CHANGES IN GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AFTER PANDEMIC

Aleksandra Kiriukhina [1], Tibor Farkas [2]

[1] PhD student, [2] associate professor
[1,2] Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences
E-mails: russy57@mail.ru [1] farkas.tibor@uni-mate.hu [2]

Abstract

Effective leadership is a term an understanding and underlying principles of which are a conceptually challenged and constantly evolving research topic. This article provides a brief listing of the leadership strategies used by European leaders in 2020-2021 and the tools for their implementation. The assessment the reputation consequences, which were undoubtedly influenced by the adoption of crisis decisions and the results. The author of the article will leave the question of which of the tools used in the fight against the pandemic will be implemented in the post-Covid governance agenda as a subject of reflection.

Introduction

Leadership and implementation tools of management strategies have been the subject of close attention of the scientific and political communities. In the light of the events of the global pandemic, the issues of qualified management and a reasonable response to emerging difficulties have become the subject of interest and assessment of individuals. However, in today's view, leadership is to a large extent part of a social process aimed at expressing and maintaining a certain collective identity in order to achieve common goals (Haslam, Reicher, and Platow, 2010). This concept vision of leadership is associated with management tools of communication, influence and persuasion. On the contrary, force and coercion are associated with a centralized control mechanism with a certain figure "at the top" (Haslam, Reicher, and Platow, 2010; Müller and Van Esch, 2020).

Changing patterns in the current management and leading strategies often affects not only the quality of the decisions made, but also entails reputational risks, expressed in the degree of social trust. This connection is especially noticeable in the light of the decisions made by the leaders of states in the fight against the ongoing pandemic. The decision-making in crises, according to Deloitte (2018), creates a so-called "Leadership's Corner" situation. On the one hand, quickly made decisions can be reckless, on the other hand, if measures to resolve the situation take a lot of preparatory time, society can reproach the authorities for being slow and losing time. Well-known that even a good reputation will not save from public censure in case of unsatisfactory measures. The COVID-19 crisis has made it clear that acute problems, characterized by unexpected, inconsistent, unpredictable events and uncertain consequences, are destroying our societies and challenging the public sector. Standard strategies for planning, protection and stability have proven ineffective in the face of a pandemic. A practically stalled economy and a vulnerable society are among the main challenges faced by the public

administration sector over the past 2 years. Worth to note that this crisis manifested itself in an extreme form. Prior to this, public administration faced various forms of financial crises, terrorist threats and direct attacks, refugee flows and much more. The decisions made in this case were mainly based on a standard set of management strategies, taking into account the current agenda. In the future, crises will appear before humanity in a form that is not yet possible to imagine.

Transformation of Leadership Strategies

The social and economic upheavals caused by global crises, like a pandemic, require a flexible and adaptive approach on the part of the management team. Activating a pre-prepared action plan, connecting the entire bureaucratic apparatus and observing his work from the position of an expert - all this was not enough. The ability to seize opportunities, create options for solving a problem, study entrepreneurial activity, create state innovations - such an approach required to overcome an exceptional crisis (Gray, 1989). From a crisis management perspective, this all-encompassing view of leadership strategies is essentially opposed to the mechanistic hierarchical formulations of leader-follower relationships evoked by the well-known and still widely practiced, but criticized, Decide-Announce-Defend (DAD) and "government deficits" models (Rickard, 2019).

Ensuring the execution of tasks by employees based on centralized top-down communication in modern crisis and risk management is gradually giving way to an involved partnership. This approach significantly improves the understanding of problems by all participants of the decision-making process, and increases the quality of knowledge and skills required for such decisions (Jetten et al., 2020). Preparedness and rapid response to emergencies place managers accountable for creating and implementing inclusive communication models. Such mechanisms will help overcome critical information gaps and better predict potential risks (Hyvärinen and Vos, 2015). Building a sense of shared identity and belonging, as well as creating an image of unity, is another challenge for a well-trained leader. For example, by explaining what risk an event poses for everyone, focus on the need to act together in the collective interest (Drury et al., 2019).

The joint coordination and distribution of tasks by areas of responsibility can undoubtedly become the basis for collective involvement, mutual support and cooperation. Following this logic, leadership will be able to timely address critical knowledge gaps, focus on the "most important". At the same time, "honest disagreements" and active discussion in an open arena will help to justify decisions and possible actions. This will help ensure that societal needs and priorities are identified, prepared to address them, plans are executed, and operations can be quickly changed as the situation changes or when it becomes clear that the results are playing out in unexpected or unwanted ways (Wardman and Mythen, 2016). There is no doubt that the Covid-19 crisis has changed the rules of the game of government. The urgent need to create robust yet flexible governance strategies, as well as the need to transform outdated public sector institutions, are perhaps the top priorities for policymakers today.

Key features of reliable Leadership Strategies

Solving acute problems on a global scale is not new in itself. What is new is that traditional strategies for dealing with acute crises are no longer effective. Revolutionary technologies, changes in the social, economic and political life of modern society have led to the fact that predicting the coming crisis and ways to overcome it is an impossible task. In a globalized society, information knows no boundaries, like human flows, and the necessary goods can be

obtained from almost anywhere in the world. Stuffing warehouses with emergency equipment, training staff in case of an emergency and waiting for a hitherto unknown and unexplored problem to hit the public sector - this will not help to cope with this problem.

Creating the conditions for the emergence of more creative and flexible civil society organizations that can more easily adapt to crisis conditions through partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Strategies based on the principle of collective responsibility and ownership will provide reliable support in the face of new crises. System reliability is a key property of leadership strategy that will provide an adequate and timely response to an unexpected crisis (Howlett et al., 2018). Crises can be caused by external or internal problems in relation to the system. The adaptability of processes in reliable systems creates a list of proactive actions that can solve the problem while maintaining a current agenda and priority value. The concept of stability is a concept that has arisen within the framework of the Theory of Automatic Control. However, it has recently been used in biology (Kitano, 2004), statistics (Huber, 1981), engineering (Carlson and Doyle, 2002). In sociology, the concept has also found application in the description of social systems (Anders and Janssen, 2013) and economic systems (Leeson and Subrik, 2006), as well as in the design of political structures (Capano and Wu, 2017).

The development of the concept has led to the fact that the stability of management has become inherent in political institutions and instruments, political and administrative processes. Thus, robust management strategies are the ability of one or more decision makers to maintain or implement a public agenda, function, or value in the face of the problem and stress caused by crises through flexible adaptation, flexible modification, and pragmatic redirection of management decisions.

This understanding of the reliability of the control strategy brings us closer to the concept of dynamic stability. The dynamic stability of management strategy is characterized by the fact that social and political actors abandon the idea of restoring past equilibrium, instead participating in an adaptive search for a new, emerging order (Simonovich and Arunkumar, 2016; Ansell and Trondal, 2018). Good governance depends on adaptation and can change political and administrative institutions, regulatory processes and policy instruments in accordance with new and emerging conditions. Consequently, while a stable system can withstand change, remain the same, or recover in the face of disturbances, a reliable system seeks to transform itself in order to achieve a purpose, function, or value. Below, several strategies that seem promising for more robust control solutions are considered.

Planning and preparedness

Planning broadly refers to the process of assessing the risks faced in different areas and areas of activity, and determining the appropriate actions and necessary resources. The best practice guidelines also suggest that planning processes must be inclusive and allow consultation and communication between multiple community sources to ensure that relevant components of the plan are representative, well integrated, and work effectively to help achieve the overall launch goal (Drury et al., 2019). For example, the UK has conducted complex crisis simulations "Winter Willow" and "Exercise Cygnus" to identify weaknesses in the health care system in the event of an infectious disease outbreak (Bryce et al., 2020). Based on the results of the simulations, protocols of action and recommendations for the material support of medical services were developed. However, statistics on morbidity and mortality in the United Kingdom during the pandemic showed that these preventive measures were not enough.

Informing about the chosen strategy

Communication is one of the most important components of an adequate response to crises. A communication challenge is best characterized by the phrase "strategy statement" (Campbell, 2020). It is important not only to have a plan, but also to publicly disclose "what the plan is" (Sellnow et al., 2019).

Actively informing the population about what lies ahead. Primarily in order to avoid an information vacuum that could otherwise create useless speculation and doubts about the future course of events, along with doubts about whether public leaders really know what they are doing (Leiss, 1996). Thus, the strategy statement can include a clear and clear goal that identifies the main objectives of overcoming the crisis and the causes (Sellnow et al., 2019). As an example, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has earned recognition for masterly setting out a solid national COVID-19 strategy in the early stages of the pandemic to take advantage of a "window of opportunity" to stop the spread of the virus before it starts. Keep. Examples of this are statements such as "We are going hard, we are going early" and that New Zealand "does not accept any deaths" (McGuire et al., 2020; Wilson, 2020). In her public speeches, the Prime Minister emphasized the overall strategy, and also explained how the main services will work and what measures (contact tracing and testing) will work after the isolation is in place in the country (Wilson, 2020).

Identifying and supporting people's needs

Risk and crisis management does not happen in a "flat" social space (Wardman, 2008; Wardman, 2014). The community is made up of people with different cultural, social and economic differences. Some socially vulnerable groups require special treatment (Reynolds, 2007; Crouse Quinn, 2008). It is important that the social groups that are most vulnerable so as not to exacerbate inequalities in health and social divisions (Blumenshine et al., 2008) receive information. Feedback from such vulnerable groups is also important to understand how their requirements may differ from regulatory policy models and how best to comply with them (Goulden et al,. 2018). Political leaders in some countries have recognized that COVID-19 affects different people in different ways and, accordingly, have sought to implement measures that generally pay attention to all those affected by both the pandemic and specific responses. Addressing a segment of the population that is usually neglected during crises, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, in particular, told children that "it's okay to be afraid" and miss hugging friends (McGuire et al,. 2020).

Transparency

The concept of transparency usually refers to the practice of making information available to the public in terms of data, rules, operations, procedures, inputs and outputs (Hood, 2007). However, public disclosure of information requires a detailed analysis of the published data. Based on considerations, what information is most relevant, to whom and in what form should be provided, when and for what purposes (Löfstedt and Wardman, 2016). This raises the dilemma of choosing between timeliness and accuracy or availability (Garbett et al., 2011; Hood, 2007). Providing information immediately in "real time" may require trade-offs in completeness and confidence in the information that is assumed to be true (Garbett et al., 2014). Sometimes, delaying public disclosure is beneficial. During such a delay, the information can be verified for the validity and reliability of the sources. Information may also be released immediately upon understanding that later updates may be required (Lancaster, Rhodes, and Rosengarten, 2020).

The main priority of the information policy of the Singapore government in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis has become "radical transparency." The government provided publicly available data on outbreaks regarding disease clusters and demographics of those who tested positive for the virus, including where they traveled and sought medical attention and when they were discharged. Describing the reason for choosing this strategy, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Sui Kit explained, "First of all, we need to provide information as clearly as possible. Because when people trust the accuracy of the information we publish, there is no need to panic. Therefore, transparency is important in this regard and building a high level of trust from our people" (Tham, 2020; p.1.).

Ratings changes of some European leaders

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, the ratings of European politicians are growing. Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron, Giuseppe Conte, Sebastian Kurz are on the wave of popularity. Even Boris Johnson, who has received a barrage of criticism for his slow response to the outbreak, holds a strong position. Hereafter is the short overview of leaders action during the pandemic.

Angela Merkel's political career was gradually fading away. In recent years, Western media periodically published materials about a number of the Chancellor's failures. In 2017, the CDU / CSU party alliance, led by Merkel, received 33% in the federal elections - this is its worst result since 1949, which was the first wake-up call for the chancellor. In 2018, she stepped down as party leader, stating that she would not run again for the post of German chancellor in 2021. In the CDU, meanwhile, there was already a question about a successor to Merkel, and the German leader herself has recently fought to preserve her legacy through a competent transition of power.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has once again lifted Merkel to the top of the political Olympus. In March, the New Zealand Herald published an article with the headline "Germany's Leader Shines in Crisis, Even When Its Grip Weakens." In April, the Argentinean edition Clarin released material praising the work of the chancellor. Deutsche Welle publishes an article entitled "Coronavirus and Germany. Why does the whole world look at Angela Merkel ", and Spiegel -" From chancellor on call to world leader: it looks like Angela Merkel was created for serious crises, and not for everyday political life. " The growing popularity of the Chancellor is also demonstrated by polls. Angela Merkel's approval rating has risen 11% since March to 79%, according to a Forschungsgruppe Wahlen poll. Germany's successes are inextricably linked with the name of its leader. Berlin has demonstrated impressive crisis management in a pandemic. The country began working on the development of tests back in January, when the coronavirus, according to official figures, did not even spread outside China. Germany now conducts about 50,000 coronavirus tests every day.

French President Emmanuel Macron also strengthened his position. Polls indicate the highest level of support for him in the last two years. Research by Le Journal du Dimanche and Ifop found that the president's approval rating jumped after his speech to the nation, with Macron now supporting 51% (14% more than in February). The head of state made an appeal to the nation on April 13 and announced the extension of the self-isolation regime until May 11. The French leader is always eloquent, public speaking can rightfully be called his trump card. However, two years ago this did not help him. At the end of 2018, a wave of yellow vest protests swept across France, demonstrators protesting against rising gasoline prices. Then his approval rating reached a record low of 25%. Macron had an image of the "president of the rich," the French urged him to "come down to earth," and his chances of re-election in 2022 were

questioned. Just months before the pandemic, the French leader faced a new wave of resistance, this time over pension reform. In the face of a pandemic, Macron recovered. Due to the coronavirus, many governments have received expanded powers in connection with the introduction of an emergency regime. International media reported that some political leaders may take advantage of the situation to pass unpopular bills.

Despite having one of the highest death rates in the world in Italy, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was also able to boost his popularity. His approval rating, according to research for La Repubblica, skyrocketed to 71% - the highest level since he took office in 2018. More than 60% of the country's citizens support his work during the crisis, according to an Ipsos poll. As noted by La Stampa political columnist Fabio Martini, Giuseppe Conte "has demonstrated unusual mediation skills" in the face of the pandemic. The Italian government has met the coronavirus in an unstable state - a ruling coalition was formed in September between two bitter opponents: the Five Star Movement and the Democratic Party. In addition, Conte faced resistance from the local authorities in Lombardy, the region hardest hit by the coronavirus. However, the prime minister managed to impose severe restrictions throughout the country.

CONCLUSION

Changing the standard set of leadership strategies is a dynamic process, constantly changing. The pandemic in this case acted as a catalyst to accelerate this process many times over. While many well-known management practices have proven effective in combating coronavirus infection, many have failed miserably. The general mood in the general government sector is also shifting from centralized government to decentralized power. This means that the responsibility for the decisions made falls not only on the shoulders of the immediate leaders, but also on the society itself. Such responsibility fosters civil society, promotes the development of communication between the authorities and society, creates conditions for cooperation of various public organizations. The article discusses just a few examples of the successful application of control strategies that are robust and adaptable enough to meet future challenges. The growth of public approval in connection with the ongoing pandemic policies of some European leaders indicates that the strategies chosen can be used in the formation of the management agenda in the future.

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