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Transformational leadership in the public sector. A pilot study using MLQ to evaluate leadership style in Cluj county local authorities

Cristina MORA¹, Tudor ȚICLĂU²

Abstract

Leadership has been a major topic of research for social scientist, in the last century. The number of approaches in studying this phenomenon is truly outstanding. However no integrative theory to include all essential elements has been developed yet. In the last three decades, especially after the NPM movement, leadership has attracted substantial attention as an essential factor for organizational performance in the public sector. The present study builds on this through a pilot study aimed at evaluating leadership behavior using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X) (Bass, Avolio, 1995). The main purpose was to examine types of leadership behavior present in local public administration, in both decentralized and deconcentrated institutions by using a twin perspective: auto evaluation and peer evaluation. We wanted to find out whether transformational leadership is present in public organizations and if there are any significant differences based on two variables: type of institution and evaluator (self-evaluation vs. peer evaluation). The article is structured in three main parts. The first one discusses the concept of leadership in general, the ambiguity of the term, and the problems with in empirically studying this phenomenon. In the second part we analyze the Transformational Leadership theory proposed by Bass (1985) and then argue for the use of transformational leadership in the public sector. Lastly we propose a model for evaluating leadership in the public sector using MLQ. Preliminary data from a pilot study show above average transformational behaviors but also possible influence of the type of organization (decentralized vs. deconcentrated) on leadership behavior.

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The concept of leadership

Leadership is still one of the most ambiguous concepts in social sciences although at the same time it has been endlessly studied in the last 100 hundred years from numerous perspectives. Warren Bennis (1959: 259) states that “of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination. And, ironically, probably more has been written and less known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioral sciences”. Others have also pointed out the difficulty of finding common ground on leadership understanding. Burns (1978) similarly remarked that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” while Stogdill (1974), after a comprehensive review of literature on this subject concluded that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. Although more than 700 years old³, leadership still has an element of unknown, as researchers continuously try to find an integrative theory for it. Some of the difficulties may come from the fact that the actual word was directly adopted in scientific language from common vocabulary without being precisely redefined (Yukl, 2010). Additional confusion is caused by the use of other imprecise concepts like power, authority, management, control, influence, supervision (Yukl, 2010: 20). But mostly it comes from the actual nature of leadership, which works like an “invisible” force inside organizations – some authors go so far as to challenge the relevance of leadership as a scientific construct, because of its different meanings for individuals (Miner, 1975; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). Still, leadership remains of high interest for social scientist because of its relation with organizational performance. “What is a successful leader? How does a successful leader behave? How does leadership lead to organizational performance?” are all questions usually found in studies on leadership.

³ Van Seters and Field (1990) note that the term leader was used as early as the 1300s according to the Oxford English Dictionary(1933), information supported also by Rost (1991, 1993) who states that most etymological dictionaries mention the verb “to lead” as coming from the Old English word *leden* or *loedan*, which meant “to make go,” “to guide,” or “to show the way,” and the Latin word *ducere*, which meant “to draw, drag, pull; to lead, guide, conduct.” From all accounts, the words lead, leader, and leading have been used in several European languages with Anglo-Saxon and Latin roots from 1300 to the present. France seems to be the exception; there, even in the late twentieth century, the word leader does not translate well (p.38). For more on this issue see Blondel, 1987. According to Rost (ibid.) the Latin word *ducere* was used in the Bible and other Christian books as early as 800.

Defining leadership is a formidable task. Literature reviews on this subject turn out numbers between 200 (Stogdill, 1975) and 350 definitions (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Although this vast array of definitions can be somehow intimidating for researchers, concept definition seeming as a never-ending endeavor, new studies continue in their search for an integrative theory of leadership. Because of this impressive number, we will try to offer a general definition of leadership that includes all critical elements necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the concept. Thus, in our opinion *leadership refers to a non-routine process of intentional influence, from an individual (the leader) towards a group of individuals, aimed at accomplishing certain predefined objectives relevant to both the group and the leader.*

The definition is built upon a number of vital elements: (1) *Leadership is a non-routinely process of intentional influence* – it's different than doing everyday tasks, which is more specific to management (for more on this see Bennis 1989; Katz and Kahn, 1978) and involves more than just supervising, coordinating, controlling, planning and other managerial specific activities. Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001: 8) define non-routine events as any situation that constitutes a potential or actual hindrance to organizational goal progress. Thus, organizational leadership can be construed as large - and small - scale social problem solving, where leaders are constructing the nature of organizational problems, developing and evaluating potential solutions, and planning, implementing, and monitoring selected solutions within complex social domains (Fleishman et al., 1991; Zaccaro et al., 1995); (2) *Leadership revolves around achieving certain (organizational) goals* – leaders exert their influence in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives but also to bring a sense of purpose to the groups' activity. Organizational purpose is operationalized as a direction for collective action. Leadership processes are directed at defining, establishing, identifying, or translating this direction for their followers and facilitating or enabling the organizational processes that should result in the achievement of this purpose (Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001: 7); (3) *Leadership is a group process* – although most theories of leadership are leader-centered, a leader without a group of followers is just another "lone nut". Characteristics of the group members (attitude, competence, structure – see. Hersey and Blanchard, 1977) can have significant influence on leadership effectiveness; (4) *Leadership is about change* – change is one of the main variables that differentiate between leaders and managers. The fundamental difference between the two lies in their respective functions for organizations and for society. The function of leadership is to create change while the function of management is to create stability (Barker, 1994). Kotter (1990) observes that managers seek to produce predictability and order; leaders seek to produce organizational change. As the ones responsible for creating a vision of the organization leaders have to constantly promote change in order to keep the organization adapted to its surrounding environment, without losing focus on the mission and core values; (5)

Leadership is inspirational – it is based on a process of influence that has both emotional elements as well as cognitive reasoning. Leaders inspire followers to willingly sacrifice their selfish interests for a higher cause (Yukl, 2010) (exp. soldiers in a war). At the same time, because of the complex nature of their activities (organizational sense making, problem solving, conflict mitigation, direction setting, interpreting and modeling the organizational environment) leaders rely heavily on reason and cognitive processes in order to “influence” the followers. “Executive leaders “add value” to their organizations in large part by giving a sense of understanding and purpose to the overall activities of the organization. In excellent organizations, there almost always is a feeling that the “boss” knows what he is doing, that he has shared this information downward, that it makes sense, and that it is going to work” (Jacobs and Jaques, 1991: 434).

Transformational leadership

We mentioned earlier that one of the essential elements of leadership is change. Leaders are agents of change, be they at organizational level or at societal level. They represent the catalysts of social movements. They can fulfill this role by inspiring those around them, setting an example and creating a vision of the future that is both attractive and credible. The transformational leadership theory starts from these premises. The term was first used by Downton (1973) in order to distinguish it from transactional leadership but it only caught attention after Burns’s (1978) work on political leadership. Like Downton, Burns presented the new paradigm of transformational leadership in contrast with the transactional leadership. The transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of group, organization, or society; to consider their long-term need for self-development rather than their need of the moment; and to become more aware of what is really important (Bass, 2008: 50); in comparison, the transactional leader approaches followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another; transactional leaders identify what the followers want from their work and try to offer that in exchange for accomplishing organizational objectives; in other words, transactional leaders rely on followers self-interest for motivation. As long as the followers do their job, the rewards or promises of rewards are fulfilled by the leader (Bass 1985a; Bass 1985b).

Burns’s conceptualization of leadership as either transactional or transformational was modified by Bass (1985a, 1985b) who argued that transformational leadership augmented the effects of transactional leadership on the efforts, satisfaction and effectiveness of followers (Bass, 2008: 51). “Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically

achieve higher performances. They also tend to have more committed and satisfied followers as they empower followers and pay attention to their individual needs and personal development, helping followers to develop their own leadership potential.” (Bass and Riggio, 2006: 4). The two models are seen as complementing each other (Bass and Riggio, 2006: 4): “Transformational leadership is in some ways an expansion of transactional leadership. Transactional leadership emphasizes the transaction or exchange that takes place among leaders, colleagues, and followers. This exchange is based on the leader discussing with others what is required and specifying the conditions and rewards these others will receive if they fulfill those requirements. Transformational leadership, however, raises leadership to the next level. Transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers’ leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support”. Also according to Bass (1990: 21) transformational leadership “occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group”. To summarize, transformational leadership is a form of leadership that seeks to create commitment from followers by targeting their higher needs (e.g Maslow’s self-actualization need) and making them reach their full potential in any social structure. Transformational leaders can be seen as agents of change because of their commitment for continuous self-development of each member of the group in order to reach their ideals. Because of this commitment is usually higher than in other group-leader relations and followers perform beyond expectations.

Characteristics of Transformational Leadership

In 1985 Bass devised the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as an instrument intended to assess both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. MLQ was tested in numerous organizational environments involving military, educational, or commercial organizations (for more on this see Gellis, 2001). Since then MLQ has emerged as the primary means of quantitatively assessing transformational leadership (Bryant, 2003) Research (Bass, 1985b; Avolio, Bass and Jung, 1999) on the transformational leadership model⁴ suggest that transformational leadership can be conceptually organized along four cor-

⁴ Rafferty and Griffin (2004) propose a 5 dimension model of transformational leadership that was also determined empirically. Other similar research on the concept have been done by Zaleznick (1977) – clinical studies, Tichy and Devanna (1986) – interviews with 12 executive leaders, Bennis and Nanus (1985, 1988) –interviewed 90 public and private CEO’s. Complexity leadership, concept that derives from transformational leadership studied by Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001)



Fig. 1 - The four elements of Transformational Leadership

- *Idealized influence* designates leaders seen as role-models by followers. They are admired, respected and trusted. They inspire power and pride in their followers, by going beyond their own individual interests and focusing on the interests of the group and of its members (Bass and Avolio, 1999). Seeing them as role-models, followers want to emulate them. “There are two aspects to idealized influence: the leader’s behaviors and the elements that are attributed to the leader by followers. In addition, leaders who have a great deal of idealized influence are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary. They can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct” (Bass and Riggio, 2006: 6).
- *Inspirational Motivation* refers to the capacity of the leader to articulate in simple ways the goals and objectives of the group (organization). It also refers to the capacity to create a mutual understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Transformational leaders provide visions of what is possible and how to attain it. They enhance meaning and promote positive expectations about what needs to be done (Bass, 1988). Transformational leaders are able to create clear and appealing views of the future and give meaning to the work that is being done in present. Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech and US President John F. Kennedy’s vision of putting a man on the moon by 1970 stand out as exceptional examples of this characteristic (Yukl, 1989: 221). Through these sorts of means, transformational leaders encourage their followers to imagine and contribute to the development of attractive, alternative futures (Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson, 2003: 208).
- *Intellectual Stimulation* is linked to creativity and innovation. Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders help followers view problems in new ways. They encourage followers to question their own beliefs, assumptions, and values, and, when appropriate, those of the leader, which may be outdated or inappropriate for solving current problems (Bass and Avolio, 1999). This is an important part of followers learning to tackle and solve problems on their own by being creative and innovative. Following new ideas and new paths of solving problems is encouraged by transformational leaders through dismantling any sanctions or fear of ridicule for

new and controversial ideas (Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2003). Followers are consequently empowered to follow new paths of thought. Transformational leaders can discern, comprehend, conceptualize, and articulate to their followers the opportunities and threats facing their organization, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and comparative advantages. It is through intellectual stimulation (of the followers) that the status quo is questioned and that new, creative methods of accomplishing the organization's mission are explored (Bass, 1985a).

- *Individualized Consideration* means the leader is responding to each individual's specific needs in order to include everybody in the "transformation" process (Simic, 1998). Followers are developed to successively higher levels of potential. The transformational leader treats each member of the group as a unique individual with specific needs, abilities and knowledge. Task assignment and reward distribution is done on an individual basis. An important element is the capacity of the leader to build an organizational culture that supports individual development and growth. Individual consideration can be expressed through many forms, from specific rewards or praises to individuals, career counseling, mentoring and coaching or activities with the aim of individual professional development. Bass and Riggio (2006: 7) describe this as being "practiced when new learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate; individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized and the leader's behavior demonstrates acceptance of individual differences (e.g., some employees receive more encouragement, some more autonomy, others firmer standards, and still others more task structure)". Clearly then, besides having an overarching view of the organization and its trajectory, the transformational leader must also comprehend the things that motivate followers individually (Simic, 1998: 52).

Regarding the effects of transformational leadership on organizational outcomes extensive surveys done based on *The Full Range Leadership Model* (Avolio, Bass, 1991, Avolio, 1999) using MLQ5X showed that transformational leadership was more effective than transactional leadership which was in turn more effective than non-leadership. Regarding the relation with organizational performance, transformational leadership has been linked to *increased levels of performance* (as defined by Wang, Courtright, Colbert, 2011) – *task performance* – work behaviors that are stipulated by a formal job description (Liao and Chuang, 2007; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich, 2001), *contextual performance* – voluntarily motivated work behaviors that go beyond prescribed job roles but contribute to the psychological and social contexts around the job. This is accomplished by transformational leaders serving as role models who are willing to sacrifice their own interests for the collective good and by bolstering a sense of group

belongingness and cohesion (Podsakoff et al., 1990) and *creative performance* – finding new ways of problem solving and challenging the status quo); followers are encouraged to be problem solvers, use their creativity, experiment, and learn failures without the fear of sanction (e.g. Jung, 2001; Wang, Courtright and Colbert, 2011). A series of survey researches (Lowe, Kroeck and Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Judge and Piccolo, 2004) found that transformational leadership was significantly related to some measure of leadership effectiveness (the correlation was stronger in subordinate ratings and self-ratings (Yukl, 2010).

Transformational leadership in the public sector

We've seen that transformational leadership has proven to be a desired model of leadership based on research regarding the impact on organizational outcomes, follower's commitment, and different types of performance. But how does it perform in the public sector? First of all we have to bear in mind that there are significant dissimilarities between public and private organizations (Dahl and Lindbloom, 1953; Downs 1967; Lindblom, 1977; Wamsley and Zald, 1973; Rainey, 1989). Major differences relate to values, structure, legal framework, interest representation, purpose, culture and impact of decisions (Țiclău, Mora, Țigănaș and Bacali, 2010). Add to this the specific environment of public administration which is traditionally regarded as a system characterized by inertia, rigidity, and immovability (Hîntea, 2008: 51) and the fact that, modern public administration faces tremendous politic, economic, technologic, and social challenges (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000). The issue of performance⁵ also needs considering, performance measurement being more difficult to do in the public sector, in large part because public organizations usually pursue multiple goals simultaneously; many of whose outcomes are noneconomic (Van Slyke and Alexander, 2006). Lastly, authority is more diffuse, fragmented and outside pressures stronger, thus decisions are far more complex and cumbersome, leaving leaders in a continuous battle to find support of other *stakeholders* for their policies (Țigănaș, Țiclău, Mora and Bacali, 2011). A side effect of lack of authority is a difference in the leader-follower relationship - public sector leaders often lack the range and flexibility of rewards and the discretion and authority with which to incentivize alignment and sanction divergence among subordinates, including the freedom to hire and fire (Van Slyke and Alexander, 2006: 368). All this is an argument for the increased pressures on public sector leaders compared to their private counterparts. Some authors claim that transformational leaders are expected to be both less common and less effective in public sector organizations than private sector

⁵ One useful instrument for evaluation in general is PAEM - Public Administration Evaluation Model. "It generates structured programs and projects out of mere unstructured activities of public institutions; it helps building an indicator system that has a double function: secures the future existence of a monitoring system and provides a functional evaluation toolkit." (Antonie, 2008, p. 14).

organizations because the former are thought to rely more on bureaucratic control mechanisms (Wright and Pandey, 2009: 75; similar claims in Bass and Riggio 2006; Howell 1997). However a series of meta-analytical studies have proven that transformational leadership behavior is at least as common and effective in public organizations (Dumdum, Lowe, Avolio 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, Sivasubramaniam, 1996) as it is in private ones. One possible explanation is that public organizations are generally seen by theorists as more bureaucratic than they actually are. Recent studies suggest that, on average, government organizations exhibit only moderate levels of bureaucratic control mechanisms such as centralization, formalization, and routinization (Wright and Pandey, 2009; Boyne 2002; Wright 2004). Besides the specific characteristics of public sector there is the issue of context, by this referring to two specific elements: the general context of PA reform and the specific context of public administration in Romania. Regarding PA reform it's clear that recent trends especially those related to New Public Management have seen an increasing emphasis on creativity, innovation, flexibility, responsiveness from public organizations at the same time with cost reductions, increased effectiveness and sensitivity to citizen's needs. In this scenario often leaders are the ones who are seen as initiators and catalysts for such reforms but at the same time, have to bear the responsibility for any kind of stumble, be it economic, social or even political (Hîntea, 2007). The buzz word in the last three decades has been "change". Such a context is clearly suitable for a transformational type of leadership.

However public administration is the sector that appears to be less responsive to change. The distance between the objectives proposed by a public institution and the results obtained is ever so great. While no government can ignore the theme of reform as it is a major subject whether in election time or not, a clear vision about where public administration reform should lead, the results expected to bring, and the impact in time, of such policies is lacking. Actual reform was scarce, ambiguous and incremental especially in the beginning of the '90's (Mora and Ticiău, 2008: 91). Reform initiatives lacked a coherent vision regarding what needed to be done, a clear direction and specific implementation tools and measures to produce measurable results (Cepiku and Mititelu, 2010). The stimulus for transformation was to a large extent generated by factors outside the national governments, mainly the European Union (Țigănaș, Ticiău, Mora and Bacali, 2011). Most studies on public administration sustain that the best results are obtained with the contribution of those who are directly affected by it. However, practice shows a different story. Often enough, hostility towards reform comes from civil servants themselves because they see the changes as a threat to their own jobs. A survey regarding civil servants perception on PA Reform in Romania (Șandor and Tripon, 2008: 105) shows that reforms efforts were not coherent, the attempts were too little explained, each ministry came with a new plan and those in charge with implementation of the reform were not real professionals. Another

recent study on governmental agencies (Hîntea, Hudrea and Balica, 2011) showed (among others) that ministries still prefer ex-ante control over ex-post, a possible sign of a rather paternalistic culture with little preference for autonomy. It is obvious that organizational culture plays an important role in the effectiveness of the reform process, and as things stand at present, there are low chances to create an open culture that encourages change without leaders up for such a challenge. In other words, public administration needs transformational leaders. It should be noted that emphasis on mission may make transformational leadership particularly useful in public (and nonprofit organizations) given the service and community oriented nature of their missions (Wright and Pandey, 2009). The fact that transformational leaders represent models for followers, stimulate innovative thinking and motivate employees to achieve success and perform beyond their limits, is a strong argument for encouraging this type of leadership in the public sector. One example of a reform that could offer the possibility to promote the transformational leadership model in local public institutions is the introduction of the Public Administrator position starting from 2006. As Balica argues (2008) in some ways the Romanian form of the Public Administrator gives more flexibility and possibility to adapt to a changing environment compared to the American counterpart. Because of the high hierarchical position occupied in the organization, the local Public Administrator can become an agent of change and thus a true transformational leader.

Lastly, the issue of ethics and public values does not contradict with the transformational model. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) argue that transformational leaders would use their charisma in a socially constructive way to serve others. Keeley (1995) states that transformational leaders can be very effective ethical leaders. Burns (1978: 20) claims that transforming leadership is motivating, uplifting, and ultimately “moral, in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and the led.” In conclusion transformational leadership has all the ingredients to be implemented and perform successfully in the public sector.

Methodology

The current study surveyed employs working in four local public authorities from Cluj County – Cluj-Napoca Town Hall, Cluj Napoca County Council, Local Finance Department and State Department for Rural Development and Fishing (APDRP)⁶. The data was gathered in January 2012 during a one week period using the MLQ5X instrument (Bass, Avolio, 1995). We used both self-rater and peer-rater forms in order to get a more objective view regarding leadership behavior. There were a total of 4 leaders evaluated through self-evaluation and

⁶ Direcția de Plăți pentru Dezvoltare Rurală și Pescuit

peer-evaluation. The positions occupied by all the leaders are middle to higher management positions (head of departments or head of directions). In all 4 cases the leaders were evaluated by at least 4 subordinates, one person on the same hierarchical position and all but one case by their superiors. The peer-evaluators were asked by the leader if they wish to participate to the study. They were informed about the results being anonymous and that there weren't any kind of negative effects or sanctions based on the questionnaire responses. *The main purpose of the study was to identify the type of leadership practiced in the public institutions analyzed* – transformational, transactional or laissez-faire. However, from this starting point we also hypothesize the following:

1. *The behavior of the leaders will be more transactional and laissez-faire than transformational.* Our argument is that because of its characteristics, transformational leadership is less probable to appear in public organizations, especially because of the typical bureaucratic structure and legal constraints that limit change and innovation. Bass (1985a) suggested that transformational leaders are more likely to emerge in times of growth, change, and crisis. Other scholars (Bass and Riggio 2006; Howell 1997; Pawar and Eastman 1997; Wright and Pandey, 2009) see control systems typical of public bureaucracies as a natural deterrent for transformational leadership.
2. *There will be a significant difference between auto-evaluation and peer-evaluation based on the type of institution (decentralized vs. deconcentrated).* We argue that because of the different legal framework governing the two types of institutions chosen (decentralized vs. deconcentrated) leadership behavior will be different. Currently deconcentrated public services are central governmental ministry services represented at local level – this means that heads of services are directly subordinated to the appropriate central ministry – compared to decentralized public authorities which have administrative and financial autonomy from the central government and are run by elected officials.

Instrument

We used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X short form) based on the Full Range Leadership Model (FRL) devised by Bass and Avolio (1999) using the multirater 360 form⁷. The MLQ5X (short) consists of 45 items which cover a wide spectrum of leadership behaviors. The full range model of leadership assumes the existence of differences in the effectiveness of leadership styles, based on the active/passive distinction. Broad categories of leadership range thus from Passive/Avoidant Leadership (Laissez-Faire), through the classical model of Transactional Leadership and up to Transformational Leadership (Bass, Avolio, 1999).

⁷ The multirater 360 refers to using both self and peer evaluation of leadership.

The main 3 types included in the MLQ are described as follows (adapted from Bass and Avolio, 1999: 94-96).

Leadership type	Characteristics
<p>TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP</p> <p>Transformational leaders are proactive: they seek to optimize individual, group and organizational development and innovation, not just achieve performance "at expectations." They convince their associates to strive for higher levels of potential as well as higher levels of moral and ethical standards.</p>	<p>Idealized influence (IA) (instills pride, respect, goes beyond self-interest, displays sense of power and confidence)</p> <p>Idealized behaviors (IB) (expresses and shares values, beliefs, strong sense of purpose, consideration for moral and ethical consequences, importance of collective sense of mission)</p> <p>Inspirational Motivation (IM) (talks optimistically about the future, enthusiasm, creates compelling vision, confidence in goal achievement)</p> <p>Intellectual Stimulation (IS) (re-examines critical assumptions, seeks alternative solutions to problems, suggests new ways to look at problems, new ways to complete assignments)</p> <p>Individual Consideration (IC) (Teacher, coach, takes into consideration individual needs, abilities, aspirations, develops others strengths)</p>
<p>TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP</p> <p>Transactional leadership defines expectations and promotes performance to achieve these levels. Contingent reward and management-by exception are two core behaviors associated with 'management' functions in organizations.</p>	<p>Contingent Reward (CR) (provides assistance in exchange for efforts, discusses who is responsible for performance, sets clear rewards for goal achievement, expresses satisfaction when expectations are met)</p> <p>Management by exception: active (MBEA) (focuses on irregularities, mistakes, deals with mistakes, complaints, failures, keeps track of all errors, directs attention towards failures)</p>
<p>LAISSEZ-FAIRE (PASSIVE-AVOIDANT)</p> <p>Passive leaders avoid specifying agreements, clarifying expectations, and providing goals and standards to be achieved by followers. This style has a negative effect on desired outcomes - opposite to what is intended by the leader-manager. In this regard it is similar to laissez-faire styles - or "no leadership."</p>	<p>Management by exception: passive (MBEP) (fails to interfere until problems are serious, firm belief in no interference until problems arise, interferes when problems become chronic)</p> <p>Laissez-Faire (LF) (avoids involvement, absent when needed, avoids decisions, delays responding to urgent problems)</p>
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>Extra Effort (EE) (get others to do more than expected, increase desire to succeed, increase others willingness to try harder)</p> <p>Effectiveness (EFF) (meets others job related needs, represents the group to higher authority, leads a group that is effective, meets organizational requirements)</p> <p>Satisfaction with the leadership (SAT) (uses methods that raise satisfaction, works with others in a satisfactory way)</p>

The leadership scale used in the MLQ ranges from 0 to 4 with the following meaning:

0= this behavior is never used
 1= this behavior is used once in a while
 2= this behavior is used sometimes
 3=this behavior is used fairly often
 4=this behavior is used frequently if not always

Limitations

Being a pilot study with only 4 leaders included for self-evaluation and 23 individuals for peer evaluation, quantitative analysis of the data is not appropriate. Because of this the results should be treated with caution when generalizing. However the study can be a good example of an initial research regarding transformational leadership in the public sector, a starting point for further analysis of leadership style in Romanian public administration.

Results

Hypothesis 1: *The behavior of the leaders will be more transactional and laissez-faire than transformational.*

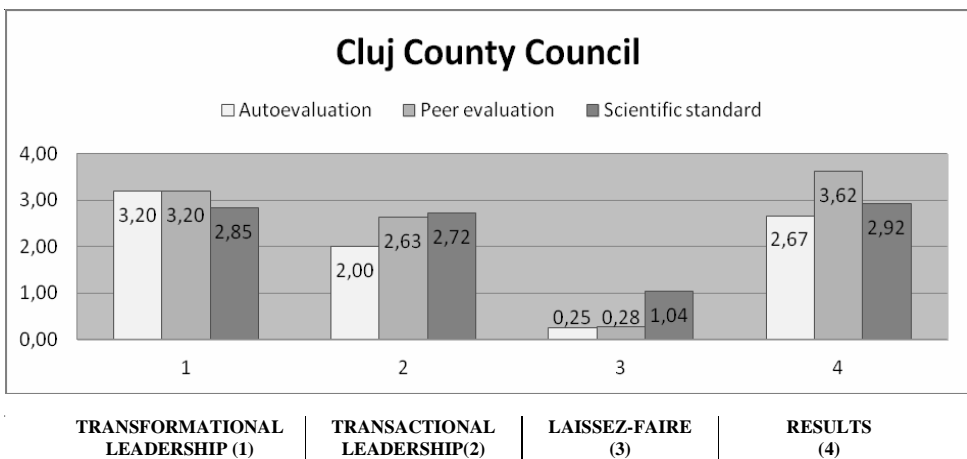


Fig.2 Leadership behavior in the County Council

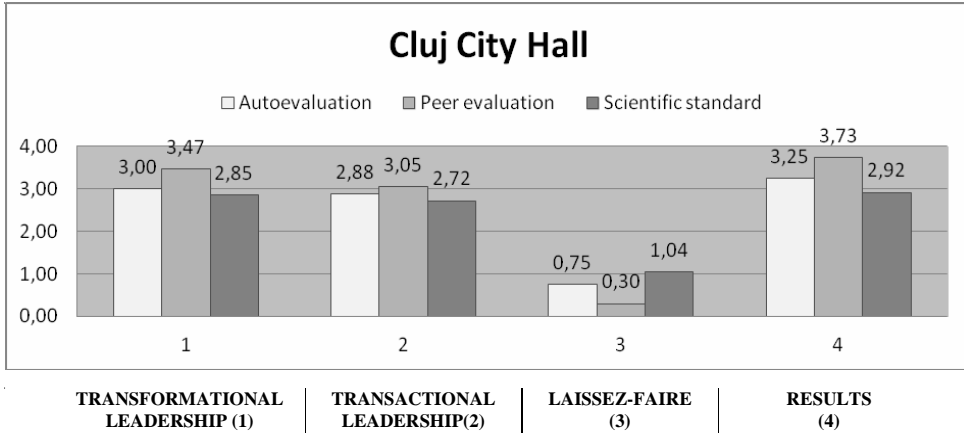


Fig. 3 Leadership behavior in the City Hall

Figure 2 and 3 representing the behavior of the leaders from the two decentralized authorities indicate that the dominant leadership style in both cases is transformational. Both self-evaluation and peer evaluation on the transformational scale are higher compared to the scientific standard⁸. The scores are over 3, meaning that transformational leadership is used frequently in both cases. Regarding the transactional scale we see a slight difference in results with the first leader receiving a lower score than the second one, which again exceeds the average score. Both leaders have much lower scores on the laissez-faire scale, much lower than the scientific standard. It is important to mention that in both cases the peer evaluation scores (either subordinates + same level colleagues + superior) are higher or equal to self-evaluation scores.

Figure 4 and 5 representing the behavior of the leaders from the two decentralized authorities, show that the scores on the transformational and transactional scale are close. In the case of APDRP the transactional score is higher (self-evaluation) while for the Local Finance Department the two scores are almost even (Fig.5). However it is worth mentioning that different from the first two cases, here the self-evaluation scores are significantly higher than the peer-evaluation. Also, the scores on the laissez-faire scale very close to the scientific standard, and thus higher compared to the previous two leaders.

Our initial assumption regarding the dominant type of leadership can be considered *infirm* (at least partially) as in all cases transformational leadership was either dominant (decentralized authorities) or very close to the highest score

⁸ The scientific standard indicates the average ratings for Romania available online at www.testcentral.ro

(deconcentrated authorities). The laiser-faire scale received the lowest scores in all 4 cases with the decentralized authorities having much lower scores than the scientific standard compared to the deconcentrated authorities which had scores closer to the scientific standard. It's worth mentioning that in 3 cases both self-evaluation and peer evaluation turn out transformational leadership scores higher than the scientific standard – in the case of APDRP only the self-evaluation was higher – which entitles us to state that transformational behaviors are practiced often by all leaders evaluated. As a general trend, in all 4 cases the leadership can be characterized by a mix between transformational and transactional behaviors, the two being complementary. This is also supported by past research. Transactional and transformational leadership are usually found in a continuum rather than being mutually exclusive (Bass, Avolio, 1994; Yammarino, 1993). Bass (1985a) viewed the transformational/transactional leadership as being comprised of complementary rather than polar constructs. The transformational leadership style is likely to be ineffective in the total absence of a transactional relationship between leaders and subordinates (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Goodwin, Wofford and Whittington, 2001). Last but not least, the scores on the Results scale in all 4 cases turn out above standard which is in accordance to the claim of increased performance of transformational leaders (Bass and Avolio, 1989; Bass and Yammarino, 1991; Podsakoff et. al., 1990).

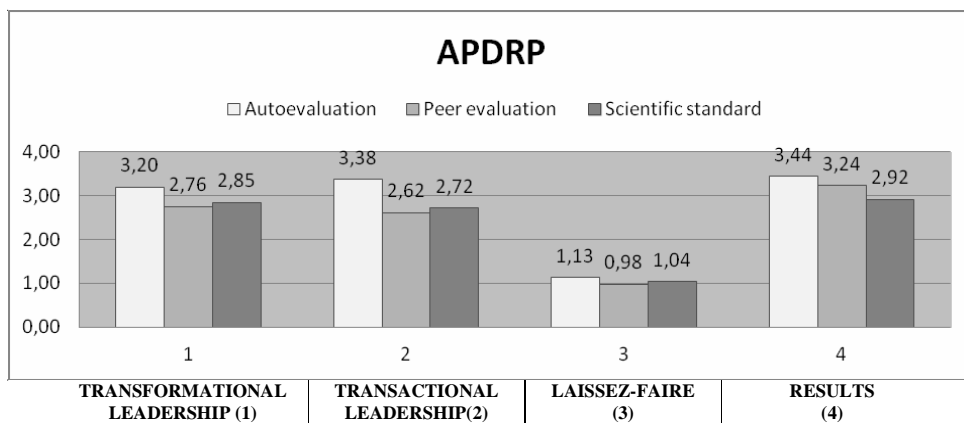


Fig.4 Leadership behavior in APDRP

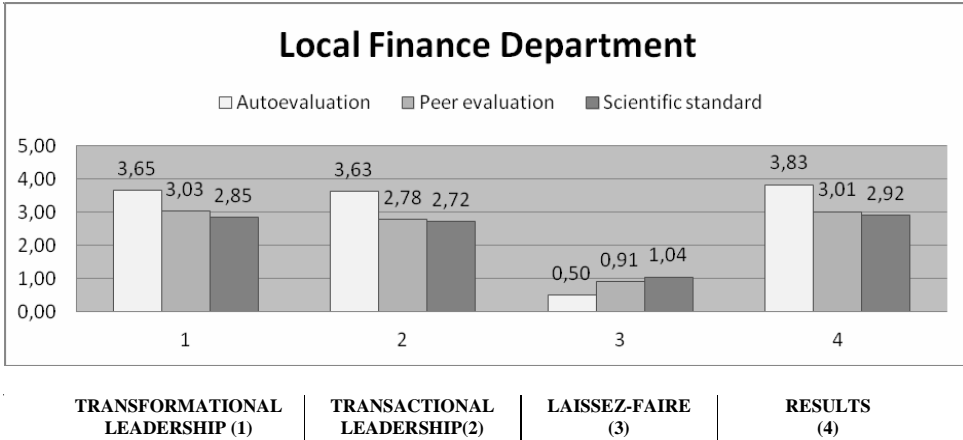
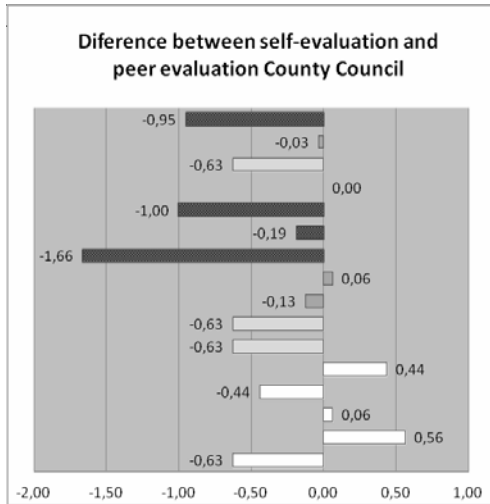


Fig. 5 Leadership Behavior in Local Finance Department

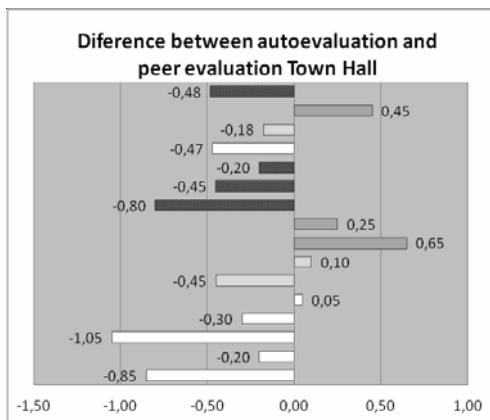
Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference between auto-evaluation and peer-evaluation based on the type of institution (decentralized vs. deconcentrated). We refer here to differences between self-evaluation and peer evaluation. Some studies already shown that the type of organization and structure can influence leadership behavior and its effectiveness (Lowe, Kroeck and Sivsubramaniam, 1996; Wright and Pandey, 2009)

In the first case (*Figures 6*) we can see that the leader self-evaluation is lower compared to peer-evaluation on the Results scale (-0,95) and Transactional leadership scale (-0,63). Also notably there is no overvaluation by the leader in any of the scales. In the second case (*Figure 7*) the leaders self-evaluation is lower than peer evaluation on the Transformational scale (-0,47), on the Results scale (-0,48) and on the Transactional scale (-0,18). Different from the first case, there is however a positive difference on the Laissez-Faire (passive avoidant) scale which indicates that the leader self-evaluates his behavior as more passive-avoidant than his colleagues do. So overall, the two leaders from decentralized institutions generally under evaluated themselves compared to peer-evaluations with one exception, the LF scale on the second leader. This means that the group sees them as displaying more transformational transactional behaviors then they personally perceive. Moreover, the group feels that they are encouraged to perform, that organizational objectives are achieved and that leadership is satisfactory.



RES	Avg. Results
LF	Avg. Laissez-Faire
TZ	Avg. Transactional
TSF	Avg. Transformational
SAT	RESULTS
EFF	
EE	
LF	LAISSEZ-FAIRE
MBEP	TRANSACTIONAL
MBEA	
CR	TRANSFORMATIONAL
IC	
IS	
IM	
IB	
IA	

Fig. 6 *Difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation County Council*⁹



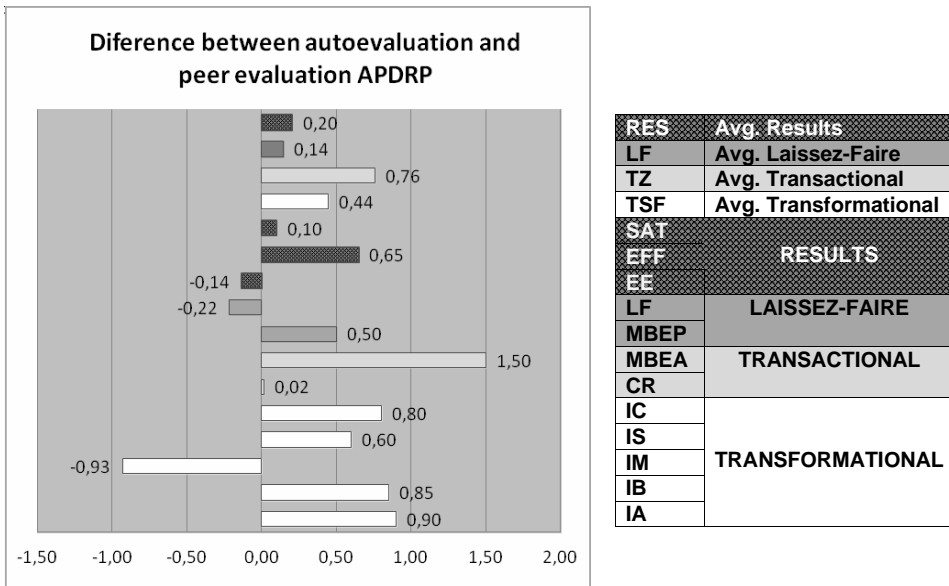
RES	Avg. Results
LF	Avg. Laissez-Faire
TZ	Avg. Transactional
TSF	Avg. Transformational
SAT	RESULTS
EFF	
EE	
LF	LAISSEZ-FAIRE
MBEP	TRANSACTIONAL
MBEA	
CR	TRANSFORMATIONAL
IC	
IS	
IM	
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Fig. 7 *Difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation County Council*

Going to the deconcentrated institutions (Figure 8 and 9) opposite to the first two leaders, the differences are mainly positive, meaning the leaders gave themselves higher scores than the peer-evaluators. The first leader (Figure 8) except one notable difference – Inspirational Motivation – over evaluated his behavior in all 4 scales, most notably on the Transactional scale (+0,76) and Transformational

⁹ The scores have been obtained by subtracting the scores by peer-evaluation from the self-evaluation. A positive score means the leader over evaluated himself/herself compared to peer evaluators while a negative score means the leader under evaluated himself.

scale (+0,44) with moderate to low differences on the other two scales, Laissez-Faire (+0,14) and Results (+0,20). The second leader (Fig.9) again scored higher on most of the scales on self-evaluation compared to peer-evaluation, with the notable exception of the laissez-faire where on both items peer evaluation was higher than auto evaluation (-0,38 for Management by Exception: Passive, and -0,44 for Laissez-Faire). The second leader also got the highest difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation from all 4 cases, on the results scale (+1.84 on Extra Effort) and the second highest difference on the transformational scale (+1.81 on Individual Consideration). This means that in both cases leaders feel that they are more transformational than their colleagues actually perceive.



RES	Avg. Results
LF	Avg. Laissez-Faire
TZ	Avg. Transactional
TSF	Avg. Transformational
SAT	
EFF	RESULTS
EE	
LF	LAISSEZ-FAIRE
MBEP	
MBEA	TRANSACTIONAL
CR	
IC	
IS	TRANSFORMATIONAL
IM	
IB	
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Fig. 8 Difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation APDRP

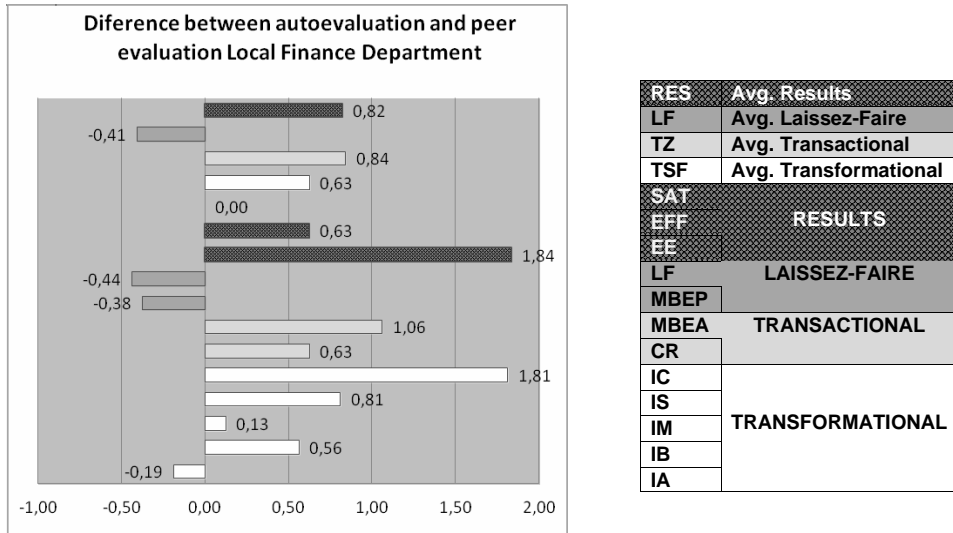


Fig. 9 *Difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation Local Finance Department*

The second major difference on the results scale can be interpreted that the leader feels he is motivating others to do more, to succeed and fulfills job related needs and organizational requirements when, from his followers perspective, he does this far less.

Overall, comparing the results (decentralized vs. deconcentrated) we can argue that our second assumption regarding differences between leader evaluations based on their belonging to a decentralized or deconcentrated institution is confirmed. In the case of leaders from decentralized institutions the difference in evaluations were negative, peer-evaluators considering their leaders achieve better results than they personally think and have more transformational and transactional behaviors. The other two leaders from the deconcentrated institutions are seen less transformational and achieve less results as they personally perceive. We also have to point out a significant difference on the passive avoidant behavior, the first two leaders (decentralized) getting very low scores on this scales (much lower than the scientific standard) while the last two leaders (deconcentrated institutions) got scores very close to the scientific standard which can be an explanation for lower scores on the results scale as passive avoidant behavior has been correlated with lower levels of performance (Dumdum, Lowe and Avolio, 2002; Gaspar, 1992; Fuller, Patterson, Hester and Stringer, 1996).

General leadership portrait

Based on the data presented we can state that all 4 leaders evaluated display both transformational and transactional behaviors, above the average which is consistent with the scores on the Results scale which are also above the scientific standard. From this perspective our first assumption regarding a predominance of transactional and laissez-faire leadership was not confirmed. However we have to mention that the leaders from deconcentrated institutions obtained much higher scores on the Laissez-Faire scale compared to the leaders from decentralized institutions corroborated with the high differences on the Results scale between self-evaluation and peer-evaluation leads us to believe that the type of institution could have an influence on the leadership type. Unfortunately, being a pilot study with only 4 cases, more complex quantitative analysis (associations, correlations) wouldn't be relevant.

In spite of this, the general image of the 4 leaders analyzed is positive as both transformational and transactional scores are above average, which is in accordance with other researches on this topic (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Our second assumption was confirmed, with the first two leaders sub-evaluating themselves compared to the peer-evaluations while the last 2 (deconcentrated) over-evaluating themselves. One possible explanation, in the later could be a possible communication problem between leadership and followers and could be linked to higher scores on passive-avoidant behavior (faulty communication being a characteristic)

Conclusions

The purpose of the present paper was to offer a synthetic view regarding Bass's (1985a) transformational leadership and its relevance for public sector. Current information on transformational leadership effectiveness in the public sector is rather contradictory, with data available to argue for and against this idea. We feel that more research on this matter, especially regarding transformational leadership in governmental organizations from Romania is almost a necessity. At present there are no empirical studies on public sector leadership using this theoretical model. For this we conducted a pilot study aimed at identifying the style of leadership present in local public administrations institutions using the MLQ5X leadership evaluation instrument. We also aimed to find out whether there would be a significant difference on leadership scores based on the type of institutions chosen (decentralized vs. deconcentrated). Based on data gather we showed that, against our initial assumption leadership in all the four institutions is a mix between transformational and transactional and far less laissez-faire. We also showed that the type of institution could influence leadership

behaviors, as there were significant differences between leadership scores in decentralized institutions (self-evaluation compared to peer-evaluation) and leadership scores in deconcentrated institutions. Regarding the difference in perception other studies on leadership in public organizations have shown that differences in self-evaluation compared to peer-evaluation can be caused by a communication problem or even a muted conflict between management and the rest of the organization (Hintea, Mora and Ticiău, 2009). We consider the transformational leadership model a possible answer to the challenge of Romanian public administration reform. Although, the mission of the transformational leader in public administration reform is much more difficult than in the private sector, this is an additional argument for it rather than against it. The leader is forced to progressively create an organizational environment favorable to the success of the changes proposed by reform. In addition, he must transfer his vision to the expectation level of his followers, to motivate them through his abilities and knowledge. Using the tools of sociability and adaptability, perseverance and cooperation, the leader has to transform his followers into a motivated group, so that members feel that the initiative of change belongs to them, and the results will be consequently favorable. In this context transformational leadership can be a possible answer to resistance to reform inside public administration.

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