

# LEADERSHIP IN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS

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**Abstract:** Uncertainty is one of the modern age features, and as every uncertainty contains a certain level of risk, accordingly, the modern age is often perceived as the “age of risk”. Actually, the modern age is the “age of safety”, because we are witnessing an increasing number of natural disasters and technical-technological accidents, which result in extraordinary situations, and consequently the modern age has become an age in which security is perceived as a central value. Leadership is a process in which an individual exerts influence on a group or community in order to achieve a common goal, which is aimed at overcoming the consequences of extraordinary situations and establishing a state of safety. Due to the specifics of extraordinary situations, it is necessary to develop concrete concepts of leadership, which would improve resilience, and at the same time reduce the vulnerability of a particular community, or society as a whole. The focus of the paper is on the consideration of leadership as a concept, with special reference to leadership in extraordinary situations.

**Keywords:** leader, leadership, extraordinary situations.

## INTRODUCTION

Current events in different parts of the world confirm that no country, regardless of its level of technological, economic and social development, can eliminate numerous risks, respectively, dangers from accidents, car accidents, breakdowns, natural disasters and other forms of destructive action on humans, natural, cultural and material goods and the environment in general. The frequency of accidents and catastrophes has increased over the last two decades. One of the assessments shows that during

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this period, only natural disasters killed 3 million people, while almost a billion inhabitants of the planet suffered or felt their consequences. (Salzberg, 2011)

Today, it is obvious that natural disasters and technical-technological accidents as generators of extraordinary situations present a threat of unprecedented proportions to future life on the planet. In order to reduce the risk of extraordinary situations, it is necessary to accept the necessity of joint action, i.e. to accept the principles of action according to the integrated concept. Each of us, as individuals, has a role to play in this, and therefore the actions we take in our lives, homes and at work are of paramount importance. These actions make sense, they strengthen the hope and enduring commitment that is necessary for success. Everything mentioned tells us that in the future special attention should be paid to the decision-making process and leadership in extraordinary situations, so that future extraordinary situations and events could be detected, prevented/resolved in a timely manner and their consequences could be more easily eliminated.

Due to the specifics of extraordinary situations, it is necessary to develop a concrete concept that will provide answers for successful leadership in extraordinary situations. In developing such a concept, the requirement to develop leaders' knowledge that enables decision-making during an extraordinary situation should be taken into account. What is the concept that will enable the leader to make optimal decisions and to have an effect on a group in order to achieve a common goal? To determine the model of leadership in extraordinary situations, it is necessary to determine the initial elements of this model, which includes the definition of: (a) the concept of leadership and (b) traits, styles and behaviors with charisma and knowledge that make a leader "a leader in extraordinary situations". Consequently, the paper is divided into five sections that describe the above mentioned elements of the leadership model with a focus on decision-making and the specifics of leadership in extraordinary situations.

## THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

According to Northouse, there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it. It is similar with the terms democracy, love and peace, because although each of us intuitively knows what is meant by those words, these can still have different meanings for different people. It was James MacGregor Burns who first attempted to explain and define leadership, in the context of organizational systems, back in 1978. The definition of leadership includes: (1) simplified paradigm/leadership is good management/; (2) semantic description/leadership is the process of leading/; (3) transactional definition/leadership is social exchange between a leader and a follower/; (4) situational concept/leadership is a phenomenon that precedes and facilitates decisions and actions/ and (5) aesthetic concept/leadership is art or craft/. (Northouse, 2008)

Here it is necessary to make a distinction between the terms leadership and management. Leadership is a process focused exclusively on achieving common goals, and management on coordinating activities in order to do business. Consequently, managers are people who do "things the right way", and leaders are people who do the "right things". A manager does not have to be a leader, nor a leader has to be a manager. Managers have formal powers on the basis of which they act, while leaders do not have to have that. They may have informal power that allows them to play the role of leader; in fact, leaders in the organization do not have to have any official function and/or position, but despite this deprivation they can persuade others to follow and listen to them.

Petar Jovanovic points out that leaders need to integrate hard, rational, analytic, planning, organizational and control skills with soft, human skills. A top leader is first and foremost someone who knows



how to motivate those who know. He needs to know how to motivate his people to acquire necessary knowledge and apply it to specific problems, as well as to learn from each other. Leaders are not above followers nor they are more important than them. Leaders and followers should analyze themselves in relation to each other. They are together in the process of leadership - two sides of the same coin. Leaders exist in all spheres of human activity. A leader is a person who has the ability to influence other people to follow him, to do what he suggests. He knows how to win people over in favor of his opinion, that is, to make them follow his suggestions and decisions. Effective leadership requires leaders to be good psychologists, good communicators and animators, to know how to work with people, to convince them and lead them forward, towards the set goals. They need to be both good visionaries and forecasters, so that they can well predict future goals and the necessary changes and actions for their realization. (Jovanović, 2006)

Leadership essentially requires the ability to influence the behavior of others. The task of every leader is to organize work, give clear instructions, constructively criticize, show interest in people. In order to fulfill these tasks and achieve the goal, the leader needs to know how to communicate with the group he leads, to know not only how to speak, but also how to listen to others, and not to become a bottleneck in communication. Leadership is a process on which the survival, growth and development of the organization and effective adaptation to changes in the environment depend, and the power and influence of leaders largely depends on the way of communicating with the group and motivating members. (Salzberg, 2011)

## LEADER TRAITS

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the qualities that make some people great leaders were studied. Theories of the “great man” were developed, so named because they sought to establish the innate qualities and characteristics of great social, political and military leaders (such as Mohandas Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Napoleon Bonaparte). Many researches such as Stogdill, Bryman, Lord, de Vader, Alliger, Kirkpatrick, Locke, Mann, and others have been dealing with identifying specific traits that separate leaders from followers. They present the approach to leadership as a peculiar set of qualities created on the basis of: intelligence, vigilance, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, self-confidence, sociability, masculinity, dominance, energy, integrity, etc. (Northouse, 2008)

Some of the main characteristics of a leader include as follows. Intelligence - presents innate ability to properly understand things and phenomena in life and the world. Self-confidence - means the ability to be confident in their own competencies and skills. Determination - implies a desire to get the work done and includes traits such as: initiative, perseverance, dominance and energy. Integrity - a quality that implies honesty and trust. Society demands that leaders possess a greater degree of integrity and character. Sociability is the aspiration of a leader to achieve pleasant social relations. In addition to these main qualities of a leader, there are other qualities of a leader, that are related to effective leadership, such as: vigilance, perspicacity, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, masculinity, dominance, energy, adaptability, extroversion, cooperation, tolerance, influence, etc. (Northouse, 2008).

It is important to point out here that special elements of leadership are: (a) charisma and (b) feelings. The word charisma originated in ancient Greece and meant “one who is closer to god” or “favorite of the gods”. Charisma is one of the personal characteristics, which gives a certain person superhuman and special powers, and it is possessed by only a small number of people, and because of having it, others treat such a person as a leader.



Possessing certain personality traits is related to whether someone is an effective leader or not. The “big five” personality factors are: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness (reliability). Extroversion is the factor that is most associated with leadership, and neuroticism is negatively correlated with leadership, given that the characteristic of neuroticism is a tendency towards: depression, anxiety, insecurity, vulnerability and violence. When striving to do exceptional things in an organization, leaders stick to these five modes of action that characterize exceptional leadership: (1) modeling the way; (2) inspiring shared vision; (3) challenging the process; (4) enabling others to act and (5) encouraging the heart. (Goleman, 2004)

## TYPES OF LEADERS, LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Every leader must find a way to influence others in order to achieve common goals. Communication is often one-way, but without supportive behavior, without establishing true, honest interpersonal relationships, a leader’s style will not achieve effective work performance. Researchers who studied the approach to leadership style found that leadership consisted of two basic types of behavior: (a) task-oriented behavior and (b) relationship-oriented behavior. The main purpose of the approach to leadership style is to explain how leaders combine these two types of behaviors to influence subordinates and their efforts to achieve a goal. (Northouse, 2008)

According to the Blake and Mounton managerial (leadership) network, five basic leadership styles can be identified: authoritarian, humane, impoverished, compromise, and team management. In addition to the five main styles given in the leadership network, Blake and his colleagues identified two other styles: (a) paternalism and (b) opportunism. Paternalism refers to a leader who uses both authoritarian and humane styles but does not integrate them. He is a “merciful dictator” who acts mercifully, but does so in order to achieve his goal. Opportunism refers to a leader who uses any of the five basic style combinations for personal advancement. (Northouse, 2008)

However, people almost always have a backup style that comes to the fore when the usual way of solving a problem does not prove successful. In some situations, leaders need to be more task-oriented, while in others they need to be more relation-oriented. Based on a situational approach that is oriented to leadership in different situations and which states that in different situations there is a need for different types of leaders, effective leadership means adapting your style to the requirements set in different situations. Leadership styles, based on the situational leadership model, consist of patterns of behavior of the person seeking to influence others, including commanding behavior (division of tasks) and supportive behavior (establishing interpersonal relations). (Salzberg, 2011)

Considering that employees move up and down the development ladder (the level of development is the degree to which subordinates possess the competencies and commitment necessary to accomplish a particular task or activity), it is crucial for leaders to be flexible in their leadership behavior. Leadership styles are classified into four different categories of command behavior and providing support: (1) ordering - in which commands are strongly expressed and support is weakly expressed; (2) coaching - in which both commands and support are strongly expressed; (3) supporting - in which the leader predominantly provides support, while the orders are weakly expressed; and (4) delegating - in which support and weak issuance of orders are weakly expressed. (Goleman, 2004)

Contingency theory describes leadership styles motivated by tasks and interpersonal relations. In order to understand the actions of leaders, it is crucial to understand the situations in which they lead the followers. Effective leadership depends on the degree to which the leadership style conforms to the



appropriate parameters in the environment. Situations that will be assessed as the most favorable are those in which there are good relations between leaders and members, defined tasks and strong power of the leader position. It is important to say that contingency theory emphasizes that leaders are not effective in all situations. (Northouse, 2008)

Petar Jovanovic states that the following types of leaders should be distinguished:

- ✓ charismatic leader - a person whose influence and ability to lead derive from his personality (a large number of military leaders, politicians and businessmen belong to this group);
- ✓ traditional leader - a person who acquires a leadership position by birth or inheritance (kings, religious leaders, tribal leaders);
- ✓ situational leader - a person who is able to accept the role of a leader in a certain period, in different situations (if he is in the right place at the right time);
- ✓ formal or bureaucratic leader - a person whose leadership position derives from the position to which he is appointed (manager and other executives) and
- ✓ functional leader - a person who does not provide his leadership position by the position in the organization, but by his own work and performing certain tasks. (Jovanović, 2006)

It can be stated that there is no best leadership style that applies to all situations. In one situation it is better to apply autocratic, in another participatory style. However, today, a contingency approach to leadership is increasingly used where the leadership style is adapted to a specific situation. This approach requires a good analysis and knowledge of the specific situation and all specific factors relevant to the selection of the best leadership style. (Jovanović, 2006).

Using a leadership style that best suits the motivational needs of subordinates is a challenge for a leader. This is achieved by choosing behaviors that will complement or replace what is missing in the environment. Leaders seek to improve the degree of achievement of goals by providing information or giving rewards within a given environment; leaders provide subordinates with the elements they feel they need to achieve their goals. Whether a certain behavior of a leader motivates subordinates or not, depends on the characteristics of subordinates and the characteristics of tasks. The path-goal theory suggests the following types of leader behavior that differently affect the motivation of subordinates: (1) command leadership - provides guidance and psychological structure; (2) support leadership - provides care; (3) participatory - enables inclusion; and (4) achievement-oriented leadership - provides a challenge. (Northouse, 2008)

According to Northouse, charismatic leaders show certain personality traits, but also certain types of behavior. First, they are a powerful role model for the attitudes and values they want their followers to adopt. For example, Gandhi was against violence and was a true example of civil disobedience. Second, charismatic leaders are perceived by the followers as competent. Third, they articulate ideological goals that encompass moral values. The famous speech, "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King, is an example of this type of charismatic behavior. Fourth, charismatic leaders place high expectations on their followers and then show and have confidence in their ability to meet those expectations. (Northouse, 2008)



## SPECIFIC OF DECISION-MAKING IN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS

Extraordinary situations are not a set of events in which we simply give in, but a set of events that require responsible decision-making from responsible institutions and individuals. In extraordinary situations, an optimal decision should be made urgently, aimed at preventing or at least reducing losses: human lives and/or material resources, protection of vital infrastructure facilities on which the functioning of the state and society depends, that is, certain organizations and care of victims. In the conditions of unclear circumstances, in which there is not enough information, in which too much, sometimes contradictory information begins to arrive in a short period of time, and thus it is quite difficult to make an optimal decision. (Gor, 2010)

Therefore, in addition to insufficient insight into what is currently happening, the decision maker usually does not even have enough time to analyze the situation and alternatives, but on the other hand, he has a huge responsibility, because it is on his correct and timely decision on what should be done first and who is in charge of doing so, that the further course of events and the dimensions of its consequences depend. All this, along with the often present severe moral doubts, represents a serious professional challenge for decision makers, but also an extremely stressful situation in the psychological and ethical sense.

In addition to the above mentioned, according to Jovanovic, decision-making in extraordinary situations, especially in those whose size exceeds the limits of an individual organization and/or local community, region and country, involves a larger number of participants, at different levels and with different powers, internal hierarchical relations and structure, organizational culture and more or less clearly and precisely defined inter-organizational relations, where they all need to be coordinated and integrated into a harmonious system, which provides an adequate crisis response. In this regard, leaders are in a difficult position, because each expects of them a signpost for action and reduction of uncertainty by their choice, to overcome their own anxiety and direct the available capacities in a way that they can only hope is right and appropriate to the situation and circumstances. (Jovanović, 2006)

Responding to extraordinary situations is a challenge by the nature of things. Decision makers need to solve complex dilemmas without the information they need in a changing organizational environment and bureaucratic policy and in conditions of serious stress. Namely, the way of making decisions in the conditions of extraordinary situations does not fit into the usual concept of bureaucratic decision-making. Urgent decision-making is not possible if formal rules are strictly followed.

An extraordinary situation creates tensions and pressure on decision makers who are not sure, but need to decide quickly, which can cause a feeling of helplessness and consternation. Decision makers can compensate for their sense of insecurity with a rigid and sometimes obsessive preoccupation with only one possible solution. It is usually thought of by analogy, and the reference point is the last similar situation. Since extraordinary situations are generally quite different, measures taken on the basis of such reasoning can be counterproductive.

Particularly significant is the earlier joint experience of individuals and institutions in resolving extraordinary situations, a reasonable degree of mutual trust, and a precise delimitation of competencies, which reduces competition, rivalry and struggle between the people and/or organizations involved, and clearly establishes powers - who leads and, accordingly, makes the final decisions, and who advises and therefore has the obligation to "tell the truth to the authorities" even when it is unpleasant. However, even in the best of circumstances the influence of hierarchy is always present in groups with a



clear authority structure, so some group members will analyze the leader's post-event choices and say what they think he wants to hear, or at least avoid saying what they think he wants to hear. (Jovanović, 2006)

## SPECIFICS OF LEADERSHIP IN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS

Kešetović and Toth notice the need to urgently make the right decisions aimed at stopping or at least reducing the consequences for human lives, material resources or critical infrastructure. Such decision-making poses a serious professional challenge before the decision-maker and an extremely stressful situation in the psychological and ethical sense. (Kešetović & Toth, 2012)

According to Goleman, nothing can test a leader as an extraordinary situation, which has the potential to very quickly reveal the latent strengths of a leader or the core of weaknesses. The leader should be ready for an extraordinary situation, to establish control over the situation, provide a minimum of damage and effectively prevent, mitigate and reduce the duration of an extremely difficult situation. Every skill, trait and perspective are very important tools for leadership during an extraordinary situation, but these stand out as follows: communication, clarity of vision and goal, care, personal example, character, ability, courage, determination. There are many other qualities and skills that develop and occupy a significant place during extraordinary situations, and these are the following: the ability to accept change, promote reward and recognition, maintain discipline in consistency and honesty, being enthusiastic and optimistic, cultivate a sense of humor, supporting professional development process for employees and aligning the strength of the leader with the requirements of extraordinary situations (such as knowledge of another foreign language or computer skills). (Goleman, 2004)

Northouse believes that for the study of leadership in extraordinary situations, it is very important to observe the behavior of the leader, his characteristics and how these are manifested in extraordinary situations, and how the course of the extraordinary situation influences the metamorphoses from an informal into a formal leader. Future extraordinary situations impose on us the task of classifying which are the desirable traits of leaders in extraordinary situations in order to deal with them successfully. In extraordinary situations, the leader's first task is to determine the true nature of the situation. It is necessary to find the answers to the questions: What tasks were subordinates given to perform? Do they have the desire to complete the job they got/accepted? Are they trained to perform the task? How complex are these tasks? Consequently, leaders need to be able to show a high degree of flexibility. (Northouse, 2008)

It is also necessary to choose behaviors that will supplement or replace what is missing in the work environment. Effective leadership is achieved by realizing goals by providing information or giving rewards within a given environment. If subordinates are insufficiently competent, it is recommended to the leader to apply a commanding style. If the employees are competent but without enough self-confidence, leadership with the application of a support style is suggested. Leaders need to consider the needs of their subordinates and then adjust their own style in an adequate way. Too authoritarian style in an extraordinary situation can lead to a conflict between leaders and followers.

When it comes to the behavior of leaders, in one of the elements of the leadership model in extraordinary situations, it can be divided according to the phases of the course of extraordinary situations, respectively:



- ✓ *Phase I:* Preparation for the extraordinary situation (communication, vision and goals, care and connection as a preparation for the extraordinary situation);
- ✓ *Phase II:* Guidance during extraordinary situation (communication during extraordinary situation, clarity of vision and goal and care in extraordinary situation); and
- ✓ *Phase III:* Post-extraordinary situation guidance (inspect and correct, renew and reassure, maintain, restore and rehabilitate).

Leaders mostly express their skills in turbulent, that is, changing conditions. Frequent change of conditions increases risks in decision-making, so it brings to the surface many important characteristics of a good leader: quick understanding of the situation, good risk assessment and choice of ways and means, as well as quick decision. The leader should therefore have well-developed skills of managing time and stress. One of successful ways of effective leadership in extraordinary situations is the timely creation of a “Reminder in an extraordinary situation”. Such a reminder is formed for every possible extraordinary situation, and if the leader sticks to the plan from the reminder, there is a great chance that the extraordinary situation will be successfully resolved.

## CONCLUSION

The modern age imposes the idea that a part of the challenges we face in resolving extraordinary situations stems from the way we think about it, both as individuals and as a community. Accordingly, it is clear that the time of average and mediocrity has passed, and that today we are striving for the better, or, more precisely, for the ideal. An extraordinary situation requires a change in approach to leadership. Everyone should think like a leader and act in the best interest of the organization. When a leader seeks advice it is an indication of strength, not weakness. In organizations, employees are focused on the outcome, not on someone who is leading, who is the leader at the moment. (Salzberg, 2011)

In extraordinary situations, roles and responsibilities are often unclear. It is essential that leaders take responsibility when needed. It is very important to make key decisions, determination has always been the key to successful leadership in extraordinary situations. Leaders need to be determined, and willing to take risks, so as to be successful. Also, in extraordinary situations, the leader’s calm is very important. Leaders need to show confidence and resilience to cope with the initial trauma and exhaustion, as well as to follow the course of events normally. Everyone wants leaders who can be brave and willing to take responsibility for their expertise and position. It is indisputable that leadership in extraordinary situations depends on the strength of the person, on the practiced skills and competencies. Each characteristic of a leader directly or indirectly influences leadership behavior in extraordinary situations. Leadership should compensate for everything that society has not systematically solved.

Leadership development is an area that is lacking in higher education institutions. This is especially characteristic of organizations that are more often exposed to extraordinary situations. Leaders need to take a more active role in higher education as leadership development takes time, commitment and patience. Moreover, leaders do not develop overnight or in a comfort zone. This process of creating a competent and capable leader usually takes several years. Leadership is a skill that is learned through life experiences and by observing other leaders. Effective leaders need to constantly adapt to permanent change and never stop learning. (Nikolic & Zivkovic, 2010)

Based on all of the above, it can be concluded that in extraordinary situations, leadership is more expressed, that is, it comes to the fore. Followers gather around the leader, follow him, want to cooperate with him. Francis Fukuyama calls this the “rally around the flag” syndrome. These are situations



where a leader either uses his qualities, skills, competencies and style, or simply proves that he is only a formal leader without effective leadership. When we say: "Leaders are shaped by their own experiences", it means that leaders are not born as such. Therefore, these experiences should be transferred, intensively, especially experiences from extraordinary situations, in order to greatly help in resolving, identifying future extraordinary situations, but also to build a general model of leadership in such situations.

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