How to Lead a Locality: Evidence from Local Political Leaders in Slovenia

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The paper discusses the application of certain aspects of political leadership in Slovenian municipalities. The author investigates how Slovenian mayors perceive their role in the local community, how they perceive the function of political leadership, and which characteristics prevail in the leadership of Slovenian municipalities. The author is particularly interested whether mayors place an emphasis on the characteristics of leaders or of managers while leading their municipalities. The paper presents a newly designed typology, i.e. a characteristic typology of mayors as leaders and mayors as managers. Based on an extensive analysis of empirically gathered data, the author has discovered that the majority of Slovenian mayors lead their municipalities in a visionary manner, with a long-term stance on municipal development on the basis of established rules and procedures, and with a preference for personal contacts with citizens and the use of emotional intelligence. In the differentiated system of Slovenian local government mayors are

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mostly democratic, proactive, and strategically oriented visionaries, who see their position as a long-term mission.

Keywords: local political leadership, roles and tasks, mayor, Slovenia

1. Points of Departure: Perception of Roles and Tasks Associated with the Mayoral Office

Although organisational roles and tasks are more or less clearly defined within formal norms and rules, it is true that the higher the position is, the less precise formal rules are.[1] Leaders, particularly those who hold the highest political positions, face tasks that are often defined very loosely (Larsen, 2000, p. 6). Leach et al. (2005) explained that political leadership offers plenty of room for the interpretation of roles where political leaders can develop their skills and abilities. In some cases these have an impact on their actions, as well as the operation and leadership. Mayors therefore develop – regardless of their operating environment – a variety of skills and abilities in order to create effective coalitions in the municipal council, as well as in the broader local environment (Lowdnes & Leach, 2004). This places an emphasis on understanding the ways of leadership and the leaders' labour orientation (Gains, 2007, p. 298). Therefore, it is not surprising that mayors occupy different roles in their mayoral positions and consequently prefer some tasks to others.

Due to different perceptions of the roles and tasks of local political leaders, Ivanišević (1987, pp. 87–82 & pp. 113–129) developed a theoretical framework for the comparative analysis of mayors. He defined six mayoral tasks or roles: administrative coordination, political integration, transmission of political decisions, separation between politics and administration, vertical integration of the whole political system of a country, and representation of local interest before central bodies.

Based on extensive empirical studies of political leadership, Elcock (2010) designed a matrix of local political leaders' (i.e. elected mayors') roles. The horizontal axis presents three sets of leadership attributes: (1) the *formal powers and duties*; (2) *informal relations*, which the mayor needs to devel-

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op with the director of municipal administration (CEO) and municipal councillors, as well as with political parties, trade unions, voluntary organisations, and other partners; and (3) *personal characteristics*, including charisma, integrity, and the ability to develop good relationships with other local leaders. On the vertical axis Elcock (2010) ranked three of the most important sets of mayoral roles: (1) *governmental* – policy formulation and coordination of the municipal council, composition and supervision of the budget, and convening and leading municipal council meetings; (2) *governance* – cooperation with complex networks of stakeholders, negotiations with service providers, contractors, traders, voluntary organisations, and other actors in a fragmented local system; and (3) *allegiance* – maintaining contacts with municipal councillors, political parties, citizens, and voters, with the specific intention of maintaining and ensuring a strong electorate at the following election.

Figure 1: Analytical grid for local political leaders – mayors

	Institutional/Formal	Informal	Individual
Influences	(Manifest/Structure)	(Latent/agents)	(Charisma/agent)
	Legislation; Standing orders; Council constitution	Relations with council, political parties, CEO, officers	Experience; Background

Roles			
Governmental	Policy, budget, vetoes, appointments, personnel	Relations with political parties, backbenchers, CEO, chief officers	Articulate, ability to dominate, negotiate; competencies/experience
Governance	Representation, outside memberships, decentralised structures	Relations with lobbies, interests, other levels of government	Reticulist abilities/skills, established contacts/networks; ruthless
Allegiance	Term of office, formal relation to council; power of recall/dismissal; abolition of office	Relations with outside parties, lobbies, electorate; Power	Approachable, assessable; risk of corruption; clientelism; power

Source: Adapted from Elcock, 2010, p. 7.

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An empirical study of the relationship between personality traits and successful leadership performance has revealed that mayors outlined as their key priorities: (1) personal success – cooperation with others and managing relations; (2) strategic direction and integrated oversight; (3) political intelligence – understanding and action in political arena; and (4) organisational mobility – organisational and cultural changes (Leach & Wilson, 2002). Building on this, Leach and Wilson (2002) divided the work orientation and mayoral roles into four categories: (1) preservation of political association (construction of a multi-party coalition in the municipal council or maintaining alliances within the majority), (2) providing strategic direction and policy development, (3) representation of the municipality to the outside world, and (4) ensuring the effective implementation of adopted decisions. This distribution coincides with the distinction between mayoral roles developed by Koprić (2009). Koprić (2009, p. 84) argues that we can distinguish between a minimum of four roles: political, administrative/managerial, internally oriented leadership, and externally oriented leadership.

In addition, another differentiation of mayoral roles can be highlighted – *mayor as leader* and *mayor as manager*. The author has no intention of analysing the wider differentiation of leadership and management concepts, but simply wants to make a distinction between mayors who with their tasks, *modi operandi,* and personality traits come closer to the theoretical description of leaders, and those mayors who operate more like managers. Zaleznik (1992, p. 1) argues that leaders and managers are different. He says that leaders are like artists, who tolerate chaos and a lack of structure, while managers follow order, support supervision, and favour quick solutions to problems. A more detailed distinction between leaders and managers is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distinction between managers and leaders

	Managers	Leaders
Attitudes toward goals	Take an impersonal, passive outlook.	Take a personal, active outlook; shape rather than respond to ideas. Alter moods: evoke images, expectations.
	Goals arise out of necessities, not desires.	Change how people think about what is desirable and possible. Set company direction.

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	Managers	Leaders
Conceptions of work	Negotiate and coerce. Balance opposing views.	Develop fresh approaches to problems.
	Design compromises. Limit choices.	Increase options. Turn ideas into exciting images.
	Avoid risk.	Seek risk when opportunities appear promising.
Relations with others	Prefer working with people, but maintain minimal emotional involvement. Lack empathy.	Attracted to ideas. Relate to others directly, intuitively, empathetically.
	Focus on process, e.g. *how* decisions are made rather than *what* decisions to make.	Focus on substance of events and decisions, including their meaning for participants.
	Communicate by sending ambiguous signals; subordinates perceive them as inscrutable, detached, and manipulative. Organisation accumulates bureaucracy and political intrigue.	Subordinates describe them using emotionally rich adjectives, e.g. "love", "hate". Relations appear turbulent, intense, disorganised, yet motivation intensifies, and unanticipated outcomes proliferate.
Sense of self	Comes from perpetuating and strengthening existing institutions.	Comes from struggles to profoundly alter human and economic relationships.
	Feels part of the organisation.	Feels separate from the organisation.

Source: Adapted from Zaleznik, 1992, p. 1.

This paper discusses the application of certain aspects of political leadership in Slovenian municipalities. We are interested in how Slovenian mayors perceive their role in the local community, and specifically whether mayors place an emphasis on the characteristics of leaders or of managers while leading their municipalities. Therefore, this paper addresses two research questions in analysing Slovenian local leadership:

RQ1: How do mayors perceive the function of political leadership?

RQ2: Which characteristics (leadership or managerial) prevail among mayors of Slovenian municipalities?

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2. Data Collection

The data used in this paper were collected for a comprehensive project on local political leadership in Slovenian municipalities.[2] This is the first study of local political leadership in Slovenia, which was modelled after a comprehensive, internationally comparable, study of mayors from seventeen European countries, entitled *The European Mayor*.[3] However, some specific elements were added. An empirical survey was conducted among Slovenian mayors between January and April of 2014. We used quota sampling to select the participating municipalities. Slovenian municipalities were divided into five groups according to municipality size (criterion of population). In each group of municipalities one half was randomly selected (random sampling). A survey among mayors, based on an individual (personal) approach, was conducted in four stages. Finally, 106 out of 212 responses were collected, thereby achieving the objective – 100 per cent response to quota sampling, which coincides with half of the population of Slovenian mayors.[4]

Based on an extensive analysis, we placed Slovenia in the Central and Eastern European group according to Hesse/Sharpe's typology (1991) of vertical power relations. We also placed it in the strong mayor model according to Mouritzen/Svara's typology (2002) of horizontal power relations. Furthermore, we analysed the normative framework of Slovenian local government and calculated the index of institutionally determined mayoral strength. In addition, we placed Slovenian local political leaders – who are institutionally among the strongest in Europe[5] – among the executive mayors (Kukovič, 2015, p. 71) according to the characteristics of the POLLEADER typology models (EUROLOC & EURA, 2004; Bäck et al., 2006).

It can be said that a differentiated system of local government exists in Slovenia, where all municipalities (regardless of size) have the same duties, obligations, and responsibilities. This means that within the Slovenian local government system there is no functional or organisational unbundling of municipalities. Moreover, all Slovenian mayors have equal

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[2] The data for this study was part of the author's PhD dissertation project entitled *Styles of Local Political Leadership*.

[3] More about the study in Bäck et al., 2006.

[4] For a detailed methodological explanation see Kukovič, 2015, pp. 145–154.

[5] Slovenian mayors were outranked only by their French counterparts.

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powers, irrespective of whether they lead a municipality of 300 or more than 200,000 inhabitants.[6] Because we wanted to see if specific characteristics could be observed in the leadership of large and small municipalities according to the population criterion, we considered municipality size as an independent variable.[7]

3. Analysis of Perception of Roles and Tasks Among Slovenian Mayors

With the intent of forming a clearer picture, we started the analysis of the perception of roles and tasks of Slovenian mayors with a brief description of the mayoral role in the Slovenian local self-government system. The mayor is an individual body, a political official elected for a four-year term of office by direct election, i.e., by secret ballot cast by voters who have permanent residence in the municipality (Local Self-Government Act, 2007, Article 42). The right to vote for, and to be elected as, mayor is granted to every citizen who has the right to vote in municipal council elections. The candidacy procedure is fairly simple: political parties and groups of voters can propose candidates. Mayoral elections use the double-round absolute-majority vote system – the candidate who gets a majority of all the votes cast is elected. If none of the candidates receive an absolute majority of the votes cast, a second round is held for the two candidates who received the most votes. The second round should be held no later than 21 days following the day of the first round (Brezovšek & Kukovič, 2012).

In accordance with the way the work of a municipality is organised, as well as the distribution of competences among municipal bodies concerning municipal tasks, the role of mayor is executive and coordinative at the same time. One of the mayor's more prominent competencies is the political and legal representation of the municipality and the municipal council. The mayor summons and presides over municipal council sessions, but has no right to vote. As an executive body, the mayor primarily

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[6] According to the population criterion, the smallest Slovenian municipality has 372 inhabitants, while the largest municipality has 286,307 inhabitants (data for the second half of 2014 (H2 – situation after 1 July 2014). Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2015).

[7] We divided the municipalities into two groups: large municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants and small municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.

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executes the decisions made by the municipal council[8] and has the right of legislative initiative. The mayor proposes the draft budget, municipal decrees, and other legal acts for adoption by the municipal council.[9] Mayors are "masters" of municipalities because they look after municipal assets, replenish them, and provide for an increase in their value on a daily basis by virtue of signing various contracts, public tenders, the rational and economical implementation of the budget, plus a strict consideration of the principles of good management. Their tasks also include the summoning of citizen assemblies and the adoption of emergency measures when the lives and/or property of citizens are endangered (Brezovšek & Kukovič, 2012). As the commander of civil protection, the mayor decides on all matters concerning protection against environmental and other disasters, and adopts protection and rescue plans (Local Self-Government Act, 2007, Article 33). However, the most important mayoral function is being in charge of the municipal administration (Haček, 2006, p. 166), where mayors *de facto* perform the functions of decision-making, directing, delegating, supervising, and controlling.[10] The mayor of a municipality

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[8] The mayor directs the work of the municipal administration with regard to the execution of decisions adopted by the municipal council, and executes the decisions of the municipal council in accordance with their own powers and tasks (Local Self-Government Act, 2007, Article 33). The mayor provides for the publication of statutes, decrees, and other general legal acts of the municipality, and for the annulment of conclusions and the execution of other decisions of the municipal council. Within the scope of their competences, mayors provide for the lawfulness of regulations and other decisions adopted by the municipal council. The mayor may withhold the publication of a general legal act of the municipality, as well as the execution of decisions adopted by the municipal council, and notify the competent ministry of the unlawfulness of the decisions in question. They may submit a request to the Constitutional Court for the assessment of the compliance of a municipality's general legal act with the Constitution and the law. The mayor may initiate the procedure for the nullification of administrative decisions before the Administrative Court (Local Self-Government Act, 2007, Article 33).

[9] The mayor submits proposals of the draft municipal budget and the draft consolidated balance sheet, as well as other budgetary acts, the appointment of deputy-mayors and the decision on unprofessional performance of the function of deputy-mayor, and the establishment of bodies of the municipal administration and the body (or bodies) of joint municipal administration.

[10] As the head of municipal administration, the mayor decides on administrative matters in municipal competence at the second level, on appeals filed against the decisions adopted by the body of joint municipal administration that belongs to the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality the mayor governs, and decides in disputes over jurisdiction between municipal administration bodies. The mayor appoints and dismisses the director of municipal administration and heads of municipal administration bodies, and with other mayors, appoints the head of the joint municipal administration body. They determine the systematisation of posts in municipal administration, decide on the appointment or conclu-

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plays a central role in the Slovenian local self-government system and, due to the fact that the mayor is an individual, one-person body, the citizens find that he or she is the most recognisable one.

Based on normative framework review, it can be observed that mayoral tasks are quite specifically determined in the legislation. That is why the following steps in our analysis focus on the perceptions and attitudes of mayors towards the nature of their work in the local community; i.e., how they perform mayoral tasks.

Our first assumption is that mayors establish the mode of leadership based on their views and work priorities. Hence we can claim that mayoral perception of roles and tasks is a very important topic for understanding leadership better.

The mayors were asked how important particular tasks were.[11] According to the data gathered, the mayors recognised the following mayoral tasks as the most important: "to attract resources from external sources", "to ensure the good quality of local services", "to encourage new projects in the community", and "to create a vision for the municipality" (Kukovič, 2015, pp. 248–249). Additional analysis of the data collected in the international survey *The European Mayor* (EUROLOC & EURA, 2004) shows that not only do Slovenian mayors believe these tasks to be "the most important mayoral tasks", but so do mayors from other post-communist countries (Kukovič, 2015, p. 217).

Furthermore, the mayors were asked about the areas in which municipalities should have more competences.[12] It was assumed that mayors would like to have more competences in those areas which they perceive to be a priority. The largest proportion of mayors (93.4 per cent) responded that municipalities have (too) few competencies in the area of "local development".[13] This response was expected, because previous surveys on

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sion of employment relationship(s) in the municipality, order the municipal administration to perform tasks in support of the municipal council, and are accountable to the council for the performance of municipal administration with regard to the execution of decisions adopted by the municipal council. The mayor provides for expert and administrative assistance of the municipal administration to the municipal oversight committee and directs the work of the municipal administration and the joint municipal administration body (Juvan Gotovac, 2000, p. 17).

[11] The question was: "Many different tasks are associated with the mayor's position. How important do you think the following tasks are?"

[12] The mayors were asked: "In which of the following areas, in your opinion, should municipalities have more than their current competence?"

[13] All mayors from larger municipalities highlighted this area.

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Slovenian local government[14] had shown a strong preference for (and a work focus on) local development in the sense of local investments, development projects, development of the economy, and so on. Areas that follow regarding the proportion of responses are: spatial and environmental management (91.5 per cent), environmental protection (75.5 per cent), and heritage protection (67.9 per cent). For purposes of comparison it may be added that these areas were most frequently pointed out by European mayors as well (EUROLOC & EURA, 2004).

Furthermore, we observed a significant gap between large and small Slovenian municipalities in the area of non-profit social housing, because more than 40 per cent of mayors from large municipalities recognised this area as one where municipalities should have more competencies. On the other hand, only 26.6 per cent of mayors from small municipalities thought the same. It is also interesting to note that mayors from large municipalities responded with higher percentages in all the given areas compared to mayors from small municipalities. That means that mayors from large municipalities would like to have (even) more competencies and jurisdictions in various areas.

Secondly, we assumed that the time distribution and organisation of mayoral activities are based on a mayor's priorities. That is why mayors were asked how much time they devoted to individual activities.[15] Table 2 shows that mayors spend most of their time each week on "meetings with administrative staff"[16] and on "other professional mayoral activities" – an average of more than seven hours per week per each activity. If this response is linked with the *de iure* determined mayoral competences, we can observe that being in charge of the municipal administration, as one of the crucial tasks, also appears in everyday mayoral performance.

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[14] See, for instance, the research project *Mayors and Deputy Mayors,* 2012.

[15] The question was open-ended: "On average, how many hours do you spend each week on the following activities?"

[16] On average, mayors from large municipalities devote even more time to meetings with administrative staff (10 hours per week), compared to their counterparts from small municipalities (6.5 hours per week).

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Table 2: Mayoral activities

	Large municipalities	Small municipalities	All municipalities
Meetings with council and executive board	2.5	2.5	2.5
Meetings with administrative staff	10.0	6.5	7.4
Meetings with citizens, groups, etc.	8.8	6.1	6.8
Ceremonial and representative functions at the town hall	8.1	4.0	5.1
Public debates and conferences outside the town hall	4.0	2.9	3.2
Field visits (official and unofficial) in the municipality	8.5	6.9	7.3
Meetings with authorities from other municipalities	2.3	2.2	2.2
Meetings with authorities from the national government	2.3	1.6	1.7
Meetings with mayors from neighbouring municipalities	2.3	1.9	2.0
Individual preparation for mayoral duties	7.0	6.0	6.2
Political party meetings	1.5	1.1	1.2
Other professional mayoral activity	5.7	8.0	7.4
Other important activities**	6.1	5.6	5.7

* The data in the table shows the average number of hours per week.
** Mayors specified other important activities: work on projects, supervision of investments, meetings with contractors, evaluation of requests and complaints, answering questions asked by the media and citizens, and reading and responding to emails.
Source: Author.

As shown in Table 2, local political leaders spend considerable time on "official and unofficial field visits in the municipality" and on "meetings with citizens and other groups" (an average of about seven hours per week).[17] This coincides with responses that personal contact is the most effective

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[17] A difference may be observed between the responses of mayors from large municipalities and mayors from small municipalities. On average, mayors from large municipalities spend more hours per week on both activities (8.5 and 8.8 hours), compared to mayors from small municipalities (6.9 and 6.1 hours).

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source for the mayor to obtain information on the level of support among the citizens and to be informed on what they think about the functioning of the local authority. According to the data, Slovenian mayors spend the smallest share of time in "political party meetings" (an average of only one hour per week).

Next, Slovenian mayors were asked about three particular aspects of the mayor as a political leader.[18] According to the data, the most important mayoral tasks are those associated with planning, strategy development, and direction of local policies (the average value is 2.9 out of 4).[19] This confirms that mayors would like to occupy the mayoral position for a longer period, not just for one term of office, and they try to create a long-term strategy and vision for the development of the municipality. A comparative study shows that such results are not present only in the Slovenian case, but also among mayors from other European countries, particularly those from the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Belgium (EUROLOC & EURA, 2004), as well as Iceland (Hlynsdottir, 2016, p. 16).

Slovenian mayors evaluated the question linked to the establishment of cohesion and maintaining sound relations with the municipal council as the next most important task (an average value of 2.82 out of 4). It should be added that mayors from small municipalities ranked these tasks slightly higher than did the mayors from large municipalities (2.87 compared to 2.67). It was somewhat expected (regarding the tasks that were evaluated as the most important) that the lowest-ranked tasks were those associated with the supervision and implementation of politics (the average value is 2.63).

So far we have analysed the priorities and tasks of Slovenian mayors in greater detail. At this point we included the views of mayors on their role as political leaders in the analysis. Mayors were asked what they would give priority to, if there were a clash between different considerations in their daily work.[20] We discovered that mayors from both large and small

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[18] We asked the mayors: "Please rate how important the following tasks are for a mayor as a political leader." The mayors evaluated the tasks on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 means "not tasks of the mayor" and 4 means "the most important tasks of the mayor".

[19] We observed that the average value of mayors from large municipalities was even higher (3.15), because 40 per cent of mayors evaluated this task as "the most important task of the mayor".

[20] The question was: "If there were a clash between different considerations in your daily work, what priority would you give to the following?" The mayors ranked the given considerations on a scale from 1 to 3, where 1 stands for "most important" and 3 stands for "least important".

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municipalities gave priority to "observing established rules and procedures" (e.g. laws, regulations, internal procedures) over the other two aspects of work, because 40 per cent of mayors evaluated this aspect as the most significant one.[21] Again, this response can be connected with the legislation on mayoral competencies, which renders the mayor responsible for ensuring that all municipal activities are lawful and legal. A slightly smaller percentage (30 per cent) of mayors assessed the aspect of "accomplishing tasks efficiently and quickly" as the most important one.[22] Only 10 per cent of mayors ranked "ensuring everybody involved is satisfied with decision-making processes and their outcomes" as the most important aspect. It can be summarised that mayors from large municipalities give absolute priority to observing the established rules and procedures, while mayors from small municipalities prefer accomplishing tasks efficiently and quickly as much as they do observing established rules and procedures (the difference in valuation is merely 1 per cent).

Mayors were also asked how they perceived various aspects of leadership.[23] Based on the data shown in Table 3, it may be observed that the majority of mayors from large municipalities (55.6 per cent) and even more mayors from small municipalities (77.2 per cent) build their position of leader on "personal relations". More than 70 per cent of all mayors assessed this aspect of leadership as crucial. This aspect is connected with the concept of emotional intelligence, which is considered by many experts[24] to be a main, if not key, element of a good leader. The leadership aspect that was ranked as the second most important (60.4 per cent) – "motivation through commendation and reward" – supports this. It can be summarised that the majority of mayors assessed personal relations with (local) stakeholders as the most important aspect. According to Zaleznik's (1992) perspective on the distinctions between managers and leaders, this kind of relationship with other actors refers to the latter.

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[21] We noticed that the proportion of mayors from large municipalities was even higher (51.9 per cent) in comparison with mayors from small municipalities (35.9 per cent).

[22] An interesting fact is that more mayors from small municipalities (34.6 per cent) rated this aspect as 1 (most important), compared to their colleagues from large municipalities (18.5 per cent).

[23] The question was: "What priority do you give to the following aspects of leadership?" Mayors ranked the given aspects of leadership from 1 to 4, where 1 stands for "most important aspect" and 4 stands for "least important aspect".

[24] For more on emotional intelligence see George, 2000; Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003.

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Table 3: Attitudes of mayors towards preferred aspects of leadership

	Large municipalities	Small municipalities	All municipalities
Formal power and authority	3.7	1.3	1.9
Motivation through commendation and reward	11.1	10.1	10.4
Personal relations (friendship, respect, trust)	55.6	77.2	71.7
Motivation through political loyalty	/	1.3	0.9

* Data shows the percentage of mayors who ranked specific aspects as 1, which stands for "the most important aspect".
Source: Author.

Only rare individuals assessed the remaining two aspects of leadership, i.e. "formal power and authority" and "motivation through political loyalty", as the most important ones. Moreover, more than half of the mayors (52.8 per cent) assessed the aspect of "motivation through political loyalty" as the least important aspect of leadership.

We also measured the attitudes of mayors towards different leadership instruments.[25] The data show that mayors assessed all the given leadership instruments as "very important" or "important". A fairly homogeneous picture may be observed among the mayors from large and small municipalities, as there are no significant differences between the two groups. The mayors awarded the leadership instrument of "mission statements" the highest score (an average value of 2.67 out of 3), which supports the previously mentioned strategic orientation of mayors and their visionary leadership of municipalities. The instrument of "benchmarking" was in second place, and it was ranked slightly higher by mayors from small municipalities, compared to those from large municipalities. This indicates that mayors from small municipalities are more oriented towards comparison and competiveness of their municipalities. However, the instrument of "legislative goals" was similarly assessed (an average value of 2.35 out of 4), which coincides with the perception of mayors regarding the importance of their tasks as political leaders; namely planning, designing, setting, and guiding local policies.

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[25] The question was: "Please rate how important the following instruments of leadership are." Mayors evaluated the instruments on a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 means "not important" and 3 means "very important".

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Table 4: Importance of different leadership instruments

	Large municipalities		Small municipalities		All municipalities	
	Percentage	Average	Percentage	Average	Percentage	Average
Legislative goals (set at the beginning of a term of office and formulated for the next four years)	100	2.44	92.4	2.32	94.4	2.35
Mission statements (long-term development)	100	2.67	96.2	2.67	97.2	2.67
Benchmarking (comparison of performances between different municipalities, learning, increasing competitiveness and efficiency)	81.4	2.15	92.4	2.43	89.7	2.36

* Data appear as the percentage of mayors who responded with values 3 or 2 on a scale from 0 "not important" to 3 "very important", and the average value of responses on scale from 0 to 3.
Source: Author.

According to these findings, it may be concluded that the majority of Slovenian mayors lead their municipalities in a visionary fashion, with a long-term objective of developing their municipalities on the basis of established rules and procedures. This result corresponds to the mainstream attitude among mayors from other European countries (Getimis & Hlepas, 2006, p. 197–198). At the same time, Slovenian mayors prefer personal relationships and apply emotional intelligence while leading their local communities.

4. Introduction of a Characteristic Typology

The paper highlights the dilemma of leadership, namely the distinction between the work patterns of leaders and managers. Because we were interested in whether mayors have any prevailing leadership or managerial characteristics, we designed a characteristic typology of mayors as leaders and mayors as managers.

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This typology was designed by means of including 19 statements in our questionnaire (see Figure 2).[26] Carefully selected statements helped to determine the operational patterns of mayors. Every statement was constructed so that its grammar and content would reveal the characteristics of a leader or a manager. After the data were collected, we used a coding tool in IBM's SPSS statistical software and awarded one point to every statement that represented managerial characteristics and zero points to every statement that represented leadership characteristics. That was how we developed three models (with regard to the sum of allotted points). We placed the extreme types at the beginning and at the end of the continuum – *the leader* (from 0 to 8), and *the manager* (from 12 to 19). Because we were particularly attentive to those mayors who have no dominant characteristics of either a leader or a manager, we introduced an intermediate type, entitled *the hybrid*. This type included mayors with sums of points from 9 to 11.

The analysis shows that three quarters (75.5 per cent) of Slovenian mayors have the characteristics and working patterns typical of leaders. We noted that the proportion of leaders is higher among mayors from large municipalities (85.2 per cent), compared to mayors from small municipalities (72.2 per cent). One fifth of mayors (20.8 per cent) are hybrids – they combine the characteristics of both leaders and managers in equal proportion.[27] In addition, the proportion of mayors who have the clearly defined characteristics and working patterns of managers is very low (3.8 per cent).[28]

However, we discovered another interesting fact: 76.7 per cent of mayors who lead *urban* municipalities, as well as 74.7 per cent of those who lead *rural* municipalities,[29] have the characteristics of leaders. The proportion of hybrids is approximately the same (around 20 per cent) regarding mayors from urban and rural municipalities. An interesting difference may be observed among mayors with managerial characteristics, because they all indicated they were mayors of rural municipalities.

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[26] Mayors were requested to mark each statement with "true" or "false" regarding their working methods. Each statement required only one answer.

[27] The proportion of hybrids is slightly higher among mayors from small municipalities (24.1 per cent).

[28] No differences exist between mayors from small and large municipalities.

[29] We should clarify that the distinction between *rural* and *urban* municipalities does not imply two different legal categories of Slovenian municipalities. The differentiation is derived from the dominant (economic) activity of citizens in the municipality. It must also be highlighted that this distribution is based on the subjective assessment of mayors.

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Figure 2: Statements that characterise a leader or a manager

Leader	Manager
The best way to build a team is to set a group goal that is highly challenging, maybe even "crazy".	I think more about immediate results than I do about mentoring others.
Sometimes, it's almost as if I am a "collector of people" because I am always recruiting and getting to know new people.	People will be motivated if you pay them enough.
	It is nice to know about people's long-term goals, but not necessary to get the job done.
I like to surround myself with people who are better at what they do than I am.	If you have a consistent recognition system that rewards everyone in the same way, then that is enough.
I am a lifelong student of what makes other people tick.	My greatest pleasure in my job comes from making the work process more effective.
I pay close attention to how and where I spend my time, because the priorities I put into action are the ones that other people will observe and follow.	I devote more of my time and attention to my weaker performers than I do to my top performers, who basically take care of themselves.
	It is better not to know anything about the personal lives and interests of the people who report to me.
I have worked hard to get along with or understand people who are very different from me.	People talk about "mission" too much – it is best just to let people do their work and not try to bring values into the conversation.
	It is my job to know everything that goes on in my area.
	I pay more attention to the system than to subordinates.
Wherever possible, in my work I challenge the "*status quo*" and do not accept it.	My work is focused more on the present than the future.
	If I make a mistake, I rarely admit it ... I prefer to fix it myself and keep an upright pose.

Source: Adapted from Schuler, 2002.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the findings of this comprehensive analysis of mayoral leadership, we may conclude this paper with a synthesis of the most noteworthy patterns among Slovenian local leaders. From the perspective of the role of the mayor as a political leader, it should be emphasised that the majority of Slovenian mayors lead their municipalities in a proactive, strategically oriented, and visionary manner, with a long-term stance on municipal development on the basis of established rules and procedures. They also prefer personal contact with citizens and the use of emotional intelligence. According to our initial distinctions between managers and leaders (Zaleznik, 1992), these patterns are connected with the latter category.

Furthermore, a strong dominance of mayors with leadership characteristics has also been confirmed with the assistance of a newly developed

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characteristic typology. The typology shows that the majority of Slovenian mayors possess the characteristics and working patterns typical of leaders.

To conclude, in the differentiated Slovenian system of local government mayors see their mayoral position as a long-term investment. They want to achieve local development of their communities, as well as the development of administrative and professional networks, regardless of their political orientation or non-partisanship.

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HOW TO LEAD A LOCALITY? EVIDENCE FROM LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS IN SLOVENIA

Summary

The paper discusses the application of certain aspects of political leadership in Slovenian municipalities. The author investigates how Slovenian mayors perceive their role in the local community, how they perceive the function of political leadership, and which characteristics prevail in the leadership of Slovenian municipalities. The author is particularly interested whether mayors place an emphasis on the characteristics of leaders or of managers while leading their municipalities. According to the data from a comprehensive project on local political leadership in Slovenian municipalities, mayors identified the following as the most important mayoral tasks: attracting resources from external sources, ensuring the quality of local services, encouraging new projects in the community, and creating a vision for the municipality. Furthermore, the mayors were asked about the areas in which the municipalities should have more competences. The largest proportion of mayors responded that municipalities have (too) few competencies in the area of local development. This response coincides with a strong preference for (and the focus of Slovenian mayors on) local development in the sense of local investments, development projects, and development of the local economy. The paper also presents a newly designed characteristic typology of mayors as leaders and mayors as managers. The analysis shows that three quarters of Slovenian mayors possess the characteristics and working patterns typical of leaders. In addition, the proportion of mayors who have the clearly defined characteristics and working patterns of managers is very low. Based on an extensive analysis of empirical data, the author concludes that the majority of Slovenian mayors lead their municipalities in a visionary way, with a long-term stance on municipal development on the basis of established rules and procedures, and with a preference for personal contacts with citizens and the use of emotional intelligence. In the differentiated system of Slovenian local government mayors are mostly democratic, proactive, and strategically oriented visionaries, who see their position as a long-term mission.

Keywords: *local political leadership, roles and tasks, mayor, Slovenia*

KAKO VODITI LOKALNU JEDINICU: PODACI O LOKALNIM POLITIČKIM VOĐAMA U SLOVENIJI

Sažetak

U radu se analizira primjena aspekata političkog vodstva u slovenskim općinama. Autorica istražuje kako slovenski načelnici shvaćaju svoju ulogu u lokalnoj zajednici, kako gledaju na funkciju političkog vodstva, te koje osobine prevladavaju kod upravljanja slovenskim općinama. Posebna pozornost poklanja se osobinama vođe nasuprot osobinama menadžera, tj. koju od te dvije kategorije načelnici drže važnijom u kontekstu svoje rukovodstvene uloge. Rezultati opsežnog projekta na temu lokalnoga političkog vodstva u Sloveniji pokazali su koje zadatke načelnici smatraju najvažnijima. Radi se o privlačenju sredstava iz vanjskih izvora, osiguranju kvalitetnih lokalnih javnih usluga, poticanju novih projekata u zajednici, te izgradnji vizije budućnosti za općinu. Načelnici su također odgovorili na pitanje u kojim bi područjima općine trebale imati više kompetencija, i tu se pokazalo kako većina drži da općine imaju (pre)malo kompetencija u području lokalnog razvoja. Taj je odgovor u skladu s fokusom slovenskih načelnika na lokalni razvoj u smislu lokalnih ulaganja, razvojnih projekata i razvoja lokalne ekonomije. U radu se također predstavlja nedavno razrađena tipologija osobina načelnika kao vođe u usporedbi s osobinama načelnika kao menadžera. Analiza rezultata upućuje na to da troje od četiri načelnika u Sloveniji posjeduje osobine i radne obrasce svojstvene vođama, dok je postotak onih koji posjeduju jasno izražene osobine i radne obrasce menadžera iznimno nizak. Detaljnom analizom empiričkih podataka došlo se do zaključka da većina slovenskih načelnika upravlja općinama na vizionarski način, s dugoročnom perspektivom razvoja općine na temelju prethodno utemeljenih procedura i pravila. Također su skloni održavanju osobnih kontakata s građanima i uporabi emocionalne inteligencije. U okviru slovenskoga diferenciranog sustava lokalne vlasti načelnici predstavljaju većinom demokratične, proaktivne i strateški orijentirane vizionare koji svoja radna mjesta doživljavaju kao dugoročnu misiju.

Ključne riječi: *lokalno političko vodstvo, uloge i zadaci, načelnik, Slovenija*