

Leadership in Public Administration: Which way to go?

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Abstract: *Whether performance in public administration is improving or not, it is not governments only concern, too much emphasis on performance distracts attention from organizational capacity and underlying government values. Thus caution should be exercised on sources of legitimacy based on authority used during recruitment of personnel. Different systems of authority attract different personnel who will perform or not. This paper discusses three sources of legitimacy for domination based on authority and their limitations: the charismatic authority, traditional authority and legal rationality.*

Keywords - Charismatic, legal-framework, system, tradition.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Any system of administration requires an appropriate way of attracting personnel that best suit their organization. It is important to note that one who suits one system may not suit the other. Government administration in the modern state is bound by rule of law and is conducted with generally formulated principles. The people who occupy positions of power are not rulers but superiors as they hold office temporary. Legal-rational authority differentiated from traditional authority precisely by its assumption postulates that binding social norms can be created by acts of legislation. It also differentiated from charismatic authority by its postulates that such norms can become binding without the authority of inspiration or at least can once made or remain binding without the continued sponsorship.

2. THE CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY

This system derives its legitimacy from personal qualities of a leader, it believes that followers requires administrators who will reflect manifestation of the leader's charisma. Authority stems from the society's belief in the exemplary characteristics of the leader. Charismatic authority points to an individual who possesses certain traits that make a leader extraordinary. This type of leader is not only capable of but actually possesses the superior power of charisma to rally diverse and conflict-prone people behind him/her. His/her power comes from the massive trust and almost unbreakable faith people put in him/her. The charismatic leader may not want to change anything. Despite their charm and apparent concern, the charismatic leader may well be somewhat more concerned with themselves than anyone else. The values of the charismatic leader are highly significant. If they are well intentioned towards others, they can elevate and transform an entire organization. There are no successors when they leave.

3. THE TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

The traditions and unwritten laws of the society dictates who has authority and how this authority can be used. This system requires administration which will conform and reinforce the customs and rules which are sanctified by tradition on which the authority of the ruler depends. Rulers enjoy personal authority and followers are subjects but the routine governs conduct. It must however provide for continuity and have experts who know and act on precedents. Second, traditional authority indicates the presence of a dominant personality. This leader is someone who depends on established tradition or order. This leader is also a dominant personality, the prevailing order in society gives him the mandate to rule. This type of leadership, however, is reflective of everyday routine and conduct.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK RATIONAL AUTHORITY

This system of authority derives from society's belief in the laws that govern it, and laws are obeyed because they have been enacted by proper procedures. It depends on serving the rational purposes of the ruled and on a framework of laws follows the bureaucracy with well-known characteristics for fixed jurisdictions provided. Legal-rational authority is one that is grounded in clearly defined laws. The obedience of people is not based on the capacity of any leader but on the legitimacy and competence that procedures and laws bestow upon persons in authority. Contemporary society depends on this type of rationalization, as the complexities of its problems require the emergence of a bureaucracy that embodies order and systematization. Legal-rational authority gives peculiarly self-conscious character. It explicitly and with self-consciousness embraces the principle that norms must be created by men and that binding social norms have no existence apart from those purposeful human acts of human legislation that bring them into being. The legitimacy in legal authority takes on some democratic overtones. There are two kinds of rationality associated with the creation of legal norms; substantive and formal. For instance, an Act is substantively rational if it is guided by principles such as those embodied in ethical thought. An Act is formally rational when it is based on general rules.

5. ALL THREE FORMS EXHIBIT A SPECIFIC LIMITATION

First, charismatic leadership can be problematic because it is somehow based on some form of a messianic promise of overhauling an unjust system. It is not impossible, however to find such type of a leader, as history would show. It is constrained only by his/her personal judgement. He/she is not governed by any formal method of negotiation. Disputes are settled by Solo monic arbitration and the relationship between the leader and those who are led is unstable hence loose. There is no procedure for appointment, promotion, or dismissal and there are no career tracks. There are no spheres of authority to protect against arbitrary exercises of power hence unequal treatment in due process.

Second, traditional authority poses its particular difficulty insofar as it is based on some kind of a dominant power. The development of rational regulations is impeded making this authority irrational. It may rely on or even exploit prevailing practices and may suffer from a lack of moral regularity in the creation of legal standards. There is likely to find no staff with formal or technical training. Justice under traditional authority is a mixture of constraints and personal discretion.

Third, legal-rational authority manifests the power of the bureaucracy over the individual. In the exercise of authority, the administration of power, laws and rules, including institutional duties and protocols, have control over individuals. Modern societies rely on legal-rational authority in terms of finding a common ground in which consensus may be achieved. But consensus on the basis of agreements often lacks flexibility, which may embody the dominance of a bureaucratic mentality of which government service is sometimes accused. The economic interests arose from the struggle between the holders of privilege and the holders of power resulting in irrational disturbances of the privileged and to affirm the legally binding character of contracts.

People not only need to have the knowledge about the character traits of the leaders but also the moral duty to understanding collective basic requirements that confer legitimacy on the mandate of government officials in whom they entrust the future of their nation. Democracy in the modern world evolved in Britain and France and then spread to other nations. The main reason for the development of democracy was dissatisfaction with the corruption, incompetence, abuse of power, and lack of accountability of the existing polity, and public involvement in decision-making which was often an absolute monarchy whose legitimacy was based on the doctrine of the divine right of kings. But democratic change cannot be achieved only by means of rewriting the laws. An ideal discourse situation in the grassroots must be present.

6. CONCLUSION

There is an inherent and seemingly unconscious feeling and need for reconciliation of leadership in public administration. The government as well as the public administrators may therefore find the most useful method with regard to the promotion of leadership in public administration. Now that the three methods have their challenges, perhaps a suggestion on a new method of administration maybe introduce by the scholars of public administration as a priority. There is an urgent need to rethink or reformulate an inclusive method of leadership in order to break the bondage of the existing authority leadership in public administration.

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