayors in over 300 communities in the United States between 1994 and 1998. Respondents identified two trends of

particular concern: an increasing tendency by councils to micro-manage, and the inexperience and poor caliber of their some council members.

Schafer & Toy (1999), in their study of 225 city managers in California, identified “the amount of independent authority” as having the most significant correlation (reverse correlation) with the ability of managers to thrive in the stress-filled climate of public management. Council members who focused too much on the program details was the fourth most important source of stress. Twenty-eight per cent of those interviewed were negative about whether they would again choose their public sector career. These studies confirm the micro-management reported by many of this study’s participants.

Having close dealings with elected officials was a new experience for all of the participants as officers in most assignments are not to have direct contact with elected officials. According to General Louis Wilson, USMC, “Our business is that we understand conflict and we take an oath that we will protect our country and not make policy” (Quoted in Montor et al, 1987). Some found it exciting to be a player in the policy arena, while others were more frustrated by a process featuring multiple stakeholders, shifting political winds, time-consuming public processes and interagency competition. Those who were more successful became involved in building influence relationships with elected officials and becoming involved in political committees. This is an area where retired officers had to find satisfaction from being a part of the process rather than the decision-maker, or find satisfaction in another aspect of public service.

#### Authority, Values and Ethics.

The final area in the subtheme of organizational relations is that of values and ethics. Some participants were disappointed in joining organizations where there was



little sense of strong purpose. Those retired officers expressed strong commitment to the role of ethics and values in leading organizations. Leaving a *gemeinschaft* military organizational culture, they were disappointed in the occupational orientation of many of the high-level public administrators in their organizations. They questioned how to lead in an organization where others modeled behavior that was more designed to promote a career than the public good.

Ban (1995) wrote that public sector organizations generally fostered a "culture of control" whereby they gained employee compliance by focusing on rules and external controls. There is little ethics and values development evident in public sector employee development efforts and little agreement about which ethic should guide public agencies (Skidmore, 1995).

#### Leading Processes

Some of the areas where the retired officers interviewed expressed their greatest success was in improving procedures, strengthening the planning component and standardizing processes in their public agencies. Those who had the most success in introducing such changes used influence and modeling. Those who proposed improvements but relied on their executive or CEO to implement plans generally saw less change actualized.

#### Stereotypes of Military Officers

All of the participants interviewed encountered some stereotypes of military officers. These varied by individual, many saw officers as rigid, bureaucratic, not very bright, having little experience with civilians and clannish. Some of the people they now supervised had little experience with the military; their impressions may have been

shaped by the media. Some retired officers had managers who did not appear to understand their background or what they were capable of. The experience of facing stereotypes was also shared by retired officers in a focus group study done by Webb (1990) and in contemporary media pieces (Cohn, 1997). Hadley (1986) also discussed the existence of "The Great Divorce," a growing gulf between the military and civilian sectors of the country which may be perpetrated by negative media images.

Participants who recognized and deliberately countered these stereotyped images and avoided using military jargon and communication styles expressed less frustration about the effects of these images. By educating others in their organizations regarding their experiences and by demonstrating their abilities, they felt they had begun to change perceptions and to gain the types of assignments they knew they were capable of. Those who retained their military communication style and relied on their managers to direct their career voiced more disappointment and negativity over their situation.

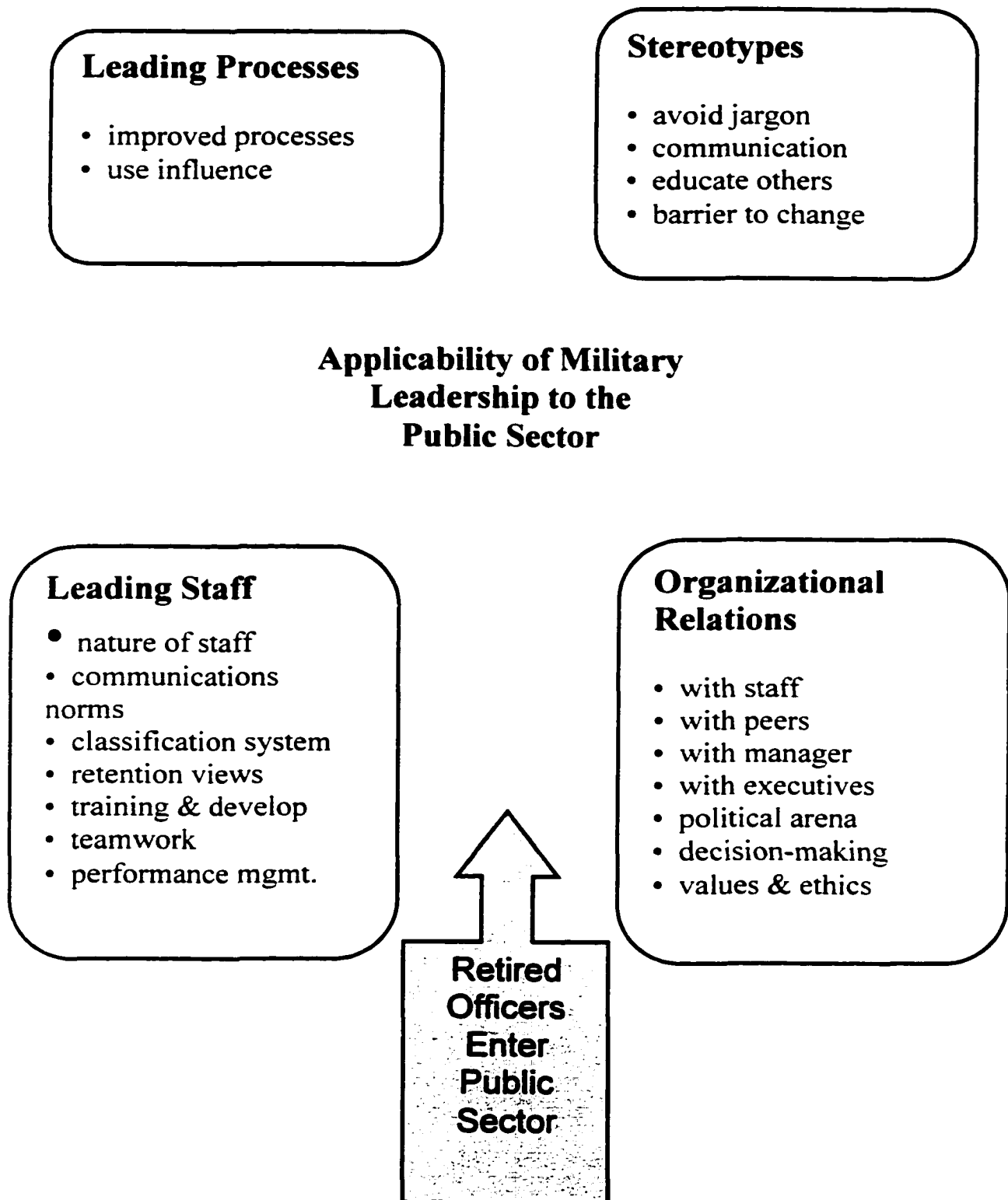
A summary of the theory of the applicability of military leadership to public sector organizations is found in Figure 2 and the grounded theory is summarized in Appendix F.

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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**Figure 2: Grounded Theory of the Applicability of Military Leadership to the Public Sector**



## **Implications**

### What do the findings say about military leadership?

The portrait of military leadership revealed by the interviews contains elements of a variety of leadership theories. The contingency view of leadership, expressed by almost all participants, fits several different theories where the nature of the subordinate and the context determine what style of leadership is used – Fiedler’s notion of contingency leadership (1967), House’s path-goal theory (1971) and Hershey and Blanchard’s notion of situational leadership (1988). A few participants described a more extreme, dualistic view (i.e., KATN versus coaching leadership) which approached McGregor’s authoritarian/participatory Theory X, Theory Y (1960). A contingency approach to decision-making is supported in the work of Vroom and Yetton’s (1973) continuum of autocratic, consultative and group decision-making.

Many writings on military leadership are drawn from the great man/woman concept of leadership, with a particular focus on examples from the operational and combat achievements. As Janowitz (1960) related, the organization depends upon technical and administrative talents, but has a special reverence for its heroic leaders. However, in Ulmer’s view (1998), the focus on tactical decision-making skills and on the personal style/presence of those in command, can shift the focus away from the skills needed in a non-combat or operational environment:

The “operating” situation requir[es] standard procedures and crew “drills,” with expectations for prompt, discernible, measurable results. The linkage between cause and effect is clear. Hard data are usually available for decision-making.

Reflection or contemplation is out of place. The typical general officer or CEO personality fits well into this situation. Any [tendency] toward immediate action is reinforced in the junior leadership years when prompt, aggressive control of the tactical situation represents laudatory behavior. The other type of situation gives the general officer or CEO personality more trouble. It requires contemplation before action, patience with ambiguity, and an appreciation for broad participation in the decision-making process. This is the "building" or "improving" situation. (pp. 19-20)

Ulmer, as a retired general and former head of the Center for Creative Leadership, has been in a unique position to study military leadership. He wrote that military practices of short-term assignments have made it difficult for senior officers to contribute and lead in situations requiring long-term change. "In effect, everything about the current system moves leadership style relentlessly toward the 'operating' end of the spectrum." (Ulmer, 1998, p. 20)

There are certain aspects of charismatic leadership contained in notions of military leadership, particularly in the phenomenon of command presence. Conger and Kanungo (1989) defined charismatic leadership as involving: a vision shared by followers that is distinct from the status quo, innovative and unconventional means to accomplish that vision, a realistic assessment of the external supports and restraints and the process of inspiring followers to pursue the vision through communication and influence. Burns (1979), however, said that charismatic leaders were not true leaders because their followers' actions were based more in a personal attraction to the leader: "Idolized leaders are not, then, authentic leaders because no true relationship exists

between them and the spectators – no relationship characterized by deeply held motives, shared goals, rational conflict, *and* lasting influence in the form of change.” (p. 248). Burns identified two types of leadership: 1) transactional, wherein rewards and sanctions are used in an exchange relationship to gain the cooperation of the followers, and 2) transformational leadership, where “persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of others” (p. 18).

Bernard Bass and his associates have done quantitative research on transformational leadership in naval officers for over a decade (Bass, 1990; Bass, 1996; Waldman & Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino, Spangler & Bass, 1993, and other works). Bass’s (1985) original theoretical work on the subject described transformational leadership as including an appeal to a vision, inspiring confidence, empowering followers and creating inspirational activities. His later field research on naval officers was based on data from subordinate ratings of the leader using his Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1989), and, in some studies, incorporated ratings from formal performance appraisals. Bass has sought to identify and quantify transformational leadership within individuals by measuring their subordinates’ assessment of their charismatic behavior and the personal attention they show to followers, as well as the resulting motivation and intellectual stimulation experienced by subordinates. A problem with Bass’s work in this area is that the MLQ may be measuring factors that contribute to a leader’s effectiveness and improve organizational performance, but it is not clear that it measures a key aspect of transformational leadership as defined by Burns and others – working toward significant

change. The issue with Bass's research confirms Rost's (1993) view on the problems of studying leadership without a definitive definition.

Transformational leadership – as defined by Burns (1979), Conger and Kanungo (1989), Rost (1993) and others is uplifting to both the leader and follower – which goes far beyond the factors Bass is measuring. The notion of transformational leadership incorporates the idea of challenging, complex change, and asking those involved to both commit and change themselves in order to realize the vision. Bass measured the views of subordinates and factors in the ratings of superiors, but does not capture whether the individuals are involved in adaptive rather than technical changes – a distinction central to the work of Heifetz (1994). This is unfortunate, as Bass has published the majority of the publicly available research on leadership in naval and marine officers, and his MLQ has been used in other military research studies (Clover, 1990; Dorfman, Howell, Cotton & Tate, 1992; and other works).

There are multiple examples of transformational leadership in the military. The armed forces have instituted numerous innovations, many of which involved painful organizational changes that included: creating a vision, involving internal stakeholders with competing interests, creating commitment and synergy in a diverse, multi-function team and making personal sacrifices to make the vision a reality. The military has been at the forefront –sometimes painfully in the public view – of many race and human relations struggles. Many projects – from digging wells in Africa to peacekeeping and nation building missions have involved culturally complex, politically sensitive issues. The potential for military officers to exercise transformational leadership is evident.

Some military officers may be drawn to see adaptive challenges as technical problems (Heifetz, 1994), particularly because, as a group, they are strongly oriented toward rational/logical approaches (Barber, 1990; Ulmer, 1998). Taking a strict technical approach may limit views of the problem, restrict potential solutions and obscure outcomes. The technological focus of military jobs, along with the hard-science educations of most officers may pre-dispose some toward technical analyses and solutions. The officers who have the most to bring to the public sector have both the competencies and the commitment for technical and adaptive change.

#### Military officers as change agents in the public sector

Retired officers have the potential to play positive, activist roles in facilitating the kind of change needed in the public sector. Selden and associates (1999) used a Q-sort test with government administrators from Georgia to identify how they viewed their roles. They found that respondents who took an activist, values-based approach identified themselves as those most likely to look for a different job within five years. Those who sought no activist role in policy, voiced no strong values about their jobs and had no strong commitment to efficiency improvements, rated themselves as the most likely to remain with the organization (Selden, et al. 1999). It is unfortunate that the group which is the least change-oriented is the one most interested in staying in public employment. Government needs leaders instead of caretakers in its administrative ranks.

Public administration faces another challenge from the influx of outside executives recruited to bring business practices to local government. Some of these executives focus solely on efficiencies and budgets at the expense of policy. This influx, coupled with the trend toward more anti-government sentiment on elected councils and



boards. may shift the balance of policy-making toward the legislative branch. The danger is that public policy – which has for centuries found balance in the struggle between bureaucracy, the legislature, the courts and special interests – will move too far toward short-term political responsiveness and away from the administrators' focus on long-term implications. The public sector needs administrators who are willing to do the painful political work of regaining and retaining this critical balance. Retired officers who enter the public sector need to be willing activists and not caretakers.

The retired military officers interviewed had different experiences with the job transition process. Some found jobs before they left the military, while others had painful searches with multiple rejections before successfully obtaining a job. Once stepping into a leadership position in the public sector, they had to rely largely on themselves to identify these military strategies and behaviors that would successfully adapt to their new organizations and which were unique to the Navy or Marine Corps. The armed services should improve transition assistance programs for retirees, who have given 20 or more years in service. Such transition assistance should include sessions in organizational theory and culture with emphasis on how civilian organizations differ from the military; leadership assessments with individual coaching on how to capitalize on one's strengths and compensate for areas of weakness; and assessment centers with such components as leaderless groups to provide individual feedback on communications and leadership issues.

#### Implications for Retired Officers Working in Public Organizations

It is hoped that this study will help retired officers enter careers in local government with their eyes open. Realistic expectations of the rewards and drawbacks in

the public sector will help retiring officers determine if local government is an appropriate second career and allow them to better prepare for the transition. Two of the eleven participants left local government before the end of this study and others interviewed expressed some deep disappointments. Holland (1985) in his work on career choices, identified six different organizational environments. He wrote that each individual develops personal dispositions toward specific environments and that they seek environments that are congruent with their preferences. It may be that retired officers may find more satisfaction in what Holland described as a "realistic" environment.

Retired officers need to assess whether they can find individual satisfaction in an environment where they exchange technical challenges for adaptive challenges with uncertain goals, decision-making authority for facilitating multiple stakeholders, independence for political input, and close, defined relationships for a loosely coupled and independent workforce.

French and associates (1983) specifically focused on the transition of 23 retired Navy officers, surveying the group during three separate intervals during the first three months of their career transition. They concluded that the primary transition stresses were lack of job complexity (not finding the work as exciting as their military assignments), role ambiguity (not understanding the organizational expectations and norms) and the under-utilization of their abilities (French, Doehrman, Davis-Saks & Vinokur, 1983). These were the same issues important to members of this study.

Campbell has been gathering data since the 1970s contrasting Army generals with their CEO counterparts in the business world. He found the generals were more conventional in their problem solving and were more dominant, competitive and action-

oriented than the business leaders. This action-orientation, if true across the services, may prove a challenge to those working in the public sector where true resolution of issues is rare and action typically slow (Cited in Ulmer, 1998).

A few of the participants displayed an approach of resigning themselves to the ineffectiveness of public systems. In the military bureaucracy, core systems such as human resources are far removed from the control of the individual officer and their administrative policies are generally accepted and worked with. There are far fewer paths for challenging, lobbying and influencing these overarching systems as compared to local government. Local agency leaders have more opportunity to change these systems if they have the commitment and will to do so.

Some participants who addressed public sector inefficiencies related negative experiences with federal processes and federal employees. Experience with or biases about the federal sector should not shape a new leader's view of local administrative government. To approach a new organization anticipating dysfunctional systems and under-functioning staff will color the experience and limit what a manager or an executive perceives as possible. Retiring officers can bring transformational change by refusing to accept mediocrity and challenging counterproductive systems and attitudes.

It is possible that some of the military leadership behaviors and practices can be interpreted differently in the public sector. Displaying decision-making abilities, a bias toward quick, decisive action, and portraying control, self-confidence and decisiveness – so important in military leadership – can appear to employees as if the leader is not seeking participation and involvement. Many public employees may not be looking for

an individual who has the answers, but may be more comfortable with one who asks the questions.

The balance of constructively disagreeing versus obeying directives of superiors shifts in the public sector. There is less of a need and less of an expectation to “carry a message to Garcia” without question (Hubbard, 1899). (See Chapter Two.) There is a greater need for implementation challenges and ethical issues to be brought forward and even argued with superiors. A few participants in the study appeared to take the position, in the words of one, that “the boss is the boss.” This is not a leadership perspective. Military officers need to recognize that there is generally a greater expectation that they disagree, even aggressively disagree with their manager, over important issues in a responsible manner.

The public sector is not for everyone and it was clear that some of the officers interviewed were not enjoying their work. Given the difficulty some participants had in finding their first job, it is important that they enter a field where they will find enrichment and success.

### Implications for Local Government

None of the public organizations involved in this study provided any orientation for its mid-managers or executives (outside of generic sessions that addressed such issues as benefits). Government agencies should have a multi-session orientation for all its leadership staff entering from external organizations. Such an orientation should include components on the human resources, budgeting, fiscal and civil services systems. It

should include practical aspects such as how to write and docket proposals going before the elected body and the nuances of the political system.

Anyone entering a new organization needs to learn new roles and discover new organizational norms as well as unlearn behaviors that are not a fit with their new organization. Klausner and Groves (1994) wrote on the importance of mentors or “buddies” in helping new members learn the organizational culture. Local government would benefit by assigning mentors or team members to assist with orienting executives and managers, particularly in the actual processes, shortcuts, political minefields to be avoided, etc. An assigned resource colleague or mentor could teach them the organizational norms, structures, language and meanings, facilitate connecting them with resources and answers and model an activist orientation toward public leadership. This would assist all new mid-managers and executives entering the agency from outside the public entity, but would especially help retired officers who have worked in a unique organizational culture for over 20 years.

#### What will help military officers succeed

Participants revealed some suggestions for assisting military officers in transitioning into the public sector in a way that positions them to meet the current challenges facing government: 1) recognize there are differences; 2) focus on adaptive change; 3) be prepared to build your own learning organization; and 4) build influence relationships at every level.

#### Recognize there are differences.

Nearly every participant initially denied having transitional issues. Yet, during each interview, stories were told that revealed confusing, challenging and sometimes

painful transitions. Why were these issues difficult to identify at first? There may have been an initial unwillingness by some to discuss the topic with a stranger. It may also be that the similarities between aspects of the formal culture of the public sectors and the military masked many of the informal cultural differences. It can be easy to focus on similarities and minimize differences. Officers need to realistically expect that there will be transition issues.

**Focus on adaptive change.**

In the midst of the unknown, it is easy to fall back on what one knows best, and it is more comforting and safer to focus on making technical changes. Many of the changes implemented by the retired officers in their new organizations were technical changes focused on standardizing procedures and processes. What is truly needed in the public sector though, is adaptive change that takes place within an environment of uncertainty and unclear goals. Public sector leadership involves both collaboration and consensus building with multiple stakeholders and, at times, involves the building and use of power relationships. Successes discussed by some of the participants such as empowering line staff and creating teams to identify organizational values demonstrate the broader outcomes possible when leaders focus on significant change.

**Be prepared to build your own learning organization.**

Public managers and executives face challenges from public sector systems (civil service, discipline and rewards systems), existing group norms (rigidity of assignments and expectation of lifetime employment) and some staffing issues (older, savvy, cynical workforce) that hinder the potential for implementing real change. Learning organizations must be built despite these challenges and, at times, in the midst of a larger

organization in stasis. By developing and presenting a clear vision, continually developing individual members, creating systems that reward and reinforce that vision and by creating trust with members, leaders can begin to recreate the organization.

**Build influence relationships at every level.**

Public sector managers and executives operate in an internal environment of interagency conflict, competition, conflicting long and short-term visions and values conflict. To be successful, influence relationships must be built with staff members, peers, managers, the CEO, elected officials, labor representatives and involved citizens. Relationships in the public sector are strikingly different than in the military. The mutual experiences, shared beliefs and common technical background that built camaraderie in the service are rarely found in the diverse services environment of government. Relationships will be built on influence, mutual interest and sometimes on power. These relationships may be less personally satisfying than the relationships of the wardroom, and retired officers may need to seek close relationships outside of work.

**Implications for the Study of Leadership**

The overwhelming majority of writings on military leadership focus on combat. As an example, one literature search on the topic "military leadership" performed during this study, revealed over 60% of the references involved battle-related topics such as tactics. Nearly all of the remaining references discussed military leadership from the "great men" theoretical standpoint. The field of leadership studies has not done an adequate examination of the strategies and practices of military leadership, particularly in view of its lessons for military and civilian sectors regarding administrative settings.

Most of the studies on leadership in military organizations involve easily accessible populations such as military academy candidates. This is a convenient population, but not necessarily the group most likely engaged in transformational leadership. A quantitative approach that utilizes data from officer candidates is not necessarily measuring transformational leadership as it is not addressing the intent or effort to affect real change. The military – and the Navy and Marine Corps in particular – need to do more significant research within the senior and flag/general officer populations and make this data available to civilian researchers.

A feature of this study is that the researcher is from outside the military. There are theorists who hold that research performed from the perspective of an outsider is, by its nature, seen through a lens that obscures the true meaning of the data. This research topic was pursued with full knowledge that the process relied on the input of readers and reviewers from the military to ensure that the voices of the participants were heard in the text. It was also endeavored with the belief that the distant standpoint of the “other” was important in examining transition issues and differences in the organizational cultures. The appropriate role of qualitative research from the standpoint of the “other” needs to be further discussed and clarified, especially as the nature of leadership research involves the multiple perspectives of both leaders and followers. Finally, there is a need for more research on military officers which is available to civilian researchers and, in particular, research that involves 360 degree feedback.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research began as a class project. The lack of existing research on military officers transitioning to second careers spurred the pursuit of this topic. Clearly much



more research needs to be done. Some of the areas needing further examination include: the transition experiences of retired military officers that will assist retirees in finding satisfying and productive second careers; comparisons of the organizational cultures of the military, public, private and non-profit sectors which would facilitate the cross-pollination of managers and executives already occurring; public sector leadership issues such as leadership behaviors, administrative decision-making, leader-followership and employee motivation that would give government the type of information that has long been available to the private sector.

This study involved eleven Caucasian males who were identified after an extensive search of local government organizations. These participants are reasonably reflective of their cohort. It is expected that a more diverse population will be accessible for research in the coming years as the retiree population of higher-ranking officers will reflect more gender and racial diversity. It would be beneficial to investigate if any additional perspectives are found among a more diverse group. Nine of eleven participants were naval officers. It is recommended that more research be done comparing transition issues unique to naval officers and marine officers and any differences in the subcultures of aviation, surface and submarine warfare and staff core specialties such as engineering and supply.

### Closing Thoughts

At the end of Chapter Two contained some essential elements for public sector leadership. It is fitting that this research close by examining those elements in view of its findings.

**1. The public sector is experiencing profound change requiring transformational leadership.**

Retired officers who can offer transformational leadership are those with: a vision that may be outside the standard way of doing business, a comfort level for ambiguity, the presence to communicate through their actions and words that they believe and live the vision, the ability to inspire and motivate others toward the vision, and the passion to carry it out. Those focused on finding a technical solution to these public problems cannot adequately lead organizations toward addressing complex challenges.

**2. The public sector faces change directed by the political structure and special interest groups requiring leadership that will honestly inform employees of coming change.**

The officers interviewed all displayed a concern about taking care of their people. It is important that any desire to protect one's people and any vestiges of restricting information on a "need to know" basis do not hinder the flow of important facts. Public employees have access to much more information within the organization and from the media than do military personnel. Information which is not shared with staff may surface in rumors or be released in public statements by elected officials, blind siding staff members. The leader must achieve a delicate balance between the need to pace the change and information employees receive, with the need to ensure they are not blind to political events.

**3. Successful leadership in the public sector must involve influence rather than coercion.**

Retired officers who are proficient coaches and implemented change successfully in administrative environments, know that complex change cannot be ordered to occur. Influence is more than persuasion by logic; it involves modeling success, living the vision (i.e., walking the walk) and presenting a concept worth committing to.

**4. With a history of competing values and shifting political directions, the public sector needs leadership that defines, articulates and lives the mission and values of the organization.**

One of the strengths of military officers entering the public sector is that they contribute a much-needed commitment to leading by values. In a public culture of competing values, retired officers bring a commitment to public service, which will enhance any organizations they join.

**5. Successful public sector change needs collaborative leadership and a belief in the value of diversity.**

Experiences with collaborative change and working in a diverse organization were provided to military officers in the guise of TQM efforts and in the training and self-examination done by the military services in response to their increasing multiculturalism. In any organization, collective experience does not necessarily translate to individual commitment. If an individual views leadership simply as providing the answers and appearing in control of situations, she or he will discourage opportunities for collaborative efforts. The commitment to broad involvement from diverse sectors is an important and an individual one.

The potential for retired officers to bring needed skills to the public sector is substantial. The capabilities and commitment of individuals will determine whether or not they are ultimately successful.

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**APPENDIX A: THE INSTITUTIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL CONTINUUM**

<u>Military Social Organization: Institutional vs. Occupational</u>		
-- Charles C. Moskos		
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Institutional</b>	<b>Occupational</b>
Legitimacy	Normative values	Marketplace economy
Role commitments	Diffuse	Specific
Basis of compensation	Rank and seniority	skill level and manpower
Mode of compensation	much in non-cash form or deferred	Salary and bonus
Level of compensation	Decompressed; low recruit pay	Compressed: high recruit pay
Residence	Adjacency of work and residence locales	Separation of work and residence locales
Spouse	Integral part of military community	Removed from military community
Societal regard	Esteem based on notion of service	Prestige based on level of compensation
Reference groups	"vertical" – within organization	"horizontal" – external to organization
Evaluation of performance	Holistic and qualitative	Segmented and quantitative
Legal system	military justice	Civilian jurisprudence
Post-service status	Veteran's benefits and preference	Same as civilian

First published in: Moskos, C.C. (Fall, 1977). Trends in military organization. Armed Forces and Society, 4, 41-50.

## APPENDIX B: GUIDING RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Overview/Grand tour

1. Can you give me a brief summary of your military career?
2. What kind of education and training did the Navy/Marines provide for you?

### Leadership

3. Can you think of someone you watched in the military who was a role model, or a mentor for you? Someone who was a leadership model for you?
4. Can you think of a time when you were working under someone's command when they displayed great leadership?
5. Do you see a leadership style difference between a combat situation and a military bureaucratic organization?
6. Can you think of a time you were tested a leader and were proud of how you handled the situation?

### Processes

7. The military has to do everything on such a large scale. What are some of the techniques you relied upon to accomplish your mission?
8. The military is known for its bureaucratic processes. Tell me about a time when you became really frustrated with an order or a process. [Did you ever have to challenge or question a process because it conflicted with the mission or could potentially harm your people?]
9. Looking back, what are some of the things you learned about organizations in the military that helped you make the transition to government? What are some of the things you brought with you?
10. You came to the [public organization] after [number] of years in the military. During those early transition days, what were some of the things that you weren't accustomed to in the civilian work sector; some of the things you had to consciously think about to be successful?

### People

11. What were some of the methods you would use to motivate people in the military?
12. How did you build unit cohesion in the military?
13. What was it that enabled you to build loyalty between you and your staff in a military setting?
14. How did the structures and practices of the military compare to government in terms of how you work with people? In terms of building loyalty and comraderie?
15. How can you build teamwork in a government setting?
16. When you joined the public sector, what were some of the things you found didn't work in managing people? What did you find you had to do differently?

### Summary

17. How would you compare your military and government careers? [Probe for differences in excitement and satisfaction.]
18. What are some of the principal ways your military experience shaped you as a leader?

## **APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM**

### **University of San Diego, Doctoral Thesis Project – Military Leadership Influences**

I understand that the focus of this project is to research the influence of military background on those in leadership positions in local government.

I understand that the procedure for this project will be as follows:

- I will be interviewed about my working experiences inside and outside of the military.
- The questions asked will relate to my professional experiences.
- I am free to decline to answer any question, without providing justification to the interviewer.
- No names of my staff will be sought or used in any published materials relating to this project, including transcriptions of my interviews.
- My participation is voluntary, and I understand that I am free to stop participation at any time. At any time I can ask questions about the project and receive answers.
- There will be no expense involved in participating in this project.
- My identity as a participant will not be revealed. Details about me will be masked to avoid identification.

The interviews will take place during 1999-2000. I will have the opportunity to review the portion of the transcript utilized in the research project for accuracy. No further participation in this project is expected of me.

I understand and give permission for the project data to be incorporated into published writings and professional presentations.

I, the undersigned, understand these statements and I give consent to my voluntary participation in this project.

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Signature of the Participant

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Date

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Interviewer

**APPENDIX D: SAMPLE COMMUNICATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES**

[return address]  
August 29, 1999

[Name]  
Human Resources Manager  
City of Escondido  
201 N. Broadway  
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear [Name],

I am a doctoral student in Leadership at the University of San Diego. I am writing my dissertation on the transition issues of retired military officers moving into high level positions in local government. I am trying to identify what aspects of their military experience translate well into public sector leadership positions.

I am trying to locate individuals who:

- are working in local government in mid-management or executive positions;
- served 20 or more years in the Marines or Navy as a senior officer; and
- have been retired less than six years.

I would like to contact you about how I might locate any such individuals working at the City of Escondido to see if they would be willing to participate in an interview.

I will contact you later in the week and look forward to speaking with you.

Yours truly,

Lynn Eldred  
Work: [phone number]  
Home: [phone number]



**APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF GROUNDED THEORY OF THE  
PHENOMENON OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
<b>Theme: Leadership Development</b>			
Must prepare to take over command without notice	Education and Training	Common initiation. ongoing career development.	Instill values, beliefs, behavior norms, leadership principles.
Youthfulness of many junior officers (as young as 22)	Mentoring	CPO's and sr. officers expected to develop junior officers.	Guide, role models, how to lead crew, decision-making.
	Developmental Experiences	Responsibility: immediate; seen as a reward. Included in decision-making.	Develop critical thinking, confidence & decision-making.
	Technical expertise	Set and demand high standards. Model technical proficiency.	Increase technical expertise. Accomplish mission.
<b>Theme: Leading Staff</b>			
Operational environment	KATN style	Demanding, possible threats. Set & expect high standards. Demand orders are followed.	High mental & physical performance, handle stress. Obey orders without questions. Accomplish strategic mission.
	Technical expertise	Set and demand high standards. Model technical proficiency.	Increase technical expertise. Accomplish mission.
Administrative environment	Coaching style	Plan, coordinate, involve, and inform.	Accomplish programmatic mission.

**Summary of Grounded Theory of Military Leadership**  
**Theme: Leading Staff: continued**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
Staff: some young, lack experience, poor education. Continual staff changes.	Select out those who can't adapt.	Boot camp. Honest performance appraisals. May not let re-enlist. Discipline.	Be honest in appraisals. "Make the tough calls" – deal with discipline problems.
	Controlled environment	Paternalistic system. Do everything together.	Build camaraderie. Turn around behavior.
	Communications straightforward state reason. judicious.	Orders followed literally. Trust leader. People can be hurt.	Communicate clearly; speak directly. Demonstrate your decision-making. Need to know
	Training and development	Quickly productive. Make up for poor education. Consistency despite rotation.	Make training as #1 priority; provide continuous career training.
Willingness to go into harm's way.	Shared values.	Instill at orientation. Leader models & reinforces.	Lead by values.
Willingness to go into harm's way; to follow leader.	Command presence. calm. High technical ability. Physical ability. Maintain demeanor.	Perception: leader is in control, knows job and will keep staff safe.	Appear calm. Maintain demeanor. Display abilities; work along side staff; stay fit. Respect is yours to lose.
Put life in leader's hands: Decision-making	Display quick & decisive ability: rational process.	Build crew's confidence in leader. Perception: we are in good hands.	If people trust your judgment they will obey.
Put life in leader's hands: 2-way loyalty	Build loyalty.	Counsel all; be involved with family. Reward & recognize top performance.	Take care of your people.

**Summary of Grounded Theory of Military Leadership**  
**Theme: Leading Staff, continued**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences: Leadership Lessons</i>
	Discipline	Be fair & apply to all. Take action to protect crew.	Discipline builds loyalty and obedience.
	Motivation	Set high expectations; communicate & reward; Promote for merit;	People need to be pushed. Recognize individually. Reward & promote on merit.
Willing to place self in harm's way for the unit	Camaraderie and unit cohesion	Values of unit identity. Structures: deployment, social events, sports, and competition. Be visible; demonstrate support for staff.	Use events and structures. Demonstrate support. Work along side staff.
<b>Theme: Decision-Making</b>			
Leader may need to be replaced quickly.	Develop decision-making.	Early responsibility, gradually increasing. Responsibility is a reward	Final decision is CO's. Input, not consensus. Relish independence. Dislike micro-management.
<b>Theme: Leading Change</b>			
Managing change.	Change strategies motivated by events.	Top-down directives: officer does implementation. Utilize controlled environment.	Follow & implement organizational change. Variety of programs can be seen as "flavor of the month."

**APPENDIX F: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND PUBLIC  
SECTORS**

<b>Theme: Leading Staff</b>		
<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Public Sector</i>
Nature of Staff	Diverse, many young, inexperienced.	Many older, more experienced, concerned with pay, benefits & retirement.
	Trust between officers & enlisted.	Labor/management relations.
	Control over staff; follow orders.	Independent; do not always comply with directives.
Communication	Direct, specific. "Need to know" principle.	Negative reactions to straightforward communication; jargon; formal style.
Classification System	Staff will "Do what needs to be done." Flexible job duties.	Established (sometimes out of date) job titles, job descriptions, pay rates. "Not my job" syndrome. Unresponsive HR system. No managerial latitude.
Staff Retention	Use induction, performance reports and re-enlistment system to "weed out." Move staff every 2-3 years:	Organizational stagnation; lack of mobility. Pay to keep individuals regardless of job duties.
Training and Development	Training a top priority; continuous development; stay current in field.	Mixed levels of training – some very poor. No leadership development. "Shallow bench."
Teamwork/ Camaraderie	Built into system – overseas deployment, dependency, paternalistic system, cross-department shipboard teams	Lack of established structures that promote teamwork.
Managing Performance	Work with whole individual; NJP; making the tough calls; fair & consistent discipline creates loyalty.	Limited focus; performance problems. Limited effectiveness; cumbersome civil service system; not all managers enforce rules.
	Wide variety of recognition options. Rewards based on merit.	Some delayed, undeserving, and blanket awards.

**Differences between the Military and Public Sectors**  
**Theme: Organizational Relations, continued**

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Public Sector</i>
Staff Relations	Respect comes with position. Confidence of staff. Respect is "yours to lose."	Must build own reputation. Possible cynicism of staff.
Peers Relations	Mission is primary. Camaraderie of wardroom.	Lack of camaraderie and internal support.
Relations with manager	CO has ultimate responsibility. Role is to support CO. CO is in charge of officer development.	Support boss. Lack of training and development opportunities. Mundane assignments.
Relations with Executive Leadership	Praise in public, chastise in private. Knows your job. Command presence.	Exec criticizes at meetings and public hearings; assigns blame; probably does not know your job.
Political Relations	Insulated from congress and top management.	"Close to the flagpole." Competition among department heads. Citizen involvement.
Amount of Discretion	Broad discretion. Trust in judgment. Give general direction.	Micro-management. Others don't know your job. Multiple questions and requests for information.
Decision-making	Broad authority. Make life and death decisions. Quick decision-making. Responsibility its own reward.	Limited authority. Involvement of many stakeholders. Slow, indecisive process. Micro-management.
Values and Ethics	Clear, shared values.	Conflicting values. Some individual orientation rather than public good.
<b>Theme: Policies and Procedures</b>		
Policies and Procedures	Exist for everything. Standardized across the organization. Generally adhered to.	Lacking in many areas. Applied inconsistently. Less developed than in federal contracting. Not always consequences for non-compliance.

**APPENDIX G: LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: EFFECTIVE AND  
LESS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY RETIRED OFFICERS**

<b>Theme: Leading Staff</b>				
<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Nature of Staff	Many older, more experience, concern for pay, benefits & retirement.	Choices.	Meetings; open and frequent communications.	Information bulletins; problems with spreading rumors.
	Labor-management relations.	Adversarial labor relations.	Open communications.	
	Independent; do not always comply with directives.	Limits of discipline system.	Follow-up.	Assume directives will be followed.
Communication Norms	Negative reactions to straightforward communication; jargon; formal style.	Staff unaccustomed to direct style. Stereotypes.	Communication style adjusted. Eliminate jargon & formality.	Direct style affects customer & staff relations. Jargon, formality create barriers.
Classification System	Established (sometimes out of date) job titles, job descriptions, pay rates; "Not my job" syndrome.	Civil service system; some unresponsive HR systems; no latitude for manager.	Lobby & work within HR system; improve selection; re-organization.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.

**Leadership in the Public Sector: Effective and Less Effective Strategies Employed by Retired Officers,  
Theme: Leading Staff, continued**

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Retention	Lifetime employment; lack mobility; pay to keep individuals.	Organization in stagnation; turnover as negative.	Change attitudes: turnover is good; promote mobility; pay what post is worth.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.
Training and Development	Most poor levels of training. No leadership development. "Shallow bench."	Expectations that staff know the job.	Increase training. Add leadership/ career development programs.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.
Teamwork/ Camaraderie	Lack of established structures.	Downsizing environment.	Communicate goals, delegation, instill sense of ownership; team recognition; social gatherings.	Inner circles.
Managing Performance	Limited focus; not all managers enforce rules.  Unearned and "blanket" awards.	Limited effectiveness –civil service system.  No merit rewards.	Work with on staff regardless of other managers. Reorganization. Use rewards available.	Accepting & criticizing status quo.

**Leadership in the Public Sector: Effective and Less Effective Strategies Employed  
by Retired Officers,  
Theme: Organizational Relations, continued**

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Staff Relations	No established reputation. Leader is questioned. "Open door" avoids chain of command.	Less control over staff. Cynicism of some staff.	Consciously build reputation. Communicate carefully. Follow-up.	Assume you have a positive reputation and cooperation.
Peer Relations	Lack of camaraderie and internal support.	Separate work and personal lives. Focus on own department.	Hold events. Outreach.	No follow-up. Accept status quo.
Relations with manager	Support boss. Lack of training and development opportunities. Mundane assignments.	Multiple stakeholders complicate decisions. Historic lack of training and development.	Find own development opportunities.	Don't question boss. Wait for development opportunities.
Relations with Executive Leadership	Criticize at meetings and public hearings. Feelings of being disrespected.	CEO staff probably does not know your job.	Build influence relationships.	
Political Relations	Insulated from congress and top management.	"Close to the flagpole." Competition of department heads. Citizen involvement.	Enjoy influence. Build relationships. Join political committees.	Avoid, try to insulate self from the process.



**Leadership in the Public Sector: Effective and Less Effective Strategies Employed by Retired Officers**  
**Theme: Organizational Relations, continued**

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Political Process	Multiple approval levels. Competition among department heads.	Multiple stakeholders. Public processes. Takes longer.	Enjoy influence. Build relationships. Join political committees.	Avoid, try to insulate self from the process.
Amount of Discretion	CEO staff doesn't know the job. Many questions and information requests.	CEO and elected officials' staff are generalists.	Develop relationships and trust. Build reputation.	Become frustrated.
Decision-making	Limited authority. Slow, indecisive process. Micro-management.	Multiple stakeholders. Others make critical decisions.	Accept change. Build influence relationships. Find satisfaction in the work itself.	Become frustrated.
Values & Ethics	Not always clear. Some "me" orientation.	Conflicting public goals.		

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**Leadership in the Public Sector: Effective and Less Effective Strategies Employed by Retired Officers, continued**


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**Theme: Policies and Procedures**

<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Effective Strategies and Practices</i>	<i>Less Effective Strategies and Practices</i>
Policies and Procedures	Lacking in many areas. Applied inconsistently. Less developed than in federal contracting. Not always consequences for non-compliance.	Lesser priority. Existing policies and procedures are often out of date or "on the shelf."	Bring in practices from the military. Introduce through influence and modeling.	Discuss solely with the chief executive and rely on him/her to implement.

**Theme: Encountering Stereotypes**

Stereotypes	Stereotypes include: rigid, bureaucratic, not very bright, clique-ish, trained in psychological warfare. Experience of retired military not understood or recognized.	Less public contact and direct experience with the military. Rely on media image. Not given appropriate assignments or commensurate pay. Barrier to implementing change.	Avoiding military jargon and formality. Conscious efforts to counter stereotypes. Take on higher level assignments. Educate co-workers and demonstrate abilities.	Actions that reinforce stereotypes, e.g., using jargon, issuing too many written policy directives. Rely on superior to give out assignments.
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