International
Journal of
**Human
Sciences
Research**

MULTIFACETED LEADERSHIP OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: A CASE STUDY[1]

Fernanda Martins
Professor at the Department of Social Sciences in Education and Researcher at `` Centro de Investigação em Educação`` Universidade do Minho
Department of Social Sciences of Education of: ``Universidade do Minho``
Campus de Gualtar - Braga
https://www.cienciavitae.pt/portal/C915-69E0-B8E7

Ana Paula Macedo
Professor at the Nursing School of: Universidade do Minho
Researcher at the Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing: ``Escola de Enfermagem de Coimbra``
Portugal
Collaborating researcher at: ``Centro de Investigação em Educação`
Universidade do Minho
Escola Superior de Enfermagem da Universidade do Minho
Campus de Gualtar - Braga
https://www.cienciavitae.pt/E611-B822-D0D6

1. This text was originally published in 2018, in Portuguese, in the book of Proceedings of the X Portuguese Congress of Sociology: ``*Na era da "pós-verdade"? Esfera pública, cidadania e qualidade da democracia no Portugal contemporâneo*``.The publication of the work in English allows access to researchers and teachers in the field of education from different parts of the world.

1

Abstract: The management model implemented in Portugal, with Decree-Law number: 75/2008 of April 22, highlights the school director. The case study now presented aims to present some data regarding the leadership styles of a director, within the scope of this management model. The content analysis of the interviews allows us to point out the existence of a congregation of actions and logic, underlying his leadership, which we call multifaceted leadership, supported by three different types of leadership: antagonistic/ demanding, business/managerial and democratic. Despite these three types, it becomes relevant within this management model to identify democratic leadership. It therefore appears that in action this director does not completely break with the previous model, the model of democratic management.

Keywords: New Management Model; Democratic management; School principal; Type of Leadership;

INTRODUCTION

The conditions created, in the field of management of Portuguese schools from the end of the nineties of the last century, in the sense of a formal change in power relations within the school, led to the introduction of the single-person management body, the director of school/group of schools and, this way, aimed to reinforce the school's leadership and provide greater effectiveness, but also more responsibility to the director (Decree-Law number: 75/2008, April 22). This incident also generated the concentration of powers in this unipersonal body.

In view of this normative-legal plan, of changes in public school management, one questions, on the one hand, the reception of this new figure in a specific school, where a case study was carried out and an attempt is also made to interpret the current leadership logics of the director in question. More specifically, the aim is to discuss whether the director and other actors conform to and reproduce unipersonal leadership, a leadership with greater power, or whether, on the contrary, they resist such an imposition, in order to develop practices, close to management. of a more democratic nature.

The data collected allows us to identify traces of different types of leadership in the actions of the director of the school under study, which leads us to classify it as a multifaceted leadership, with more regular leadership of the business/managerial, antagonistic/claimant type. and, finally, democratic. It therefore appears that in action this director does not completely break with the previous model, the model of democratic management.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Portuguese public-school management model, introduced with the publication of Decree-Law number: 75/2008, of April 22, is based, on the one hand, on the recentralizing nature of political power and school administration and, on the other hand, by the emergence of unipersonal leadership, concentrating various powers and competencies. In other words, this model ends up attributing significant powers and competencies to the director, "thus lengthening and verticalizing the respective organizational chart and reinforcing the prerogatives of formally unipersonal leadership" (LIMA, 2011, p. 47).

In this sense, Decree-Law number: 75/2008, of April 22, appears with changes classified as less democratic, at a time when in Portugal some managerialist measures were introduced in the field of education, particularly in its management (cf. MARTINS, 2009). One of the most obvious is the existence of a single-person management body and no longer collegiate, capable of providing "greater

effectiveness" to management, but also of giving greater "responsibility to the director", thus moving from an executive council and its respective president to the figure of the director. In addition, this unipersonal body was given a set of new powers, which until then were shared with other governance bodies, namely, powers related to democratic choice. In the words of LIMA (2011, p. 58)

> "(…) the director concentrates twenty-five responsibilities, inherently presides over the pedagogical council, everything seems to revolve around him, weakening the existing collegial structures and putting an end to almost all democratic choice processes in schools. (…). The director now freely appoints and dismisses the deputy director, advisors, department coordinators, coordinators of grouped establishments, in a management logic of a profile, a project, a management team, referring to something similar to the principle of 'unity of command', proposed at the beginning of the 20th century by Henry Fayol (1984)".

It must be noted that in the previous model (Decree-law number: 115-A/98, of May 4), collegiate bodies held significant powers, including the election of their president/coordinator, as well as decision-making. collegially in important matters. The pedagogical council, curriculum departments, among others, were in this situation. Thus, the president of the board of directors and, later, of the executive board, not only shared his leadership with other elements of the body he presided over, as well as with the school's other governing bodies. The change underlying the new management model may constitute a factor in the erosion of democratic management and, consequently, in the fragmentation of professional collegiality practices.

In view of this normative-legal plan, which changes the management of public schools, the reception of this new figure in a specific school, where the case study was carried out, is questioned. More specifically, we sought to question whether the director and other actors conform to and reproduce unipersonal leadership, a leadership with greater power, or whether, on the contrary, they resist such imposition, in order to develop practices, close to democratic management. These questions become of greater investigative interest if we bear in mind that a good number of current directors moved from the management body of the previous model to the current one (cf. LIMA, SÁ & REGO, 2017). It is within this framework that the present case study is developed, interpreting the current leadership logic of a school director and taking into consideration, the influence on leadership exercised by the director of previous management models. The data collected allows us to identify traces of different types of leadership in the actions of the director of the school under study, which leads us to classify it as a multifaceted leadership, with more regular leadership of the business/managerial, antagonistic/claimant type. and, finally, democratic.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The present study is part of a broader investigation carried out by a group of researchers from the Center for Research in Education, Institute of Education, ``Universidade do Minho``, with one of its axes of analysis being the introduction of New Public Management in the field of school management. public.

The methodology supporting the study was situated in a naturalistic research paradigm, the method is the case study (cf. YIN, 2005). In this context, two techniques were predominantly used to collect information: the survey through interviews with different school actors, as well as the analysis of school documents (Internal Regulations, Annual Activity Plan, Educational Project, among

others), as a way of capturing the normative guidelines produced in the school context. The interviews, semi-structured (cf. AMADO & FERREIRA, 2014), were systematized in a pre-designed script common to the entire group of researchers, who carried out the study in different schools/groups, which was used flexibly and adapted to the profile of each school/group and interviewee.

Thus, a total number of twelve interviewees were obtained, namely: the representative of the local authority on the general council (58 years old), the employee representative on the general council (47 years old), the president of the general council (52 years old), the representative of teachers on the general council (57 years old), the youngest teacher in the school (48 years old), the oldest teacher in the school (a teacher, 60 years old), two coordinators (a teacher, 50 years old and a department coordinator, 57 years old), the former president of the student association (52 years old)(1), the president of the parents and guardians association (42 years old) and the former president of that association (48 years old)(2) and the school director (59 years old).

The interviews took place at the end of the 2014/2015 academic year and all interviews were carried out on the school premises, namely in offices belonging to the management. The aforementioned interviews, whose average duration was between forty minutes and two hours, were recorded in audio form, after obtaining authorization from the respective interviewees. Participants were aware that the data obtained could be disclosed to the academic community, respecting the confidential nature of identities. In the following points we present this data, as well as its problematization around the multifaceted leadership (3) of the school director.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

THE DIMENSIONS OF A DIRECTOR'S MULTIFACETED LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

The director in question, aged 59, has a long experience as a school manager, having started his role as president of the Board of Directors in 1985. Later, uninterruptedly, he would hold the position of President of the Executive Board and currently serving as Director. Despite the different management models, over time, there has been a successive continuity of its exercise by the aforementioned director. With regard to his leadership, the data collected from different educational actors and the director himself point, throughout this journey, to the continuity of a multifaceted leadership. The identification of multifaceted leadership in the exercise of the role by this director under study leads us to break with the idea that directors exercise only one type of leadership, regardless of the groups of actors with whom they interact, the contexts, the unforeseen situations and uncertainties that may arise in the daily life of a school. This way, we consider that the type of leadership exercised by school directors/groups of schools can assume a contingent nature, requiring an analysis based on a conceptual reference that served as support for identifying a classification. In this context, we can highlight some dimensions that are close to "ideal types" of leadership and that coexist in the action of the director under analysis and that are pointed out more frequently in the speeches of the interviewed actors. However, among the three types that we identified, the identification of democratic leadership becomes relevant within the scope of the new management model.

A first type of leadership that emerges in the actors' speeches presents traits of a business

and managerial type of leadership, whose centrality is in achieving "greater efficiency in the pursuit of organizational and social objectives" (NEWMAN & CLARKE, 2012, p.359). It is about guaranteeing the process that establishes calculative structures, with emphasis on "good business practices that organizations in the public sector needed to learn" (ibid). The criticism that can be made against this set of theories and ideologies is that they exaggerate the centrality and importance of management and managers, tending to naturalize social practices and their power relations, based on typical conceptions of business culture. and the business world. As we have already mentioned, within the scope of the director's action, we only find some dimensions that fall within this logic, it is an action oriented towards the creation and management of the organization's material/economic resources, especially because at a certain point the school saw -is forced to generate its own income, as an alternative to "not having to ask for it", thus becoming more autonomous. In this context, the director realized that:

> "(…) the school had to ask for anything to do anything (…); If we wanted an overhead projector we had to ask for it, if we wanted anything, we always had our hand out. (…). I understood that we had to find an alternative route. So, I started thinking about sources of revenue for the school, the idea of creating the sports infrastructure came up, it would be 1991 or 1992, … obviously we didn't have the money to build the sports infrastructure, that was what we had to do. After six years, the infrastructure was ready, so at the moment it is a source of revenue for the school (…). For our projects, I would say that we are almost self-sufficient, (…) which allows us to do many things, gives us some effective autonomy, because talking about school autonomy without financial capacity is not autonomy. (…). We have a problem, we have to solve it, any school has to try to create sources of revenue" (school director).

The importance of some financial autonomy is also reinforced by other interviewees, who recognize that this is an achievement of the school director:

> "(…) If there is no funding for this, therefore, there is no autonomy, autonomy is, as I said, entirely linked to the budget that the school has. (…) this is the big problem, not just for schools, it is a big problem for all sectors that are financially dependent on the State. (…) this school works and has worked hard over the years without dependence on the State" (representative of the local authority on the general council).

The ability to generate own revenue seems to be a characteristic that defines a good leader, as reinforced by the following actor: "if there is a good manager, the school always has added value (…), a good manager to be able to raise funds or resources for the school is always an added value" (employee representative on the general council). This situation gains greater intelligibility if we take into consideration, the centralized nature of educational administration (cf. FORMOSINHO, 1986; LIMA, 1998), which seems to assume a bureaucratic logic. From this perspective, schools have few areas of autonomy, particularly when it comes to managing funds. In addition to this fact, the budget granted to schools, considered insufficient, means that the actors' speeches about good leaders appear associated with the ability to generate their own revenue, which ends up going back to the school community, and even to the wider community. Be that as it may, the fact is that this situation presents the contours of a business-type leadership, which in the current context is further promoted with the introduction of policies, in the field of public education, of a managerialist nature. Thus, the capture of funds by public institutions is not exactly a reality, but currently appears to constitute a parameter for classifying organizations' good practices.

However, it is important to highlight that from the perspective of the director and other interviewees, such revenues are invested in the school itself, which reveals the complexity of this issue.

Another type of leadership that we identified in the analysis of the actors' speeches is related to the antagonistic/revocative type of leadership. This type of leadership is guided by confrontation and discussion, as a way of maintaining control over the organization (cf. BALL, 1994). In the specific case of the director's action under study, this type of leadership is revealed in his position of confrontation and demand with the Ministry of Education, as we can see in the excerpts we present:

> "(…) it is not a submissive school (…) the school is an active school until, when confronted with the ministry, the ministry has a stance that is in fact regrettable" (former president of the parent's association).

> "(…) we are fortunate, once again, firstly the director, but also the management, who are very open to accepting that any directive is not complied with lightly, which are orders from the ministry of education, and when they are orders that we have remedies, although we contest some directives" (older teacher).

With this type of leadership, in our understanding, this director defends the school's autonomy, being a sign of non-compliance with heteronomous rules.

Finally, the last type of leadership that makes up multifaceted leadership concerns democratic leadership. Thus, this facet of the director's leadership assumes special relevance if we take into consideration, the normative-legal context that foresees a unipersonal body, which concentrates and calls upon itself powers, which until then were the responsibility of different collegiate bodies of the school. Some speeches from the interviewed actors identify, from a normative-legal point of view, the concentration of powers in the figure of the school director:

> "In law, where decisions are made is right there in the director's office" (older teacher).

> "If we read the legislation in a very restrictive way, not everything can be delegated, what will happen is that we will concentrate everything on the director, creating a terrible situation" (department coordinator).

Despite the normative-legal change in the relationship of powers within the school, in the domain of the school's organizational action, the actors deny a less democratic leadership exercised by the director, with the quality of being "genuine" and having a "democratic spirit" being recognized.". In the words of the following actors:

> "(…) He doesn't ask for opinions to say am I with someone or am I alone, he genuinely asks, he's someone with a democratic spirit, fortunately, still very much in his head" (older teacher at the school).

> "(…) when the legislation orders the director to nominate, appoint positions, they are all for appointment, which is something that bothers me deeply, our director, already with many restrictions, gives the opportunity to groups, which each of them individually can elect within the constraints on who will represent them" (older teacher at the school).

> "Here the democratic route has always been privileged, I have always given departments the possibility of electing the coordinator, it is one of the principles, democracy (…). In this aspect, the attitude was always the same" (school director).

This situation is not unrelated to the fact that the director is the same person who held management positions in the past, as we have already mentioned. Thus, this director seeks, according to the actors' speeches, to maintain the leadership style developed within the scope of democratic management. In this sense, there

6

has been a peaceful transition from collegial to single-person management, precisely due to the continuity of the person holding the management position and, consequently, the maintenance of the leadership style acquired in the past:

> "Not much has changed, it's the same people, the mentality doesn't change because the law has changed" (president of the general council).

> "As we have been going through management with the same person; In other words, with the director we didn't notice much of this difference" (general council teacher).

> "We didn't feel any big changes because Mr. director or former president of the executive board always had those guidelines and, therefore, did not stray too far from what he was and what he is" (employee of the general board).

> "[where the greatest power resides in the school] - It is in the management, in the director, in this case. It is a consequence of the model they imposed, but my practice remains the same. Even though I have power, I'm not going to use it, just to use it" (school director).

If the implementation of this new management model was intended to replace democratic management with a more vertical/hierarchical management, the actors' margins of action, particularly those of the director, end up not allowing its full implementation, such a scenario points to a change in continuity.

CONCLUSIONS

To carry out a case study, focusing, among other aspects, on the leadership of the school principal, allows us to point out the complexity in its exercise, as we had the opportunity to verify the coexistence of different types of leadership in action of the director, called multifaceted leadership. Among the types of leadership, a business and managerial type emerged with greater regularity, namely to overcome, simultaneously, the economic difficulties that the school was facing and the lack of autonomy in this domain, typical in the context of a centralized educational administration. A second type concerns an antagonistic/demanding facet of the school director, namely towards the Ministry of Education, guided by the defense of the school's autonomy, a sign of non-compliance with the heteronomous rules, imposed from 'top to bottom'., without the participation of the school community in its definition. The last type of leadership that makes up multifaceted leadership and, more pertinently, considering that this is a study around the reception of the new management model, concerns democratic leadership. From a normative-legal point of view, with this new management model, the figure of the director emerges with centrality within the school, due to its unipersonal nature and the powers attributed to it. However, in the field of the school's organizational action, the actors denied a faithful reproduction by the director of this more vertical/hierarchical management, referring their action to a democratic style of leadership, close to that developed within the scope of previous models, namely within the scope of the democratic management model. Thus, the actors' margins of action, particularly those of the director, end up not allowing its full implementation, this scenario points to a change in continuity.

Final Note: by personal decision, the authors write according to the new spelling agreement.

THANKS

NOTES

1. We chose to interview the former president of the student association as the school was taking steps to promote elections for this structure.

2. The interview with the former president of the parents' association was justified as the current president had taken office very recently and he suggested that the previous president be interviewed, given his vast experience in the position in question.

3. To present these types of action, we were inspired by organizational analysis models and some typologies on leadership in school.

REFERENCES

Amado, João; Ferreira, Sónia (2014). A entrevista na investigação educacional. In: João Amado (coord), *Manual de Investigação Qualitativa em Educação* (pp.207-232). Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra.

Ball, Stephen (1994). *La Micropolítica de la Escuela. Hacia una Teoría de la Organización Escolar.* Barcelona: Ediciónes Paidos.

Clarke, Janet; Newman, John (2012). Gerencialismo. *Educ. Real.*, 37(2), 353-381.

Formosinho, João (1986). *A* regionalização *do sistema de ensino. Cadernos Municipais, Revista de Ação Regional e Local,* number: 3839, 63-67.

Lima, Licínio (1998). A administração do sistema educativo e das escolas (1986/1996), Ministério da Educação. *A Evolução do Sistema Educativo e o PRODEP* (pp.17-96). Lisboa: Ministério da Educação/Comunidade Europeia, Estudos Temáticos.

Lima, Licínio (2011). Diretor de escola: subordinação e poder. In: António Neto-Mendes, Jorge A. Costa, e Alexandre Ventura (orgs.), *A Emergência do Director da Escola, Questões Políticas e Organizacionais, Atas do VI Simpósio sobre organização e gestão escolar* (pp. 47-63). Aveiro: Universidade de Aveiro.

Lima; Licínio; Sá, Virgínio & Rego, Guilherme (2017). O que é a democracia na 'gestão democrática das escolas'? In: Licínio Lima & Virgínio Sá, *O Governo das Escolas* (pp. 213-258). Vila Nova de Famalicão: Húmus/Universidade do Minho.

Martins, Fernanda (2009). *Gerencialismo e Quase-Mercado Educacional: A Acç*ão Organizacional Numa Escola Secundária em Época de Transição. Braga: Universidade do Minho. Tese de Doutoramento em Educação, especialidade em Organização e Administração Escolar.

Yin, Robert (2005). *Estudo de Caso: Planejamento e Métodos*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.

LEGISLATION

Decree-Law number: 769-A/76, of October 23, Democratic Management of Preparatory and Secondary Education Establishments.

Decree-Law number: 115-A/98, of May 4, Regime of Autonomy, Administration and Management of Pre-School Education Establishments

Decree-Law number: 75/2008, of April 22, Regime of Autonomy, Administration and Management of Public Establishments for Pre-School Education and Basic and Secondary Education.

8