

POLITICS OF DECISIONS TOWARDS DISCERNMENT

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Abstract

This research is a rational-normative analysis about political decisions towards discernment. Politics as it encompasses all levels of the individual's social life includes decisions, more so critical in governance and administration because of the nature and scope of power by which to consequentially affect its (the decision's) end. Conclusively, the researcher reckons political actors, most especially for those in public service, discernment and the wise use of power about the after-effects of decisions per se.

Keywords: Politics, Public Service, Rational-Normative Analysis, Decisions, Discernment

Introduction

It is of no doubt that leadership accompanies with it decisions which is subject to careful deliberation and preponderance of the ones in the position. This, according to Theodore Roosevelt, “In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing (Brainy Quote, 2001-2016).” Thus, leadership is in itself critical thinking of common sense.

It is in this light that the researcher looks into the realities and challenges of public administration that serve as scenarios in leadership and present alternative decisions on normative prescription from the perspective of a political analyst to address the problems that confront leadership.

This research should not be construed to apply alternative decisions to be “universal” in all respects of management but may be applied and reapplied based on the context of organizational behavior in each respective workplace.

Statement of the Problem

This paper is an extensive analytical addendum of the research data utilized in the unpublished research entitled, “Cebuano Realities in

Philippine Public Administration towards an Emergent Theory”, which passed on defense last December 14, 2012 at the Cebu Technological University as a thesis requirement towards a Masters degree in Public Administration, 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:

2.1 As per issues and challenges cited in the unpublished research on precedence is the need to provide alternative-normative- prescriptive political decision(s) to effect leadership in administration; and

2.2 As per provision of alternative-normative-prescriptive political decision(s) is a need to derive or untie discernment as part of leadership in administration, a component thought for power consideration towards sustainability in any form or the opposite of it.

Research Methodology

This study is an arm-chair research which uses the alternative-normative- prescriptive political approach vis-a-vis the published research entitled, “Cebuano Realities in Philippine Public Administration towards an Emergent Theory”, which passed on defense last December 14, 2012 at the Cebu Technological University as a thesis requirement towards a Master’s degree in Public Administration.

Issues and challenges elicited from the informants from the aforementioned thesis as tabulated were extracted and further analyzed arriving at possible alternative decision(s) for leaders to undertake to derive or untie discernment as an inherent element of leadership in administration.

Results and Discussion

Case #1: The Human Resource Practitioner

Globalisation and the advent of new technology have tremendously changed the role of the HR practitioner in both the public and private sectors. Traditionally, in the public sector, the role of HR practitioner was reactive and focused on operational matters and maintenance, such as salary and leave processing. With changes in technology, the HR practitioner is no longer considered to be an agent for the sole purpose of hiring and firing employees in the public sector (Radebe, 2008-10).

Radebe (2008-10) further recommended “that the role of the HR practitioner in public sector be strategic and not limited to the nuances of ad hoc assignments. This assertion stems from the research findings that the HR practitioner has a major role to play in effecting change, and therefore must be regarded as a strategic role player. The author (Radebe, 2009-10), thus, concluded that the role of HR practitioners is critical and the public sector cannot meet its organisational goals should this role be undermined.”

According to the Human Resource Practitioner:

Table 1. Issues/Challenges vis-à-vis the Human Resource Practitioner

| CAREER POSITION | TYOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|--|----------------|----------------------------|---|
| Informant A: The Human Resource Practitioner | Strong | less prone to exploitation | “once you are weak, you will be oppressed, but if you are strong, people will not react...” |
| | Weak | prone to exploitation | |

The Human Resource Practitioner observed that in an organization, if one has a strong personality would mean that the employee is less prone to exploitation and if one is weak, thus, the employee is prone to exploitation.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

As a Human Resource Practitioner, you may decide to utilize those stronger personalities in the workforce but with coherent limitation according to the personality of the employees. Make it sure that those weak personalities remain stable as they are in dealing with those stronger personalities.

Case #2: The Educator Administrator

Education administrators organise and manage the administration, support systems and activities that enable the effective running of an educational institution. The majority are based in higher or further education (HE or FE), with opportunities also available in schools and private colleges (AGCAS editors, 2014).

Administrators work in areas such as admissions, quality assurance, data management and examinations or in a specialist department such as finance, careers or human resources. All of these can be either centrally based or within faculties, departments or other smaller units (AGCAS editors. 2014).

There are a huge number of possible job titles within education administration and job descriptions are equally diverse (AGCAS editors, 2014).

According to the Educator Administrator:

Table 2. Issues/Challenges vis-à-vis the Educator Administrator

| CAREER POSITION | TYOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Informant B. The Educator Administrator | Connection | easy hiring/promotion | ”...it is not the ranking that will matter, it’s the people who back you up (the person whom one knows), the mayor and the superintendent.” |
| | No-Connection | slow/no hiring/promotion | |

The Educator Administrator observed that in an organization, if you have the connection within the workplace, one is easily hired or promoted. On the other hand, if you don't have the connection, there is a slow, that easily hired or difficult to be promoted.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

As an Educator Administrator, you may appeal to the mayor or the school superintendent to endorse applicants that are qualified based on “merit and fitness” or “job qualifications” but this has to be done through the good “art” of “diplomacy”.

Case #3: The Prison Administrator

Prison administrators oversee the daily operations of correctional facilities. They also might be called prison wardens, jail administrators, executive directors or facility managers. Prison administrators typically require a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or a related field (Study. com., 2003-2015).

Prison administrators write and implement operational procedures for all areas of their facilities to ensure the safety of workers and inmates. This includes personnel policies, as well as inmate, staff and visitor interaction guidelines. They also make sure their facilities are in compliance with state and federal regulations (Study. com., 2003-2015).

Administrators must keep accurate records detailing general inmate population demographics and the personal histories of individual prisoners. They also must maintain financial records, including budgets, inventory and payroll documents, accounts receivable and accounts payable. Disciplinary incidents and injuries also must be reported (Study. com., 2003-2015).

According to the Prison Administrator:

| CAREER POSITION | TYPOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|--|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Informant C. The Prison Administrator | Juniors | obey/follow the seniors | “in the lower rank, whatever the authority tells you to do, you are bound to follow before you complain, common code, wait until you become...” |
| | Seniors | take the control over the juniors | |

The Prison Administrator observed that the “juniors” has to obey and follow the “seniors” while the seniors take control over the juniors. This means that seniors have more decisions than the new ones.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

The Prison Administrator may remind comrades to follow seniors, however, limited to the code of conduct of “prison” practice. Seniors may be hard to deal but the prison administrator has to take responsibility over them.

Case #4: The Prominent Politician

A politician, political leader, or political figure (from Classical Greek πόλις, "polis") is a person who is involved in influencing public policy and decision making. This includes people who hold decision-making positions in government, and people who seek those positions, whether by means of election, inheritance, coup d'état, appointment, conquest, or other means. They create and or propose laws that further the general interest of the public. Politics is not limited to governance through public office. Political offices may also be held in corporations. In civil uprisings, politicians may be called freedom fighters. In media campaigns, politicians are often referred to as activists (Wikipedia. com., 2015).

According to the Prominent Politician:

| NON-CAREER POSITION | TYPOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|--|----------|----------------------------|--|
| Informant D. The Prominent Politician | Slow | transaction in the public | “it took them two hours to process the document or transaction, the time is wasted... unlike the private, it is fast.” |
| | Fast | transaction in the private | |

The Prominent Politician noticed that processing of transactions in government offices are slower compared to private entities.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

The Prominent Politician may direct and redirect the offices under his/her jurisdiction to follow R.A. 9485, The Anti-Red Tape Act and R.A. 6713, The Ethical Standards and other bases of policy implementation. This requires monitoring among other mechanisms used in public service.

Case #5: The Decisive Leader

Decisive leaders get input from employees but make decisions based on their knowledge and authority (Mayhew, 2015).

Adding value to your organization in a leadership role largely depends on your ability to make decisions without waffling or wavering. Supervisors and managers gain respect from their direct reports by confidently asserting their authority without showing signs of dictatorship. Your leadership skills may not be enough, however. Hone your functional expertise and use communication and sound business principles to illustrate your ability to lead teams. Engage your direct reports so that they trust your

ability to make decisions in the best interest of your employees as well as the department and overall organization (Mayhew, 2015).

According to the Decisive Leader:

| NON-CAREER POSITION | TYPOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|--|
| Informant E. The Decisive Leader | Power-Play | public administration | “people want to gain especially for SIPSIP... (Socially Insecure Persons Seeking for Immediate Promotion), it is so difficult when you do not follow your boss; this is common in the private at the same time in the public...” |
| | Power-Play | private administration | |

The Decisive Leader observed that power-play has been part of any administration of both private and public offices.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

Power-play in any organization requires the leader to consider it with good conviction in balancing acts of politics of which to benefit all workers in the organization. This is the most difficult to handle yet the most way of gauging the ability of the leader to handle pressure that may be encountered in the organization.

The Common Thinker

An intellectual is “one who tries to use his or her intellect to work, study, reflect, speculate on, or ask and answer questions with regard to a variety of different ideas (Wikipedia. com, 2013).”

According to the Common Thinker:

| NON-CAREER POSITION | TYPOLOGY | | MAJOR STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Informant F: The Common Thinker | Regular/Permanent | issues are easily addressed | “it is different when you are regular in the government, for the casual and service-contractual—for the contractual, you have less benefits or no benefits at all, you are less prioritized compared to regular employees, if there are problems raised for contractual, it is not easily addressed.” |
| | Contractual/Non-Permanent | less/no benefits | |

The Common Thinker distinguished between permanent and non-permanent employees, by which, issues are easily addressed for the permanent and benefits are less for contractual workers.

Alternative-Normative-Prescriptive Political Decision:

The Common Thinker may encourage the contractual or non-permanent employees to work efficiently based on personnel evaluation in order to be hired as permanent/regular. If plantilla is not available, there is a need to inform or re-orient employees the nature of employment according to the call or scope of work considering its realities and limitations.

Conclusion

Based on data results and discussion, it is concluded that leadership in administration requires decisions as an inherent element in management. Whether an individual likes it or not, leadership entails discernment of right or wrong action or calculation on prescription(s) of alternative decision that serves as an organizational forecast to further its (the organization) interest as a unified entity of policies and practices of whichever form or kind.

One person cannot be successful in leadership if he or she does not know how to bring into dynamics the decisions which require discernment. Alternative actions may be considered or reconsidered. It is still the discretion of the leader which is to be followed. In any way, the decision(s) of the leader is further gauged on the results of the action(s) undertaken by the management. Thus, it is suggested that:

1. A person should not accept a position if he or she does not know how to address problems in the organization on decision(s);
2. A leader should balance leadership between discretion of power and institutional policies;
3. A leader may take risks but needs balance between the interplay of internalities and externalities that may affect decisions in the organization;
4. A leader may consider that discernment is done on balance between the actual scenario and the decision which has to be made in order to arrive at an expected result; and
5. A leader has to instill in mind that he/she is measured not necessarily by his/her inputs but by his/her outputs.

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