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## LEADERSHIP IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE: THE BALANCE BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY AND HUMAN-CENTERED CARE <sup>13</sup>

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**Abstract:** *Leadership in the social sphere represents a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that combines administrative competence with ethical sensitivity and human care. The contemporary social manager operates in a dynamic environment shaped by social change, digitalization, and diverse professional expectations. The paper explores the dual nature of leadership in the social sector – as an instrument of effective management and as a form of human-centered guidance and emotional support. The study emphasizes several core leadership roles: representative, managerial, mentoring, mediating, field-based, and supportive (through supervision and team development). Each of these roles reflects the balance between organizational efficiency and the need for empathy, trust, and psychological well-being within teams. Furthermore, the paper analyzes key challenges faced by social leaders today, including intergenerational workforce management, the impact of social media on professional identity, the development of a learning culture, ethical and empathetic decision-making, and the maintenance of emotional balance among staff.*

*The paper concludes that effective leadership in the social sector requires a combination of strategic vision, emotional intelligence, and ethical integrity. Sustainable social services can only be achieved when management transcends administrative control and embodies understanding, compassion, and genuine concern for people - both service users and professionals who support them.*

**Key words:** *social leadership; management; emotional intelligence; empathy; ethics; professional development; supervision; social work management.*

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