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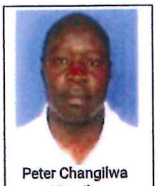

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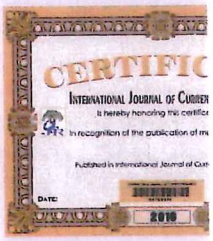

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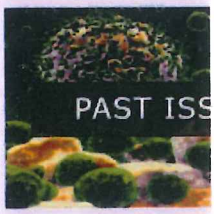

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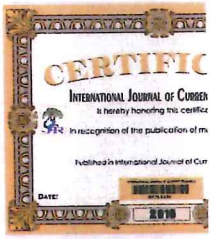
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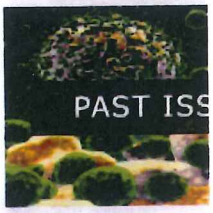
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP IN RESPECT OF THE WORK AND ORGANIZATION IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

We are going through a time period in which the leadership, work and organization has attracted our attention. Although these hot subjects have been mostly discussed in the developed countries, there is a rising awareness toward them in the developing countries, too. In particular, Turkey is one of the important countries in creating its own different model of leadership in respect to the work and organization due to its long-term historical background. That is why this article aims at examining the classical understanding of leadership with its impacts on the work and organization in Turkey. A critical review of debates on the concept of leadership was provided at the beginning of the article to draw a framework for the study. Then since leadership has always been associated with power, relationships of power and leadership were put on the table to have an idea about how the different components of leadership were employed in the work and organization. Therefore, a case study from the capital of Turkey, Ankara, was given to see the practices of leadership in workplaces.

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a critical review of debates on the classical understanding of leadership in work and organization. That is because the role of leaders has started to change with globalization and new demands of employees although the classical understanding of leadership still develops some strategies to keep its old system. In particular, since classical leadership has a hierarchical order, it is very difficult for a person from a different family to be a leader. That is because several work and organization were owned by particular families and thereby their leaders are assigned among the family members. Without a doubt, work and organization are two main fields of any types of leadership to manifest themselves with this mentality. Therefore, the Factory of Balçık Heating Element Technologies (FBHET) in Ankara is a case study of the article to see the practices of leadership in work and organization. Leadership and power relationship, decision-making process and consensus building are main factors to be examined to understand the nature of leadership in a workplace of Turkey.

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Leadership Debates: Classical Understanding

Historically leadership has been seen around a single individual and his relationship to his followers or subordinates. That is why it was based on vertical or hierarchical top-down influence (Pearce and Conger, 2003:1-2). In particular, the classical leader type tries to influence other to do something by applying the penalty and reward system. For example, Adolf Hitler is one of his interesting examples in using coercion and penalty to influence somebody to do something although the most of today`s leaders promoting reward system to manipulate "the others." (Northouse, 2001: 7). One can easily see the classical leadership type in developing world more easily. In Turkey, for example, the classical leadership still shows its face in many works and organizations. Since military has been an agent of transforming society throughout the history, one can readily see the militaristic leadership system even in education, parliament and civic organizations. One-man leadership is still popular among many parties and leaders are not eager to initiate inter-party democracy. Thus, since leader/manager makes a decision alone and declares it to his or her subordinates, the standardization of rules and organization is inevitable (Sahlins, 2010: 6). Such a standard view of leadership can be related to people conceptualizing leadership as given gift or trait. We hears from many people that "he is born to be a leader" or "she is a natural leader" (Northouse, 2001: 5).

This does not mean that the leader does not have any personal characteristics at all because it is obvious that charisma differentiates the charismatic form of leadership from bureaucratic leadership. It is true that "charisma" means "gift" in Greek, but the leadership should not be standardized in a bureaucratic way (Weber, 1947).

Leadership and Power Relations

Leadership is usually defined in terms of the power relations existing between leaders and their followers. That is to say, leader is seen as a central power leading change in the other or organization. In this understanding, it is believed that leadership changes their followers through individualized attention (Northouse, 2001:2). One can argue that in classical leadership this power can be used as a coercion to make change, but in shared or inclusive leadership forms, for example, this can be nothing than influence of leaders on other`s believes, attitudes and courses of action. That is because power or leadership is shared or distributed among the members of group or organizations in the inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006). That is why it is not based on one man decision. There is a similar focus in the shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In short, these two theories show that the classical understanding has been challenged by scholars in the modern times. Before giving the parameters of this change and development of new paradigms in the leadership theories, we need to delve into the concept of leadership more.

The Components of Leadership

Philosophically, leadership phenomenon can be understood in for ways. In other words, leadership has four components: (1) leadership is a process, (2) leadership includes influence, (3) leadership happens within a groups context, and (4) leadership involves goal achievement (Northouse, 2001: 3). First of all, leadership is a process. This means we cannot see leadership as something assigned from above. It is defined through a process. Nobody are born as leader, but he or she develop leadership (Cooper, 2002: 9). For example, Napoleon had an idea that every soldier in his army had a potential to lead the army in his absence. This shows us that it is not true to give a leader a sort of divine right to lead or rule (Cooper, 2002: 9). For this reason, leadership is not a characteristic resides in the leaders. Conversely, it is a transactional event occurring between the leader and his or her followers. Thus, one can argue that leadership is not defined through hierarchical relationship. Instead, it is rather based on interactive relationship. For this reason, instead of being restricted to a particular person in the group, it becomes attainable for any member of the groups (Northouse, 2001:3).

Secondly, it is believed that in any forms of leadership there should be an influence. In other words, leaders should have a sort of effective power on his followers whether it is coercive or not. Without an influence, it is impossible to transform assigned leadership style to emergent leadership in the organization. That is to say, any person can be assigned as a leader for a particular organization, but it takes time to be true or emergent leader in particular setting without influence.

Thirdly, leadership is something can only happen in group or organizational setting. That is to say, group or organization is the *sine qua non* of leadership. In other words, there should be somebody to lead and to be leaded if one talks about leadership. For this reason, one can say that if there is somebody to lead and somebody to be leaded in the nature of leadership, how can we get rid of power relations and hierarchical structure? In my opinion, although I am not inclined to see the nature of leadership as our destiny hard to change, I strongly believe that the only thing we are trying to do is to democratize leadership, increase public voice in decision making process, and develop new concepts of leaderships such as inclusive leadership and shared leadership to play around the classical definition of leadership which is still in power. For this reason, finally, we should see leadership in terms of achievement of particular goals. As it is well known, goals always keep groups away from stagnation or standardization. Since any members of the groups move toward accomplishing the same goals, it is not hard to have conflict resolution into group and leader with coercive power. Otherwise, it will be difficult to get rid of landscape of militaristic perspective of leadership. Leader should have public value, target common good, and build trust, for example (Morse, Buss and Kinghom, 2007: p.x-xii).

Consensus Building and Leadership

Coming to 21st century the classical leadership style has been questioned by many parameters of social change. One parameter can be related to social movements advocating for more rights for citizens. Instead of one-man decision some states and organizations have started to base their administration on consensus, groupthink and inclusive decision making process. However, there is still some people leading states or organization, but the new leader type is not only responsible for decision making, but also he or she has to design, regulate and select a social system to make decision (Vroom and Yetton, 1975: 5). This shows a transition from classical understanding to a modern understanding of leadership system. This is what we called as effective leadership.

Like many living being or living things an organization can develop some disorders. For this reason, the primary responsibility of leaders is to diagnose the problem and then solve it by consensus. Furthermore, instead of the surveillance of classical power, there is a supervision based on dialogue. All of them make leadership as action-centered (Gray, Field and Brown, 2010: 3). Another parameter is in more participation of women and different ethnic groups in public space. For example, compared to past there is also a significant increase in women leaders which is known as "feminization of work."(Knippenger and Hogg, 2003). For this reason, classical leadership even seems to face new challenges in terms of sex, gender, race and ethnicity in the modern times. It is interesting to note that it will be hard for new leadership styles to base themselves on exclusion and coercive power. Therefore, inclusion is alter ego of exclusion which is developed as reaction to diversity (Ryan, 2006: 19). As it is well known, although nationalist movements are still in powers to lead the masses, the flow of migration and the rise of local culture

alongside globalization make their power less. This is what opens a new space for global advocates to demand an inclusive leadership system and to be active in decision making process. Also, work environment is rapidly changing every day. That is why classical leadership cannot adjust rapid changes and develop a new vision for organization. Therefore, leader should be dedicated to his or her work to move his organization a leap forward instead of being addicted to power (McDermott, 2008: 25).

Understanding Classical Leadership and Work and Organization by a Case Study from Ankara

After having a literature review and theoretical discussion on leadership and decision making process, one should look at how does it work in a work organization? In fact, the FBHET is an interesting example to understand the classical nature of work satisfaction, decision making, control and leadership in work and organization in Turkey. FBHET is located in Ostim which is one of the famous industrial complexes of Ankara, the capital of Turkey. I had a deep interview with one of its owners in addition to its six employees to understand the nature of work, organization and leadership styles. The factory is simply based on family business. That is why it is almost leaded by the elder brother, Mr. SüleymanBalçık. When he built the factory in 1959, he gave his surname to it and he is still the sole leader of the company although he has started to share a part of his power with his little brother due to the challenges of his aging years. That is to say, the elder brother is general director who is responsible for marketing, accounting and warehouse, whereas little brother is only responsible for production. Also, there are *usta* (master), *kalfa* (little master) and *çırak* (apprentice) in production process, and they are under the control of the little brother. Although in each unit or department there is a chief who is responsible for a sort of controlling and decision making process, the control and decision making process are centralized. For this reason, although chiefs and employees are responsible for the production, they are not referred for any managerial jobs. Additionally, the decision making process is under the control of the elder brother although he sometimes needs to refer his little brother "suggestions." Therefore, while looking the composition of the factory one can readily see that family network is the main criteria to even for being accepted to the job.

Considering different control strategies, it is hard to put the control system in this factory in simple, technical, and bureaucratic control categories (Edwards, 1980). For example, in administration, one can see some signs of simple control strategies because the elder brother directly exerts his power on whole workplace, but this is not enough to explain control system in this workplace. That is why I would like call it as traditional family control. This was verified by paternal attitudes of the factory owner or general director. To narrate, during my interview he had said that "I want to be like a father of my employees." The institution or governance mechanism can be either formal or informal in nature (North, 1990). FBHET is partly informal in nature. That is because traditional family rules are considered more than modern administration rules. In other words, informal rules were more dominant in this workplace rather than formal and rational rules. Furthermore, leadership is shaped through informal family rules which are not open to "the others" or "foreigners." I had interview with six employees to learn their perceptions about leadership in work in addition to their work satisfaction. All workers with whom I had the interview did not have a special training about heating elements technologies. They have learned the work process in the working area through experience. Almost all employees accepted the existence of an authority in workplace. Only one employee said, "There is no insult here, and we can talk to the employer about our problems," but this all about reporting problems due to not having any role in decision making process to find solutions.

None of the employees I had interviewed were a member of labor union, but almost all of employees believed that labor union are necessary to defend their rights, such as reducing working hours and increasing wages. Although most of the employees reported that they were happy about their jobs, none wanted their children to work in this workplace. They said that firstly they should complete their education and have better jobs. I asked a critical question in order to be sure about how they were accepted to this job: "Where did you learn about a requested new position for this job?" Only one person said, "I learnt about the job through the Internet." The rest five employees confessed that they had found the job through the family network.

Concluding Remarks

FBHET shows that leadership and decision making process is still keeping its classical form in work environment in Turkey. Despite some European standards in workforce, family networks and informal organizations are still in power and they still define the nature of work organization. Therefore, workers are not active enough to express their rights and demands. Instead, their passive situations make the family members more strong to be authoritarian leaders. However, this doesn't mean there aren't any democratic and laissez- faire leaders running their companies by providing opportunities to their workers. In particular, the production line in the factory seems to set a background for a hierarchy in the factory in which family members have already possessed. In other words, family members transferred their family hierarchies to the workplace in different ways. For instance, the elder son is only person substituting his father in his absence. That is why the bottom line here is that as a result of employing some achieved features of leadership an individual is assigned as a manager through their ascribed bloodline advantages instead of achieving the leadership status.

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