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RELATIONAL POLITICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TÊTE-À-TÊTE PUBLIC OPINION

Abstract: Public opinion is the complex of beliefs expressed by a significant number of persons on an issue of public importance. A public opinion has an issue of national significance and a group of persons who are concerned affected by the issue. The different views on the issue must be expressed and the size of the publics who are interested in the issue must be big enough to attract attention. Public opinion is a collection of views held by persons interested in the subject. Thus a person unaffected by or uninterested in an issue does not contribute to public opinion on the subject.

Key words: public opinion, administration, belief, national issue, decision.

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INTRODUCTION

“Service to citizens and to the public”. The definition of the role of public administration, government and self-government in the new political and economic conditions has not attracted sufficient attention. This is connected with the overall ambiguity of the role of public and private sectors and of the responsibility of the State for creating conditions for their development [1]. So far, reform documents only point out these problems at a general level. There is little understanding of the fact that this should be a principal conceptual change with practical consequences for the definition of functions and concrete tasks of public administration, the shape of its institutions, the means for its activities and its relations to citizens and to the public. The issue has its political, economic and other dimensions, and it is naturally determined by the Constitution and the legal order.

What has been made so far both at the theoretical and practical level is not sufficient for the transition from the system in which public administration was understood primarily as a tool of power of the Party and State, to targeted and consistent implementation of the contemporary concept of democratic public administration[2].

Modern democracies understand public administration primarily as service to citizens and to the public. Such understanding of the basic role of

public administration is the foundation from which its principles (such as transparency, publicity, accountability, public control of administration), forms and methods of activities, requirements for professional and impartial performance etc. are derived.

The focus of public administration lies in providing public services. In addition to traditional services (municipal, health care, school, transport services etc.), they also include some "classical" administration activities in advanced countries, such as issuing licenses, permits, documents, certificates, providing information etc. A number of these activities are no longer viewed as an exclusive domain of the State. Our new experience shows that many operational tasks, professional decision-making, execution of supervision, testing etc. can be decentralized and transferred to self-government or to private entities [3].

Shifts in this area have their limits, though. Economic aspects cannot be the only guide (and, moreover, it has been proved on many occasions abroad that the exclusion of public tasks from the responsibilities of public authorities did not bring expected savings, however, it resulted in the erosion of the values and principles upon which the provision of public services was based).

It should also be stated clearly that stress on the conception of public administration as service to the



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public does not mean, on the other hand, a denial of the power, authoritative component of public administration. This comprises tasks in the sphere of security and internal order, regulation and enforcement of the fulfilling of legal duties, the application of administrative supervision tools, the imposition and execution of sanctions within the limits of administrative authority etc [4].

The material content and extent of public tasks and public services depend on how the importance of social automatism and the extent of state intervention is viewed at a specific period, how the balance between the freedom of an individual and his responsibility for himself on the one hand, and solidary care of the human community for an individual and responsibility for him on the other hand operate. This is a matter of protection and execution of interests and values recognized by the decisive majority of citizens.

The basic characteristic of public administration comprises the knowledge of heterogeneous and often contradictory aims that it is obliged to defend. In the present period of principal social changes and new demands which must be secured despite limited financial and human resources, public policy is exposed much more to pressure to make responsible selection of priority aims and to redefine tasks and functions of public administration in accordance with the aims. A permanent professional and political dialogue is fundamental for the process of defining these tasks and functions, leading to new economic, legal and other solutions [5].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is an extensive analytical addendum of the research data utilized in the unpublished research entitled, "Efficient Public Service Delivery Model for Government Offices", at Cebu Technological University bearing on alternative decisions of the issues and challenges that confront leaders in the actual practice of management. As such, this up to-date research sought to untangle administrative decisions on the merit of: Issues and challenges cited in the unpublished research on precedence is the need to provide alternative-normative- prescriptive political decision(s) to effect leadership in administration; and Per provision of alternative-normative-prescriptive political decision(s) is a need to derive or untie discernment as part of leadership in administration, towards sustainability in any form or its opposite.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an arm-chair research which uses the alternative normative- prescriptive political approach *tête-à-tête* the published research entitled, "Efficient Public Service Delivery Model for Government Offices", at Cebu Technological University. Issues and challenges elicited from the

informants from the aforementioned were extracted and further analyzed arriving at possible alternative decision(s) for leaders to undertake to derive or untie inherent element of leadership in administration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The changing role of public administration. Some aspects of contemporary public administration would appear similar to someone working in government decades earlier, while other aspects have been undergoing fundamental transformation. While the changes are numerous, there are two that deserve highlighting.

The first, as alluded to previously, is the increasing emphasis on the role of the public administrator as a manager, and the need to apply the managerial tools familiar in the private sector. This drive toward generic management has almost certainly enhanced the efficiency and perhaps the effectiveness of the public sector, but its critics argue that it has also undervalued the peculiarly public nature of management in government, and the need to think about public sector values other than sheer economic efficiency [6].

A second major change in public administration has been the increasing linkage of state and society in the delivery of public services. Government is no longer an autonomous actor in implementing its policies but often depends upon the private sector and/or the third sector to accomplish its ends. This linkage of state and society may enhance the effectiveness and the legitimacy of government but it also presents government with problems of accountability and control. Blending state and society means that public administrators must become more adept at bargaining and governing through instruments such as contracts, rather than depending upon direct authority to achieve the ends of government.

Bureaucracy is now less centralized and less hierarchical than ever in its recent history. The degree of centralization of the bureaucracy and of government policy has varied by country, but in almost all there is less power now vested in the center than in the past. Just as working with civil society may require a different set of skills than governing alone, so too will working more closely with subnational governments, or with quasi autonomous organizations that are nominally connected to ministerial authority but which may be designed to act more on their own [7].

Orientation to securing public interests as the starting point.

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Assume that the functions and tasks of public administration can and must be derived from identified and recognized public interests since securing them is the reason of its very existence. The way in which general or public interests are accepted and satisfied is a cross-section of historical traditions, the concrete development stage of the respective society, the existing institutional framework of public administration as well as the enforced political emphasis.

The orientation of public administration towards securing public interests can be understood as its direction towards the solution of concrete problems of individual citizens and population groups and towards securing the functioning of the society as a whole. In this respect, public administration is interconnected with public policy, the aim of which is to identify, express and recognize public interests and to choose adequate means of satisfying them. Of course, the process of identifying, recognizing and satisfying public interests is always influenced by politically and ideologically affected interpretation. Identified and recognized public interests can become a good basis for differentiating the functions of public administration. In this direction, significant changes took place after 1989 especially in connection with the economic reform, political democratization and with the protection of basic human rights and freedoms [8].

Functions of public administration.

Public administration and the whole public sector are going through a radical change of their position in relation to economy while the elimination of ineffective and bureaucratically burdensome methods of direct interventions in the economic sphere from the totalitarian era does not mean any liquidation of the economic regulatory function of the State and the related tasks of public administration.

The principal changes result from the changing internal and external conditions of the development and functioning of economy, primarily from the needs to complete the market transformation of economy and from the international process of globalization of economic relations. The consequence of this is the need to increase the potential and effectiveness of the State and public administration in respect of the implementation, promotion of a rational development of economic proportions through macro-regulation, control of the privatization process of state-owned enterprises and public services, securing free competition and transparency in its implementation, securing an effective exercise of ownership rights of the State

and other public entities, support of the private sector, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises, the development of effective cooperative relations between the public and private sectors, drafting and implementing effective sectoral policies, especially securing internal and external security, regional policy, transport policy, information and communication policy, environmental policy, education policy, social policy, employment policy and health care policy [9].

A well-functioning public administration and public sector provide conditions for the prosperity of private enterprise by creating an optimum and rational infrastructure by means of modernizing communication networks, systems of information services for citizens and businesses, through providing professional assistance to territorial self-government authorities, through support to investments in public interest etc.

It requires an increased quality and capacity of public administration in the sphere of regulation and control of the compliance with conditions and rules of the market environment, particularly the conditions of free competition and the elimination of monopolies, securing the quality, technological level, products free from health damaging defects and consumer protection. An important role of public administration lies in restricting "grey" economy, in securing proper tax collection, in discerning and preventing economic crime. In connection with the discharge of these and other tasks, public administration is in charge of public funds management (collected from tax-payers in the form of taxes, charges and other public dues under the law and simultaneously used in their general interest), and the state-owned movable and immovable property which, after all, should also serve all citizens. The financial area is remembered in the Constitution at least in the provisions on the state budget, the final state account and on an audit carried out by the Supreme Audit Office; the regulation of the "details" - which can be, however, of far-reaching importance - is implied in ordinary laws [10].

The general legislation on the management of national property from the period before 1990, which is a residue of the previous regime, is still in force, leaving the management of state-owned property practically in the hands of the Executive. Neither any law has been adopted in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter to stipulate which property necessary for securing the needs of the whole society, for the development of the national economy and for public interest may be owned by the State, a municipality or certain legal entities, nor any legal regulation of the management of state property has been passed which would, among other things, regulate the relationships

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between the legislative and the executive power in this respect so that every significant case of the disposal of state-owned property could be in accordance with the law [11].

Thus a modern, rationally and effectively functioning public administration is a substantial and irreplaceable prerequisite for the economic growth.

Another significant function of public administration is to secure and strengthen democratic institutions and mechanisms. Two main directions of the development of political democracy can be mentioned here: a) towards the strengthening of institutions and mechanisms of representative democracy, and also b) towards the development of institutions and mechanisms of participative democracy, i.e. direct participation of citizens and their organizations in the management and administration of the State [12].

The concept of administration as a tool of power still survives in a general understanding surviving from the authoritarian regime, which has maintained, on the one hand, the negative attitude of the population to public administration and, on the other hand, distorted ideas and stereotypes in the behavior and actions of a number of politicians and officials. Now it is primarily a matter of exercising a

citizen's right to participate, including the expression of their views in a referendum, and other forms provided for by the legislation, the right to information (which some of our politicians find so difficult to get along in the ongoing legislative approval of the Information Bill) and to democratic control [13].

The basic issue is how the public administration fulfills its role, how and how effectively it fulfills its tasks and functions and how it is evaluated by citizens in this respect. However, a prerequisite for the targeted action of public administration is that it should know its role and its tasks and that it should be motivated sufficiently to fulfill them, and that citizens should be made familiar with them in an understandable form [14].

CONCLUSION

The official actions of public administrators are based on public trust carrying legal accountability. Public office is a public trust. Public officers employees should at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency; act with patriotism and justice, and live modest lives Section 1 of Article XI of the New Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

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