THE EFFECTS OF POWER DISTANCE ON PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANIZATION
(The case of Albania)

PhD. SUELA GERDHE
University "Fan. S. Noli", Faculty of Economy.
Korce. Albania

Abstract

Experiences have shown that social-economic and cultural developments bring the significant changes in the individual patterns of behavior in society and organizations. The managers must take into consideration cultural determinants which can influence their employees' attitude and behaviors. The aim of this paper is to present the direction of the influence of one of the national culture dimensions – power distance on the relations between managers and workforce which include employee participation and communication. The first part of this article presents the analysis of dimension before and after the communist's dictatorship in Albania. The remaining part of the paper is dedicated to presenting the results of the empirical study examining the power distance in workplace (public and private organizations). In particular, article show the direction in which differences in the level of power distance influence relations and patterns of behavior between managers and employees in practice.

Key Words. Transition. The power distance. Values. Behavior patterns. Relation.

Wanting to explore the model and the way how the culture with its dimensions effect the relationships in organization we focused the research in the field of organizational behavior. Researchers of behavior have two different approaches to the role of the national culture in the management. On the one hand representatives of the convergence approach perceive the management practices as the factor independent of the national culture and institutional context. The scientists representing this school of thought argue that in the management there are the same 'best practices' which could be used independently of the cultural and institutional environment. On the other hand, the second group, which represents so-called divergence

approach, emphasizes that management practices are culture bounded and their transfer is not possible in all situations – it depends on contextual factors. After the research in organizational behavior and human resource management articles Adler and Bartholomew stated that 70 percent of the articles include the concept of culture, and 98,3 percent of this kind of articles conclude that culture is important and caused differences to the organizational behavior and human resource management. (Tayeb 1994)

Amount of research assessed in advance some of the values and behaviours that dominate and are subject to specific national cultures. The treatment of values and practices in the workplace can not be seen and evaluated as separate from the general value's systems (individual, social and moral) that dominate a certain type of culture.

(Hofstede 2005)

National culture of a country and its dimensions become influential and determinants of values system of the individual in society. These values enriched or not are transmitted in the workplace and are the basis of perceptions and behavioral models for each employee. The culture of organization, operates as part of a national culture and in return, national culture influences all its activities. Wanting to support this connection, the study is concentrated to analyses the power distance and the effects that it have on the individual values in the workplace, the patterns of behavior and communication. The research is focused on these areas (1) the analysis of dimension before and after the communist's dictatorship in Albania, (2) the analysis of the power distance in the workplace, (3) and lastly the new behaviors, relations that encourage the change of the power distance to the employees. The paper concludes that the relationship between the distance of power personal values and the patterns of behavior is a close relationship. Any change in the extent of power distance reflects new values, behavior and relationships in the workplace.

Research methodology.

The methodology used to conduct the theoretical and practical research consisted in these directions. *First,* the research is supported on a specific model of search. *Second,* discuss the specific issues, to better understand the correlation: the power distance – values, patterns of behaviors, relations.

Research process on this study is partly deductive and confirmation, for testing a model of relationships, starting from the predictions of human relations that derived from theory. The paper adopts an interpretative analysis with arguments that show how organizational reality is closely related to social attributes. The interpretative research aimed at understanding the phenomenon, through the understanding of people associated with these phenomena. Data collection and the methods used to analyses, think that will enrich the validity of the findings in this area and will serve as a multiple methodological and interpretative search. Research focused on public and private organizations in Albania.

The Power Distance
(Power, Status, Hierarchy, Respect, Acceptance of Authority)

The most popular studies for culture are proposed by Hofstede who conducted research among IBM workers from different countries. He identified five dimensions: individualism/ collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term

orientation. Among these dimensions there is one especially linked with relations between managers and employees, it is the power distance.

Refering [1]*Hofstede,* (2005), the power distance reflects the response of the same questions. Way some people are unequal? Way some people have more status, respect than others? Way the physical and intellectual capacity, the power, the wealth or status can not go together? These capabilities increase the differences between social classes of individuals. The author justifies the existence of power distance with statements "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others. " "Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally"

Under the *"Bible"* the price of poverty is seen as a manifestation of the desire for equality, the same thing said by *Karl Marx* for the purpose of the "dictatorship of proletariat", but he never guessed that his revolution would lead to a class without power and that the exercise of power will pass from person to system.

[2]*Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)* is the author who has extensively addressed the concept of power. He offers two models that the "lion" and "fox" and requires the use of their time. By linking these models with differences in power distance say that low power distance resembles the guile of the fox traps, and high power distance model "plays" so powerful among individuals depending on a society. The power distance is the extent to which inequality is seen as a fact of life.

The power distance in organization is closely related to the emotional distance that separates subordinates from their superiors. It shows the extent to which workers expect their supervisors to have more power. The extent to which workers believe that the decisions and thoughts of superiors are right or not, shows the distance of power. The power distance represents the willingness to accept the differences in status as something legitimate. In cultures with high power distance the superior and subordinates consider themselves unequal. The structure is centralized and aimed towards those flat, organic with a limited number of supervisory personnel. Decision-making is such and superiors are giver of orders, while implementing their subordinates. In cultures with low power distance that inequality falls. The parties feel comfort facing each other. What fulfills the authority, in these structures is realized by norms, values and culture of the organization. In cultures with large- power distance largesse are allowed, while in those with low distance largesse considered undesirable.

	Characteristics	Tips
High PD	• Centralized companies. • Strong hierarchies. • Lar ge gaps in compensation, authority, and respect.	• Acknowledge a leader's power. • Be aware that you may need to go to the top for answers
Low PD	• Flatter organizations. • Supervisors and employees are considered almost as equals.	• Use teamwork • Involve as many people as possible in decision making.

According to Hofstede's model about power/distance **(PD)**

1   "Cultures and Organizations, Software of Mind": Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival (2005) p. 84-100
2   "The Ruler" Translated by P. Rodd. p. 30- 40

According to Martin, J (2002) power distance is closely related to issues:
- Having little desire;
- The people always seek a middle way;
- Most employees try to be detached from the problems of the organization;

The extent to which power distance is distributed equally among people or not is reflected in many relationships as relationships superior - subordinate, parent-child, teacher-student.

This author also states that the distance of power determines how the information flows, communication patterns, the level of satisfaction and the differences in wages between workers and managers. In cultures with low power distance, the satisfaction in work, the performance and increased productivity are resulting from workers' participation in decision making. The cultures with high power distance concentrates the authority at the top of the structure and the managers rely on formalized roles coated with authority and the close control policies.

Wanting to judge the power distance and its dimensions in Albania's society, the analysis will be based on time. If we refer to developments in time, of the Albanian society, the picture presented us mixed relationships.

We are living in a unprecedented time and is intensifying the international communication. Will this lead us towards a world standard? Can we say that we are far away the extreme of high power distance? Authority in Albania is not obtained, but arose from the characteristics of the system itself. This pattern of relationships prevailed everywhere, in the families, the schools and the organizations.

Argued by [3]*Emine A, Vezaj* the respect and authority for the elderly has been virtue and this often made that the individual to required it. The children were totally dependent on the parent and not encouraged independent behavior of children. The respect and authority to parent remain so far as long as the parent was alive. The authority's formal difference persists even after children become masters of their lives. So we can rightly speak of a dependency model that is crossing all the relationships. The strong need of dependence do it one of the dominant values of the Albanian culture. It discourages the risk making process and encourage the contradictions.

Accepting that the family develops its culture in accordance with the norms of society, we say that the family's culture is a part of the landscape of the changes in the national culture. Today, the individuals in Albania generally shape themselves according to time, the experiences of other countries and less of the examples they receive from their elders. The dependence is replaced with the value of independence, the authority is replace with communication and open debate, coexistence of generations with individual lives. Such a change has influenced the values of generations and gender subcultures and believe it will dampen the differences between them, but will not eliminate them completely .[4]*Sartori,G (1993)*.

In schools applied the same models. The parent-child model was replace with teacher-student model and the values transmitted from one area to another. The teacher-student inequality and the need for dependence was embedded in the minds of students. The process of education was orientated and had strict rules of communication. The new development programs on the education system and liberalization of system aims to reduce the polarization between the elite and the uneducated groups of people. This indirectly reduces the power distance and bring the

3   "The expanded family and modern challenges" Journal"Peace" Nr. 6. May 2007
4   "Once again the theory of democracy" Tirana 1993.

new values and behaviors. There are changes in the teacher-student relationship, their communication and the treatment of each other. The education has priority free initiative, self-development trends, open discussion and debate. The whole system is based on the student's need for independence. The value of independence is regarded as something good, because it serves the development of individual character and strengthening the values of superiority. The increase of personal investments at the university level and post graduate shows a decreasing trend of power distance and the reduction of polarization of society. ([5])

Ronald Inglehart, provides a new approach of the power distance. The corruption is indicative of transition from traditional authority - rational authority. The phenomenon of corruption in Albania not only affects the functioning of the state, but also that of private organizations. It appears in several forms, such as the use of power that gives the position and the purchase of cooperation with the authorities to meet goals. The high frequency of corruption by parliamentarians, government members, leaders, academics, shows the pallor of values as honesty, morality, conscience and replacing them with the values of selfishness and ambition sick.

So, the power tends to corrupt and the absolute power corrupts absolutely. The corruption results in loss of some individual values and replacing them with values and norms imposed by the power that the money gives. The Albanian society is based on unequal relationships between people. These relationships are governed by multiple obligations. Here, people accept inequality, but feel that the use of power is shaped by the sense of obligation .

Argued by [6]*Dervishi. Z,* the Albanian society entered in the course of democratic development while in her psych-cultural design was completely lacked a sense of respect for the hierarchy of real values. In such circumstances the Albanian society is facing the dilemma: either to structure on the real hierarchies of values or to experience an extended anarchic situation. More specifically: either to create the stable pyramids of professional, economic, political, social and cultural hierarchy or drowned in the tide of anarchy.

The power distance in the workplace.
Relations between the managers and the employees in the context of changes.

The Albania's society with a dictatorial system until 1990, has changed to a pluralist system, however, still find the combined elements of both systems. In Albania, the power derived from the skills of the use of force and military dictatorship.

The system allowed only one party and the political spectrum was characterized by strong rights. The labor unions were controlled by the state, even were ideologically based and involved in politics. All this, confirmed that a traditional authority today, only in some aspects are replaced by rational. This is shown somewhere - the freedom of press, speech, discussion of broad political, the political disputes and their outcomes in some cases with violence. The government scandals are expected and in many cases blame those who are in low levels of the hierarchy - but this is not justified by the use of power, the guaranteeing of individual against the law, and fact that power, wealth and status go together.

5   " The Education in Albania "Albania's Forum. 2003
6   «Hierarchies on the basis of values or anarchy» AIPR

How is reflected this dimension in the workplace?

Is the dimension responsible for the emergence of values, behaviors and new relationships in organizations?

The previous system inherited a huge incentive to obey the law. The degree of power distance reflected not only the values of leaders, but also those of followers. The authoritarian management style was the only style in all organizations in communism. Organizations centralized the power as much as possible in a few hands. Subordinates expect to be told what to do. There were a lot of superiority personnel, structured into tall hierarchies of people, reporting to each others. Salary systems show wide gaps between top and bottom in the organizations. There were the complete lack of participation in decision-making process (a competent group make decisions and required the implementation of them). The people work to live, the working environments were far from normal environments. There were the barriers between the levels of hierarchy, and the relationships were characterized by arrogance and ignoring. The membership in the political party and devotion to her was the only condition to occupy the senior positions, regardless of profession, the individual skills and experience.

The businesses, today in Albania, continue to be characterized by the large power distance, because many employees own a low status and are relatively uneducated. In these conditions they are weak, powerless and often require autocratic leadership. The uneducated workers require necessarily the close control. So, they encourage and support the power difference. "This tendency was made due to the emergence of the authoritarian values, those of submission and servility." [7]*Toci, M (2007)*

The acceptance and possession of authoritarian values and deception are present not only in public organizations, but private ones, because workers are afraid of disagreement with their leaders. The economic poverty and the lack of other alternatives in the labor market, makes difficult the relationship. This shows the centralization in the organization of work, the trend for increasing the number of hierarchical levels and privileges to the leadership. According to the dimension of power, we see a tight hierarchy, the lack of consultation in decision making and inequality. In such conditions people are often uninterested and disconnected with the problems of the organization. The characteristic behaviour of employees are the indifference, the lack of consciousness and the addiction.

The power of leadership today is not absolute, since this power is in most cases more institutional than personal. The businesses are organized and function with the hierarchical structures and less flexible ones. There are profound changes to rank among individuals, the lack of loyalty to one another and the willingness to try more individually than in groups. In terms of employment we can talk about a short life of working and the high turnover. This reduces the possibility for the intellectual preparation and development of employees and do not encourage the reduction of the power distance.

For several public organization, the reputation outside the organization is more important than that inside. The accomplishments are rarely evaluated and encouraged by management and often they are the result of individual requests. The status and authority in organizations, not always are influenced by level of education, background, or length of service. The higher salaries in the organization reflect the greater benefits, prestige, status. This way of assessing the competences and skills makes the employees to be insecure, bored, incredulous and uncommitted with the organization. An undeserved status and authority, in most cases promotes the value of distrust and the lack of courage to employees.

7   "Leadership. The role and its importance in organization" 2007

The relationships are not based on harmony for these businesses, may even blame someone even though you are not able to determine the real responsibility. Employees generally do not trust each other and the organization does not give the individual a full identity. Often we find poor ethics at work and did not find a connection between the ranking, respect, power, privilege and age. Also, human relations is to expand beyond the scope of the organization. Often subordinates consume their evenings talking about organization issues, but such a personal involvement, not always brings dedication and loyalty of an employee at the firm. So the people are uninterested and disconnected from the problems of organization.

Although, we found the powerless workers, the workers seeking autocratic leadership, the fearful workers from the changes, centralized decision-making, with the right we can notice another trend, which started in the public sector. Considering specialists they are starting to be addressed as part of the vertical hierarchy, they are encouraged by new positions in the organization, of good subordinate-superior relations or accommodation with technical expertise. The persons who possess the same position for several years are seen as specialists and are encouraged by the executive positions. So, the trend is a reduction of power distance, because managers are more satisfied with the superior participants, they are speaking for informal consultation and delegation of authority. We emphasize that these trends are in their infancy and more required by specialists.

As long as the power distance in organizations, will continue to be high and there will be centralization in decision making, we think that most employees will continue to be uninterested and unmotivated in order to be an important part of the organization. In such circumstances we can not talk to their maximum commitment. So, the question of creating and maintaining a culture may be the only cure that will boost the interest of employees. The culture of the organization will replace the high formalization (which is decreasing very slowly) with a range of ethical standards. The authority of leaders will be replaced with the authority of culture. The future of this dimension will develop new value as that of independence, trust, tolerance, communication and lack of obligation. These values will be accompanied by new patterns of behavior and communication.

Conclusions

We can draw two main conclusions from the research conducted.

- The first findings confirm that a traditional authority, today, only in some aspects are replaced by rational. Albanian culture is high power distance, which means that subordinates maintain a distance from their superiors and have a sense of respect or even awe of them. The degree of power distance reflected not only the values of leaders, but also those of followers. The power distance and the use of it is turning into a critical point for organizations, moreover, because the communication efforts of the leader followed by an audience often powerless, fearful, indifferent and unmotivated.

- A new trend has appeared and is growing in the public sector. Less fearful employees who require more initiative, considerations and cooperation. They require support from managers and complain of abuse of power. Is important to emphasize that these trends are in their infancy and more required by specialists who promote new values of independence, initiative, ambition, collaboration, accountability. In this context the planning of systems, procedures and policies, must stimulate new behavior in the workplace.

- A second general conclusion should be taken under consideration specially by practitioners. Replacement of the leader's authority with authority of the culture of organization should be evaluated as issue in perspective.

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