Crisis, Leadership, and Leadership Development

A Case Study from Ireland

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Abstract
The recent economic crisis that has affected Ireland, as well as many other countries in Europe, has brought the issue of leadership and leadership capacity in the public service into sharp focus. The evidence from the economic crisis, and many other recent crises in public administration, suggests that new leadership capacities must be developed to deal with the complexity of modern public administration. In this paper, the recent case of economic crisis in Ireland is reviewed for evidence of weaknesses in leadership capacity in the public administration, and a new leadership development programme designed to address these weaknesses is described.

The issue of leadership capacity at senior levels in the public service has come into sharp focus in the debate that has followed the major economic crisis that hit Ireland in 2008. The argument that a lack of leadership capacity in the Irish public service was at least partly responsible for that crisis has been made in a number of independent reports commissioned by the Irish government into the causes of the crisis. The question therefore arises, on the basis of the evidence presented in these reports and elsewhere, what type of leadership is required now and in the future in our public service to help ensure that similar crises do not recur in the future, and how can leadership development programmes be designed and implemented to develop the requisite leadership capacities?

In this paper the evidence of deficiencies in leadership capacity that have contributed to crisis in areas of public policy in Ireland is reviewed. While the recent economic crisis in Ireland is the main case considered, attention is also drawn to other, albeit smaller-scale, cases of crisis in Irish public administration to show that the consequences of a lack of leadership capacity have been recurring over time. The nature of the leadership deficiencies identified as common to these crises is discussed, as are the skills, behaviours and attitudes that leadership development interventions should consequently seek to address. Finally, a leadership development programme developed by the Irish Institute of Public Administration to address these capacity issues, called ‘The Leadership Challenge’, is described.

Economic Crisis in Ireland

Boin & ’t Hart (2003:545) have defined crises that arise in the realm of public policy and public administration as “extended periods of high threat, high uncertainty, and high
politics that disrupt a wide range of social, political, and organisational processes”. By this definition the events that followed the economic, fiscal, and banking collapse in Ireland in 2008 can comfortably be categorised as representing a ‘crisis’. The following provides a very brief overview of the crisis but a number of comprehensive and detailed accounts are provided elsewhere (see for example Whelan 2010).

As a small open economy, since the 1960’s Ireland had pursued an export-led growth policy with a major focus on foreign direct investment supported by low corporate tax rates. The successful combination of foreign direct investment, a population boom in the 1960s, a relatively high-level of educational attainment, a flexible English-speaking workforce, ready access to EU markets, and other factors created a virtuous circle that ultimately resulted in the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ economy of the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. Whelan (2013:2) noted that “As a result of these policies, Irish productivity growth consistently outpaced other advanced economies from the early 1970s onwards. By the mid-2000s, Irish labor productivity was very close to US levels “.

The spectacular success of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ Irish economy from 1997 up to its collapse in 2008 generated great interest in other parts of the world, not least among policymakers in other small open economies who sought to replicate the Irish success.

However the success story came to a grinding halt in 2008. In summary, the Irish economy swung from the rapid growth experienced up to 2007, to rapid decline, with the economy shrinking by almost 10% between 2008 and 2010. Massive solvency issues came to light in the main Irish banks that had to be resolved by way of a government sanctioned system-wide ‘bank guarantee’, that ultimately led to a government injection of €64 billion into the banking system, resulting in a massive cost to the Irish taxpayer. The economy went from a state of effectively full employment in 2007 to an unemployment rate of close to 15% by 2010. In late 2010 the Irish government agreed a financial rescue programme with the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), thus effectively ceding Ireland’s economic sovereignty to the so called ‘troika’ of EU Commission, IMF, and European Central Bank.

While it is generally recognized that in 2008 Ireland, as a small open economy, was adversely impacted by the global financial and banking crisis, it has also been identified in a number of independent reviews that the scale and severity of the crisis could have been mitigated but for serious domestic failings, including failings within the Irish public administration. For example:

“International developments, however, did not in themselves cause the crisis though they helped precipitate it. The problems causing the crisis as well as the scale of it were the result of domestic Irish decisions and actions”. (Nyberg 2011: ii).

While the nature of those failings is discussed in more detail below, particularly insofar as they relate to leadership capacity, it is worth noting at this point that even in the aftermath of what was clearly a catastrophic systemic failure, various actors and agencies had very different interpretations of their role and culpability in the period leading up to the crisis.

Indeed in the aftermath of failures in the area of public policy and administration, it is not unusual for events to be interpreted very differently by different actors, for blame to be
apportioned in different directions, and for the causes of failure to be hotly contested. For example, the Independent Commission set up to investigate the causes of the banking crisis in Ireland noted “that when the mania ended, participants had difficulty in accepting blame for their own part in it” (Nyberg 2011: 95).

It is also noteworthy that Ireland, in common with a number of other countries (see for example Bovens & ‘tHart (1996), Pressmann & Wildavsky (1973), and Boin et al (2001)), has experienced ongoing policy failures and crises in public administration over a number of decades, albeit on a lesser scale than the crisis of 2008.

This is relevant to the current discussion because many of the leadership deficiencies identified as key factors in the recent economic crisis have also been identified as contributory factors in other crises. In the next section a number of these common factors are discussed.

The systemic nature of crisis in public administration

The multiplicity of individuals, organisations and agencies typically now involved in the formulation and delivery of public policy makes the identification of the causes of crisis, and the attribution of responsibility, exceedingly difficult: “the systemic interdependence of the highly specialised agents of modernisation ... correspond to the absence of single isolable causes and responsibilities. Who will take the hot potato?” (Beck 1986: 33). As noted above, this was also an issue in the aftermath of the economic crisis in Ireland. The Independent Commission noted that “the nature of systemic banking crises rarely allows blame and responsibility to be confidently allocated. Systemic financial crises, like the recent Irish one, require a great number of institutions, enterprises and individuals to simultaneously follow unsound policies or practices” (Nyberg 2011: ii).

The complex and systemic nature of the factors contributing to crisis in public administration has also been highlighted in other less well-publicised cases. For example, in one of the official reports into the events surrounding the misdiagnosis of breast cancer in the Midlands Regional Hospital in Ireland in 2007, it was concluded that “fundamentally the problems arose from systemic weaknesses of governance, management, and communication for dealing with critical situations” (Fitzgerald 2008: 12). In the official review of the scandal surrounding the illegal charging by the Irish state of over 300,000 long-stay residents in nursing homes over a period of 28 years, it was concluded that “The only reasonable conclusion, at this time, is one of overall systemic corporate responsibility and failure within the Department of Health and Children at the highest levels over more than 28 years” (Travers 2005: 34).

Therefore because of the multiple, complex, and dynamic interactions that now arise in the formulation and implementation of public policy, and that can over time combine to give rise to crisis, there are some key areas where senior leaders need to have skill and competency. The evidence suggests that leaders need to have an understanding of how complex systems are maintained and changed; an awareness of the highly contextual and contingent nature of public policy positions; an ability to maintain what Heifetz & Linsky
describe as a ‘diagnostic mind-set on a changing reality’, and the ability to recognise the potential for circumstances and events to conspire in often surprising ways to give rise to crisis.

The role of interpretation
We referred previously to the evidence that suggests that in the aftermath of crisis in public administration, including in the recent case of the economic crisis in Ireland, there are typically multiple interpretations of what happened, why it happened, and who was responsible. In the weeks and months following a crisis, senior managers have a particularly important role to play in influencing learning outcomes by interpreting events, and drawing meaning from them, on behalf of staff, stakeholders, and the public at large. Maitlis (2005:36) referred to this role of senior managers as ‘creating narratives’ for their organisation and the wider system, not only ‘making sense’ of events but also ‘giving sense’.

But it is not only in the aftermath of crisis that the interpretive role of senior managers is important. Senior managers inevitably must be selective about the matters they deem to be most worthy of their attention. The process of interpretation is important in drawing attention to potentially uncomfortable truths prior to a crisis developing. The failure to address these difficult issues in a timely way, to draw attention to them, to make them discussable, is frequently a significant contributory factor in the development of crisis. There are a number of reasons why these issues may be avoided, or interpreted as benign and therefore not worthy of attention. These include an unwillingness to create conflict, an unwillingness to listen to dissenting voices, or an unwillingness to challenge one’s own assumptions or those of others. For example, in the independent review of the economic crisis in Ireland it was noted that:

“A minority of people indicated that contrarian views were both difficult to maintain during the long boom and unhealthy to present to boards or superiors. A number of people stated that had they implemented or consistently supported contrarian policies they may ultimately have lost their jobs, positions, or reputations. …The Commission suspects that this conformity of views and self-limitation of responsibility would have tended to reduce the perceived need for monitoring, checking and thinking about what was really going on.” (Nyberg 2011: iii).

Therefore an important role of leadership is not only to interpret events after a crisis so as to make sense of what has happened and bring about necessary learning in the system, but to avoid crises developing in the first place by encouraging, and sometimes positing, alternative interpretations and scenarios, challenging the assumptions and interpretations of others, and creating an environment where contrarian and conflictual views can be presented without fear of retribution.

The need for adaptation
At a high level, crises in public administration reflect a failure of systems to adapt to new realities. As in natural systems, in social systems too successful adaptation to a changing environment is essential for them to survive and thrive. However, if having the capacity
to adapt is critical in the public service, it has been argued that it is in the very nature of public service organisations not to respond to changes in their environment since they do not have the same incentives to change that apply in the private sector. For example, Barnard (1938) argued that ruling elites in organizations establish routines that encourage rule-mindedness and habit rather than optimal decision-making, a state of affairs that becomes particularly problematic when the organization faces some novel set of circumstances. In their report on leadership in the public service, the OECD (2001: 1) also recognised adaptation as the crucial leadership challenge facing the public service:

“countries are finding that there is a gap between how their public sectors are, and how the interests of the nation need them to be now or in the future. Member countries are finding something missing between existing public service cultures and the public interest.”

One way in which the failure of systems to successfully adapt becomes evident is when early warning signs are ignored, or discounted as unimportant. The evidence from the case of economic crisis in Ireland, and indeed from a number of the other cases referred to above, suggests that there are almost always early warning signs which, if recognised as important and dealt with in a timely manner, could have mitigated the effects of, if not completely averted, the ensuing crisis. For example, commenting on the role of the Department of Finance prior to the economic crisis in Ireland the Independent Review Panel concluded:

“The Department of Finance should have done more to avoid this outcome. It did provide warnings on pro-cyclical fiscal policy and expressed concern about the risks of an overheated construction sector. ...But it did not drive the process, and was reluctant to oppose packages that included outcomes that retained labour peace for the economy as a whole.” (Independent Review Panel 2010: 25)

Rather the evidence suggests that when early warning signs of crisis are detected the tendency is frequently to address the technical, rather than the adaptive, aspects of the challenge. For example, Hardiman (2010) noted that when proposing and implementing plans for public sector reform, successive administrations in Ireland have failed to address the substantial reform challenges in favour of addressing more technical, and sometimes superficial, issues:

“The public sector modernization project in Ireland was widely supported in principle from the early to mid-1990s on. But its implementation was limited on all the conventional measures. It was stronger on symbolic areas such as customer service statements than on real substantive change.” (2010:18)

This willingness to face up to harsh realities rather than ignore them, and to deal with the substantial issues, whether on matters relating to the design or implementation of public policy or the functioning of public service organizations, is at the heart of
successful adaptation. To understand the recent economic crisis in Ireland and, we would argue, many of the other crises in public administration referred to earlier, they must be understood fundamentally as failures of adaptation. Because adaptation requires leadership, they also represent failures of leadership.

Why then is it so difficult to exercise this type of adaptive leadership, even when the consequences of not doing so can be so disastrous and harmful to so many? To do so inevitably mean disturbing the status quo, eschewing the ‘quick fix’ solution in favour of longer term experimental work, and, developing a sense of collective responsibility for addressing problems among all the key stakeholders. But there is enormous pressure on senior authority figures to come up with quick solutions, and in the post-crisis phase to restore a sense of normality and a sense of confidence that the system is basically sound. Linsky and O’Doherty (2008) sum up the dilemma facing senior authority figures as follows: “the payoff for avoiding adaptive work is that those in authority are protected from facing the disappointment and resentment of those affected by the change, while those who have to own the change do not have to experience the losses that the change involves. The end result of these dynamics is that the status quo effectively stays in place and the learning required for adaptive work is not possible. An immune system is created that protects everyone in the system from feeling vulnerable” (2008: 72)

A failure to adapt because of a failure to provide leadership leaves the system vulnerable to major external shocks that eventually force change through crisis, and learning through crisis is a very painful way to learn. This is why leadership development is necessary, and important.

Leadership and leadership development

Taking account of the evidence that a lack of leadership capacity was a significant contributory factor in successive crises in Irish public administration, most particularly the recent economic crisis, the Institute of Public Administration in Ireland set about developing a leadership development programme to address these issues. In this section the overall design, content and approach of the programme is described insofar as it relates to the development of those skills of leadership referred to in the above discussion of crisis. (For a more detailed discussion of programme content, and to get the perspective of a group of participants, the reader is referred to the article by Participants: Administration, 2008).

Programme Design

The programme was designed following a period of consultation with senior figures in the Irish public service, a review of relevant research evidence, and a survey of the leadership programmes offered by leading international schools of management and business.

A number of pieces of research dealing with leadership competency requirements at senior levels in the Irish public service were especially useful. In a review of data for over 200 senior Irish public sector managers who had completed a leadership diagnostic instrument, Wallis & McLoughlin (2007) reported that while on the one hand the data reflected a strong capacity for developing strategies, for structuring and controlling tasks, for seeking consensus and team
outcomes, and for adopting a ‘custodial’ and conserving style of management, on the other hand the capacities for influencing and engaging with people and networks, for tolerating and managing conflict, or for ‘frame breaking’ initiatives were less well developed. A number of the same conclusions were reached in a research study by Mc Carthy et al (2011: 67) which concluded that “there is a strong sense that risk taking, creativity and innovation are stifled and discouraged”. In another piece of research that included interviews with senior public service managers aimed at eliciting their views on leadership, O’Rafferty et al (2008) identified cultural obstacles, fear of failure and a risk-averse style as the three most significant inhibitors of leadership at senior levels in the Irish public service. In many ways these findings supported the evidence of leadership deficiencies identified in the wake of the crises discussed earlier.

Therefore the key capacities that the Institute of Public Administration sought to develop through the new leadership programme included the ability and willingness to move beyond familiar interpretations and assumptions that merely served to preserve the status quo; a capacity for anticipating and interpreting the significance of critical contextual, environmental, and system changes; an openness to disconfirming data as well as an ability, and willingness to challenge settled mind-sets, positions, and cultures; an ability to tolerate, and then manage, the conflicts that inevitably arise both inside and outside the organisation when change is mooted; a tolerance for taking appropriate risks; and a greater personal awareness of the senior authority figure’s role in influencing change in the system. Finally, an emphasis on the role of personal purpose and values was considered to be critical in a programme for senior public sector leaders.

From the outset the intention was not to develop a ‘once-off’ programme, or to aim the programme solely at the development of individual competencies, but rather to develop over time a community of practice and learning at the top levels of the Irish public service, and to provide a common language, framework, and set of principles for tackling leadership challenges.

The programme was designed and developed collaboratively by faculty at the Institute of Public Administration and leadership development experts from Cambridge Leadership Associates, MA, who had also been involved in delivering leadership programmes at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and elsewhere.

It became clear from an early stage that a programme designed along traditional lines and relying primarily on a lecture format of delivery, or on content that traditionally may have been included in leadership programmes, would not be sufficient to meet the objectives that had been set. The deficiencies of traditional leadership development approaches is summed up by Parks (2005):

“As our world becomes more complex, diverse, and morally ambiguous, leadership training and programs abound and executive coaching has appeared on the scene. Yet there remains a gnawing awareness that our prevailing myths and many of our assumed practices of leadership match neither the central perils nor the finest aspirations spawned by the forces of dramatic change” (2005: 2).

To develop the leadership capacity for adaptation would require a different approach.
The core of the approach adopted for the programme was based on the concept of adaptive leadership developed by Heifetz, Linsky and colleagues at Harvard University. This model, although not designed exclusively for application in the public sector, was considered to be particularly suitable for application in the public sector because it addresses, inter alia, those complex politic-administrative relationships and issues of contested public value (see Moore 1996) that inevitably arise when seeking to exercise leadership in public administration. Adaptive leadership recognizes that organizations embody collective systems, and that therefore leadership is not a role played all of the time by a few senior people, but rather an activity that people at all levels of the organization have the opportunity to engage in on a daily basis.

In terms of structure the programme had to be designed to allow for the participation of senior people for whom time was at a premium. The programme was designed to be residential, intensive, delivered over three short modules in a total of 8 days, with two individual coaching sessions. It was very specifically designed to address practical and personal development issues, since almost all of the participants already had a high level of academic qualifications.

While it is not possible here to deal with the detail of programme content, set out below are three key approaches/themes incorporated in the design to achieve the learning objectives.

1. **Real problems, real people, real outcomes**

In the consultation process it was clear that the programme would have to be designed with real, current, and relevant challenges in the Irish public sector to the fore, and that there was an expectation that the programme would deliver real change outcomes in respect of these challenges. Therefore the programme was designed so that rather than have workplace challenges incidental or secondary to the teaching, as in many traditional programmes, these challenges were put ‘up front’ and centre stage. This approach of putting the ‘real work’ at the centre of the learning process was influenced by the concept of ‘business driven action learning’ (see Boshyk 1999).

The challenges brought to the programme by participants had first to be approved and mandated by the senior authority in the organisation, typically at permanent secretary level. This provided participants with a major incentive to make progress on the challenge during the course of the programme.

At the very outset of the programme, participants presented their challenges to each other, and the group were invited to identify typologies of challenge, common themes, issues, and obstacles to progress. Thus commenced a process of reframing the challenges that continued for much of the first half of the programme. In many cases this reframing generated new insights and options, since the way in which the challenge was framed was key to determining who were the relevant stakeholders, and also the outcomes that were being sought. For example in one programme a senior official responsible for managing the opening of a new detention centre for juveniles, originally laid the emphasis on completing infrastructure, meeting deadlines, and implementing the transfer of detainees from other centres. As a result of clarifying the adaptive challenge at the heart of this work, he was able to reframe the
challenge so as to put the emphasis on achieving an outcome of safety, welfare and rehabilitation for the young people affected, thus fundamentally altering the approach that was being taken.

During the programme, participants worked in peer consulting groups, and adhered to a strict methodology to consult each other on their challenges, for example providing alternative interpretations, challenging assumptions, diagnosing the systemic nature of the challenges, and supporting each other by identifying alternative approaches to intervening, and then progressing their challenges.

As the programme was modular, this approach allowed participants to take new approaches and options developed in the classroom back into the workplace, and then bring further new learning back to the classroom in an iterative process of application and refinement.

2. Recreating the dynamics of complex systems

By putting the real challenges to the forefront of programme design as described above, the design team sought to ensure that the real complexities of public management and public policy challenges, including the challenges of implementation, would ‘live’ in the classroom. As noted above, the evidence from past crises makes it clear that senior public servants must be able to understand, and then intervene in, complex dynamic systems with multiple stakeholders who have a variety of interests. To be effective in exercising leadership in this type of environment the individual must not only have the capacity to effectively diagnose what maintains the current equilibrium of a system, but also the skill to intervene in order to disturb settled patterns of behaviour or practice where these are no longer useful, and replace them with more productive approaches.

The programme was designed to re-create complex system dynamics in real time, which sometimes involved working in the plenary group (typically 25 people), sometimes in small case groups, or sometimes with individuals. Typically the small case group and individual learning time allowed for deeper and more reflective work, whereas the plenary sessions allowed participants to explore risk and relationship in a more complex, and sometimes more confusing and challenging, setting. In both exercises and classroom discussions participants were challenged about their assumptions, their default perceptions and behaviours, challenged to gain greater insight into their own motivations and values, and to find the edge of their comfort zone. This work in the classroom required skilled facilitation as it raised some profoundly important, and sometimes troubling, questions for both individuals and the group.

Central to re-creating the dynamics of complex systems in a learning environment was the use of the case in point teaching method. Case in point is an experiential methodology for leadership development that has been developed by Heifetz and colleagues at the Kennedy School of Government and is described in detail by Johnstone and Fern (2010). As compared to the use of traditional case studies in the classroom, with case in point the class itself, and all of the participants and tutors, become the case. The dynamic development of the system that commences with group formation at the start of the leadership programme, and goes through many changes before course completion, provides a rich and dynamic environment for learning about leadership. The classroom reflected some of the ‘heat’ and turbulence of
the environment in which leadership often has to be exercised, including by providing opportunities to reflect on the role of authority, and for experimenting with new leadership approaches.

Using case in point in the leadership development process requires a lot of skill and experience on the part of the tutors, not least because they must, when necessary, have the confidence to cede their authority to the group in support of new learning, to withstand the ‘heat’ and the pressure that inevitably arises in the classroom, and to help participants learn from discussions or ‘events’ that may at first sight appear to be confusing, or even chaotic. For example, in this programme at various times class members expressed frustration with the tutors because their expectations of structure and control were being disappointed; or with other class members because of the frequency, or absence, of their interventions; or they complained about ‘hygiene’ factors such as class times, seating arrangements, or meals, thus reflecting the tendency to project anxiety, uncertainty, or frustration onto technical issues, and thus avoid having to confront the real adaptive challenges. Participants were at times confronted by the tutors on their need for structure or control, their impulse to ‘hide’ from conflict or look for an exit strategy, or to blame others.

While there are risks with this approach, the experience with this Irish public service programme is that it created an environment for learning about leadership in complex systems that is unparalleled in its richness and possibility. The role of the tutor is to help participants understand how emotions, interpretations, strategies, structure, and events all combine dynamically to reflect the frequently confusing reality in which leadership must be exercised. This helped participants gain greater insight into their own practice of leadership, including their points of vulnerability. This insight did not always, or even often, occur in the classroom, but more typically hours, days, or even weeks later. It was only after the participants had an opportunity to process and reflect upon the learning experience, and their part within it, that the real insight was achieved.

3. Learning about self

Exercising leadership in order to promote adaptation in a complex and challenging environment demands that leaders have a very high degree of self-awareness. Therefore in addition to the approaches just described, there was an emphasis throughout on helping participants to seek to better align their own motivations and values with their work life. This was the basis for developing what George et al (2007) described as ‘authentic leadership’. It involves challenging personal work: “denial can be the greatest hurdle that leaders face in becoming self-aware. They all have egos that need to be stroked, insecurities that need to be smoothed, fears that need to be allayed. Authentic leaders realise that they have to be able to listen to feedback—especially the kind they don’t want to hear.” (George et al 2007:4)

During this programme the coaches led the small coaching groups through progressively more challenging exercises, for example inviting members of the group to reflect on times in their life when they were aligned or misaligned with their personal values and purpose. This
allowed for patterns to emerge, and generated insights into how, and why, these patterns tended to repeat.

Coaches also worked with individuals in coaching sessions, debriefing learning from the programme, providing feedback and observations on the individual’s participation in plenary and other sessions, and providing feedback on the data from the leadership diagnostic questionnaire completed as part of the programme. It is worth noting that participants were asked to treat every aspect of the residential programme, including social interactions over breaks and meals, as opportunities for learning and coaches also used data gathered from these parts of the programme to support individual learning.

The small group work and individual coaching, the work in plenary sessions, and the inter-modular application of learning in the workplace, all combined to provide a very intensive developmental experience and generated a level of personal feedback that most participants had not experienced before. As noted earlier, while it often took some time for individuals to fully process the learning, the outcome was learning at a deeper level that sustained over time.

Conclusion

The Leadership Challenge Programme has now been delivered for six years, to over 300 senior public servants, including almost all of those currently at permanent secretary level in the Irish public service. In that period the programme has been consistently over-subscribed in terms of numbers, reflecting a very high level of demand which is mainly based on the recommendations of past participants. A significant number of those attending have subsequently been promoted to high office, but most important is the evidence that learning from the programme is lasting and finding application in tackling real leadership challenges in the public service. The Institute of Public Administration has tracked progress on the leadership challenges that participants brought to the programme, and the evidence suggests significant progress has been achieved on many of these, although in some cases the nature of the challenges changed over time. A strong network has been established among alumni of the programme, thus contributing to the goal of developing, and sustaining, a community of practice and learning that shares a common language and leadership framework.

It is of course impossible to say whether further crises have been averted as a result of the learning from the programme. But there is evidence to suggest that the appetite for exercising adaptive leadership in the Irish public service, including the willingness to challenge assumptions and interpretations, has increased.

One of the areas that has not succeeded as well as anticipated relates to addressing leadership challenges across the public service as a whole. The evidence suggests that compared to the exercise of leadership within individual public service organisations, the motivation to exercise collective leadership across the system was weak. Despite efforts by the programme faculty to create opportunities to address common challenges on a collective basis, the evidence from this programme suggests that most of the incentives in
the system are geared towards exercising leadership within a single ministry or department, and that the appetite for working collectively across the system remains weak.

Although recent crises in Ireland, most particularly the economic crisis from 2008, have created major challenges and difficulties for many people, not least for citizens and many vulnerable groups in Ireland, it has also led us to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how leadership must be exercised in the new complex world of public administration. It has led to a greater appreciation that traditional approaches to leadership development are no longer sufficient, and must be replaced, or at minimum supplemented, by the approaches described in this paper. Only in this way can we develop the skills and capacity to promote successful adaptation of the public service to an increasingly complex and global environment.
Bibliography


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