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THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ON PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

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A DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Creighton University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in
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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine and understand the relationship between community service and public service leadership. The aim of the study was to contribute to the current body of work by focusing on public sector employees and exploring how community service impacted their leadership skills and development. To achieve this, data was collected through personal interviews with 16 public sector leaders who reside in Central Illinois and employed with either a municipal, county, state or federal government agency. Four main themes emerged from the data collected: Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership, Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM), Involvement with Community Service Organizations and Political Engagement and Advocacy. These themes led to the recommendation that enlightened conversation commence to investigate the utilization of skills acquired from the unpaid experiences of potential employees to forecast and determine employee suitability which will ultimately move the field of public sector leadership forward. Additionally, the data lends to the larger conversation of what skills and abilities are required of public sector leaders, how they can be identified and what paradigms must be developed for the inclusion of community service in employee development programs.

Dedication

Dedicated to my parents - Roy and Dorothy Nunn - for their unconditional love, motivation and uncompromising approach toward bettering the lives of their children.

Acknowledgements

It is written in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” While so many individuals have supported and poured into me throughout journey, I must primarily acknowledge God for sustaining me with His promises. I am thankful for the many doors that have been opened and even the ones that were closed as result of His promises. But most importantly, I am grateful for the experiences that have led me to the achievement of this lifelong dream.

There are so many individuals who have lent to this accomplishment. However, my family has been my biggest champions and cheerleaders. They include my husband, Evans C. Spencer III, who selflessly supported me and sacrificed of himself so that I might flourish, my parents, Roy and Dorothy Nunn, who have poured everything imaginable into me including their passion to help others, and my siblings, Dr. Roderick Nunn and Dr. Santita Nunn, who have served as sources of inspiration, support and models of excellence.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

As a product of underprivileged East St. Louis, Illinois – a city with a median household income of below \$20,000 and a poverty rate of 44% - I learned early in life that I would need to work hard if I were to help fulfill my parents' dream of becoming the parents of three college graduates. While my parents insisted that my siblings and I make high-achieving grades, they were equally insistent that we help others who were less fortunate by engaging in community service on a regular basis. Not just any community service, but service that would require us to assist a person in need. Whether serving lunch at a senior center, volunteering in the baby ward of the hospital or cleaning an elderly person's home, the service ended with someone being provided a worthwhile service. While initially pessimistic toward the mere thought of giving up my precious free time, community service was viewed as just another thing that would interfere with me hanging out with the neighborhood kids or whatever it was I deemed important 35 years ago. Little did I know that community service was about to become an ongoing staple in my life and the foundation for what I hold dear – helping others.

In elementary school, my father would take my siblings and I to the various fundraisers and community events hosted by his Masonic Lodge. This group always amazed me because of the number of people who gave their free time to come together to accomplish the goal at hand. Whether it was selling dinners to fund a scholarship or clearing abandoned lots in a rundown neighborhood, two things were obvious to me; 1) The collective power of individuals coming together is unparalleled, and 2) It takes a special breed of people to give of themselves to doggedly, yet cheerfully, work toward

the good of others. It occurs to me that not long after being introduced to the endeavors of the masonic family, many of my decisions going forward centered on personifying characteristics that others would find helpful and nurturing.

In middle school, I was drawn to organizations with a community service component. The Beta Club, Honor Society and the Math Club all contained a tutoring component where members would visit the neighboring elementary school to tutor grade school children in various subjects including Math, my favorite subject. The Beta Club required additional service hours in the community that would test my resolve toward helping others. Many Saturdays were spent cleaning the school, organizing the library and picking up neighborhood debris. I must admit that it took a while to become accustomed to giving up my cherished Saturdays. But conversely, I was euphoric after every service activity and noted the difference that only a few hours of time made in the lives of many. I was completely sold.

Stilled fueled by the excitement of community service, I entered high school still seeking out organizations that offered a community service component. I found the Principal Scholar's Program, the Beta Club, Honor Society, Senior Pearls and a few other organizations that peaked my interests and stimulated my desire to serve. During my college visits with the Principal Scholars Program, I was sure to inquire about service opportunities on campus including service organizations. It came as no surprise that from the moment I officially arrived on campus, my ambitions centered on social services and helping others. I joined organizations that enhanced the lives of other including the Black Student Association, Student Government, and a public service sorority. I enjoyed advocating for student issues whether they were geared toward students from

underprivileged backgrounds or the student body, I was delighted to help people. I also still enjoyed providing community service at off-campus sites, so I joined a public service sorority to expand my reach. The thought of leaving this world better than I found it, fueled me to seek out injustices and areas where I could personally affect change no matter how big or small.

Because my academic strength had always been in Math, I opted to pursue Accounting as a major. Even though a major in the field of Social Services probably would have suited me better, my parents insisted that I choose a profession that would produce a favorable monetary return on their economic investment. Nonetheless, by the end of my Senior year, I knew that I could never be happy with a career in Accounting. My purpose to help others had become clear. Accordingly, I set out to find a graduate school program that would align with my passion for helping people while also incorporating the skills acquired as an Accounting major. My search yielded my acceptance into the Master of Public Administration program where I would gain insight into the public sector.

While working toward a graduate degree, I was recruited to work for state government. The opportunity felt like the right fit for me as it allowed me the opportunity to utilize the skills and proficiencies obtained in undergraduate school, as well as, ignite my passion for helping individuals. Since that time, I have continued to work in various capacities for government entities ranging from municipalities to federal agencies. My passion to help the community has never faltered as I continue serving the community with upwards of 30 service hours each quarter.

While serving in and about the community, I often encounter other public sector leaders who are providing community service as well. As a doctoral student at Creighton University, I was compelled to examine the relationship between community service and public sector leadership to explore how other leaders have developed leadership skills through their community service experiences.

The Field of Leadership

In efforts to further explore the relationship between public sector leadership and community service, I initiated my research by engaging existing leadership theories to develop an understanding of the broader field of leadership. Research focused on the field of leadership has radically increased since the first theories were introduced in the nineteenth century giving way to a profusion of leadership theories. The insurgence of new research has generated attention from scholars and practitioners throughout the world who, in turn, changed the way we understand the concept of leadership (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014). highlighting some of these theories to underscore the evolution of leadership theory and emphasize the unique characteristics of leaders.

One of the earliest theories introduced and systematically studied was the Great Man Theory (Bass and Stogdill, 1990). According to this theory, only great men could evoke necessary changes in society using rare mental traits such as charisma, intelligence and dominance (Stanislavov and Ivanov, 2014). The theory further held that these great men were born with the traits, thus entitling them to greatness among men (Raelin, 2015). Yang and Lim (2016) interpreted this embryonic theory to imply that leaders are born opposed to being made. Considering the social standards associated with the mid

nineteenth century, the era that the Great Man theory was popularized, viewing this theory to be biased in the categories of both gender and race is not implausible. A woman's role during this period was viewed as submissive and subordinate while blacks were considered subservient and less than human (Bass and Stogdill, 1990). It is conceivable that neither women nor black people in general were considered qualified or suitable to be great leaders because they simply did not fit within the frameworks developed. Appropriately, subsequent researchers and students of leadership would dispute Great Man Theory - for reasons which include the marginalization of women - and introduce leadership theories that not only support contradicting views but provide empirical evidence-based data to support their theories (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Stanislavov and Ivanov, 2014).

A number of leadership theories emerged after The Great Man Theory. One was Trait Theory, which studied human personalities and habitual patterns of behaviors. The introduction of Behavioral Approach toward leadership emphasized that behavior was a learned response that could be unlearned if it is unacceptable. Transactional Leadership Theory focused on performance and results (Weber, 1947). Conversely, Transformational Leadership Theory highlighted processes where leaders and followers work together to develop followers into leaders (Burns, 1978). Below, the aforementioned theories are reviewed highlighting what each theory offered, as well as, the limitations of each.

Trait Theory, also among the initial leadership theories to be systematically studied and one of the first theories to be introduced that contradicted the Great Man Theory, examined the personal, psychological and physical traits of strong leaders (Bird, 1940; Bass and Stogdill, 1990). As the dominant leadership theory for the first half of the

twentieth century, Trait Theory proposed that leaders could be distinguished from other individuals by demonstrating certain traits including agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neurotic and openness (Colbert, Judge, Choi & Wang, 2012). Although this theory remained on center stage for over 50 years, significant criticism from researchers and scholars ultimately instigated Trait Theory's fall from grace within the research community in the 1950's (Yang and Lim, 2016). This criticism included the assertion from Stodgill (1948) that the individual and situation must be considered when assessing leadership (Landis, Hill & Harvey, 2015). The lack of situational and environmental elements that impact a leader's level of effectiveness (Yang and Lim, 2016), as well as, the failure to identify common traits found in each and every leader also lent to the eventual demise of Trait Theory (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Moreover, Trait Theory failed because no one style of leadership could be successfully applied in all circumstances and conditions (Pratch and Jacobwitz, 1997). Hartshorne and May (1928) and Mischel (1968) presented strong evidence that models of trait must include mechanisms to examine how different behavioral traits react in different situations and environments. These criticisms led to the development of the Behavioral Approach.

The Behavioral Approach occupied the attention of leadership theorists for the next 30 years following the demise of Trait Theory and signaled a sharp contrast from preceding theories (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; Kahn & Katz, 1953, Stogdill & Coons, 1957, Yang and Lim, 2016). The Behavioral Approach was staunchly different from Great Man Theory and highlighted the importance of the leader's behavior rather than congenital physical, mental or social traits (Stanislavov and Ivanov, 2014). The primary premise of the Behavioral Approach focused on the leader's behavior toward the

follower and supported the belief that leadership behaviors are not necessarily innate attributes but can be learned through appropriate leader training and experience.

Nonetheless, like its predecessors, the excitement geared toward Behavior Approach eventually faded due the lack of consideration for situational experiences that may affect leader behavior (Yang and Lim, 2016). This inattentiveness toward situational experiences led to a precise focus on leader behavior toward followers and the concept of Transactional Leadership (Lim and Yang, 2014).

First introduced by German philosopher Max Weber in 1947, Transactional Leadership ensured follower loyalty by utilizing rewards and focuses on the exchanges that occur between leader and follower, such as, rewards, punishments and tasks used to motivate followers to obtain individual and organizational achievements (McClesky, 2014). While transactional leaders tend to focus on short-term goals rules, procedures and control while discouraging originality or ingenuity from followers, employees working under transactional leaders correspondingly tend to view the relationship with the leader as performance-driven because rewards are provided for producing desired outcomes (Ohunakin et al, 2016).

In 1978, American Political Scientist James McGregor redefined the theory of Transactional Leadership as a social exchange between leaders and followers. Each of these exchanges is considered to be a component of a negotiation that occurred between the leaders and the follower which will yield monetary reward, promotion or something of value if the quality and/or quantity are as negotiated (McGregor, 1978). Furthering the concept of Transactional Leadership, Bass (1985) recognized the interaction to be “a cost-benefit exchange process” (pg.11).

Despite the reward exchange between leaders and followers, Transactional Leadership has been criticized for leader rigidity, the lack of creativity that followers are allowed and its comprehensive approach to leadership theory (McClesky, 2014; Yukl, 1999; 2011; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Nonetheless, there is little debate that Transactional Leadership is tremendously effective when an organization must quickly respond to change or an imminent threat. Regardless of its effectiveness in various settings, Burns (1978) criticized the practicality of Transactional Leadership and made functional the concept of Transformational Leadership as its counterpart.

Transformational Leadership is lauded for its team approach in identifying change, creating change management and executing the plan for change. Through mechanisms to motivate and serve as morale boosters, the productivity and performance of followers increase (Burns, 1978 and Bass 1985). Seven years after Burns (1978) functionalized the theory, Bass (1985) would expand the theory of transformational leadership by refocusing it on four leader attributes: inspiration, charisma, intellectual stimulation and consideration geared toward improving individual and collective performance. Bass and Bass (2008) perceived that this form of leadership is manifested through four leadership behaviors – individualized behavior, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence.

Although introduced four decades ago, contemporary theorists consider Transformational Leadership to be a relevant theory that still applies to present-day experiences. Stanislavov and Ivanov (2014) consider transformational leadership to be germane in theory for articulating a clear vision for motivating followers and expanding their moral compass. Cited by McClesky (2014), Transformational Leadership is defined

by Lim and Yang (2014) as “a mutual process between the leaders and the followers whereby the leadership creates visions and connection that result in increased motivation for both to pursue the end goals” (p. 6). They also noted that Transformational Leadership is the absolute most examined and debated philosophy in the field of leadership and especially relevant because the leader, along with the group, together identify and implement needed changes. Focusing on the needs of their followers, transformational leaders are considered extraordinary in the opinion of Ohunakin et al. (2016) because of their enhanced ability to coach and mentor followers to reach their full achievement. While Transformational Leadership is still heavily studied, it is criticized for the lack of sufficient empirical evidence documenting the influence of situational and contextual variables on leadership effectiveness (McClesky, 2014). Nonetheless, the study of Transformational Leadership is well documented, still expanding and associated with both individual and organizational benefits including leadership development models.

Leadership Development

McCall (2010) stated that leadership is learned from an array of experiences including early work experiences, short-term and major assignments, other people, and other miscellaneous events like training programs. Similarly, Huang and Fredrick (2013) asserted in their research that differences of opinion are not always based on fact or logic, but sometimes stem from a difference in individual background and upbringing. This type of behavior, also known as cultural conditioning, can occur through various mediums such as family upbringing, mentorship, religious involvement and after-school programming.

Also furthering the concept of leadership development, Checkoway (2015) posed that involvement in community organizations is another way to influence competencies and leadership development. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) are examples of such organizations that encourage leadership development for its membership. For instance, the NAACP NextGEN Program provides professional leadership development training for young adults ages 21 to 35. Similarly, NCNW launched the Dorothy I. Height Leadership Institute in 2012 to enhance the leadership skills of both novice and experienced female leaders representing a variety of disciplines and professions.

Likewise, involvement with sororities and fraternities also provides an avenue for obtaining leadership skills through organizational sponsored leadership development programs according to Johnson, Johnson and Dugan (2015). Routon and Walker (2016) agree that Greek-lettered organizations provide students with valuable experiences through leadership roles, public speaking, and guidance for operating within organizational boundaries. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., for example, offers leadership development programs for both collegiate members and graduate members. Leadership Delta was established in 2003 for collegiate members to acquire both leadership and career training for members planning a career in Corporate America. Likewise, the organization established the Delta Leadership Fellows Program in 2016 to provide leadership, mentorship and guidance for graduate members. Participation in Greek-lettered organizations like Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. provide members with

increased opportunities for enhancing their leadership skills, interpersonal skills and public speaking (Routon and Walker, 2016).

Community and political involvement are additional mediums that provide leadership skills to individuals who choose to participate. Both avenues have demonstrated benefits to the community at large, as well as, to the participant. Whether serving on local agency boards or becoming an elected official, opportunities such as this give way leadership skills such as interpersonal savviness, public speaking and financial competence (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). The knowledge, skills and abilities garnered by the involvement in community and political organizations are invaluable resources and transferrable skills for individuals striving to become leaders.

The Motivation to Continue Serving

In the same way that community and political involvement influences leadership skills, Public Service Motivation (PSM) and altruism may also be a contributor for participants to gain valuable skills and proficiencies (Esteve et al, 2016). Moreover, these attributes may explain why public service leaders are attracted to public sector work and community service. Perry and Wise (1990) defined PSM as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (p. 368). These predispositions stem from a person’s upbringing, culture and belief system. Altruism, on the other hand, is generally defined by actions that take into account the consideration of others. Both are concerned with serving others and their general wellbeing (Esteve et al, 2016). Altruism and PSM are said to influence participation in public service and public sector employment and has been found to increase job performance and heighten leadership skills (Schwartz et al., 2014).

PSM was initially developed to explain the motives of individuals who desire careers in the public sector opposed when other opportunities in the private sector might be available. Perry (1996) identified four elements that incline individuals to seek opportunities in public service. These opportunities include attraction to public policymaking, commitment to the public interest and civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996). Both altruism and PSM should be considered to help explain the motives of public service leaders who are attracted to service roles such as those found in the public sector and with community service involvement.

As a career-long government employee and one whose rearing included ongoing community service, the majority of my life has been dedicated to serving others. As an adult, I remain involved with helping underprivileged populations through my public service activities and community involvement roles. My dissertation topic was established to contemplate public sector leadership. To fully consider the topic, it was required for me to garner a better understanding of the wide array of existing leadership theories, including their benefits and limitations, by explicitly exploring leadership acquired by community service involvement. More specifically, I am fascinated with amassing information relative to the relationship between community service and public sector leadership. I examined this relationship to distinguish ways that individuals relate community service to the attainment of their respective leadership skills. I then explored the source of their leadership skills and if community service was an essential part of their development as leaders.

Aim Statement

Stogdill (1974) emphasized that it is impossible for scholars to settle on just one definition for leadership because there are just as many definitions of the term as there are researchers in the field. Bass (2000; 2008) stressed that leadership is so complex that there is not a single definition for the concept. These assessments can more than likely be attributed to the many intricacies involved with the concept of leadership (Stanislavov and Ivanov, 2014) that stem as a result of what seems to be the endless formation of dichotomies representing an assortment of experiences. These diverging leadership experiences occur for various reasons including differing upbringing, educational experiences and beliefs which lead to varying motivations. My interest is to contribute to the current body of work by focusing on public sector employees and exploring how community service impacted their leadership skills and development.

Purpose of the Study

Like many private and nonprofit sector leaders, public sector leaders hone their leadership skills from various experiences throughout their life; a far departure from the Great Man Theory of 1869. While Chapter Four will highlight several of these skills and experiences that leaders acquire, I surmise that one way that these skills may have been developed is through community service. For decades, theories of leadership have constantly emerged within scholarly outlets. Many of these theories have examined leadership development as it relates to the job-based experiences of leaders. However, there is a gap in the research pertaining to the influence of non-job-related experiences, such as, community service involvement on public sector leadership.

Without doubt, leadership is essential in all employment sectors. However, while transparency has increased in the public sector, the public has shown increased skepticism and little tolerance for leaders' mistakes (Wart, 2003). In Illinois, for example, two of the last three Governors and some of their high-level staff members have been convicted of corruption that occurred while in office. These scenarios are not unique to only Illinois. Other governments and municipalities have experienced similar concerns of government corruption; including corruption in the federal government (Overton, 2017).

Some of the best practical writers will argue that from a political perspective, public sector leaders can only be moderately effective because of the great constraints that they encounter (Wart, 2003). Government agencies as a whole have become infamous for the red tape that plague many government offices and slows service delivery. While maneuvering through the bureaucratic red tape, public leaders also must balance conflicting personal and professional priorities, as well as, cultivate quality relationships with their employees in the hopes of increasing how employees perceive the leader's integrity (Ljungholm, 2014). Perceptions of distrust and unethical behavior by government employees can be the beginning of a leader's downfall in the public sector. As such, leadership in the public sector deserves distinct examination in terms of how its leaders are developed and how they become equipped to manage the quandaries that come along with leading within a government setting. According to Ljungholm (2014), improving worker performance in public agencies and developing leadership competencies for executives, managers, and supervisors is the key to transforming the image of public sector leaders. However, I surmise that the competencies suitable for public sector leaders must be developed first.

Leadership is reported to be an essential element in the public sector (Ascencio and Mujkic, 2016 and Bryson et al, 2016). It takes leadership to advance sectors of government from one level to another. However, while leadership development programs and resources are available to public sector employees, private sector literature and training programs devour those relative to the public sector (Buss, 2008). Heading into the 21st century, \$45 billion was annually spent on corporate training and development. Ten years later, the annual cost of corporate training rose to \$50 billion with twenty-five percent being specifically allocated toward leadership development (Seidle, Fernandez & Perry, 2016). Conversely and as evidenced by subsidized agency budgets, the public sector is saddled with scarce resources and scrutinized spending, as well as, leaders who must contend with multiple external demands, pressures and priorities, frequent decision reversals and often abbreviated tenures of service that inhibit the ability to accomplish goals (Seidle et al, 2016). As Wart (2003) and Seidle et al (2016) both indicate, there is a substantial gap in leadership literature focusing on the public sector as much of the leadership research is focused on the private sector (Wart, 2003). This disregard of leadership research within the public sector has been well documented and particularly noticeable in the area of leadership training and development (Buss, 2008, Seidle et al, 2016 & Wart, 2003).

The purpose of this Dissertation in Practice is to examine the relationship between community service and leadership in the public sector and lend to the existing body of work relative to public sector leadership. This qualitative study was conducted through personal interviews and involved 16 public sector leaders with diverse backgrounds, skillsets, expertise and tenures. These leaders are employed with either a municipality,

state, county or federal government agency and also convey varying perspectives of how community service has impacted their ability to become an effective leader.

This Dissertation in Practice will add to the current body of work that focuses on the relationship between community service and public sector leadership. In addition it will add to professional practice and the greater good of the field of public sector leadership, as well, by facilitating conversations of employee recruitment and development strategies from exclusively compensated experiences to the inclusion of volunteer experiences significant to the public sector, public sector leaders like myself can begin utilizing the skills acquired from these unpaid experiences to forecast and determine employee suitability which will ultimately move the field of public sector leadership forward.

Research Questions

Throughout the years, leadership development has become increasingly significant to employers who desire to obtain strategic goals or positive change. Not only are leaders needed in the private sector, the public sector has also sought out leaders who can guide organizations to new levels of survival; many who are recruited from the private sector. Considering the growing and evolving field of leadership, more research is needed on the leadership characteristics of public sector leaders and the role of community service in their development. Thus, the sole research question that guided this qualitative study is: What impact, if any, does community service have on public sector leadership?

Definition of Terms

During the course of the study, several prevalent terms emerged that were deemed relevant to the research. The following definitions were used during the course of this qualitative study:

Advocacy: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal: the act or process of advocating something (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2018).

Altruism: the act of volunteering with the primary motivation of benefitting another without an expectation of reward (Feign, Owens and Goodyear-Smith. 2014).

After-school Programs (ASPs): developmental programs for school-aged children that traditionally operate between the hours of 3:00pm and 6:00pm (Tanner, 2015).

Community engagement: involvement in service activities for social justice purposes. (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014).

Community Organizations: organizations that assist others in need by providing services and support that might otherwise be cost-prohibitive (Mason, 2015)

Community Service: any type of volunteer work that is conducted without compensation (Seider, S., Rabinowicz, S., & Gillmor, S., 2012). The focus of this study will concentrate on public service; unpaid service rendered toward the community or an underprivileged population.

Cultural Conditioning: the heritage and philosophies passed down throughout generations and influences values, opinions and attitudes, beliefs and social norms (Huang and Fredrick, 2013).

Leadership: Because of the complexity of the term, there is no one single definition due to the varying ways it is studied thus yielding an array of definitions. However,

for this study, the term will be defined as the influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change (Lussier and Achua, 2015).

Leadership Development: a process of development focusing on developmental science that inherently involves multiple individuals (Day et al, 2014).

Mentoring: a relationship connecting a more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé in order to develop the protégé (Mitchel, Eby and Ragins, 2015).

Political Involvement: serving as or for an elected official for a government entity.

Public Sector: the part of an economic system that is owned and controlled by the government (Buss, 2008).

Public Sector Motivation (PSM): an individual's motives for engaging in behavior for the benefit of the public interest and has been used to explain the desire to serve the interests of society at large" (Wise, 2000).

Significance of the Study

Understanding the role of community service relative to the development of leadership skills is essential to scholarly research in terms of identifying core leadership competencies in public servants. Identifying a connection between leadership and community service could give credence to the necessity of community service requirements in educational programs such as Public Administration, Public Policy and Political Science and other leadership development programs designed to prepare students for leadership in the public sector. Further, understanding the influences that impact public sector leadership will serve as an empirical contribution to existing research in leadership theory and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Public service leaders emerge from a host of backgrounds armed with skillsets derived from varying experiences obtained over the course of their lives. For many public service leaders, engaging in community service generates an array of skills and influences that ultimately inspire leader behavior and interaction throughout their careers. These influences include, but are not limited to, cultural conditioning (Huang and Fredrick, 2013), altruism and public service motivation (Perry and Wise, 2010), involvement with community organizations and advocacy (Checkoway, 2015) and community engagement and political involvement (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014).

In 2003, Van Wart exclaimed the need for more research in the field of public leadership. Fifteen years later, scholars agree that public leadership is a phenomenon significant to the public sector and deserving of attention. Despite the increased amount of research, the study of public leadership still remains obscure (Vogel and Massey, 2015; Ospina, 2016). Defined by “the politics of decision making, the complexity of accountability, the influence of the external environment, and the public sector ethos as a motivating performance factor,” contemporary models of public leadership stress the leadership more than the publicness thus marginalizing the importance of public service characteristics as compared to the private sector (Ospina, 2015, p. 275). In addition to the behavior of public leaders is the question of what motivates them to work for a government agency.

The public sector is unique from the private sector in that it is tasked with civic responsibilities and is accountable to the public. There is much to be learned about those

who work for government organizations and their motivations for doing so. One of the most popular theories to emerge is Public Service Motivation (PSM), which accounts for a person's impulse to do good works in the community. Broadly defined as a mechanism that impels an individual's motives for engaging in behavior that benefits the public interest (Wise 2000) and the desire to serve the interests of society at large (Perry 1996; Perry and Wise 1990), PSM generally refers to deliberate conduct that is intended to do good for others and society (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). Although there is much still to be learned about PSM and its etiology and whether it is congenital or developed through experience, Vandenberg (2007) defined PSM as "the beliefs, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate" (pg. 547). While it is agreed that PSM is significant to the public sector, it is not public sector-specific and applies to other sectors as well (Bright, 2016). Moreover, PSM can help provide understanding with why individuals prefer public sector work and community service involvement.

Perry and Hondeghem (2008) amended the original public sector-specific definition of PSM originally offered by Perry and Wise (1990) to provide a broader notion of PSM as related to motives for providing good public works in general. Hence, the nonprofit and public sectors are aligned in terms of their parallel aim to do good. Miller-Stevens, Taylor and Morris (2015) reported increased commonalities in the values of public and private sector leaders and submitted that there is no inherent difference between the two based on PSM. Be that as it may, Ertas (2014) proposed that because public sector employees are influenced by PSM values and subject to work for a

government agency, they are more attracted to additional service-related activities such as community service.

The impacts of community service on public leadership development remains an understudied topic as well. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2016), 62.6% of US residents volunteered in 2015 equating to 7.9 billion hours of service valuing over \$184 billion dollars. These volunteer contributions offer a significant financial impact to service organizations, as well as, those society members in need of services and assistance. In return, volunteers acquire meaningful gains which include enhanced self-esteem and well-being, increased social contracts and social support and enhanced knowledge and skills (Taylor and Pancer, 2007). Among the added benefits for volunteering in community service activities are an enriched attitude toward learning, civic responsibility and leadership (Fenzel and Peyrot, 2005).

Great strides have been made in expanding the literature for community service specifically regarding adolescent behavior toward involvement. Research from Flanagan et al (2005) investigated the social capital of adolescent community service involvement and Rockenbach, Hudson & Tuchmayer (2014) studied methods for maintaining involvement after the college years. In addition, Ocal and Altınok (2015) examined the effects of service-learning activities on social problems. In a study conducted by Fenzel and Peyrot (2005), it was concluded that community service and service-learning involvement in college has enduring effects on continued volunteer service and employment in a service-related employment sector. These effects include long-term improvements on young adults' attitudes toward social and

personal responsibility, the importance of personal political participation, and continued service involvement through volunteer service and holding a job in a service field (Fenzel and Peyrot, 2005). However, the impact of community service on public sector leadership deserves further research.

The research examined in this literature review examined the aspects of public leadership, community service and public service motivation (PSM) and how these entities influence the behavior of current and future leaders.

Public Leadership

Leadership has been perpetually defined for over a century. Theorists and scholars have spent much of the 20th century defining the phenomena in varying ways. Yukl (2002) stated that “influence is the essence of leadership” (p. 2), while Panchanatham et al. (1993) stated that “a leadership style is best thought of as a manager’s way of handling specific aspects of his role, establishing performance criteria, assigning responsibility and maintaining relationships with his people” (p. 102). Bass and Stogdill (1990) conveyed that more than 3,000 empirical leadership studies had been conducted rendering various leadership definitions. Bass (2000; 2008) emphasized the complexity of leadership was so intricate that it could not be defined by one definition. Considering the insurgence of theories focused on the diverse dynamics affected by leadership - servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), transformative leadership (Burns, 1978), team leadership (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993), organizational leadership (Peterson, 1997), inclusive leadership (Helgesen, 1995) and the role of followership (Kelley, 1998) - one broad definition would be an insufficient representation of the multiplicity of theories involved with the

study of leadership. The study of leadership continues to expand with new constructs and contexts to investigate as evidenced by the sampling of the aforementioned studies.

While traditional models of leadership focused predominately on the leader, contemporary models focus on a myriad of other factors including followers, social dynamics and relationships (Avilio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2007). Theories such as Ethical Leadership (Crown, Trevino and Harrison, 2005) and Authentic Leadership (Walumbwa et al, 2008) have surfaced from a need for managers to “utilize leadership styles and behaviors that match the situation, and the needs and abilities of the employees they are trying to influence” (Anderson, 2017, p. 247).

Ascencio and Mujkic (2016) studied the effectiveness of various behaviors to build trust in public organizations. Although scholars agree that leadership is a significant dynamic affecting both public and private organizations, the relation between leadership and trust has only been thoroughly studied in the private sector. Despite this, such research found a positive relationship between leadership and trust. Very few empirical studies have addressed the relationship in the public sector (Ascencio and Mujkic, 2016). To address this gap in research, Ascencio and Mujkic (2016) explored the relationship between employee perceptions of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors and employee perceptions of trust in leaders within public organizations. Using data collected from the 2010 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey administered by the Office of Personnel Management, Ascencio and Mujkic (2016) measured employee perceptions regarding conditions characterizing successful organizations if those conditions existed within their agency and to what extent.

The research findings suggested that both transformational leadership and transactional leadership behavior are likely to build trust in leaders. However, transformational leadership behavior is likely to build higher levels of interpersonal trust (Ascencio and Mujkic, 2016). Also, because of the social nature of the public sector, public leaders must exhibit certain leadership behaviors over others to influence their employees to focus on the public good opposed to selfish interests. With that, care and concern were more important to public employees than fairness when rewarding and correcting employees while inspirational behavior was important in the absence of external rewards (Ascencio and Mujkic, 2016).

Despite the research progress surrounding the study of leadership over the years, scholars continually identify wide gaps in the understanding of leadership. Seidle, Fernandez and Perry (2016) pinpointed one of those gaps to be the impact of leadership training and development on organizational performance specifically in the public sector and examined whether leadership training and development programs improve leader and organizational performance within the public sector.

With the existence of little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of training development programs on organizational performance, Seidle, Fernandez and Perry (2016) sought to develop a new framework of understanding training development programs in the public sector by creating a model to help improve both organizational and individual leader performance. This model consisted of multisource feedback, classroom training, coaching, and experience; four successful methods used frequently to train and develop leaders but generally not in combination (Seidle, Fernandez and Perry, 2016). The study denotes a noteworthy advance in leadership training and development

research on the multilevel model that steered the investigation and the innovative panel design used to implement it. As such, other public organizations should experience organizational improvement after utilizing the training and development model created by Seidle, Fernandez and Perry (2016).

Ospina (2016) challenged the notion that public leadership research should remain separate from the general study of leadership. Similar to Seidle, Fernandez and Perry (2016), a common regard among leadership scholars continues to convey the concern that public leadership is unique and is not covered among general leadership theories (Ospina, 2016). This research served to highlight the benefits of instituting additional public leadership research and argued that exchanging empirical understanding across disciplines will further scientific progress through theory development. Further, Ospina (2016) explored the relationship between public administration and leadership studies to underline the connection between the two fields as more public organizations experience instability and challenges that confront leader-centered concepts.

In reviewing the two key concerns related to public leadership research – a broader conceptualization of leadership and an emphasis on publicness – Ospina (2016) argued that contemporary leadership research should include more actors, more arenas, more processes and the shared dimension of leadership. Also, in respect to publicness, at the core of public leadership discussions is the influences of a democratic system on the behavior of public leaders (Ospina, 2016). Acknowledging the value tensions and consequences that are affiliated with public leadership – efficiency vs. responsiveness and self-interests vs. public good – is a key component of public leadership.

Ospina (2016) subsequently reviewed relational leadership models - transformational leadership, leader-member exchange, shared/distributed leadership and collective leadership – and concluded that public leadership aligns with relational leadership theories. The framework of relational leadership theory addresses leadership beyond leader/follower relationships and recognizes it wherever it may occur; formal, informal, organizational or environmental (Uhl-Bien, 2011). As such, public leadership scholars should join the conversation with relational leadership theorists and expand the framework emphasizing the publicness that makes public leadership unique.

Because the dynamics of public leadership are reasonably different than that of other sectors, a wide range of opportunity exists with adding to the field of study. Examining the motivation of public employees to work in the sector is one opportunity that required additional research.

Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Originally, Public Service Motivation (PSM) philosophy asserted that distinct motives among public servants existed that were contrary to private sector employees. Perry and Wise (1990) defined PSM as an “individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (p. 368). However, since that time, numerous studies on have emerged and evolved the definition and methods used to measure PSM (Perry, Hondeghem and Wise, 2010). Once thought of to be significant to the public sector, Perry, Hondeghem and Wise, (2010) clarified that PSM does not exist in government organizations only but is also engrained in public service work. Although Perry and Wise (1990) contended that “public service is much more than one’s locus of employment (pg. 398), PSM has been primarily associated with

the public sector. However, the framework has steadily expanded beyond the public sector to embrace service careers across all employment sectors (Perry *et al.*, 2008; Andersen *et al.*, 2011; Kim, 2011; Bellé, 2013; Braender and Andersen, 2013; Van Loon *et al.*, 2013; Kjeldsen, 2014).

The concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM) remains increasingly popular in public administration and public management and has been directly linked to altruism and prosocial behavior with individuals whose interests are grounded in doing good works for others and the public at the core of its foundation (Perry, Hondeghem and Wise, 2010).

Tepe and Vanhuyse (2017) explored the relationship between PSM and the choice of studying public administration on prosocial behavior in efforts to identify better behavioral foundations in public administration. PSM research is engrossed with literature asserting that the desire to work in the public sector positively correlates with prosocial behavior including public interest, civic duty and self-sacrifice (Perry, Hondeghem and Wise, 2010). The same should hold true for prosocial behavior and studying public administration.

Prosocial behaviors have distinct benefits for groups and organizations as there is a decreased need to monitor performance because of increased levels of collaboration and teamwork according to Tepe and Vanhuyse (2017). If prosocial behaviors directly affect the behaviors of public employees in this manner, there is a likely probability that dynamisms can affect the fit and effectiveness of these same employees as well. To that end, significant factors to consider and examine include the influence of monetary and

extrinsic gains, as well as, any team activities that might negatively affect performance comparisons (Tepe and Vanhuyse, 2017).

Using three subject pools comprised of over 250 students, laboratory experiments offering a monetary incentive were used to gauge altruism, fairness, strategic fairness and cooperativeness (Tepe and Vanhuyse, 2017). While the evidence did not support the probability of those with high levels of PSM choosing to study public administration, high levels of PSM were positively associated with altruism and negatively associated with strategic fairness (a preconceived approach fairness). Also, individuals preferring job security over monetary gain were likely to study public administration over business or law. Moreover, the study revealed a substantial connection between prosocial behavior and public administration as those studying public administration behaved more cooperatively, displayed more altruistic characteristics and exhibited less strategic fairness (preconceived ideas of fairness) than business and law students (Tepe and Vanhuyse, 2017).

Nevbahar (2014) contributed to the body of work on the behavioral implications of PSM by examining volunteer involvement of public and private sector employees. PSM purports a motivation for intrinsic reward and a commitment to public good with a fundamental belief that individuals with higher levels of PSM are attracted to government jobs (Perry, Hondeghem and Wise, 2010). The altruistic nature of public employees desiring to help others is not limited to the public sector or the employment sector in general. It is also conveyed through community service (Ertas, 2014).

Citing Amos, Holmes, & Allred (2015), Benz (2005), Gidron (1983 and 1985), Lammers (1991) and Park and Word (2012), Bright (2016) contends a major contribution

of PSM theory is the attraction to public service whether altruistically, affectively or self-centeredly motivated. Nonetheless, scholars have witnessed an increase of research designed to explain the phenomenon and its relationship with an array of attitudes and behaviors such as charity and volunteerism (Ertas, 2014), satisfaction and commitment (Kim, 2012), job and organizational fit (Liu, Tang, & Yang, 2015) and work perceptions and preferences (Bright, 2009).

Evidence to support the strong relationship between PSM and the nonprofit sector is corroborated in recent studies (Word and Carpenter, 2013; Miller-Stevens, Taylor and Morris, 2015). For instance, Word and Carpenter (2013) substantiated Perry's (1996) PSM scale as a valid depiction of the attitudes nonprofit employees share as a result of PSM thus suggesting that PSM was a prognosticator of their behavioral approach. Miller-Stevens et al. (2015) concluded that a great number of similarities exist regarding the values of nonprofit and local government manager despite the fact there were variances in relation to their emphasis on altruism. Also, recent studies have validated that PSM is a better predictor of nonprofit career than local, state and federal employment (Bright and Graham, 2015 and Rose 2012). Considering the growth of the nonprofit sector, representative of over 1.5 million organizations, Bright (2016) acknowledges that a better understanding of the motives that drive employees to work in nonprofit sector is required.

Bright (2016) investigated the relationship that PSM has with nonprofit and government career preferences while considering other influences such as age, gender, minority status and years of work experience. Drawn from a national survey of students enrolled in Master of Public Affairs programs throughout the United States, the results of this online survey revealed that PSM was a better explanation for why individuals

preferred work in the nonprofit sector instead of the public sector, which supported previous studies. In addition, the findings did not suggest that there was no relationship between PSM and public sector career preference but supported previous studies that women and non-minorities (Caucasian) preferred nonprofit careers while men and minorities (Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American and Multiracial) preferred government employment (Bright and Graham, 2015 and Themudo, 2009). While some of the categories intersect, this research indicates that the employment preference for most women and Caucasians is found within nonprofit sector while men and minorities prefer employment in the public sector.

The PSM values responsible for prosocial behavior within public service is believed to also be responsible for community service involvement. However, very little research has been conducted to connect volunteerism with government employees (Ertas, 2014). Lee (2011) compared volunteerism across three employment sectors and tested if individuals had provided any type of volunteer service throughout the previous 12 months and if that service had been conducted with religious, educational, social or community organizations. He found that employees from both the public and nonprofit sectors volunteered more than their private sector counterparts.

Using data from the Americans' Changing Lives survey collected by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, Nevbahar (2014), measured if the workers representing the three employment sectors had volunteered within the last year and the various types of organizations the volunteer worked (school, political group, senior citizen group, hospital, etc.). The results indicated that public sector employees

offer more voluntary service than private sector employees and provide those services at educational institutions and political organizations (Ertas, 2014).

PSM influences individuals to do public good not only in the workplace, but also in the community. While not specific to the public sector, PSM is a key mechanism that inspires government workers to provide community service and expand their benevolence and goodwill. It also helps explain why public sector employees engage in community service. It is important to understand the benefits of community service and its role in leader development.

Community Service

Thought of as a mainstay for American communities, community service not only provides assistance for others but also increases social capital, lowers community-level crime and violence, and improves health and well-being (Wray-Lake et al, 2017). It has also been the focus of many adolescent studies (Wray-Lake et al, 2017) as community service and leadership development oftentimes begin in one's youth providing a foundation for future service and leadership skills. Defined as unpaid work in the community intended to benefit others, community service involvement among high schoolers has been on the rise for years and continues to increase. According to Syvertsen et al. (2011) this increase can mainly be attributed to higher education and institutions requiring community service as a prerequisite for admission. Engaging in meaningful community service has inspired new generations of youth to distinguish themselves as social and civic leaders (Jones, 2017) and facilitated increased knowledge and skills and enhanced self-esteem and well-being (Taylor and Pancer, 2007). The benefits of

community service involvement are endless and could possibly cultivate additional leadership skills for individuals who participate.

Wray-Lake et al (2017) noted that the media's consistent coverage of the lack of youth civic engagement has influenced the notion that America is experiencing a community crisis. Although community service involvement among high school seniors continues to gain traction with increased engagement, other populations are not as involved. As high school graduates leave the hallways and surroundings of institutions that they've become quite acquainted with and converge into young-adulthood, their path may become ambiguous; especially in realm of community service involvement (Wray-Lake, Schulenberg, Keyes, and Shubert, 2017).

Wray-Lake et al (2017) examined the age-related changes in community service involvement. Empirical data is not definitive in this area but suggest that individuals who are socio-economically advantaged engage more in community service. Further, social inequality may increase as youth transition into adulthood also affecting community service involvement. While community service has been the focus of numerous adolescent studies (van Goethem et al, 2014, Wilson, 2012 and Youniss, & Atkins, 2007), there is gap in research on the development patterns of change in community service across the transition to adulthood and whether such patterns are changing across historical time (Wray-Lake, Schulenberg, Keyes, and Shubert, 2017). In essence, this gap in research exists because as adolescents grow into adulthood, they may be drawn away from community service for a time due to an array of variables, including school, work, finances and raising their own families (Wray-Lake, Schulenberg, Keyes, and Shubert, 2017). This time is known as the transition period.

Wray-Lake et al (2014) used multi-cohort national samples of U.S. youth who were followed from ages 18 to 26 and examined the trajectory of community service. The results indicated that community service involvement in high schoolers increased over time and developmental processes and historical moments are definite influences that negatively affect community service involvement during transition to adulthood. However, community service tended to resume after the transition period and beyond (Wray-Lake, Schulenberg, Keyes, and Shubert, 2017).

With community service becoming so popular, scholars are interested in supplementing services such as setting, personnel, and practices to support that developmental needs ensure a positive influence on youth experience (Jones, 2017). However, to gauge the perspective of the student and identify motivational factors, Jones (2017) examined the development of a sense of purpose and meaning for high schoolers participating in PeaceJam, a community service, leadership and social action program. To explore the lived experiences of students, multiple sources and research strategies were used including surveys and interviews to determine group trends and interests (Jones, 2017).

Developing initiative is a critical factor in the transition from youth to adulthood and can be enabled with purposeful practice in settings that serve youth (Jones, 2017). Likewise, a sense of purpose also requires interest and agency to be nurtured (Jones, 2017). However, both are understudied subjects in the field of youth development (Jones, 2017). In the survey results, Jones (2017) described that students who participated in the study reported high levels of youth purpose, academic engagement and community orientation which ranked the highest. Having participated in PeaceJam, participants

shared that they will continue providing ongoing community service, making a larger impact and focusing their effort more on those who need assistance. The participants also reported diverse viewpoints of youth purpose including new perspectives relating to community, national and global issues, reinforcement of their current aspirations and a sense of personal meaning. With participation in PeaceJam relating directly to service in the community, it was concluded that educational arenas and youth service organizations can achieve greater outcomes by paralleling youth interests and allowing community engagement activities to facilitate prosocial identities.

Flanagan et al (2014) examined the differences between community service and extracurricular activities arguing that community service nurtures opportunities for adolescents to explore their identities and enhance connections with the public who are also involved with improving their communities. Subsequently, these connections have the potential of extending their understanding for others who are of a different, age, ethnicity, religion or social class (Flanagan et al, 2014). Referencing the lack of research on community service and its impact on the social capital of adolescents, Flanagan et al (2014) broadened the research by Hart et al (2008) by differentiating community service from other forms of extracurricular activities (i.e. sports activities, academic organizations, social clubs and special interest clubs) and examining if community service affords better opportunities to develop social capital than other forms of extracurricular activities. Further, Flanagan et al (2014) argued “that community service diversifies the network of others with whom adolescents interact, nurtures intergenerational connections, and enhances adolescents’ appreciation of the capacities of people to accomplish shared goals” (p. 1).

Flanagan et al (2014) conducted two studies of students in grades 5-12 to compare the community service and extracurricular engagement patterns of four groups – bonding social capital in community, bridging social capital in community, intergenerational harmony and social support. Study 1 followed students in grades 5-12 over the course of 3 years and Study 2 involved students in middle and high school. The results of both studies concluded that involvement in community service was more effective than extracurricular activities in developing adolescent social capital and a possible predictor of adult political and community engagement (Flanagan et al, 2014). Both studies also concluded that adolescents participating in both community service and extracurricular activities yielded the highest accounts of bonding social capital in community, bridging social capital in community, intergenerational harmony and social support. Adolescents who did not participate in either community service or extracurricular activities had the lowest accounts (Flanagan et al, 2014). Flanagan's (2014) research added to the existing body of work on community service research and suggests that involvement in community service has a positive effect on adolescents.

As presented by Wray-Lake et al (2014), Flanagan (2014) and Jones (2017), community service involvement advances far-reaching benefits for students throughout their adulthood. Whether they achieve a sense of purpose, increase their knowledge and skills or become a politician or community activist, adolescent involvement in community is beneficial and offers advantages that can be transferred and applied for years to come.

Summary

This literature review provides a multifaceted view of the impact of community service on public sector leadership. Public leadership is examined through the concepts of trust, training and development programs and the study of public administration. The field of public leadership is unique in and of itself as it requires certain leader attributes (that are not offered in other leadership theories) to contend with forces significant to the public sector while successfully steering employees who are driven by intrinsic motives to continually provide good works to the public (Seidle, Fernandez and Perry, 2016 and Ospina, 2016).

Motives for preferring public sector employment are still being researched. However, while not specific to the public sector, PSM is still a significant factor in the public sector. Examined against the study of public administration, volunteer involvement of public and nonprofit employees and as a determinant for career preference in the public and nonprofit sector, PSM proved to be a noteworthy attribute. While high levels of PSM is not a determinant of studying public administration, it does impact both career preference and volunteer involvement and is influential among public sector employees.

Community service has been shown to be beneficial to both those who receive the services and for those providing it (Wray-Lake et al, 2017 and Jones 2017). Examined against transition to adulthood (TTA) and extracurricular activities, the effects of community service involvement help develop social capital and expand social networks (Flanagan et al, 2014). Additionally, surveyed for motivational factors affecting continued involvement, the data showed that the effects of engagement are long-lasting,

far-reaching and help develop skillsets that can be used in the future (Wray-Lake, Schulenberg, Keyes, and Shubert, 2017).

Adolescents who participate in community service not only gain a sense of purpose and skills that will serve them throughout their career, they also are likely to begin gauging their career choices, potentially service careers. Moreover, they tend to continue volunteering throughout adulthood especially if they choose a career within the public sector (Jones, 2017).

This literature review lends to the notion that engaging in community service whether as an adolescent, college student or adult will influence the desire to work in the public sector and develop and/or enhance the leadership skills needed to be serve as a public leader. A motivating factor of this study is that existing literature does not specifically and thoroughly evaluate the influence of community service on public sector leadership. Understanding this relationship will expand the literature and add value to both the fields of public leadership and community service. This study examines the experiences of public sector leaders and gauges the skillsets acquired through those experiences and how they impact and influence current leadership approaches.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the relational impact of community service on leadership in the public sector arena. A phenomenological study allowed the researcher to examine the experiences of the participants and subsequently describe the meaning of those experiences (Merriam, 2002). Creswell (2013) defined the phenomenological study as identifying the essence of human experiences within a particular phenomenon according to the description provided by the participants. As such, the realities of the individuals are treated as the phenomena, or pure data, and the best place to begin researching (Eagleton, 1983). Hence, the objective of phenomenology is to describe specific details and aspects (Eagleton, 1983). According to Welman and Kruger (1999), the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena – the way we experience stimuli and the meanings that these stimuluses have on our experiences. Phenomenology examines the lived experience of individuals inclusive of thoughts, memories, perception, emotion, desire, awareness and social activity (Smith, 2018). In essence, “the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved” (Welman, J. and Kruger, 1999, p. 189).

For years, I have been intrigued with people who appear to serve others with no visible benefit. Specifically, government workers who serve the public as a career and still find it in their hearts to serve the public without any outward reward. Correspondingly, the phenomenon that I am investigating is the relationship between

public sector leadership and community service. I'm interested in gauging how other public sector leaders are impacted by community service if at all. As such, the phenomenon that I investigated for this study is the relation between public sector leadership and community service.

The study can be described as exploratory in nature and served to analyze the varying perspectives associated with leadership development and the impact of community service as a factor in that development. According to Creswell (2013), exploratory research is supported by supplemental qualitative research such as literature or personal interviews and is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, rather it assists with determining the nature of the problem and aids the researcher with better understanding of the problem. Saunders et al. (2007) advised that the researcher must be open to changing direction when conducting exploratory research as new data and new insights reveal themselves. My research explores the relationship between public sector leadership and community service by gauging existing leadership theories and lived experiences of public sector leaders who are involved in community service.

The research sample included 16 participants who possessed middle to upper level management experience with a government agency. The participants were employed with state, federal and local government agencies of varying sizes and headcounts, experienced the phenomenon of being a public sector leader while serving as a community service volunteer, and decisively understands the aim of the research. Once 16 reliable interviews were obtained, I did not engage in further interviews. Connecting with the participants regarding their persona history and upbringing, such as, educational background, church affiliation, mentoring relationship, service clubs and organizations,

religious affiliations, service requirements and/or family values, that motivated their interest in community service allowed me to identify common behaviors and experiences that led toward a career in the public service.

Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative study was selected because it provided the foundation for the researcher to better explore the experiences of the participants that possibly led to public sector leadership. The qualitative study also provided an effective means for identifying intangible influences, such as education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and religion, which may contribute to the research (Creswell, 2013). Many experiences with volunteering stemmed from their academic pursuits and was fueled by their socioeconomic, ethnic and religious status. Used in conjunction with quantitative methods, Clark and Creswell (2011) stated that qualitative research can assist with interpreting and better understanding the conclusions of quantitative data. However, a qualitative approach allowed me to summarize the depth of various occurrences and experiences of each participant through the elaboration of memories and expanded storytelling which highlighted the passion for community service and public service. Personal stories organize experiences in a conveyable and explicable manner (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Although personal stories have been used as conduits for understanding the lived realities of groups and individuals, their insight into the experience of the participant can only take form through detailed analysis (Kasper and Prior, 2015).

Phenomenology

According to Van Manen (1990), phenomenology is an exploration of “the essence of lived experience” (p. 9). A phenomenological approach afforded me a precise

description of personal experiences based on personal perspectives, as well as, the ability to intimately study those experiences. My aim was to illuminate distinct details and to categorize phenomena – the answer to a question derived from what has been reliably observed - through individual perceptions. In this study, the phenomenon is the relationship between public sector leadership and community service. It is not the intention of the researcher to go beyond outward expressions and surface discussions to interpret or explain the phenomena. Rather the goal is to describe the phenomena as the participants have expressed it.

The phenomenological approach facilitates the comprehension of subjective experiences, provides greater insights into individual motivations and behaviors, and emphasizes the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. With this approach to research design and inquiry, the researcher can better understand those experiences and encounters which shape the desire to serve the public.

Utilizing phenomenology as a qualitative research design method provided the researcher the opportunity to transcend individual viewpoints and distinguish common denominators. This method facilitated the researcher's ability to identify broader distinctions without fashioning unnecessary generalizations.

Researcher Perspective

This research study was driven by the researcher's Public Service Motivation (PSM) and desire to serve the community and people in general. A native of impoverished East St. Louis, Illinois, the researcher was grounded in community service at an early age and adopted Shirley Chisolm's philosophy that "community service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth" (Schneegg, 1999). This popular adage

fueled her passion to serve her community and people in need. As a tenured public servant of over 25 years and seasoned community volunteer, I consider the desire to serve the public as a deep-rooted motivation that is outwardly displayed by the individual.

Role of the Researcher

In my role of Contract Administrator for a state government agency, I serve on the Board of Directors for several community organizations and a member of an international public service organization where I serve in leadership positions on the national, regional and state levels. Over the last several years, I have witnessed several styles of leadership and participated in a multitude of community service projects. These experiences have shaped my perception toward community service as it relates to public service. Moreover, the experiences have influenced me to further explore the relationship between community service and public service leadership to better gauge and understand the connection.

Research Site

Locating sufficient spaces to conduct participant interviews proved to be unproblematic. Because the study does not call for a controlled environment, accommodating the participants where they were most comfortable was a courtesy that was very affordable. The researcher and the interview participants were able to agree on the location of the respective individual personal interviews. Many of the participants requested the researcher come to their home at a designated time to administer the interview questions because of family obligation with the home. Others were more comfortable visiting the researcher's home because there would be less distractions. Five of the participants requested that interview be conducted at their place of business

because their agencies were very interested in the results of the study. The outcome of the study provided a dual benefit for the researcher. In addition to the obvious benefit of completing the research, the study added credence to the need for focused recruitment and levying the community service involvement of employment candidates as a means for assessing a candidate's experience and suitability for public sector employment. With this in mind, the researcher has co-authored a proposal to initiate more innovative recruitment strategies specific to the needs of the public sector.

Participant Selection

The focus of this study was to better understand the relationship between community service and public service leadership. Garnering information from 16 public servant leaders serving in various government agencies throughout the state of Illinois allowed the researcher to increase the likelihood of encapsulating pertinent experiences and activities while decreasing the likelihood of oversimplifications. The researcher was not only interested in the experiences of the participants that led to a career in public service but also specifically gauging the impact of community service on the leadership skills acquired through community service involvement and used during their tenures as public sector leaders.

Sampling

Creswell (2013) stated that to address a research question, the researcher must engage in a sampling process that includes the determination of key elements such as the number of participants, the recruitment of participants and how they will be sampled. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling entails the intentional selection of participants by the researcher who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. (Creswell, 2013).

In ascertaining appropriate participants for this study, the researcher identified colleagues employed with various government agencies who engage in community service activities. To determine the study sites, select participants, specify the sampling strategy, and establish the sample size, the researcher used purposeful sampling outlined by Creswell (2013).

Two additional sampling procedures were incorporated with purposeful sampling; snowball and criterion sampling. Creswell (2013) describes snowballing as identifying additional participants through the recommendations of other participants to expand and increase the likelihood of obtaining the best possible sample. To that end, it became important to explore participants from outside of my circle of associates. Snowball sampling was integrated to identify other suitable participants who other study participants were acquainted with and who were public sector leaders who participated in community service. Using snowball sampling the researcher able to identify 7 additional participants who were willing to contribute to the study (Creswell, 2013).

Criterion sampling ensures that all individuals participating in the study possess an understanding of the research problem and have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This method was utilized as participants were identified. Each potential participant was contacted and asked about the employment background and volunteer work to determine if they were a viable candidate. The researcher then explained the research problem and gauged if the participant thought they could add value to the research by asking probing questions to assess their commitment to community and how much time is spent serving. The researcher also directly asked if the participant believed they could

relate to the research and add any significant value as it relates to their experience with community service.

Permissions and Data Collection

The researcher was required to gain permission from each participant. An Invitation to Participate Letter was created which clearly outlined the purpose and location of the interview, approximately how long the interview will last, the manner that it will be recorded and how data will be protected. The letter also informed the participant that they were free to discontinue in the study at any time without any consequences, as well as, provides information regarding the Institutional Review Board approval and recording of the interview. The participants were advised that they would receive a copy of the transcript for their review and would be given the opportunity to correct any language that may have been recorded incorrectly. Creswell (2013) described this process as member checking; an imperative process within qualitative research that advances the researcher's credibility and transferability, as well as, validates the accuracy of the study. The Invitation to Participate is labeled as Appendix B.

Prior to the interview, the participant was given the opportunity to ask any clarifying questions of the researcher. Subsequently, the participant was asked to sign the Consent Form which clearly gives the researcher permission to use the participant's data as part of the study and to record the interview. The Consent Form is labeled Appendix C.

Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative data is obtained through open-ended questions that are not restrictive or prohibits the participant's possibilities for responding. As such six open-ended questions were formulated and administered during the personal

interviews which were developed to solicit the frank and uninhibited responses from the participants. This was made obvious by the excitement that the participants displayed by either altered voice intonations or moments of perceived distant thoughts accompanied with a subtle smile. In addition to recording the responses of each participant, the researcher took extensive handwritten notes pertaining to what occurred during the interviews. These notes served as a reminder to the researcher when transcribing the interviews. The researcher reviewed the audio recordings and field notes and transcribed the interviews into a Word document and stored on a personal flash drive. The flash drive was stored in a locked desk along with the handwritten notes taken by the researcher during the interviews. After one year, the flash drive and handwritten notes will be destroyed along with the consent forms and any data collection documents pertaining to this study.

Data Analysis

Noble and Smith (2014) noted that the process of data analysis is to construct the data in a “meaningful or comprehensible fashion, in a way that is transparent, rigorous and thorough, while remaining ‘true’ to participants’ accounts” (p. 1). The connection between data collection and data analysis is interactive and recurring and essential to the development of ideas, clarification of connotations and adapting new insights as they develop (Noble and Smith, 2014). With this in mind, the researcher began analyzing the data immediately following the first interview “to gain detailed insights into the phenomena” (p. 2). The researcher adopted an iterative approach by reading, rereading the text and listening to audio recordings while adopting an attitude of openness toward the data (Klenke, 2016).

The first stage of data analysis according to Noble and Smith (2016) involves the process of initial coding to identify keywords or phrases in each line of the data. The researcher sorted the data into manageable segments and subsequently identified patterns and similarities within the data before categorizing them into broader themes (Noble and Smith, 2016). Ultimately, each theme was coded according to Roberts (2010) and each of the participant's responses were categorized.

The researcher-maintained concern for the transparency of the process and ensured that the process from data collection to the development of themes was well documented and demonstrated precision in the methodological approach employed (Noble and Smith, 2016 and Klenke, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this study consisted of protecting the participant's responses. As such, participants were ensured that identifying information would be removed and separated from the interview immediately after the interview has been verified (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As an added assurance, the process for disposal was included in the Consent Form and signed by both the researcher and participant. Participants were also ensured that special methods and processes were employed to protect the participant's identity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Summary

Chapter 3 focused on the qualitative methodology that was utilized to collect data for this study and why it was chosen for this study. The phenomenological approach was chosen to help the researcher understand the lived experiences of community service involvement as it relates to their public service leadership. The phenomenological

approach supported the researcher's perspective and role in the study; and allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions which resulted in more in-depth responses described in the participants own words and from their own viewpoint. The approach further allowed for comprehensive conversations between the participant and the researcher which allowed the researcher to identify themes and generalizations regarding the experiences. Further, this chapter addressed a number of methodology processes such as, study locations, participant selection, sampling, coding, data collection, data analysis, credibility, and ethical considerations. The chapter concluded with an examination of ethical considerations and strategies to convalesce the trustworthiness of the study.

The findings of the data collection are reported in Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis Results. Chapter 5 reports the results of the study, elicits conclusions based on those results and the review of the literature, explores the implications of the study and makes recommendations for further scholarly research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS RESULTS

Results

This study explored the relationship between public sector leadership and community service. A void in the body of research explicating this phenomenon propelled my interest in the lived experiences of public sector leaders who perform community service. Examining these lived experiences exposed the circumstances that initially steered them to perform community service, the reasons for continuing the service and the transferrable leadership skills that they've acquired as a result of their community service involvement.

For this qualitative study, 16 interviews were conducted. The results are compiled in Chapter Four and presented in three steps – data analysis and validation of findings, summary of participant interviews and development of themes. A total of four themes were captured from the data and are presented as follows:

- 1) Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership
- 2) Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM)
- 3) Involvement with Community Service Organizations
- 4) Political Engagement and Advocacy

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Upon receiving approval from the Creighton Internal Review Board (#812939-1), I began contacting potential participants to schedule interviews. These individuals were selected because they potentially met the prequalification of residing in Central Illinois, working for a government entity and continual involvement with community service. Subsequent to the initial telephone conversation to dialogue with potential participants

about the research, assess their qualifications, and determine their availability for an interview, via email, I provided each participant with a consent form and a copy of the questionnaire that would be discussed during the interview. I also requested availability for the interview. After establishing the date, time, and location of the interview, individual alerts to remind the participants of their appointment were set. On the day of the scheduled interview, the participants received a follow-up telephone call or text message to confirm the time and location. Prior to commencing with the interview, the researcher ensured that the participant understood that the interview would be recorded for future review and accuracy. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked if they knew of any other public sector leaders who performed community service and would be potentially interested in participating in this study.

Data Analysis

Each recorded interview was manually transcribed by the researcher. Subsequently, I rigorously reviewed each transcript on numerous occasions to identify common themes emerging from the data, as well as, to become intimately knowledgeable with the data as presented. After several weeks of identifying and grouping common topics and ideas, an extensive list of potential themes was formulated. An independent statistician was solicited to assist with analyzing the data and cataloguing themes. Considering the privacy of the research participants, the physical interview transcripts were coded in such a way that protected the participant's identities from the statistician. For example, a research participant named John Doe would be coded as Participant A-JD in order to conceal his identity.

In addition to concealing the participant's identity through coding efforts, the interviews are not included in this body of work as an added measure of protecting the participant's identity (Creswell, 2013). However, significant excerpts of the interviews are integrated in this chapter. Full transcripts will be available for review by contacting the researcher.

To ensure the accuracy of the information provided by each participant, a copy of each participant's interview transcript was forwarded to the respective participant to review and revise as appropriate. Participants were asked to thoroughly review the transcript of their interview and make any changes that they deemed relevant. Simultaneously, the researcher began isolating words and phrases from each interview. Several words and phrases were identified and highlighted in the researcher's field notes



Figure 1. Word cloud. Illustrates 98 of the terms garnered from the field notes provided by Participants A-Q.

(see Figure 1 for 98 of the 210 initial terms identified by the researcher). Upon receipt of the revised transcripts from the research participants, the researcher reexamined the data to capture any supplemental words and phrases that may have been added during the revision phase.

This raw data was classified into sample codes and color-coded to identify similar thoughts and ideas, as well as, simplifying the tracking of quotes (Patton, 2002). Color-coded notes in the margins of researcher's field notes, along with color-coded Post-It Notes, helped the researcher stay organized while segregating various words and phrases. The researcher reviewed the field notes several times during the course of the coding process to ensure that each thought and idea was captured, linked and coded. Both the researcher and the statistician individually coded the data to ensure that no passage was overlooked (see Figure 2 for preliminary coding details).

Preliminary Coding: The Impact of Community Service on Public Sector Leadership
Code: CSm (Community Service Motivation)
Code: CSSk (Community Service Skills)
Code: CSa (Community Service Agencies)
Code: CSe (Community Service Etiology)
Code: LSk (Leadership Skills)
Code: LI (Leadership Involvement)
Code: LD (Leadership Development)
Code: PSSk (Public Sector Skills)
Code: PSi (Public Sector Impact)
Code: PSe (Public Sector Employment)
Code: MIS (Miscellaneous)
Figure 2: Outlines the abbreviations utilized to initially code the data provided by the research participants. Each code was written in the margin of the field notes besides the passage or quotation and color-coded for future use and identification.

Coding was conducted several times by both reviewers and subsequently shaped into possible themes. The process continued until solid themes were devised that both the researcher and the statistician could agree on.

Upon the completion of the data analysis, the researcher reexamined Chapter Two to establish whether or not a relationship exists between the literature and research. The findings, recommendations and conclusions are outlined in Chapter Five.

Validation of Findings

Bracketing

The researcher incorporated phenomenological reduction (or bracketing) to analyze the data in its purest form without manipulating or influencing the evidence. Bracketing required that the researcher subject the phenomenon to intense scrutiny, dissecting it to uncover and define its elements and essential structures (Patton, 2002). For the researcher, this process meant reviewing the interviews countless times to flesh out any and all possible themes. This also meant that the researcher had to clear her thoughts from any pre-conceived notions regarding the outcome of the theme development. However, with transparency in mind, I found it extremely difficult to completely clear my mind of pre-conceived thoughts as I was hopeful that the themes developed as I had imagined. Tulford and Newman (2012) warn that due to the existing and developing intimacy between the researcher and the research topic, bracketing protects the researcher from the amassed emotional challenges of the data. In order to constrain any emotional challenges that conceivably existed, the researcher began the bracketing process by outlining personal experiences by cataloguing her thoughts regarding community service as it relates to public service leadership. Doing so not only lessened undue influence over the data analysis, it also allowed the researcher to express preconceived notions prior to analyzing the data (Appendix D).

This bracketing exercise allowed the researcher to become fully aware of and acknowledge her personal biases and judgements prior to analyzing the data and identifying themes. (Patton, 2002). One of the most surging biasness was that individuals who are employed by the government agencies chose the public sector because of their

love for helping people. Additional biasness is outline in Appendix D. This information was provided the statistician for the purpose of being transparent regarding the preconceptions of the researcher and to ensure that the preconceptions do not taint the research.

Epoche

Epoche, the act of suspending judgement and refraining from any conclusion, requires an untainted means for reviewing the research by allowing the researcher to fully weigh the evidence and avoid levying a verdict too soon. Essentially, the researcher developed a phenomenological shift (or attitude) in order to examine the phenomenon from an unbiased or judgmental perspective (Patton, 2002). This required the researcher to engage in a series of meditations to clear her thoughts on the research topic, as well as, the responses offered by the participants. Determined to dismiss everything that I learned regarding the research topic and eager to suspend any judgment that had intrinsically developed in order to approach the data with impartiality, I quickly realized that this was not an easy thing to do. I opted to allow the data unfold without interference or biasness. If it led me down my desired path, then so be it. If not, I would still follow the data where it led me. The researcher disregarded no statement or expression that was provided by the participants. Rather, all of the transcribed data was embraced and included in the data analysis. Because the researcher was unavoidably knowledgeable and aware of the information contained in the data to be reviewed, a conscious effort was made to remain neutral while evaluating the data. She also relied on the statistician to help detect hints of bias and personal translations in order to prevent prejudices from being included within this body of work.

Member Checking

In an effort to assess the accuracy of the qualitative data and ensure that the summaries were a true reflection of the participant's experiences, the researcher provided a copy of the transcript to the participant and requested that it be reviewed for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). This request was detailed both verbally and in the written verbiage provide to each participant. The researcher allowed the participants five days to respond to the review request and further communicated that nonresponses would be interpreted as consent. All participants reviewed the transcripts with four of the participants revising the language to appropriately reflect the experiences that were shared with the researcher. These revisions primarily consisted of corrections to grammar, sentence structure and word usage. Three of the participants included additional information that was not included in the original interview but added value. These revisions helped the researcher to translate the interviews more effectively and avoid any off-kilter personal interpretations of the dialog. Subsequently, all of the transcripts were approved thus establishing qualitative validity as outlined by Creswell 2013.

This is another example of how a subheading could be used in a qualitative or quantitative study.

Chapter Four can be somewhat technical to compose because it often requires the use of mathematical equations or statistical symbols. Remember to italicize statistical variables (t , F , N , n) and use parentheses to illustrate means ($M = 2.23$) and standard deviation ($SD = .91$). The proper statistical presentation of a statistic, such as a t-test will look something like this: $t(35) = 3.82, p = .02$, whereas the degrees of freedom is enclosed in parentheses (35) and the significance value is noted with a p ($p = .02$). Use

brackets to enclose limits of confidence intervals 95% CIs [-5.25, 4.95]. Typically, we round values to the hundredths place.

Summary of Interviews

Interviews were conducted over the course of six months with the first being initiated on November 3, 2015 and the last being conducted on May 13, 2016. Each of the 16 interviews were conducted in person and recorded while the researcher penned handwritten notes. The demographics of the participants included nine women and seven men who have varying experience working for government entities ranging from 16-42 years. The 16 participants consisted of eight females (five African American and 3 Caucasian) and eight males (four African American, three Caucasian and one Asian-American) with ages ranging from 42-68 years. All of the participants live in Central Illinois and either retired from or currently work for a local municipality, state or federal government agency. While all interviews were scheduled in one-hour increments, many of them lasted longer due the participant's enthusiasm and eagerness to share their thoughts and experiences. Each of the participants responded to a series of pre-distributed questions and was encouraged to share as much detail as they felt comfortable. The majority of the participants were extremely forthcoming with their beliefs, philosophies and examples of their various experiences. On occasion, the researcher asked clarifying questions of the participants to exert control of the interview and curtail interminable and extraneous responses (Patton, 2002). To conclude each interview, the researcher asked if there was anything else that the participant liked to share regarding their experiences with community service as it relates to public service

leadership and if there were other eligible candidates that they could recommend for the research.

Development of Themes

Investigating the phenomenon of how public sector leadership and community service are related, qualitative inquiry provided the prospect of personally dialoguing with these public sector leaders regarding their lived experiences as it relates to community service and their development as a public sector leader. In doing so, the following themes emerged.

Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership

Huang and Fredrick (2013) contend that cultural conditioning is created when values focusing on attitudes, opinions and principles are transferred generationally and acclimatizes societal members to certain beliefs and social norms. Moreover, according to Huang and Fredrick (2013), becoming aware of cultural conditioning is paramount to leadership development. Beliefs and acceptance of certain ideals in an individual's own culture (or other cultures) such as social behavior and status is a depiction of cultural conditioning (Huang and Fredrick, 2013). Also, differences of opinion in decision-making settings often seem to be based on individual backgrounds and not always facts. In some of these instances, those decisions are often derived from cultural conditioning (Huang and Fredrick, 2013).

For many of the participants in this study, the inclination to perform community service is a value learned through cultural conditioning and influencing. These influences were conceptualized through instances involving Family Upbringing, Mentorship, Religious Involvement and Afterschool Programs. Below, I will provide evidence from

my interviews that illustrate how my participants narrated their understanding of their interest in community service

Family Involvement

Participant F expressed cultural conditioning as a factor in initially performing community service by stating, “Community service was honestly engrained from an early age. We would be taken along to serve in different ways in the community, at church and in other ways. I cannot pinpoint it to a specific engagement. It’s just something that I grew up with in my family.” In this instance, family upbringing provided Participant F with the motive for becoming involved with community service.

Likewise, Participant H cited similar family involvement as an impetus for becoming heavily involved in community service. She stated:

My mom, aunts and uncles were always involved in community-service related activities. I believe that I started as a kid. It was engrained in me at five or six years old if I had to guess. I remember volunteering at the Neighborhood Center cleaning up and cleaning the chalk board. That was a real honor! For me, it was important to participate. Watching others volunteer made me want to volunteer even more.

Along the same lines, Participant J offered detail regarding how cultural conditioning passed down from his parents influenced his decision to perform community service:

My parents had a lot to do with my decision to begin volunteering. Actually, it was more like being ‘voluntold.’ I didn’t really have a choice. But they were really big volunteers in the community at the Neighborhood Watch and at the Community Center. They always dragged me and my siblings along with them

and gave us various tasks like stapling, sorting, cleaning and even canvassing the neighborhood. Initially, I hated it because I wanted to play with my friends, but somewhere down the line, I fell in love with volunteering. It was in my formative years that my outlook on community service was developed. I've learned so much through volunteering and continue to learn. My mother used to always say that 'community service is the rent we pay for living.' I always reflect on that when I'm presented with service projects.

Similarly, the importance of community service was instilled in Participant K by family members. He added:

You couldn't be in my family and not volunteer. We come from a long line of volunteers – from the civil rights era and before. My parents and other family member were not having it. We volunteered all throughout the city, but my favorite was at the daycare center. I would go there afterschool to help Ms. Johnson with the smaller kids. She would give me so much work to do like I was getting paid! She did not care that I was a volunteer. She taught me how to file, answer the phone, clean the center, fix snacks and talk to people. I was able to later use all of those skills that she taught me. I always thought that my mother sent me to volunteer there so that I would be busy and have someone to watch me after school. That may or may not be true, but either way, nothing but good came from it. She did the same for my brother and sister and we are all the better for it. My mom was pretty smart to make us volunteer. I did the same for my children. Now they are learning new skills and appreciating what it means to volunteer.

With regard to Participant H, J and K, community service was initially introduced through the cultural conditioning imparted by family members who were heavily ingratiated in service activities. For each family of the aforementioned participants, community service activities were a well-regarded staple and passed down from one generation to the next. In these instances, cultural conditioning either influenced or dictated the participant's penchant to generously serve. Coincidentally, as a result of conducting community service, many of the participants also developed an array of leadership skills that can also be attributed to cultural conditioning.

Leadership Skills Acquired Through Community Service

When reflecting on what leadership skills were learned as a result of his community service experience, Participant F acknowledged, "I learned management and communication skills, teamwork, political savviness and networking." Likewise, Participant H stated, "The biggest thing that I learned is organizational skills. You look at who's doing what and learn how it's done." Participant J summarized the contribution that community service has provided toward her leadership development by stating:

With community service, you really learn how to get along with others. You learn communication and how to be compassionate. There is so much to leadership. I learned strategic planning. It's a big part of leadership. Also, cultural competency is something important for our staff and for me to apply. Also, ethics. I think I have been able learn ethics and to apply ethics as well. Advocacy is another piece that is part of leadership. The last thing is building collaborative partnership. That is not only required, but necessary.

As described by Participants F, H and J, community service offers a variety of skills development that can prove invaluable to individuals and their development as leaders. Neither of these participants reported that they initially conducted community service in order to gain leadership skills. To the contrary, their participation was necessitated and expected by their family members. However, as a result of this cultural conditioning, they not only helped to improve the community, but they gained knowledge and skills that were transferrable to other areas of leadership.

Mentorship

Similar to family upbringing, individuals who experienced positive mentors also experience a level of cultural conditioning that impacts leadership development. Mitchell, Eby and Ragins (2015) reminds us of the importance of mentoring and possible impact of on work attitudes, behavior approach, and career development. The participants of this research report that mentoring played a significant role in their continued involvement in community service, leadership development and their decision to work in the public sector.

In thinking about the role that a mentor performed in his leadership development, Participant J stated:

I was fortunate to have a mentor in high school. He kept me grounded and focused on my future. Although I didn't realize it then, he taught me some of the fundamental skills of being a leader. When I became complacent or thought I had found my niche, my mentor encouraged me to think deeper and go further. While the public sector felt right, it was my mentor who talked me through all the

possibilities that working for the public sector could offer. I am extremely grateful to him and still use many of the things that he taught me.

Similarly, Participant L also mentioned the high regard that she felt for her mentor in terms of instilling certain values and ideologies that she currently utilizes. She remarked:

Another skill that I gained from community service is the importance of mentoring (if that can be considered a skill). I think it is because every leader should be willing to reach back and pull someone up behind them. Someone did that for me. They took the time to work with me on my speech, my attire and most importantly – my temperament.

Participant K holds his mentors in similar regard and credits them for introducing the concept of community service into his life. He stated, “To be mentored and guided by African-American educators was a surreal experience. I wanted to mimic everything that they did. Well... They did community service and made us do it too. It was fun though.”

Individuals who view themselves as being similar to their mentors or who share similarities such as education, hometowns or even religions tend to experience more positive outcomes from their relationship than those who do not have comparable relationships (Mitchell, Eby and Ragins, 2015).

Mentor relationships, according to Straus et al (2013), can be quite encompassing given that mentors offer a wide array of support which may include career guidance, emotional encouragement and improving work/life balance. Equally, mentees gain valuable benefits such as advice, advocacy, networking, leadership development, goal setting and career monitoring. Successful mentorship is vital to obtaining career goals and perceived success and satisfaction and relies on reciprocity, mutual respect, clear

expectations, personal connection, and shared values on the part of both the mentor and mentee (Straus et al, 2013).

The participants of this study understand the importance of mentoring and the impact that it has on leadership development as perceived by their dedication toward mentoring others. Participant B recognizes the impact that cultural conditioning through mentoring and positive examples can have on the lives of children. He offered:

I have been a mentor for the last 27 years of my life. When I came back from the Navy and moved back to Springfield, the very first thing I sought out was the opportunity to give back. I contacted the school district and became a mentor. Every year since then, I have been a mentor. I enjoy passing on my wisdom to young people. I can only hope that they use it and allow it to impact their future.

Comparable to Participant B, the importance of providing young people with positive role models and forming genuine relationships was supported by Participant N as well:

For my primary community service, I mentor young girls who are on the wrong path in life. It takes a lot of patience, but these young ladies need to see positive role models in their lives. They also need someone to look up to and hold them accountable. Most importantly, they need a listening ear. It benefits me as well. I get to see the transformation of these young ladies which is quite rewarding for me.

In contrast with employees who are non-mentored, culturally conditioning individuals through mentorship yields more career success in the areas of promotion rate, compensation and career satisfaction (Mitchel, Eby and Ragins, 2015). While the

outcome remains to be seen for those that are mentored by the participants of this study, Straus et al (2013) affirms that mentoring can be a valuable tool for those who are accepting of it. In addition to mentoring, participation in afterschool programming is another element of cultural conditioning that the participants of this study underscored. Participants of afterschool programs may develop some leadership skills if they are open to the opportunities that are available.

After School Programs

Although adolescence may represent a challenging developmental era for children, afterschool programs are available to assist with those challenges. Many of those who participate in meaningful after-school programs acquire opportunities for nurturing their developing strengths, budding talents and leadership skills (Morton and Montgomery, 2013). One of these skills, according to Salusky et al (2015), is responsibility – an extremely valuable leadership trait that is considered crucial to one’s adulthood. In many youth programs, participants are assigned duties, tasks and projects which sometimes may require them to maneuver through difficult practical challenges. By all accounts, obligations such as this help develop responsibility. In thinking about her involvement with Girl Scouts, Participant C commented on how her participation not only enhanced her skillset but also provided a sense of responsibility:

I would probably tell you that the first memory of community service would have come through my involvement with Girl Scouts. I was with Girl Scouts for 12 years and I’m sure that my first organized community service was from that.

During that time, I learned the true spirit of teamwork, cooperation and working

together to accomplish more. I learned how to analyze and delegate to make sure that all tasks are covered and completed.

Similarly, Participant M fondly divulged the skills gained through an afterschool program, as well as, other unanticipated responsibilities that still hold merit:

I believe my first experience with community service was with the Boy Scouts. I tell you, it probably saved my life. I was raised in a rough neighborhood and Boy Scouts was not the popular thing to do. Many of my peers said mean things about it, but it kept me out of trouble. My parents were intent on that. We performed community service which expanded my horizons. I had never been to some of the places that we visited. It was the best of times and the worst of times. I learned a lot that I still carry with me – things like customer service, leadership and punctuality. People seem to overlook that trait today, but because of Boy Scouts, I am always on time.

Participant E also affirmed the benefits of her participating in an afterschool program and highlighted some of the skills that she gained through her involvement:

I guess I've kind of been involved for most of my life. When I was in the Drum and Bugle Corps, we would volunteer to do things at different activities and earn money. I'm not sure that Drum and Bugle Corps even exist anymore, but back then, it was a very popular extracurricular activity. It was very demanding. There was something to do every day afterschool. I learned to identify and use people's strengths, teamwork and delegation. We were always involved in activities and it was important to get stuff organized and done. I hate that we've lost programs

like this, but this is why people like me volunteer – to help our youth better themselves.

Participant F also commented on his experiences with afterschool programs and the skills that he acquired from his involvement:

I remember being involved in recreational sports leagues which always had a community service component with them. Your team went out and did fundraising or service projects and things like that. As I got older, there was the Key Club and other afterschool programs that centered on being a part of a group and being connected. You learned how to conduct business, business etiquette and teamwork.

Participant K also rendered praise for his afterschool program and how it impacted his life:

Like I stated previously, I come from a long line of servant leaders. I've always done community service. I do remember the Upper Bound Program. It's an afterschool and summer enrichment program that still exists today in my hometown. The program and its organizers had real impact on me. I don't recall the exact activities, but I recall how it lent to my development. I learned how to organize programs and events. I also learned how to recruit other volunteers. We had fun.

For Participants C, M, E, F and K, participating in afterschool programs not only provided opportunities to become connected, but it also allowed them to develop their leadership skillset. Afterschool programs not only provide a safe haven for children to escape the perils of their community, participation also extends the opportunity to gain

valuable life skills and experiences that may prove transferrable within the workforce (Salusky et al, 2014). Organized youth programs (i.e. leadership, arts and technology) provide significant framework for teens to develop and strengthen leadership skills (Salusky et al, 2014). For the participants in this study, afterschool programs proved to be invaluable to their professional development and provided key elements toward the expansion of their leadership skills.

Religious Involvement

Another form of cultural conditioning that has influenced the leadership development of those participating in this survey is religious involvement. The concept of spirituality is deeply personal to many and is usually not considered when thinking of leadership development. Yet many workplace ethics - including honesty, trust, and increased commitment to organizational goals - can be attributed to this mysticism (Winston, 2013). Nonetheless, the concept of spiritual leadership has emerged as a scholarly inquiry. This philosophy encapsulates the ability to motivate and inspire philosophies and techniques based on altruistic love (Fry et al, 2017).

Participant F commented that many of his leadership skills are derived from the experiences garnered from church involvement. He recalled:

My grandmother was always a strong church-goer and had us involved in the church –in the ministry- at an early age. We were a small community, and everyone looked out for each other. Folks supported each other. If someone was down on their luck and needed some assistance, the community just made it happen - if they needed food, clothes, help around the house. I just remember being indoctrinated in that probably as soon as I was old enough to walk and talk.

We were taken along to serve in different ways in the community and at church. So, to answer your question, from my church experience, I learned compassion and how to nurture people holistically. I try to care for people as Jesus would. I know I fall short, but I try. I try to be honest and trustworthy and show the God in me everywhere I go and in everything I do.

Participant J also noted his church involvement as a source of leadership development:

As I stated before, my parents played a huge part in my decision to be a dedicated volunteer. They were heavily involved in the church and made sure that we had a foundation that would sustain us in the future. Whenever there was work to do at the church, my parents would volunteer us. Like cleaning the sanctuary after church, cutting the grass at the parsonage, community canvassing and things like that. This is probably where I learned how to speak and build relationships. You know... Interpersonal relationship building. It was also probably where I got my first taste of networking. Of course, I didn't know what it was back then, but I learned how to build my network which has helped me tremendously in my profession. I think my value system is a direct benefit of being raised in the church. My value system is built on integrity and translates over to my leadership approach.

Participant O attributed his first community service experience to the church and commented on how that experience allowed for the development of leadership skills:

My first community service was with the Catholic Church. Community involvement is huge in the Catholic Church, so I had no choice but to be involved. I remember working the Summer Fest and being recruited to get all my friends to

come out. Summer Fest was fun, but the neighborhood kids were afraid to come because it was sponsored by the church. I recruited and worked one of the games. I remember complaining that I hardly got time to enjoy the festivities with my friends (laughing). But thinking back on it, I learned a lot about myself. I learned the power of persuasion. I learned responsibility. I learned a bit about delegation too.

Participant B offered the following when recalling the value that the church added to his development as a leader:

I was brought up in the church and we were feeding the homeless and feeding the elderly. I worked in the church basement setting up dinner tables for after church. I set the table and invited people in. We ushered them to their seats and brought their plates to them. We even cleaned afterwards. It left a mark and made me feel good to see the smile on people's face. Because of my service to the church, I am comfortable volunteering at the food line or at the nursing home. As I stated before, I enjoy seeing people smile.

Participant H was absolute when verbalizing her motivation for continuing to participate in community service. She self-assuredly expounded by stating, "My purpose in life was to always to serve God, my family and my community. Because I have been blessed to do that, it is very important for me to continue to do those things in my life.

While theories of spiritual leadership continue to develop and gain traction among scholarly research, the concept of spirituality tends to lend a significant role toward leadership for the participants of this study. For some, church is where they learned the

fundamentals of volunteering. For others, these religious reserves represent their foundation for leadership development.

Cultural conditioning, whether negative or positive, is a factor that influences an individual's decision-making (Huang and Fredrick, 2013). The principles, beliefs and stereotypes adopted from this conditioning – whether from the community or within the family - tend to reveal itself in various aspects of life. The responses provided by the participants regarding the influences of their families and communities affirm that cultural conditioning affects judgement and thus support the assessment of Huang and Fredrick (2013) that government leaders, moral judgment, and individual frames of reference are all influenced by the connection of cultural influences on critical thinking.

Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM)

The second theme that emerged during data analysis involved the act of volunteering as an intrinsic motivation as defined by both altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM). Feign, Owens and Goodyear-Smith (2014) defined altruism as the act of volunteering with the primary motivation of benefitting another without an expectation of reward. Further, Feign et al (2014) concede that empathy is the underlying motivation of the altruistic personality; specifically, a true altruist is exceptionally concerned with how others feel, possesses a greater degree of justice, social responsibility and moral reasoning. With that said, traditional theories of altruism suggest that if helping others brings one joy, the action is driven by selfish motives.

Contrary to traditional theories of altruism, Pessi (2017) offered a contrasting theory that proposes that the more altruistic one's motives are for helping others, the more joy one gains from helping. For instance, if a person continually and voluntarily

provides a service with no form of monetary compensation or gain only because the service benefits others, the underlying sentiment that they receive is joy. In this instance, the person is considered altruistic and his level of altruism will determine the level of joy. In other words, the more altruistic a person is; the more joy they will experience. This contemporary theory of altruism aligns closer to the sentiments shared by the participants of this study regarding their enthusiasm for providing community service and helping others.

Considering the theory offered by Pessi (2017), traces of altruism are represented in the statement given by Participant C pertaining to the motivation behind her continued volunteerism. "I like people and really get joy out of my community service. I get more joy out of my volunteer commitments that I often get out of my paid positions."

Likewise, Participant G unwittingly acknowledged altruism as she discussed reasons for initially volunteering:

I've always appreciated the ability to work with people. I just thought it was what you did. I didn't realize that not everybody did it. It was just very joyous for me and helpful to people. Not everyone is as lucky and that is what I was always taught. You're not better than anybody else. You just may be a little bit luckier.

An intrinsic altruistic motive system exists when a person's empathetic response to another's distress is free of any egoistic motivation (Feign, S., Owen, G. and Goldyear-Smith, F, 2014). With that said, an altruistic motive was revealed by Participant B when he affirmed the need to serve, "I was brought up in a household where community was very important and though we had seven kids in our family, we always felt the need to serve others because they are less fortunate than ourselves."

Altruism, or the need to help others, is an intrinsic characteristic that serves as a stimulus for continuing to serve people and the community. Hur (2013) asserts that as a motivation to enact positive change throughout the world, many great religious leaders and social reformers have relied on altruism. With no expectation of award or incentive, the inherent need to provide help manifests itself in the form of community service (Hur, Y. 2013). The participants of this study offered an accumulation of experiences and ideals relative to the role of altruism in their continued volunteerism.

Akin to altruism, Esteve et al (2016) cited research by Houston (2006) and Coursey et al (2011) indicating that researchers increasingly concur that PSM and prosocial behavior, such as altruism, are connected. Like altruism, PSM is also believed to be connected with essential social activities, such as, volunteering and assisting others (Esteve et al, 2016). Although the interpretation of PSM is broad and highly debated amongst theorist, it is commonly defined as “an individual’s motives for engaging in behavior for the benefit of the public interest and has been used to explain the desire to serve the interests of society at large” (Wise, 2000). Several participants attributed their need to perform community service to an intrinsic motivation which impels their dedication of community service. PSM has emerged as the prevailing theory used to explain this phenomenon and is believed to be connected with essential social activities, such as, volunteering and assisting others (Esteve et al, 2016).

In a study examining whether public servants are more prone to volunteer, make charitable donations, and donate blood, Houston (2006) validated the hypothesis that public servants, along with nonprofit employees, are more likely to engage in such prosocial behavior than their private sector counterparts. In addition, Coursey et al.

(2011) provide evidence that connects PSM and a specific aspect of prosocial behavior: the choice to volunteer. In that study, individuals possessing high PSM are more likely to involve themselves in volunteer activities; specifically volunteering in religious organizations. Additionally, while many researchers associate PSM with prosocial motivation and altruism, Perry et al (2010) strongly asserts that the fundamental distinction surrounding PSM is the notion that individuals are positioned to act in the public domain for the purpose of doing good for others and society. In addition to displaying altruistic characteristics, many of the individuals participating in this study revealed the qualities of PSM in discussing their reasons for conducting community service.

While reflecting on her motivations for continuing community service, Participant A demonstrated PSM by stating, “If I see a need, it’s self-satisfaction that makes me provide a service. It makes me feel good to help others. I’m not doing it for any accolade.”

Participant E related to PSM while verbalizing her motivation for continuing her community service efforts. She affirmed the presence of PSM when sharing:

It’s not necessarily the gratitude, but to see how they feel when they discover new things; something new about themselves that has been hidden within them. Just making a positive impact on the community makes me feel like this is something that money can’t buy.

Participant P expressed similar sentiments regarding his motivations for doing community service. He responded:

My motivation comes from a litany of sources. There are things in the community, in my state and in the country that I want to see changed so I feel that I personally have to lead the charge to get it done. Also, there are so many injustices in this world. If I don't speak up and others don't speak up, then where would we be as a community, a people, a county? I think it all starts with me. If not me, then who?

Esteve et al (2016) submitted, "A fundamental responsibility of those providing public services, as a defining feature of their responsibilities, is to offer their support to society at large" (p. 4). In offering this support, public servants are often compelled to overlook any individual need and regard the common good as being more crucial. However, those public servants exhibiting prosocial behavior such as altruism and PSM are more likely to outperform their counterparts who lack prosocial behavior. Public organizations that have a stake in providing services to the public at large can benefit significantly by commissioning individuals with high PSM. These individuals are inclined to perform better due to the possession of appropriate behavior traits such as compassion and self-sacrifice (Petrovsky, N. and Ritz, A., 2014). The participants of this study have been influenced to participate in community service by an array of mediums. Many also clearly exhibit a motivation for community service and helping others without benefit to themselves. This type of motivation can be attributed to prosocial behavior whether it is altruism or PSM.

Involvement in Community Organizations

Community organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) are

sometimes referred to as civic engagement organizations and differ from other types of nonprofit agencies in that they represent underprivileged groups, or the collective interests of the general public opposed to big businesses with well-publicized social agendas (Mason, 2015). With government services consistently dwindling, many communities are reportedly collapsing. As such, communities rely increasingly more on local community organizations, similar to the NAACP and NCNW, which give their time and money to supplement where government agencies leave off (Togerson and Edwards, 2013).

In addition to subsidizing the needs of the community, involvement in community organizations can result in various outcomes including influencing individual competencies, connectedness and leadership development according to Checkoway (2015). The participants in this research regard the missions of these advocacy agencies as pivotal in that they contribute a significant amount of volunteer hours to these types of organizations. Participant Q substantiated her involvement in the community stating:

Outside of the sorority, I'm currently involved with several community organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). I hold executive offices with both organizations. Much of my work deals with the advocacy of issues affecting my community and social action. I love that sort of thing because I'm representing those who can't represent themselves. It's quite rewarding.

Participant H revealed that through her leadership with the NAACP, advocacy is a part of the position. She stated:

I am also the Branch President of the NAACP and the State President. I oversee all of the Illinois branches of the NAACP, so I continue to provide community service in various ways. I travel throughout the state and country speaking on various topics and advocating for solutions to issues that we experience in our communities. Serving in these positions can really grow your leadership skills. As State President, one of the very first things that they wanted to know was what other organizations I've volunteered with. All of my volunteer experiences helped me a lot and gave the opportunity to debate, listen to legislators, draft resolutions and challenge their decisions. There was an incident of a noose at the power plant. We turned it over to the FBI and they did little to nothing. In turn, we held town meetings and spoke publicly about it to make the community aware of what was happening in our community. We allowed people to voice their concerns and how they felt about it. We had to hold somebody accountable. With my training through volunteering, I had the confidence to take this on. I knew the right terminology to speak intelligently in the public about it.

Participant G shared her thoughts regarding advocacy:

Advocacy is another piece that is part of the leadership skills that I've learned and applied. You have to feel advocacy. It's not something that you can just say. You have to believe it and then do it. If you are going to advocate for something, you have to believe in it. We have been to the State House and then the capitol building advocating for what we believe in. We not only lead as leaders, but we lead with the people who use our services because they need to know how important it is to advocate for their programs as we do.

Volunteering with community organizations has also afforded the participants of this study with vital skills that can be utilized in their careers. The participants in this research validated that they have gained valuable knowledge and skills as volunteers of community organizations while advocating for causes pertaining to their communities.

Participant F said of community involvement:

You learn how to engage in the community. From a leadership perspective, that cultivates your ability to relate to folks whatever their station in life may be – the mayor, the governor, the bankers, the lawyers are just regular people in the community. But, one day you may just have to approach them about an issue that must be addressed.

He further remarked on continued volunteerism:

It's a way to build up your community and show that you are committed to the city. The roles that I'm dealing with currently involve deals with tax dollars. If we do right by people whom we might not ever see, that's going to come back in a positive way in our lives and make the overall community better. There are apparent needs in a number of areas in the community. So, being able to identify with those folks and not look down on them or treat them like victims is the goal. To find opportunities for different resources would turn their lives around and put them on another path. The more that we can make every individual in our community productive, it will improve our city or community that much more.

Participant L furthers the discussion by stating:

Volunteering gave me some of the skills I needed to be an effective leader. It provided me with the confidence I needed to advocate for my community. My

volunteer work provides me with a practice field of sorts. I learned how to lobby my legislators and advocate for issues and actually have an intelligent conversation with people of that level. It gave me the footing I needed to understand how our political system was set up and how to interpret the political lingo good enough to ask pertinent questions and expect rational answers. Now that I'm on the other side of it, I realize that it's really the same side. My constituents and I are fighting for the same things. But it was my volunteer work that gave me the footing to be successful in this position.

Involvement with community organizations has a tremendous impact on local communities and society in general. By design, community organizations assist others in need by providing services and support that might otherwise be cost-prohibitive. However, the upside of being involved with community organizations is that it may yield something more to those who decide to give freely of themselves – leadership skills and development.

Sororities and fraternities are also characterized as community organizations. Despite the negative images that have recently plagued fraternities and sororities, many of these historical pillars are perceived as excellent channels for leadership development and are heavily relied on to provide community services and advocacy efforts. Fraternities and sororities offer more to its members than the stereotypical partying and perceived tight-knit relationships. Members of these organizations enjoy perks such as networking opportunities, social consciousness and leadership training. Many sororities and fraternities offer broad leadership development programs, beginning with new

member education programs and continual membership development programs throughout their affiliation (Johnson, Johnson and Dugan, 2015).

Participant I revealed that her involvement with community service began while pledging a sorority. She stated:

I was such a bookworm until I didn't participate in much outside of the classroom. But that all changed when I got to college. I became interested in pledging a sorority and one of the requirements to join was community service. I and my line sisters would volunteer all the time and when we were initiated, the volunteering increased. That was 36 years ago, and I haven't stopped volunteering.

Participant A continued the dialogue by admitting, "I've grown so much as a result of the values instilled in me by the sorority. I love to help people whether I'm volunteering in the community or at work advocating for a client. Helping people is what I do."

Participant N also expressed admiration for her sorority in the areas of volunteering and the attainment of leadership skills:

Yes, I still provide community service and always will as long as I'm able. Much of the time is spent volunteering with the sorority. This hasn't changed much since college. I've always had a heart for volunteering so joining a public service sorority was right up my alley. I mean... I volunteer other places - as well - but the sorority takes up a lot of my time. Participant N further articulated some of the leadership skills that she's gained as a result volunteering, "I can't begin to tell you of all the skills I've learned while volunteering - organizational skills, leadership skills, communication skills, political savviness, managing people,

financial acumen are just a few. I actually participated in leadership training through the sorority and learned so much. My sorority expects you to use those skills when they teach them to you. I think I have used all of them at one point or another during my career.

Likewise, Participant E acknowledged:

I currently volunteer through the sorority. I have put together a financial management program for the sorority because I think it's very important to know your finances. I find that the more excited I am about it, the more people become excited and want to be involved in it. It is very well attended by sorority members and community members. Participant O boasted, "I am a trainer for my fraternity. I go around the country providing useful information to our membership. In turn, it helps me better my craft since I train at work." Participant L also credits her sorority with her successful bid for elected office. She gloated: My sorority has an awesome leadership development program. Part of the program specifically focuses on preparing for elective office and preparing African-American women for the challenge of running. Because I am now considered a success story, I feel obligated to give back by training others who might be interested. It certainly requires me to sacrifice my time, but it is worth it in the end. Someone did it for me, so I have to do it for someone else. No ifs, ands or buts..."

Over the last decade, many instances of hazing and misconduct amongst sororities, fraternities and their individual members have been presented in the news media. These instances have corroded the reputation of many of these historic

organizations and overshadowed the positive attributes that these organizations have made to the community and their members. Nonetheless, the lived experiences of aforementioned participants validate the influence that sororities and fraternities offer their membership in the form of leadership development and the impact that these organizations have on the communities that they serve.

Political Involvement and Advocacy

Community Service began an upward trajectory in the 1980's. By 1999, more than 80% of entering freshmen reported that they had participated in service programs as compared to the less than 66% who reported service involvement in 1979 (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). This surge of service can be attributed to two key measures. The first of these measures is Campus Compact, a program created by elite university presidents to address young people's waning ethics as demonstrated by low academic achievement, teenage pregnancy, and other social issues. The second measure was initiated as a result of the political views of consecutive United States presidents, beginning with Ronald Reagan, who urged American citizens to intervene on societal problems and begin to solve them opposed to waiting on the government to do so (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). Programs that were previously government-operated were converted to the private and nonprofit sectors propelling the need for more volunteer assistance in organizations and service to the community as reported by Youniss and McIntosh (2014). With this in mind, civic organizations recruit individuals to help promote community interests. At the same pace, citizens tend to turn their attention to politics and government to protect their own individual interests and issues that they deem as important (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). However, being engaged or politically involved garnered unexpected benefits for

some of the participants that they may not have imagined initially. Participant A corroborated Youniss and McIntosh (2014) by stating:

I was involved in politics that required volunteer service. Not in the sense of if I didn't volunteer, I lose my position, but in that I needed to feel the pulse of the community and there's no better way to do that than volunteering in those communities. Volunteering allowed me to get to know people. When they saw my work ethic, I was invited to sit on Boards.

Participant A further stated that one of her reasons for initially volunteering surrounded her desire to hold political office:

I wanted to run for elected office. In order for me to run for office, I needed to be known in the community. I met Former Mayor Karen Hasara who was an elected official at the time. I started volunteering with her and decided that I was just as smart. If she can do it, so can I. After being elected as City Clerk, I was all over the place doing a little bit of everything. People still remember me from being an elected officer and asks me serve on Boards and committees to this day. They would not have known me, or my work ethic had I not ran for office.

Participant B explained how his political activity is intertwined with community service:

People think that being an Alderman is easy. It is not. It's like a second fulltime job; not to mention so much time from the family. They think that you go to meetings and come home. No. I've never done so much community service in my life! Every day is something new. I'm not complaining because I raised my hand, so now it's up to me to make a difference.

Participant J agreed that political involvement is tied to community service, “I did so much community service as an elected official until all I really want to do at this stage of my life is rest. But I can’t. Duty calls.” Participant N also confirmed that political involvement and community service are related:

Serving as a Commissioner really takes a lot of your time. Not only must you listen to your constituents, you have to listen to your boss. Time is premium because there is always so much to do and accomplish before moving to next thing. Sometimes, you have to juggle several things at once. Since I don’t get paid, I consider it community service. Some might disagree but only if they knew how much work goes into it.

As noted by Youniss and McIntosh (2014), many individuals who render service in the name of social justice are highly likely to remain engaged. They volunteer when asked, and they participate in politics when properly recruited or motivated. For them, politics is not something apart from daily interests and concerns; it is part of their daily lives and an ongoing routine to make a difference (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). For the participants of this study, community service is a byproduct of being politically involved and engaged with the communities that they serve.

Those who are engaged in the community may have at some point witnessed racial conflict throughout their neighborhoods. Racial strife and tension have been a part of America’s motif for centuries. From slavery to the Civil Rights era, many ethnic groups continue to feel polarized in America because of the negativity that they’ve experienced when faced with issues involving race-relations. While research and Gallup polls conducted over the past several decades reveal blatant racial hostility and tension

among ethnic groups, these polls also indicate that race-relations are progressively improving in many ways including the narrowing income and wage gap between blacks and whites, educational achievement rates, and the decline in white-on-black crime rates (Kang, 2016). However, despite these perceived successes, Americans continue to face travesties that fortify the ongoing racial obstacles that have afflicted the country for decades including police brutality, racial discrimination and a higher percentage of Blacks in prison. In fact, according to a 2017 Gallup poll, Americans' worry about race relations is at a record high; from 17% in 2014 to 42% in 2017 (Swift, 2017). Because of these ongoing perils, many individuals have dedicated themselves to the improvement of race-relations through community service.

Participant B commented on race relations:

A lot of people still look at the color of other people. If we can take the color aspect out of the person and just look at who they are and what they are doing, I think we can accomplish great things - not only as a city but as a nation. We look at each individual and we grade them on who they are and what they are doing instead of the color of their skin. Like what Martin Luther King said, 'We grade them on the content of their character' and I think we can achieve great things.

For Participant B, eliminating the perceptions that accompany race and judging each individual person on their individual merit is one approach to uniting the nation and moving the country forward. However, in order to eradicate prejudices and move the country forward from racial tensions will require effort on both sides of the spectrum.

Participate E related:

One of the most important things that I feel like we need to have is more community service in African American community. We've been so suppressed for so long that we don't understand that you don't always have to have finances, but if you have time - that your time is important that you can give would make a difference. I feel that we need more volunteer services because your intelligence is not based upon your wealth and we have a lot of poor people that can provide their knowledge, but they don't know that because they have never been encouraged to do that. Their voices have been muted. I like to encourage people and bring out their strength.

Participant F responded on the importance of community service:

I would say that community service, or some would call it the ministry, is a social value orientation of mind in terms of personal fulfillment and personal assessment of my success. At any point in time, it has got to be tied in some way in bettering my community, my neighborhood, and frankly - my race. I was kind of raised that way. It's a part of what you do to carry your own weight within the society. Because of that, I work tirelessly throughout the community to ensure that sectors of the population are engaged; especially those who don't feel as if they have a voice. I will be that voice."

Participant Q further remarked on the race relations and importance of community service:

When I think about community service in my community, I think of the people that need assistance in one way or the other. While racism is not as prevalent as it was when I was a child, it still exists in certain forms whether flagrant or subtle. It

is important that people speak up – not just about racism – but also other injustices such as unfair housing practices, unfair wages, unequal education and inadequate healthcare. People have to keep pushing and teach others how to push. If we stop pushing, things will never get better.

Rugh and Massey (2014) concluded that while attitudes towards African Americans have changed in that segregation and discrimination are no longer tolerated as a matter of principle and law, many continue to harbor negative racial stereotypes, display limited tolerance of racial mixing, and offer little support for any form of civil rights enforcement. Additionally, Rugh and Massey (2014) note that unconscious racism and prejudice also appear to be prevalent in America and play a role in shaping behavior. Swift (2017) confirms that the comments rendered about race relations by President Donald Trump have sparked outrage among the Black community and possibly contributes to the growing concern about race relations.

Kang (2016) awakens our collective memory and reminds us that Americans are all too cognizant of the role that race has played in shaping all facets of society, culture and politics. Racial bias is a deeply embedded attribute of American society that has existed since the founding of our nation. Although significant racial progress has been achieved, it has been achieved primarily through legal decisions and legislative actions (Kang, 2016). As such, individuals, such as the ones participating in this research, feel it is their moral obligation to oppose racial injustice and improve race-relations where possible.

For many individuals, community engagement is instilled in their psyche from birth. For others, a tragedy or an injustice may have been the key motivator for becoming

involved in the community or in the political arena. For the participants of this study, engagement on this level seems to be fueled by something greater than one's self.

Summary

In Chapter Four, I offered findings that enlighten the relationship between public sector leadership and community service. I iterated my approach for the qualitative design methodology and data analysis process. I also provided detail for participant selection and validation of findings.

Chapter Four further outlined the research findings after investigating the impact of community service on public sector leadership from the vantage of 16 public sector leaders who are heavily engaged in community service activities. The lived experiences of these 16 leaders depicted commonalities in their community service involvements, upbringing and motives for performing community service thus engendering four themes - Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership, Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM), Involvement in Community Service Organizations and Political Engagement and Advocacy.

Although they all possessed varying backgrounds and ethnicities, their experience delineated how and why they began participating in community service activities. For some of the participants, family played a pivotal role in their decision to become involved in community service. For others, their mentors, religious affiliation or sorority/fraternity affiliation served as the primary motivator to serve. The cultural conditioning of public sector leaders was pivotal and life-changing for the research participants of this study. Like me, this type of motivation led them to initially become involved in community service. Without this type of thrust from family members, mentors and religious leaders,

these participants may have taken another path which veered away from community service and possibly depriving them of the valuable leadership skills that shaped their future as a leader.

As important as how these public sector leaders became involved with community service is their motivation for continuing to serve. For some of the participants, altruism or PSM played a significant role in motivating them to continue the service. For these public sector leaders who have dedicated their careers to helping others, providing services 8 hours a day was not enough to satisfy their desire to assist those less fortunate. Their desires to help others spilled over into their personal time as well. For many of them, the question of why they continued to serve never crossed their minds. However, intrinsically, it was something that they needed to do to satisfy the propulsion. For others, the feeling of helping others far outweighed any other rationale for serving the community. These inherent motivations can only be explained by PSM or altruism.

One avenue that was used by many of the research participants to help facilitate their desire to help others was through community service organizations. Many of these organizations have existed for decades or even centuries and can only survive through the dedication of volunteers. The research participants of this study understood the impact that organizations like the NAACP, NCNW, sororities and fraternities have on the communities they serve and on the people who live in those communities. Likewise, the participants acknowledged that active involvement in these organizations offered added benefits for those who take advantage of the programs designed to develop the leadership skills of members. These leadership programs were designed to groom tomorrow's leaders and to sharpen their leadership skills in preparation for increased responsibilities

and accountability as a leader. Also, community service organizations continue to be an unexpected resource for individuals to develop leadership skills through active membership. For the research participants, these newly-acquired skills became invaluable resources during their tenure as a public sector leader.

The legislative arm of the public sector entails political activities. Many of these research participants engaged in some facet of political activity and reported to have gained valuable leadership skills as a result. Not only do these public sector leaders enjoy serving in this capacity and impacting communities, they also consider their involvement in political activities to be a conduit for leadership development skills. Many of the skills that the research participants garnered through political activity have proven essential in their roles as public sector leaders.

The public sector leaders who participated in this study all identified leadership skills that they attained while performing community service and transferred to their roles in the public sector. These activities offer leadership skills and development that are transferable to their careers and assists with vital leadership tasks that are essential to the public sector and its employees. Leadership skills such as the ones Participant A and H shared included management, communication, networking, teamwork, cultural competency and political savviness are no doubt essential for any leader. Interesting enough, the public sector leaders in this study indicated that these valuable skills can be obtained at no cost through community service.

Through data collection and analysis of this study, the researcher identified four themes from this interaction. The underscored themes are:

- 1) Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership

- 2) Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM)
- 3) Involvement in Community Service Organizations
- 4) Political Engagement and Advocacy

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This phenomenological study investigated the relationship between public sector leaders and community service. I was fascinated to understand if community service played a role in the leadership skills of public servants. It is my intent that this research adds to the body of knowledge existing in the realm of community service and public sector leadership.

The lived experiences of 16 public sector leaders employed by local, state or federal government agencies were compiled through face-to-face interviews and delineated into four themes. Chapter Five entwines the existing research and the findings of this study, outlines

The following discussion focuses on the purpose of this study, the research questions and the significance of community service as it influenced public sector leadership. It also recapitulates data obtained from Chapter 2 and the research phase of this study, as well as, outlines implications for the public sector leaders. The chapter concludes by offering recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological exploratory study was to ascertain a more profound understanding of how community service influences the leadership skills of public leaders. As previously noted, an array of leadership and community service involvement theories have emerged over the past decade. However, both fields have significant room for expansion considering the limited research on how the two fields interrelate. This study integrated the two disciplines and advanced the current body of research to aid in the understanding of how community service involvement could

influence the public leadership and change the way that public sector leaders are developed. One research question fundamentally guided this study: What impact, if any, does community service have on public sector leadership?

It was my interest, as a researcher to explore the relationship between community service and public sector leadership. This research question was explored through the four themes that emerged from the data collected during that interview phase as reported in Chapter 4. While in Chapter 4, I brought in the words of my participants to illustrate the themes, I turn now to connect those themes with research.

Theme 1: Cultural Conditioning Influencing Community Service and Leadership

Family upbringing, mentorship, religious involvement and afterschool programs are four aspects of cultural conditioning that emerged as significant contributing factors to public leaders during the data collection phase of the study. Huang and Fredrick (2013) stated that social norms and beliefs are developed through cultural conditioning and later manifested through an individual's opinions and decision-making. Participants in this study recalled several cultural conditioning experiences relative to both community service involvement and leadership development. Family upbringing and family traditions, such as, religious involvement and family beliefs, served as a prodigious influence for some of the participants deciding to initially become involved in community service and for the ongoing commitment for others to continue serving. Straus et al (2013) reported mentoring is pertinent to career success. Similar to family upbringing, mentoring also can help to advance leadership skills such as advocacy, networking and goal setting. Those individuals who are mentored tend to have more career success as promotions are more frequent and salary raises are plentiful (Mitchel, Eby and Ragins,

2015). Participants in this study articulated the importance of not only being mentored, but also serving as a mentor and helping others to develop in productive citizens.

Afterschool programs have also proven to be influencers in the realm of cultural conditioning (Morton and Montgomery, 2013). As all afterschool programs are not made equally, those with enrichment programs – instructional programs that add educational value - help future leaders to develop strengths, talents and leadership skills and help to develop traits that are transferrable to their professional careers (Morton and Montgomery, 2013 and Salusky et al, 2015). Participants in the study acknowledged the wealth of leadership skills that were acquired as a result of their participation in enriched afterschool programs.

Leadership skills such as honesty, trustworthiness and an increased commitment to organizational goals can also be attributed to the cultural conditioning obtained through religious involvement (Winston, 2013). Although not typically the first source of development, religious involvement remains the center of many individual lives. Whether a conduit for community service or a source for leadership development, several participants hold their religious institutions in high regard and credit them for assisting with their leadership development.

As a byproduct of the cultural conditioning that influenced community service, some of the participants reported learning some leadership skills that ultimately served them well as public sector leaders. Participating in community service not only benefitted community agencies and the populations that they serve, it also served as a medium to learn new skills and abilities, facilitates a proactive approach toward civic responsibility

and aids in leadership development (Fenzel and Peyrot, 2005 and Taylor and Pancer, 2007).

Theme 2: Altruism and Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Feign, Owens and Goodyear-Smith (2014) defined altruism as the act of volunteering with the primary motivation of benefitting another without an expectation of reward and an underlying motive of empathy. True altruists are described as being remarkably concerned with how others feel, possessing a greater degree of justice, social responsibility and moral reasoning (Feign, Owens and Goodyear-Smith, 2014). However, ongoing debate among researchers argues that if caring for others brings the provider joy, then it stems from selfish motives and not altruism (Pessi, 2017). However, Pessi (2017) offered a conflicting position which contends that the more altruistic one's motives are for helping others, the more joy one gains from helping.

Closely related to altruism is PSM which also has been closely studied by researchers and scholars alike. With public concern at the core of its foundation, it is said to be the characteristic responsible for motivating individuals whose interests are grounded in doing good works for others (Perry, Hondelghem and Wise, 2010). Initially thought to be specific to the public sector (Perry and Wise, 1990), researchers now agree that PSM transcends the public sector (Perry et al, 1990) and has also been studied independently of workplace settings (Lee, 2011 and Coursey, Brudney, Littlepage Perry, 2011). Additionally, the PSM values responsible for prosocial behavior within public service is believed to also be responsible for community service involvement. However; little research has been conducted to connect volunteerism with government employees (Ertas, 2014).

While many of the participants had a fortuitous introduction to the concept of community service in their adolescent years, the connection with helping others flourished into one that transferred into adulthood. Some continue to perform community service because of the joy they feel from helping others. This kind of joy also serves as a motivating force to serve the public in their professional careers as well. In these instances, altruism and PSM can be attributed with influencing these participants both on and off the clock.

Theme 3: Involvement in Community Organizations and Advocacy

Many communities rely on government services for sustainability. However, with government services dwindling by the day, underprivileged communities and populations must rely heavily on community organizations to take up the slack. The decline in services can be attributed to the resurgence of 19th century free-market capitalism or laissez-faire economic liberalism which challenges the power of the government, emphasizes the value of free market and shifts economic power to the private sector (Davilia, 2014). These shifts in ideologies has caused racial resentment in that several industries such housing, employment and the financial markets have become adversaries of the poor (Davilia, 2014). As such, community organizations such as the NAACP and NCNW must rely on the services of volunteers to fulfill their goals and missions to fill the gaps that the government has left vacant (Togerson and Edwards, 2013). These volunteers not only help sustain communities, but they also learn skills and proficiencies that are transferrable to their careers and to their overall development.

Sororities and fraternities provide services to vulnerable communities as well. Traditionally stigmatized by excessive partying and hazing of new members, these

organizations have suffered from corroded reputations that have diminished their contributions to society. Nonetheless, these organizations are overhauling their tarnished reputations and replacing them with auras of respect and deference. This transformation is driven not only by the man hours that these organizations lend to community, but also by the professional development that is made available to their members to ensure that they are prepared for civic responsibility, leadership and advocacy (Johnson, Johnson and Dugan, 2015).

Theme Four: Political Engagement and Political Activity

The 2017 Gallup polls report that 42% of Americans were increasingly concerned about race relations. As the wage gap between blacks and whites continue to narrow, educational achievement rates continue equalize and white-on-black crime rates taper (Kang, 2016), the country remains in peril. Because of the ongoing unfair actions against and mistreatment of minority groups, many individuals immerse themselves in political activities and organizations so that they are able to impact change for disadvantaged populations. Many individuals, like some of the participants in this study, render service in the name of social justice and are highly likely to remain engaged because they view political involvement as a necessary part as part of their daily lives if improvement is to occur (Youniss and McIntosh, 2014). Political involvement falls under the umbrella of civic engagement, a broad concept for defining most types of political participation focused on personal and societal interests according to Chrysochoou and Barrett (2017). As the participants of this study continue engaging in the civic activities that define America's democracy, they are continually developing themselves by learning new leadership skills that can easily be utilized in their public sector roles.

An array of experiences influenced the community service involvement of the participants of this study. Whatever the influence that motivated the participant to become involved in community service activities, this involvement has become a pivotal part of their lives in more than one way. For some, this involvement has significantly lent to their development as a leader. Whether learning new skills and abilities that will advance their careers or simply understanding the dynamics of networking and interpersonal communication, serving the community has proven to be a valuable experience that has far-reaching benefits.

Recommendations and Implications for Public Sector Leaders

Being a public sector leader is no easy feat for those who desire to impact change for others. One must be equipped with a leadership skillset that supports flexibility, obtains trust from subordinates, exhibits responsibility and motivates others to do good for the public. Obtaining a skillset that facilitates such outcomes is no easy feat either. But it is not impossible. Participation in community service involvement is one way to develop skills in preparation for public sector leadership.

Information gathered from the literature review, data collection phase and data analysis provide insights to opportunities that conceivably provide professional leadership development through community service opportunities. Some specifically facilitate opportunities that yield skillsets specific to the public sector.

In the aspect of cultural conditioning, individuals must be open to receiving direction and guidance from family members, engaged in the mentor relationship, willing to participate in enriched afterschool programs and engrossed in religious involvement beyond normal church service. It is recommended that this type of involvement begin at a

young age so that development can occur prior to adulthood and before entering a public sector career.

Altruism and PSM are popular philosophies that are continually being researched. While both are closely related as prosocial behaviors, they are distinct concepts that both relate to the desire to help others. Individuals with either are excellent candidates for the public sector considering their intrinsic nature to help others. However, employers must have a way to verify the presence of these attributes prior to hiring if this approach is to be beneficial.

There are several community service organizations that require volunteers to operate and fulfill their mission to the communities that they serve. From organizations such as the NAACP to sororities and fraternities. These types of organizations offer a substantial training ground for those volunteers looking to expand their repertoire of leadership skills. By performing basic tasks and assignments, one can usually rummage some sort of skillset that will benefit them in the future. However, in order to get the most out of the volunteer experience, it is recommended that the organization is thoroughly investigated before joining to ensure that a professional development component is a part of their value system. The desire to gain a skillset or an array of knowledge and skills may be contested by traditional proponents of altruism. However, modern students of altruism contend that a person's love of volunteerism is the true testament of altruism (Pessi, 2017).

Political involvement and engagement is one of the most powerful activities to develop leadership skills and incite change significant change in vulnerable communities. However, many politicians fall victim to helping themselves opposed to helping the

people that who elected them as their representative. Lord Acton, a 19th Century historian reminded us that “absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Prior to engaging in political activities, one should ensure that the motives for doing so are honorable and just although as mentioned before, many have paid the consequence for not meeting the standard of elected political office. Many politicians elected by the people have been imprisoned because of their wayward and selfish actions. Acting within the boundaries of the law and for the good of the people is the best way to avoid jail time and a diminished reputation.

Conclusion

The public sector leaders interviewed for this study developed vital skills and proficiencies through their involvement with community service both as adolescents and adults. Although the service opportunities that were selected may have differed in goals and objectives, their overarching mission remained identical – to help others. Both altruism and PSM play a noteworthy role in some instances with respect to why these leaders either began participating in community service and/or continue to serve. Nonetheless, as a result of providing community service, some type of professional development was ascertained that the study participants were able to transfer and utilize in their careers in the public sector. Empirical evidence supported the notion that community service is typically performed as a result of being motivated by varying sources and not as a medium to gain any benefit. Conversely, providing community service has afforded unexpected benefits that participants have been able to use for years to come. Subsequently, these skills have proven useful as leaders within the public sector.

The aim of this Dissertation in Practice was to add to the current body of work that focuses on the relationship between community service and public sector leadership. However, aside from the academic aim, this study contributes to professional practice and the greater good of the field of public sector leadership as well. By facilitating conversations of employee recruitment and development strategies from exclusively compensated experiences to the inclusion of volunteer experiences significant to the public sector, public sector leaders like myself can begin utilizing the skills acquired from these unpaid experiences to forecast and determine employee suitability which will ultimately move the field of public sector leadership forward.

In addition to transforming employee recruitment and development practices, this study lends to the larger conversation of what skills and abilities are required of public sector leaders, how they can be identified and what constructs must be designed for the inclusion of community service in employee development programs. This overarching conversation is significantly critical because of the lagging resources of the public sector as compared to the bountiful resources of the private sector in terms of employee development.

Despite the strides that this Dissertation in Practice has made to the field of public sector leadership, it is not without limitations. The study was conducted using only participants who were older in age and resided in Central Illinois. While the age of the participants infused a sense of expertise and insight to the study, it also excluded the input of younger leaders who may have added varying viewpoints and perspectives to the conversation. This limitation narrowed the responses from public sector leaders that may

have enhanced the conversation. Future researchers should take this into consideration as they continue the conversation and build upon this research study.

As a researcher with an unremitting level of curiosity, my retort regarding the outcome of this research is twofold. Primarily, I am overjoyed to learn that an irrefutably relationship between community service and public sector leadership exists. The research confirms for me that other public sector leaders have yielded leadership skills from their community service experiences and, much like me, transferred those skills to their government leadership roles. Like many of the participants in this study, a significant amount of my personal leadership proficiencies was garnered through lived experiences while providing community service. Conversely, even though many of the research participants indicated that they have a heart for service, they also reported how they incidentally segued into their government careers opposed to strategically pursuing employment opportunities with the public sector. Most of the participants were interested in only finding a job in their career field and responded to a public sector job opening. Nonetheless, I would surmise that they probably would not have remained in the public sector is not where they were meant to be.

Secondly, while the results of this research have satisfied the aforementioned curiosity that motivated this research, it has opened the door to more inquiries. My chief inquiry involves community service as a criterion to public sector leadership development. Because all of the research participants agree that numerous skills were garnered through community service and due to the lack of empirical evidence available in both the fields of community service and public sector leadership, I am now curious to understand specifically how the research participants garnered their leadership skills.

Moreover, I am interested to understand how these skills are used in their public sector role. Successively, the field of public sector leadership may benefit from understanding if there is something to be learned from community service in terms of training and developing public sector employees.

For me personally, this research has been life-altering in many ways. As the next generations of my family become of age to perform community service, I feel compelled to pass along the wisdom and foresight given me by my parents. Conversely, opposed to demanding community service involvement as a means to help others, I can now also present the far-reaching benefits of community service involvement particularly as it relates to those interested in careers within the public sector. Additionally, for those novice public sector employees who I have the pleasure of mentoring, community service involvement will from this point forward be a recommendation for acquiring many of the public sector leadership skills that they will be able to utilize for their leadership trajectory.

With that said, the data collected from the research literature and the interviews in this study have spawned varied opportunities for further research and discussion, including expanding the fields of study for both public service leadership and community service. As we continue learning more about how these two fields interact, opportunities for both of the fields will begin to emerge.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the importance of community service in your life
2. Tell me about the first time you participated in community service.
 - a. How old were you?
 - b. Where was the service provided?
 - c. What leadership skills did you learn from volunteering?
3. Why did you decide to provide community service initially?
 - a. What outside forces (if any) influenced your decision to volunteer?
4. Do you still provide volunteer services within your community? Why or why not?
 - a. If so, in what capacity?
 - b. If so, what motivates you to continue your work within the community?
5. What prompted you to pursue a career in the public sector?
 - a. Tell me your thoughts regarding the influence that community service has had on your decision to work within the public sector?
6. What leadership skills that you learned during your community service have you applied within your career?

Appendix B

Invitation to Participate

Dear _____,

My name is Sarahjini Nunn. I am a doctoral candidate in the Interdisciplinary Doctor of Leadership Program at Creighton University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Leadership and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying the impact of community service on public service leadership. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a personal interview about your community service and leadership background. The interview will last approximately one hour.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for **one year** after the successful defense of my research in my locked office. I will be the only person with access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at Creighton University. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Adam Greteman at 402-850-5762.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the study. You may contact me at 217-761-7132 or SarahjiniNunn@creighton.edu if you have study-related questions or problems. Please fully complete the attached consent form if you agree to participate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarahjini R. Nunn, Ed.Dc
Creighton University

Appendix C

Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sarahjini Nunn of the Department of Interdisciplinary Doctor of Leadership at Creighton University. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project had been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, Institutional Review Board at Creighton University. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in his study, I may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (Insert Phone # and E-mail).

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant's Name (please print) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date

Researcher's Title _____ Department

Appendix D

Researcher Biases

This initial step revealed that the researcher started volunteering while in her formative years as a member of the Beta Club. Her love for community service followed her through both high school and college where she would pledge a service sorority and serve in leadership for several student organizations including Student Senate and her sorority. Community service involvement with the sorority and other community organizations persisted well into her adulthood. Her love for service carried over into her career where she initially chose to work in social services within state government. All of her subsequent career choices were with government agencies. A considerable amount of her acquired leadership skills was attributed to her community service involvement. Those acquired leadership skills were applied to her career in the public sector thus formulating the perception that (a) many people conduct community service at an early age; (b) those who have a heart for community service may purposely choose to enter public sector work; (c) leadership skills are attained from performing community service and; (d) skills learned from community service are transferred to public sector work. As such, the researcher considers community service to have a significant impact of public sector leadership.