Theories of Motivation in Public Policies Process

Dorina Țicu*  

*“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, B-dul Carol I, no. 11, Iași, 700506, Romania

Abstract

The decision-making process at the level of public policies requires increased attention because of the actors involved who have the responsibility to implement the decisions and programmes proposed. This article aims to operationalize certain theories of motivation applicable in the public policies such as the theory of the hierarchy of needs, theory of the two factors, through a quantitative study in the city halls of the towns that are county seats (Iași, Vaslui, Bacău, Fočani, Galați, Suceava, Piatra Neamț, Botoșani). The article’s aim is to identify the subjective elements, the intrinsic-motivational factors (assessment, self-development, social, security needs) and the extrinsic-motivational factors which can determine the decision-making process.

1. Introduction. Actors and decisions in public policies process

The decision-making process at the level of public policies requires giving increased attention to the actors involved because they are the ones who have the responsibility to implement the decisions, the proposed programmes. Basically, the way they behave, how they value certain actions or trajectories of all these issues depends on an implementation of a decision more or less perfect, beyond the access of the actors to the resources, of their status or of the internal or the external framework of the decision. The actors’ motivation becomes a component of any analysis at the level of the decision in public policies because it translates itself into the actors'
behaviour through an extra intensity directed that have as aims the effort made by actors in order to achieve the proposed goals.

2. Theories of motivation in public policies process

There are several theories about the motivation of the actors involved in the decision-making process at the level of public policies, but we'll just stop at two of them: the hierarchy of the needs theory and the theory of two factors.

The hierarchy of the needs theory is developed by Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943, pp. 370-376) who carries out a hierarchy of human needs. According to this theory, every individual has certain needs which may be ranked starting from the physiological needs (food, shelter, sex, other bodily needs), those related to security (safety, protection), the social ones (affection, acceptance, friendship), assessing ones (factors related to self-esteem, self-respect, recognition, attention) to the self-development ones (to become what everybody wants and is able to become, to hold power) (Maslow, 1942, pp. 335-340). Maslow believes that the physiological needs and those related to safety are basic, primary needs, while the others come under the category of "high needs" (Robbins, 2003, p. 158). The primary needs are those that are satisfied by every individual, while the secondary needs are satisfied at the external level, through different ways such as payment. This theory appears at the level of the decision-making process in the area of the managers who may be motivated by certain needs when they are discussing a decision of a solution for a public policy or when they are engaging in this process or when they may inspire the others around them, starting with those needs in order to achieve the desired result following the implementation of that public policy, especially when there are created “coalitions of support” (Miroiu, Zulean, Rădoi, 2002, p. 45) or ad-hoc coalitions.

The theory of the two factors (also called as the motivation theory as hygiene) was questioned by the psychologist Frederick Herzberg (Herzberg, Mausner & Snzderman, 1996, pp. 15-20). This theory is based on the question: what do people expect from the work that they have achieved? and that has as response two factors: “good or bad expectations” (Herzberg, 1964, pp. 3 – 7). This theory argues that the success of the implementation process is directly related to the relationship between the actors and their work which is quantified by the degree of satisfaction or by the lack of it. If the level of satisfaction is higher, the process of implementation has a greater chance of success by the high degree of motivation of the actors (Herzberg, 1968, p. 59). With satisfaction, the successful implementation is conditioned by the presence and by the necessity of “the hygiene factors” (Robbins, 2003, p. 161), which include: the agency policies in which the actors are hired, the type of the administration of the organisation, the conditions of the payroll and the manners of the activities evaluation. As long as all these factors relate to the needs of the actors, they are considered relevant by them, the satisfaction is high, and this translates into an active, purposeful behaviour.

The decision-making process is viewed, from this perspective, as a process that involves achieving some goals that may have consequences for the actors that are watching their needs. As long as these consequences will be in the eyes to the actors and their needs will be satisfied, they will be motivated in this direction.

3. Methodology and results

In this study, we carried out the two previously mentioned theories. Subsequently, at the level of this part of our analysis, we try to determine whether the motivation of the decision makers is influencing or can influence the decision making process based on the variable that refers to the orientation of the actors to the extrinsic/intrinsic factors.

The present study was conducted during the period March-June 2012, on a sample of 568 respondents, public servants, employees of the city halls of towns which are county residence: Botoșani, Suceava, Piatra Neamț, Iași, Bacău, Vaslui, Focșani, Galați.
The sample is representative and it is based on the probabilistic process, trying to ensure that "each element of the population has equal opportunities to sample" (Miftode, 2003, p. 256). In relation to the size of the sample, the probabilistic error is most likely somewhere around 6% (Miftode, 2003, p. 257), the values of Cronbach-Alfa is 0.716 (this provides the internal validity of the questionnaire (Tavakol, Dennick, 2011, p. 54)).

The summary of the demographic data is the following: 61.9% of female, 26.1% of male and 12.1% non-response; 35.7% aged between 31 and 40 years old, 31.2% between 41 and 50 years old, 20.4% over 50 years old, 12.5% aged between 21 and 30 years old and 0.2% up to twenty years old; last school graduated – 48.3% high school, 12.3% college, 35.6% Master’s degree and 1% Ph.D.; at the time the questionnaire was distributed 47.3% declared themselves advisors, 31.8% inspectors, 11.7% contact persons, 8.4% Heads of Office, and 0.8% directors; monthly income – 26.8% up to 1000 LEI, 14.8% from 1000 to 1500 LEI, 8.6% from 1501 to 2000 LEI, 1.6% from 2001 to 2500 LEI, 0.4% over 2500 LEI, and 47.9% non-responses.

The needs identification of decision makers was achieved through the Maslow’s Theory. From the total respondents, 38.3% declared that the job they have provides to them daily living in very large measure (psychological needs), 13.9% - in a large measure, 18.5% - not in a large, but not in small measure, 12.7% - in a small measure and 8.8% - not at all (non-response rate was 7.9%). In terms of safety at work (security needs), 24.8% of respondents felt safe in a very large measure; 22.5% - in a large measure; 22.2% - feel neither safe nor in insecurity; 10.6% - feel safe in a small measure, while 5.4% - not at all (14.4% - non-responses rate). From a total of 85.2%, 5.4% of respondents have not created any friends at work (social needs); 8.2% in small measure; 22.4% neither a small, nor a large measure; 26.2% in a large measure; and 23% in a very large measure. 28.4% of the respondents feel respected at the workplace (assessment needs) in a very large measure; 25.9% in a large measure; 21.3% neither a small, nor a large measure; 5.7% in a small measure, and 4.8% not at all (13.9%-non-responses rates). From a total of 85.5% of respondents, 19.1% claim that if they feel prepared, in a very large measure they may advance (self-development needs); 20.4% said to a large measure; 23.3% - neither a small, nor a large measure; 11.6% in a small measure; 11.1% - not at all.

Creating a hierarchy of the needs, it can, therefore, be said that, after the item "in a very large measure", their hierarchy is as follows: first, comes the psychological needs (38.3%), followed by the assessment needs (28.4%), followed by social needs (23%), and safety needs (24.8%), then those of self-development (19.1%). Only safety needs are primary needs, others are secondary.

In terms of the motivational factors that can influence the degree of the motivation of the decision makers, they can be of two types: hygiene or extrinsic factors – which are related to the work environment, the relationships with the others - and motivating factors or intrinsic – which refers to responsibility, recognition, satisfaction at work. From this point of view, we have tried, at this level of our analysis, to determine what is the degree of motivation of respondents compared with these internal factors, as well as with external ones, through twelve items that had to be arranged on a scale that measured the intensity (1 – "very important", 5 – "not at all important") and then to observe the frequency either of the internal factors or of the external ones (in terms of Herzberg Theory: the items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12 – operationalizes the external/extrinsic factors, the items 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11 – internal/intrinsic ones (Robbins, 2003, p. 152)).

Intrinsic factors: item 1: 46% of respondents consider the statement "I want to have an interesting job" is very important; important – 18.8%; 11.6% - neither important, nor unimportant; 2.8% - unimportant; 2.3% -not important at all. Item 3 – "recognition and appreciation for their work" - 70.1% - very important; important for 11.3%; 4.2% - neither important, nor unimportant and 0.8% - unimportant; 0.8% not important at all. Item 4 – "I want the opportunity to be promoted" – 43.4% - very important; 18.7% - important; 12% - not important or unimportant; unimportant – 2.6%; 4.8% - not important at all. Item 7 – "I wish I had responsibilities at work" – 31.6% - very important; 34% - unimportant; 9.9% - not important or unimportant; unimportant – 2.6%; 2.9% - not important at all. Item 10 – "I want the opportunity for personal development through learning new things" – 55.7% - very important; 18.7% - important; 5.7% - neither important nor unimportant; unimportant – 1.5%; 1.4%
- not important at all. Item 11 – "I want a job where I can go to the final my projects" – 49.5% - very important; important - 19%; 7.4% - neither important, nor unimportant; unimportant - 2%; 2.6% - not important at all.

External factors: item 2 - "I want to have a good boss", for 52.8% is very important; important for 16.2%; 8% - neither important nor unimportant; unimportant for 3.1%; for 1.2% not important at all. Item 5 - "I want my job to ensure a satisfactory life" – for 62.2% is very important; 12.8% - important; 2.8% - not important or unimportant; unimportant for 0.9% and for 0.5% - not important at all. Item 6 – "I want my job to ensure respect in society"- for 40.7% is very important; important for 22.4%; for 9.6% is not important or unimportant; unimportant for 2% and for 1.5% - not important at all. Item 8 – "I want to have good conditions at the place where I work" – for 55.1% is very important; important for 20.4%; 6.8% - neither important nor unimportant; unimportant for 1.2% and for 0.3% - not important at all. Item 9 – "I want the work to be carried out according to the rules, clear procedures" – for 57.7% is very important; important for 17.3%; 7.4% - neither important nor unimportant; unimportant for 1.2%; for 0.5% - not important at all. Item 12 – "I want security at the workplace" – for 56.8% is very important; important for 16.5%; 6.3% - neither important, nor unimportant; unimportant for 1.5%; for 1.1% - not important at all.

From here, in terms of the general orientation of the respondents, 44.1% of them are oriented to the extrinsic factors, 36% to intrinsic factors and 14.4% – both to the extrinsic factors, as well as to intrinsic ones. 5.6% of respondents entered at the rate of non-responses.

Thus, it can be seen that the ratio between the actors oriented to the extrinsic factors and those oriented to the intrinsic ones is pretty balanced. The decision-makers oriented to the extrinsic factors– which are related to the work environment, relationships with others - are over-represented, however.

On the other hand, it can be seen that among all kinds of needs there is a correlation of positive sense (Table 1).

Table 1: The correlation of needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Psychological needs</th>
<th>Self-development needs</th>
<th>Social needs</th>
<th>Security needs</th>
<th>Assessing needs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological needs</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>.258(**)</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.177(**)</td>
<td>.163(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-development needs</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>.258(**)</td>
<td>.307(**)</td>
<td>.449(**)</td>
<td>.501(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.307(**)</td>
<td>.487(**)</td>
<td>.432(**)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CP</td>
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*** CP – Pearson Correlation

The more the respondents grow some type of need, the more others develop. The highest value at the level of correlation between the psychological needs and other four types is between the psychological and the self-development needs and then between the self-development needs and the appreciation ones, between the social ones and the security ones and between the security and the appreciation.

In terms of correlations between the intrinsic factors and the extrinsic ones, all the correlations were positive and had had much higher values, which means that if actors are intrinsically motivated, they become after that extrinsically motivated.
4. Conclusions

Therefore, knowing the needs of decision-makers is absolutely necessary in order to determine the way in which the decisions are taken at the level of the public policies process. The decision and the decision making process are influenced by the typology of the needs of decision makers, on the one hand and, on the other hand, by the way they rank them.

Starting from the data presented above, it can be concluded that the decision and the decision-making process are determined by the motivation of the decision makers. The motivation of the decision makers is also influenced by their needs. These needs are, on one hand, strictly intrinsic– are strictly related to the individual preferences of decision makers - and helps shaping the extrinsic needs – related to satisfaction at work – in particular the public administration.

The decision and the decision-making process in the area of public policies is, thus, an approach which should be studied from the perspective of decision-makers, from the perspective of the preferences of the actors involved, actors who have subjective preferences, individual needs. From this point of view, the future research needs to outline the boundary between the public space – the space of the public policies and public administration, where public policies are processed – and the private one – the subjective space of the actor.

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References