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LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION – THE UTILITARIAN ASPECT

PRZYWÓDZTWO W ORGANIZACJI – ASPEKT UTYLITARNY

Summary

The main purpose of the article is to distinguish the concepts of leadership in the public administration and the private sector. This paper contains definitions of leadership and management which play an important role in the public sector organizations. The article indicates selected styles of leadership and draws attention to the need for a pragmatic approach, depending on the situational context. In addition, it highlights the contrast between the leaders currently in power and those who aspire to the highest positions in public administration.

Keywords

leadership styles, public sector, public administration

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja różnic dotyczących przywództwa w administracji publicznej i w organizacjach prywatnych. W artykule zawarto definicje przywództwa i zarządzania, omówiono wybrane style przywództwa i zwrócono uwagę na potrzebę pragmatycznego podejścia do przywództwa w zależności od kontekstu sytuacyjnego. Autor artykułu omawia także różnice występujące między osobami aktualnie pełniącymi funkcje liderów a tymi, które dopiero pretendują do pełnienia takich ról w administracji publicznej.

Słowa kluczowe

style przywództwa, sektor publiczny, administracja publiczna.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that leadership in the public administration plays an important role. After the collapse of the communism and the political transformation 1989 in Poland, rational and effective state management gained greater importance. The management process does not exist without appropriate leaders and therefore a concept of leadership and its styles in public administration is essential. The public sector is different

from the private sector – therefore, there is a need for separate research in the field of leadership in public and private sectors. The differences existing in public administration between leaders who currently hold offices and aspiring leaders, are also of note.

Leadership is an autonomous and separate field within public administration research, although the considerations are not as developed as studies of leadership in business administration. Proper leadership skills definitely improve the performance of public sector entities. Numerous thorough studies indicate that public administration leaders are different from those in the business world, so there is a need for a variety of leadership development programs in the public administration focusing on those differences rather than simply imitating programs dedicated to the private sector. What once again aroused interest among practitioners and researchers is the debate on administrative leadership in the public sector [Orazi, Turrini, 2015]. From the early 1980s, the new approach was closely related to the widespread public management reforms in the United States and Western Europe. There has been a shift from management to leadership concept at that time, and as a result, senior officials received greater autonomy leading them to the freedom of choice regarding their style of management. Consequentially a dispute arose between practitioners and theoreticians about the essence of public sector leadership and its similarity to that in the private sector. These groups criticized the so-called PSL – public sector leadership. Disagreements and lack of communication among practitioners and researchers led to the creation of different definitions of leadership in administration and split the debate into smaller elements [Orazi, Turrini, 2015].

1. The Evolution of Leadership Theories

The emergence of the great man theory, established in the 19th century, has made leadership the subject of an organizational research. According to the above theory, leaders are born with certain features of character such as self-confidence, intelligence and emotional literacy. Later on – 2nd half of the XXth century – the researchers focused on matching the style of leadership to the realities of a specific organization. Situational theory, developed in 1969 by P. Hersey and K. Blanchard, and contingency theory, developed in 1950s in the United States, indicate that leaders are effective in a given situation mainly due to their flexibility. Leaders ability to match their style of leadership to a specific situation affects their success. In the late 1970s, the sources of transactional and transformational leadership theories appeared in the literature [Bohoris, Vorria, 2007], and they still constitute basis for the debate about the leadership. The first one consists of, among others, using financial incentives to employees (punishment and reward), while the latter is associated with motivated leaders with a vision of the organization. The lack

of grounds for adopting the “administrative leadership” approach for some period of time resulted from regulatory procedures, political authority and was related to the low level of control over the public administration. This approach to the public administration leadership, however, has since changed.

In 2003, Van Wart published the article *Public sector leadership theory* assessing leadership and its importance in the public sector. According to Van Wart, interest in the above topic resumed with the debate on the transactional and transformational style in the 1980s. The way in which public administration was organized prompted researchers to contemplate the new phenomenon of leadership in the public sector, and four main areas of the above should be observed according to Van Wart [Van Wart, 2003].

2. The Concept of Leadership in the Public Sector

Management and leadership are often understood as identical concepts. Nothing could be more misleading – contemporary corporations, organizations and academic circles delimit those terms, pointing out their different features. According to the scholars, it is very important to understand these concepts separately [Bohoris, Vorria, 2007]. It shall be pointed out that the first area became the problem with regards to the definition. Furthermore, it is linked with the question whether leadership in public administration is a separate topic or it is derived from the management theories. The second issue is an attempt to answer the question whether leaders are created or are they born? The third area combines the two previous ones, namely the answer to the question: which leadership style is the most appropriate. The last question referred to the impact of the public sector on the particular groups and organizations. In the light of above questions it seems that public sector can be understood as the process of delivering specific results through legal and effective ways and as the process of development and support of entities providing results, adjusting the organization to the environment (rationalism) [Orazi, Turrini, 2015].

Leadership and management in the public sector are concepts based on a common ground in modern times. Various management concepts and leadership in public administration can be sought among civil servants at various levels of public administration structure. One can distinguish public managers, achieving efficiency using data management techniques, and administrative leaders proactively supporting line managers, providing the right tools. Leaders of the public sector are struggling with greater bureaucracy and a higher level of formalization of procedures – in comparison with their private counterparts (mainly in areas related to employment and public procurement). The leaders of the public sector indicate a definitely lower satisfaction with their profession due

to numerous limitations. However, they are characterized by a higher motivation in relation to the provisions of public services [Orazi, Turrini, 2015].

We can observe many national programs regarding the development of leadership around us. They are based on the assumption that everyone is a potential leader and that the appropriate program is able to extract this quality from every person. Such projects focus on shaping strategic thinking, achieving results and communicating with the surrounding environment. Those who are sceptical about such programs argue that their implementation in the given countries is too vague, i.e. without paying attention to professional practice and specific realities. In addition, there are voices about how to run these programs in practice, without taking into account communication, interpersonal relations or motivation. The solution to this problem could be the initial selection of people who already have some potential leadership skills and educational background from those who pretend to be employed in public administration or are employed in public administration [Orazi, Turrini, 2015].

Each organization should be efficiently directed in order to achieve its goals and tasks in a better way. German philosopher Max Weber said that for this purpose a bureaucratic apparatus can be developed, supervising the hierarchy of the service or using informal sources of power. This statement underlies the distinction between management and leadership. The approach to leadership in public administration has changed over time. For the majority of the twentieth century, it was included only in the bureaucratic legal and procedural framework developed by Weber [Szczupaczyński, 2014]. Then, under the influence of efficiency requirements, and in particular the need to rationalize budget expenditures, the new public management concept was created. It introduced, among others, result oriented approach of the public management, treating public service recipients as clients, and using enterprise-specific management tools such as performance-based bonuses and performance indicators. Implementation of new public management is, however, associated with competency problems due to the requirements of officials' skills so far relevant for business management [Wytrązek, 2010]. Among other things, this is why the search for an administrative leadership model is evolving [Gigol, 2016].

Leadership has many definitions. The expert on management, Peter Drucker came to the conclusion that the only definition of leadership is the ability to indicate who has followers. To get supporters, one needs to influence the environment. Some researchers argue that leadership is no different at all from social influence, that is, a wider-scale process, and others that it is all that a manager does to effectively run the organization [Drucker, 1993].

Now, the following question can be once again: are public leaders born or created? The answer to the above question is relative, often even the predispositions are not enough without the contribution of hard work from the leader. The charisma and vision are not enough without, for example, reliable technical (substantive) background and general insight into the situation [Bohoris, Vorria, 2007].

Management is an art and science in one. It serves to achieve specific goals of the public and private sector. It is a process in which the tools and specific procedures are used to maximize the institution's profit. One can say that management is more technical and requires less creativity from leadership. It is the use of an appropriate instruments and coordination in a proper way with people, taking into account the realities of the serviced institution. A properly functioning organization has both good managers and leaders who complement each other. Only thanks to the right proportion of the above managers it is possible for the enterprise to succeed on the global scale or for e.g. state or local government to function properly [Bohoris, Vorria, 2007].

Managers in the public sector are people commissioned to supervise the execution of administrative tasks and key planning of future activities of the institution. Their competences include creating budget plans, solving organizational problems and controlling subordinates. On the other hand, leaders motivate and inspire people to work – they influence employees thanks to their soft skills (e.g. interpersonal relations) [Kotter, 2001, p. 2]. Good leaders have infinite layers of passion, energy and courage. The organization needs both analytical minds, introducing appropriate behaviour patterns, as well as passionate souls who support and motivate everyone around. It cannot be denied that the contribution of leadership and management plays a key role in the proper functioning of the institution [Bohoris, Vorria, 2007].

3. Selected (Public) Leadership Styles

One can distinguish several styles of leadership. Any situation or problem to be solved requires an individual approach, hence there is no single leadership style. However, there are some features of character that increase the effectiveness of leaders managing people. One of them is emotional intelligence, i.e. a higher level of empathy and understanding of the environment. Without it, a leader might have a lot of knowledge and many ideas but no possibility of implementing them. This does not mean that technical or IQ skills are irrelevant but they can be placed on one level (with emotional intelligence) in the hierarchy of values for the leader [Goleman, 1998].

Emotional intelligence of leaders can also be associated with high performance of the organization. David McClelland, a well-known researcher, found that senior rank-

ing managers (characterized by empathy) achieve better results than their “cold” counterparts [Chmiel, 2003, p. 337]. The findings of the above researcher were applicable in both American, Asian and European branches. This shows us how important the emotional intelligence has for both the private and public sectors. Importantly, research shows that people are able to learn and develop in this field. Emotional intelligence consists of the following elements:

1. self-awareness – which means the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on the others,
2. self-regulation – which means the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, the propensity to suspend judgment-to think before acting,
3. motivation – understood as passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status, a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence,
4. empathy – the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people, skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions,
5. social skills – understood as proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, an ability to find common ground and build rapport [Goleman, 1998, p. 88].

Just like with the question about the innate predispositions of being a leader, the idea arises whether we acquire emotional intelligence with birth? Are we gifted with it by nature or is this the result of our experience? Research on this subject is not conclusive because, on the one hand, science proves that there is a gentle connection (i.e. predispositions) and, on the other, confirms that empathy can be learned through experience and our upbringing. One thing is certain that emotional intelligence increases with our age, i.e. matures with us. Despite the mature age, people still need training and education in this area, however it cannot be an episode but a continuous process aimed at raising awareness of broadly understood empathy [Goleman, 1998].

The literature about leadership styles can be divided into several stages. The first focuses on identifying the personality traits of successful leaders. Trait theories argue that well-known leaders have certain inborn traits, i.e. they are born a certain way, which distinguishes them from others. The next phase is the “style” and “behavioral” approach to leadership – emphasis is placed on behavior and style instead of the current characteristic [Koech, Namusonge, 2012, p. 1]. One of the main results from the above studies is the bringing of more successes by leaders in a democratic or participatory style. It can be noticed that both the first and the second phase concentrate mainly on the extraction of the best leadership pattern (based on characteristics or style and behavior). The elemental obstacle of the second stage is to ignore the situational factors that should be understood by the leader in order to match them with the surrounding reality. Some of the recent studies have opposed “transactional” and “transformational” leadership.

The first is called instrumental, focusing on a simple exchange with subordinates, and the last one is synonymous with visionary and enthusiasm motivating subordinates [Koech, Namusonge, 2012].

It can certainly be said that research on the leadership has gone through a crisis of skepticism, and the current interest in the above topic has focused on the role of the leader for the entire organization. The efficiency of the public sector for example, is measured by the contribution and effectiveness of its leaders. The contemporary classification of leadership divides it into several individual styles. Using the charismatic approach, we distinguish laissez-faire (so-called non-leadership), transactional (a system of penalties and rewards for subordinates) and transformational (based on inspiration and motivating employees) leadership [Koech, Namusonge, 2012].

The laissez-faire style is represented by passive leaders who almost always avoid confrontation or even meeting with their subordinates. One can say that this is a more extreme approach than liberalism. In addition to the lack of negative intervention, laissez-faire is also characterized by total indolence in the context of any form of cooperation with the subordinate. The liberal approach doctrine means lack of interventionism, but not complete abandonment of the contact with individuals [Koech, Namusonge, 2012]. It is assumed that laissez-faire is associated with the unproductivity and ineffectiveness of the organization. Transformational style of leadership encourages subordinates to put extra effort and to go beyond the accepted scale. Units subordinate to such a leader are loyal, trusting and feeling respectful towards their superior. In addition, the above style is characterized by greater motivation of employees to additional activities. Interestingly, transformational leaders achieve better results thanks to their subordinates because they are able to inspire them. It was also found that this style of leadership is related to the efficiency of the public units. Leadership is an art of motivating people to achieve common goals. Leadership is the influence and manipulation (in a positive way) of subordinates for the common good [Koech, Namusonge, 2012].

The transactional style of leadership is based on an exchange between the supervisor and the subordinate which manifests itself through the performance of the employee's actions for the reward specified for him. Supporters are rewarded if they meet a certain standard or enter the appropriate criteria. The above style aims at motivating employees with a tangible gratification and getting them to comply with the rules and principles. The transaction does not necessarily have to be positive for its participants. In the event of failure to perform a task, failure to comply with its duty, the leader may punish the employee by, for example, exemption or order to cover costs. This ensures a sense of responsibility for the orders given to both the subordinate and the supervisor

who, despite the delegation of the task, is still responsible for them [JSS Academy of Technical Education INDIA, 2014, p. 58].

One can also distinguish the concept of authentic leadership which was created in response to the governmental corruption scandals at organizations' top management level in the United States (turn of the 20th and 21st century). The debt crisis in public administration is the reason for the increased interest in ethical aspects of leadership in the public sector [Wytrązek, 2010]. A fundamental element in the theory of authentic leadership is the concept of authenticity. It means everyday awareness of one's own personal experiences, including thoughts, emotions; acting in harmony with your true self and expressing what you really think and believe. To the above, there were added elements adapted from the other theories, e.g. the theory of transformational leadership and ethical leadership. The component of self-awareness was taken from the theory of emotional intelligence. The theory of authentic leadership is in the maturing phase, but numerous studies have shown its value and usefulness to explain processes related to leadership and its impact on employees [Gigol, 2016]. There was a clear positive influence of the leader's true leadership on subordinates in terms of achieved results and commitment and other elements of team behavior. Authentic leadership of superiors influences the results achieved by employees and the sense of satisfying basic needs by groups of employees. The above concept reduces the probability of so-called professional burn-out and the desire to leave work and contribute to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, regardless of the level of professional experience. Based on the research, it was noted that the positive interaction effect between the leader and the subordinates is strengthened in the groups of employees through the effect of social learning [Gigol, 2016].

In addition to above three main leadership styles, the following are also presented in the literature:

1. autocratic and democratic – research shows that employees operating in a democratically managed environment do not act under the same pressure as their autocratically-run equivalents. What is more, the results indicate a better performance of subordinates in the organization and their much better level of well-being. The autocratic environment is characterized by eternal fear of the superior and a feeling of humiliation by the authorities. The atmosphere and a positive approach to life by co-workers definitely positively affects the quality of services provided by the public sector [Omolayo, 2007, p. 33],
2. participative, supportive and instrumental – the supportive leadership concept goes back to research in which its four basic features have been distinguished: encouragement to participate, widespread sharing of information and power, efforts to strengthen the employees' self-esteem and motivating employees to perform

various work tasks. Instrumental leadership is associated with the leader's leadership and is characterized by behaviour aimed at organizing the work of employees by giving them clear instructions. Contrary to participative leadership which is defined as "a common influence on the decision-making process" [Łukowski, 2017, p. 113]. In both cases, the ultimate decision-making power lies with the leader. The main differences concerns both the extent to which leaders consult their subordinates and the extent to which they have the right to express their views in the decision-making process. Essentially, instrumental leadership and participatory leadership are perceived as extreme [Pedraja-Rejas, et. al., 2006].

Robert K. Greenleaf presented in his essay from 1970 under the title *A Servant as a Leader* the idea that a good leader should be a servant [Greenleaf, 1970]. According to him, a conscious choice results in the transformation of a humble servant into an influential leader. There is an interesting paradox here because the subordinates are considered powerless and not as those who are able to turn into good managers later. A servant helps others through his empathy and experience. She/he is closer to lower-level work, in contrast to managers often detached from reality. She/he is guided by care, not by manipulation. A servant is aware of the needs of people at his professional level and knows the organizations from scratch. By transferring it to the public sector, the manager who previously was a lower-ranking official will be considered a better leader due to the knowledge of the environment in which she/he works and because of his trainee authority [Hanson, 2011].

Characteristics of the servant's leadership are: skillful listening, empathy, awareness, persuasion, anticipation, management, commitment to human development and community building. Those are the signs of the servants who decide to become leaders. Servant leaders are focused on ethical behaviour, rely heavily on teamwork and engage others in decision-making. This philosophy is a holistic approach, improving our institutions, building a community and promoting personal growth among employees. The servant has to examine whether other priority needs of people have been handled – are they becoming smarter and more autonomous? Servant leaders should focus on doing the most important things. They are able to encourage their subordinates to engage in personal development. In this way, the servant leader offers a higher level of service to others. This approach creates a level of responsibility possible only among highly independent employees [Hanson, 2011].

What the elected officials have to think about are the motives of their work in the public sector. They have an obligation to verify their commitment to serve the citizens and the entire state. Work in the public administration is supposed to serve the residents and solve problems they have. The management at the state and local government level

combines it with continuous work to improve the quality of services provided by national institutions. Pointing to service as one of the highest values in the public sector, leaders encourage subordinates to ethical and proper conduct. Managers must carefully listen to employees' concerns for which emotional intelligence is necessary. Because public sector officials and managers reflect changes in the environment, they are tasked with constantly monitoring the upcoming numerous changes and adapting their activities to them [Hanson, 2011].

4. Current and Pretending Public Leaders

Current leaders are constitute political elite of every state. As a rule, the first are leaders who hold top office positions in public administration or other specific socio-political organization. They have titles such as prime ministers, chancellors, presidents or even kings. They are distinguished from other leaders by making strategic decisions for a socio-political organization in a sustainable manner. A modern state leader builds his or her own political base by belonging to a particular party. What is worth emphasizing, is that the candidates for power are usually state leaders and self-government leaders, i.e. above all, officials holding a certain authority at higher levels. Pretending state leaders in the strict sense are politicians including ministers in the government, the office of the president or holding independent positions (e.g. presidents of institutions) [Sielski, 2012].

Current local government leadership includes three aspects: territorial, subjective and objective. The municipalities and counties are local self-government units. It is mainly at these levels that tasks are performed to satisfy the collective needs of residents in accordance with the binding legal acts. In the subjective sense, this means councilors and representatives of executive bodies elected in a direct or indirect way. The subject aspect is related to the political option. A current leader should issue strategic and permanent decisions, have adequate political facilities and occupy the highest position in a given system. [Sielski, 2012]. Only three offices in Poland (in the case of local self-government) are able to create current leaders like village mayors, mayors, and city presidents. Arguably only these three types of local leaders fulfill at least four from presented above leaders' attributes. First of all, they occupy the highest position in a semi-hermetic political system. Secondly, they make strategic decisions, shape the budget structure (expenses and income), perform executive functions, issue administrative decisions, and have numerous competences from the public and legal sphere. Thirdly, leadership is of a lasting character, i.e. the office is held for a certain period of time, currently for a maximum of two terms. Fourthly, the local government leader should have appro-

priate political support in the form of a political party, a socio-political organization, to convince a larger part of his community’s voters [Sielski, 2012]. Pretenders are those politicians who do not have the above-mentioned attributes. For example, the voivode is a representative of the government, so she/he does not occupy the highest position in the system, she/he does not make strategic decisions. She/he only receives orders from higher level authorities. In communes, the pretenders are chairmen of the council (subject to, for example, village mayors, mayors, city presidents) and in counties, district heads. Several more types of pretending local government leaders can be distinguished. The first is a leader with party power (she/he performs, e.g. local government positions), the other is a media leader – e.g. the former presidents of cities, the so-called “faces of the party”, and the last one is an informal leader, i.e. having a substantive layout, e.g. experts in a given field [Sielski, 2012].

CONCLUSION

The above considerations showed the multidimensionality of leadership. The literature of leadership styles review emphasized the importance of the so-called emotional intelligence in leadership. A number of research have shown that besides technical ability, leaders (from private and public sector) need a dose of empathy. Today’s most recognized leadership scheme is its division into transformational, transactional and the laissez-faire one. The work contains a description of all the above. Choosing the most advantageous form of leadership in public sector is not an easy task. No single leadership style can be considered the best. It depends on the people, tasks, type of organization and situation. Therefore, every leader should always be guided by his/her intuition, experience and case-by-case approach.

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