Repositório ISCTE-IUL

Good leadership practices in contexts of unpredictability

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 was declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020, and the world is still in the throes of an unprecedented and highly unpredictable public health crisis, with consequences at an individual, group, organisational and societal level.

Under such dire circumstances, leadership is of decisive importance, as the repercussions of the decisions taken may now, more than ever, be crucial. Hence, leadership is currently essential not only for the success, but for the actual survival of organisations. In a scenario of ongoing change with unforeseeable outcomes, the absence of good leadership could mean the demise of an organisation.

Grounded on the theory of responsible leadership and the theory of shared leadership, we present the good leadership practices that are considered essential during times of major unpredictability such those currently underway.

Keywords: Pandemic, leadership, leadership responsible, shared leadership, good practices.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The disease broke out in China in December 2019 and three months later, by March of the following year, it had already spread to 114 countries (World Health Organisation, 2020). This disease had led to one of the most unpredictable public heath crises of recent times (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020). The pandemic knows no limitation in terms of time or space. Our health and our freedom are dependent not only on the actions of every one of us as individuals, but also on the actions of others (Forester and McKibbon, 2020). The pandemic affects public health at a global level and has widespread effects on all aspects of personal life (Nicola et al., 2020a). It is expected that not only will there be consequences in terms of physical health, but also on the mental health of those affected, with an increased number of cases of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, domestic violence and child abuse (Galea et al. 2020). The social and economic life of individuals and organisations are changing substantially (Sutkowski, 2020), with this pandemic evincing repercussions in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors (Nicola et al., 2020b), clearly meaning that the pandemic crisis has impacts at the group, organisational and societal level.

In this context, the consequences of good or bad leadership are now, more than ever, of vital importance (Wilson, 2020). Leadership is currently essential not only for the success, but also for the actual survival of organisations. In a scenario of ongoing change with unforeseeable outcomes, the importance of good leadership is intensified (Woszczyna et al., 2015). The development of better leadership for organisations and for society has become a crucial issue.

The literature reveals that the phenomenon of leadership has been a subject of interest for many decades now in academic circles, with various paradigms and approaches having emerged over the years.

Among the most recent theoretical approaches to leadership, responsible leadership and shared leadership are of particular interest.

The core thesis of responsible leadership lies in the idea that the power and influence of leaders should be used "to improve everybody´s lives, rather than

contributing to the destruction of the value of individual careers, organisations, economies and societies" (Marques et al., 2018, p.3). Responsible leadership has been approached from two perspectives. From one angle associated to an ethical phenomenon and, from another viewpoint considering the consequences of the actions of leaders. The first perspective considers that responsible leadership is understood as "the social-relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in a social process of interaction" (Maak and Pless, 2006a, p. 99). The second perspective argues that responsible leadership could be defined as "the consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders, as well as exertion of influence by enabling the involvement of the affect stakeholders and by engaging in an active stakeholder dialogue" (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p.59).

Another equally recent approach to leadership in the literature is that of shared leadership. According to Welman (2017), shared leadership involves a change in the way that it is conceptualised as this approach views it as phenomenon that is socially constructed among the members of a team. However, the literature offers various definitions of shared leadership. Despite this diversity, Zhu et al. (2018) argue that there are three key elements in the different definitions of shared leadership: lateral influence between peers; the emergence of a group phenomenon; and the dispersal of leadership roles and influence among the different team members.

This chapter aims to demonstrate how in moments of crisis, such as that experienced since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced organisations to make a tremendous effort to reconfigure their functions, very often shifting to remote operations, the answers offered by traditional leadership paradigms might not be the most appropriate for organisations, and how, to the contrary, models of responsible leadership and shared leadership provide more effective tools.

Hence, this chapter begins with a review of the main paradigms and approaches associated to leadership. We shall subsequently focus our attention on two more recent approaches to this phenomenon, those of responsible leadership and shared leadership. Finally, based on these theories, we shall demonstrate how

they could contribute to constructing a set of good leadership practices in the present scenario.

BACKGROUND

Leadership

The phenomenon of leadership has aroused a certain curiosity from time immemorial. The challenge of fully grasping the phenomenon of leadership and building a theoretical framework has led to the emergence of different paradigms and approaches, exploring diverse aspects in which the leader's influence, the relationships and effects established by the leader's action are projected in organisational contexts. Traditionally, leadership has been conceptualised as a skill at the individual level (Day, 2001).

Over the last few decades many definitions of leadership have been presented, demonstrating the importance of leadership in modern organisations and the impact of effective leaderships on organisational performance.

Aimed at systematising our knowledge on the topic of leadership, AveryAvery (2004) came up with a proposal of heuristic value, in which the evolution of our knowledge about this subject is structured around the paradigms underlying the different theoretical approaches associated to it. Thus, according to the author, the different approaches can be classified in four distinct paradigms: Classical, Transactional, Visionary and Organic.

Following AveryAvery (2004), the holistic perspective suggested by Bass (1985), in considering the phenomenon of leadership in terms of a *continuum*, contributed to systematise the basic features and the temporality that characterise each of the listed paradigms.

AveryAvery (2004) identifies the elements that characterise and distinguish each one of these paradigms, enabling a comparison between them according to a set of criteria collected from the extensive literature on leadership. These criteria consider the historical period, the basis of leadership power, the source of the leader's commitment and the leader's vision. The author argues that the classical

paradigm extended from antiquity right up to the 1970s. Its bedrock would lie in the respect for or exercise of power of command or control. Fear of and respect for the leader would represent ways of obtaining rewards or avoiding punishment. The leader's vision would be irrelevant in the followers' consideration of accepting their leader. The transactional paradigm flourished from the 1970s up to the 1980s. Here, leadership would be based on the interpersonal influence and consideration of the follower for the leader. The negotiated rewards and the management of expectations would underlie the leadership's strength. The leader's vision was not considered an essential element. The visionary paradigm was applicable from the mid-1980s up to 2000. The basis of this leadership lay in the inspiration emanated by the leader and absorbed by the followers through their emotions. The leader's charisma contributes to the followers' engagement. Individualised consideration is crucial and followers may even contribute to the leader's vision. Finally, we come to the organic paradigm enforced since the early days of the twenty-first century, based on consensual decisions, where the leader may emerge not necessarily through formal appointment. The self-determination of the leader is fundamental. The vision emerges within the group, being a strong cultural element (AveryAvery, 2004).

Table 1 – Leadership paradigms and their features

Leadership Paradigms/ Features	Classical	Transactional	Visionary	Organic
Historical Period	From antiquity right up to the 1970s.	From the 1970s to the mid-1980s.	Mid-1980s up to 2000.	After 2000.
Basis of Leadership Power	Through respect for or exercise of power of command and control.	Interpersonal influence and consideration of the follower for the leader	The leader inspires the followers through emotion.	Decisions in the group by consensus. The leader may emerge not by formal appointment.
Source of the Leader's Commitment	Fear of or respect for the leader as a way of obtaining rewards or avoiding punishment.	Negotiated rewards, agreements and management of expectations.	The leader's charisma contributes the followers' engagement. Individualised consideration.	Acquired in the context of shared values and processes within the group. Self-determination.
Vision	The leader's vision is not required to obtain the follower's acceptance.	The vision is unnecessary and might not even be conveyed.	The vision is central. The followers may contribute to the leader's vision.	The vision emerges within the group and is a strong cultural element.

Source: Adapted from Avery (2004). Understanding Leadership – Paradigms and Cases (p.18).

Avery (2004) also identifies the elements that characterise and distinguish each one of these paradigms, thus enabling a comparison between them based on a set of criteria: key players, knowledge base of the followers, sources of the leader's power, the follower's power, the decision-making process, management in relation to the leadership, principles of management of complexity, cultural aspects, diversity, adaptability, responsibility and accountability, structural features and contextual features. Table 2 presents a systematisation of the criteria associated to each paradigm, along the lines proposed by Avery (2004).

Table 2 – Comparison between the paradigms of leadership

Leadership Paradigms/ Features	Classical	Transactional	Visionary	Organic
Key players	Leader	Leader	Leader	Group
Knowledge base of the followers	Low	Low to high	Medium to high	High
Sources of power of the leader	Position, reward, coercion, expertise, certification	Position, reward, coercion, relational skills, bargaining power	Position, accredited, expertise, vision, charisma, emotional influence	Expertise, collaboration, sharing of power, primus inter pares
Power of the follower	Almost none	Low	Medium	High
Decision-making process	Decision-making centred on the leader	The leader consults and then takes the decision	The leader collaborates	Group decision
Management versus Leadership	Management	Management	Leadership	Shared leadership
Principles of management of complexity	Newtonian, low complexity, strong control of the leader	Newtonian, low complexity, strong control coming from the leader	Newtonian and new science, medium complexity, shared control	New science, high complexity, low control, self-management
Cultural aspects	*High ** High *** High **** Low	*Low or high ** Low the high ***High **** High	*High or low ** Medium *** Medium **** Medium	All low
Diversity	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Adaptability	Fast via the leader's orders issued to the followers	Slow, because the followers need to be heard and influenced	Slow, as it is necessary to modify mindsets and bring people to accept a new vision	Could either be agile (everyone is always prepared to change) or slow (excessive brainstorming required)
Responsibility and accountability	High for the leader, the followers just carry out the tasks	High for the leader, but the followers are accountable (partial results)	High for para the leader, the followers are accountable for their results	High for all
Structural features	Simple, bureaucracy	Simple, bureaucratic, departmentalised	Adhocracy, departmentalised	Adhocracy, network
Contextual features	Simple, stale	Simple and stable	Simple, complex, stable/dynamic	Complex and dynamic

*Level of inequality in relation to power; ** Level of distancing relative to uncertainty; *** Level of masculinity; **** Level of individualism.

Source: Adapted from Avery (2004). Understanding Leadership – Paradigms and Cases (pp.39-40).

For Avery (2004), particular attention should be given to the cultural aspects. In fact, the literature portrays a growing interest in the role of leadership in different cultures (Avolio et al., 2009). This is illustrated by the Globe Project (House et al., 2004) which is one of the most ambitious studies in this regard. In this project an integrative theory was proposed, developed around the central idea that the attributes of a given culture are indicators of the leadership style and organisational practices in that culture (Javidan et al., 2006).

Avery (2004) also draws a distinction between the leadership approaches and theories at a micro level, in which the spotlight is directed at the leader or the leader-follower relationship, and those analysed at a macro-level, incident on the context in which the leader-follower relationships develop.

Two lines of approach are distinguished in the micro-level analysis. In one of these lines, we find approaches based on a rational vision of leadership, in which the management of others does not necessarily include the leader's emotional engagement. Here, the dominant idea is of rationality and the Newtonian and Taylor's vision of the organisation as a machine. Along the other line are approaches based on the prominence of organisational non-rationality, considering the subjective elements (emotions) in the leadership and the relationships that they establish with the followers in that context.

In the first analytical line, the approaches tend to merge in terms of scrutiny of the leader (Weber, 1947), of the leader's characteristics (Stogdill`s, 1948) and of the leader's behaviour (Yulk, 1981), where it is considered that the leaders can be trained to develop effective behaviour directed at guidance of tasks and relationships. In the leader-follower approach (LMX – Leader Member Exchange Theory) the relationship between the leader and the followers varies in intensity and quality according to how the leaders treat the followers (Breukelen et al., 2006). In the socio-cognitive approach, the follower is assigned an important role in the perception of leadership. Accordingly, the analysis of the followers' mental process is the core focal point as it is in that very process that the idea of leadership is formed.

Contingency theories emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Avery (2004), these theories continued to be centred on the leader, but considered the

context relevant because the leader's behaviour will depend on the contingencies arising from that context. For example, the situational leadership approach places the focus on the adjustment between the leader's behaviour and the follower's needs (Avery and Ryan, 2002). This approach gave rise to the transactional theory (Bass, 1990).

The transactional theory of leadership is viewed as "an instrumental process of exchange between leader and subordinates, in which the leader defines and clarifies precisely what the subordinate has to do in order to achieve the intended results (e.g. elucidating the subordinate's role), identifies the needs of the subordinates (e.g. materials, career progression, training, acknowledgement, status, etc), promises and allocates rewards according to the results obtained in performing the defined role, e.g. the leader allocates rewards that have previously been agreed with the subordinate in view of the results attained" (Santos and Caetano, 2007, p. 179).

In addition to the transaction theory, we also highlight the contingency theory drawn up by Fiedler (1997), based on premises that the leader's style is stable and that peoples' motivational grounds do not change rapidly. Lastly, reference is made to House's path-goal theory (House and Evans, 1996), based on a model of the motivation of expectations, in which people make rational choices for their behaviour according to their individual perception of the effort they will be required to make in order to achieve the results.

In another analytical direction, which stresses subjective and relational features, the concept of emotional intelligence developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) emerged through Goleman (1995) concerning aspects of the leader's profile – intelligence (skills), attitudes, talent (abilities) and competence (competencies), as well as clarification of the concept of emotional maturity. The concept of charisma also returned to the forefront.

Towards the end of the 1980s, in the context of the emotional theories of leadership, Hater and Bass (1988) proposed the transformational theory. This is defined as a process in which the leader drives the subordinates to surpass the stipulated standards of performance and exceed expectations. This process is based on a strong identification of the subordinates with the leader by virtue of a

series of attributes and behaviours that generate feelings of trust, admiration, loyalty and respect in the subordinates (Hater and Bass, 1988). This theory is grounded on three assumptions. The first assumption recognises that the phenomenon of transformational leadership occurs at all leadership levels; the second asserts that transformational leadership is integrative as it incorporates elements of the visionary, charismatic, emotional and inspirational theories; and the third maintains that the theory of transformational leadership is not intended to be absolute, admitting that in certain circumstances transactional leaders could be more indicated.

The characteristics of a transformational leader consist of idealised influence or charisma, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulus (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Santos and Caetano, 2007). Judge and Piccolo (2004) argue that idealised influence or charisma refer to the extent to which the leaders' behaviour is admired by their followers, making them identify with the leaders. Individualised consideration refers to the extent to which leaders meet the needs of their followers. Inspirational motivation refers to the extent to which their vision is appealing and inspirational to their followers. Finally, intellectual stimulus refers to the extent to which the leader accepts risks and requests the ideas of the followers.

Leaving the micro-level analysis aside, we now address the macro-level approaches to leadership. Here, leadership is characterised based on the notion that it is in the particular context that the different situational variables with impact on the study of leadership should be examined. A systematic approach to leadership along these lines is proposed by Krantz (1990) focusing on the external subsystems that influence the leader's capability and exercise of leadership. However, the difficulties experienced in the study of leadership according to this systemic perspective contributed to the appearance of other approaches. For example, the substitutes for leadership theory (Dione et al., 2006) argues that there are various persons in the system and larger scenario who actually diminish the leadership's intervention capacity and in a certain manner substitute the leader. The self-leadership approach (Neck and Houghton, 2006) considers that if the people in an organisation are trained towards self-leadership and the overlap of the organisation's interests and those of the individuals is relatively close, then the leader's role diminishes.

All these leadership theories and approaches have undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of the phenomenon of leadership. But to what extent can they offer more effective solutions in situations of extreme unpredictability such as those currently being experience, where no one dares to produce forecasts or delineate strategies even for the short-term?

Indeed, we have been living in a pandemic context for over a year now and it is becoming increasingly difficult to imagine that anything vaguely positive could emerge from this crisis. This scenario has affected countries, economies, organisations and people, with consequences that are as yet not entirely determinable. A crisis such as that currently being experienced destabilises organisations and their workers (Boin, 2005), forcing leaders to redesign their responses in order to assure the survival of their organisations (Biddle, 2020).

Among the different professionals, those of the health sector have probably been the ones that have faced the greatest challenges, with excessive workloads alongside the psychological burden derived from fear of infection intwined with the fear of infecting others (Lui et al., 2020). Zhang et al. (2020), where it has been concluded that 28% of health professionals have experienced anxiety disorders. Hamouche (2020) also notes that Covid-19 has posed an enormous challenge to health sector workers with consequences on their physical and psychological wellbeing.

But health sector workers are not alone in being confronted with tremendous pressure and challenges. As suggested by Bader et al., (2019), disaster scenarios have repercussions on the performance of different types of workers. The pandemic is a global crisis whose repercussions affect all players involved, creating a high level of interdependence among all (Ansell et al., 2020). Balanagalakshmi et al., (2020) indicate that for about 22% of workers, the pandemic has negatively affected their wellbeing at the workplace. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) also draw our attention to the major changes that many organisations and their workers have had to face by shifting, in a very short space of time, to working remotely. This change has sometimes had negative consequences, for example, in the difficult separation between professional and personal life (Chawla et al., 2020).

Thus, in periods of crisis, organisations work under pressure, facing a series of challenges that the leaders must successfully address (Dirami et al., 2020). And one of these challenges is that of finding suitable strategies to deal with the crisis and mitigate the impact of the adversities on the stakeholders. It is fundamental for the leaders to be able to inspire in people "a sense of hope for 'future goodness' and dignity, to be guardians of radical hope and see into the future (Maak et al., 2020). This is certainly not a time for leaders to ignore the needs of those they lead. Some authors indicate that we are witnessing, somewhat all over the world, what Padilla et al., (2009) call toxic leaderships in which the search for answers in our tried-and-tested paradigms actually ends up by preventing us from discerning sustainable leadership solutions (Clegg et al., 2021). Narcissism and ideological rigidity ultimately affect the leaders' ability to resolve the issues inherent to their position in a manner that is ethical and empathetic with their employees (Maak et al., 2021), with Trump and Bolsonaro being paradigmatic examples of this.

Leadership is clearly crucial in society but, in order to be effective and able to rise to our current challenges, it will have to change (Maak et al., 2021). As noted by Clegg et al. (2021, p.3), "Several aspects of this crisis should inform any theory or account of leadership. First, the focus on the leader alone is insufficient".

Rost (1991) argues that the industrial paradigm of leadership based on male, technocratic, quantitative, cost-benefit sustained, personalist, hierarchical, short-term driven and materialistic management has long given way to another paradigm in which responsible leadership features strongly.

Could the theory of responsible leadership, in articulation with other more recent theories, such as the theory of shared leadership, help us to respond more effectively to the challenges that are presently placed before us? The essential features of each theory will be described below so that we can understand their potential in contexts of unpredictability.

Responsible Leadership

In the mid-2000s the concept of responsible leadership started to attract the attention of the business world. The publication of the book entitled "Responsible Leadership" by Maak and Pless (2006b) greatly contributed to this outcome.

The importance of this topic is growing with the worldwide questioning of the existing disparity between what leaders are expected to do and what they have actually done (Broadberlt, 2015). In this regard, the ethical crisis afflicting organisations all over the world has put leadership in the clear forefront of research on business ethics (Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017). According these authors, the role of leadership should not be underestimated as leaders are determinant in stories of success and failure everywhere and are obviously preponderant in defining the ethical conduct of organisations.

Before delving into the concept of responsible leadership, it is important to consider what we mean by responsibility. Waldman and Galvin (2008, p.328) state that responsibility "is geared toward the specific concerns of others, an obligation to act on those standards, and to be accountable for the consequences of one's actions". This definition implies understanding just who are the "others", which requires looking at this issue from two angles: the economic perspective and that of the stakeholders.

Waldaman and Galvin (2008) assert that the economic perspective suggests three basic principles. The first principle being that leaders should take into account that their responsibility begins and ends with the shareholders and owners. The second principle is that responsible leadership should be highly strategic and calculable. The third principle is that the rewards and monitoring systems should work towards ensuring that that leaders effectively define their responsibilities with the shareholders and owners.

The stakeholder perspective considers that leaders are responsible for taking into account the shareholders, workers, clients, consumer groups and the community in general. Waldman and Galvin (2008) argue that these two perspectives are pertinent, meaning that when leaders take decisions, they should consider all the stakeholders, both internal and external.

It should also be clarified that the stakeholder theory draws a classification that distinguishes between primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders cover clients, researchers, workers and shareholders. Usually there is a high level of interdependence between these stakeholders and the organisation (Voegtlin et al., 2019). Secondary stakeholders refer to non-governmental organisations, local communities and social groups. As a rule, these stakeholders influence or affect or are influenced or affected by the actions taken by the organisations, but do not conduct transactions with the organisations (Clarkson, 1995).

Responsible leaders should consider both the primary and secondary stakeholders as they have to collaborate and cooperate with all, establishing relationships of trust. And the leaders' decision-making will inevitably have direct or indirect repercussions in the sphere of all the stakeholders.

But what does responsible leadership actually mean? Despite being such a recent topic in the literature, there are various definitions of responsible leadership. Responsible leadership is usually defined from two viewpoints (Roque and Ramos, 2019). The first perspective views leadership as an ethical phenomenon and the second is associated to the notion of responsibility in the leader's actions. Considering the first perspective, responsible leadership could be defined as "values-based and through ethical principles driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change" (Pless, 2007, p.438). The relationship between the leaders and those who are affected by their leadership is seen from an ethical point of view and as developed through a process of social interaction (Maria and Lozano, 2010). Doh and Stumf (2005) also emphasise ethical values and good relationships in interactions with stakeholders. For these authors, the concept of responsible leadership requires meeting three conditions: leadership should be based on values, decision-making should have ethical undertones; and there should be quality stakeholder relations. This perspective places the focus on the relationship between the leader and the stakeholders, guided by ethical values (Pless and Maak, 2011). Thus, leaders should build and cultivate sustainable

relationships with stakeholders aimed at attaining common goals designed to benefit many and not just a restricted set of individuals (Maak, 2007).

The second perspective considers responsible leadership "as the consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders, as well as the exertion of influence by enabling the involvement of the affect stakeholders and by engaging in an active stakeholder dialogue. Therein responsible leaders strive to weigh and balance the interests of the forwarded claims" (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p.59). For the authors, the definition of responsible leadership is equivalent to saying that leaders should take into account the consequences of their actions both for the organisations and in the broader sense outside those organisations. Likewise, Marques et al. (2018) consider that the leaders' power should be used to improve the life of individuals, regardless of whether they are internal or external to organisation. Similarly, Haque et al. (2017) see the notion of responsibility as fundamental.

Waldman and Galvin (2008) also distinguish two possible visions of responsible leadership, based on the leaders' behaviour: the limited economic view and the extended stakeholder view. The first perspective considers that the leaders' decisions should be solely focused on maximising value for the stakeholder. The second perspective (Stahl and Luque, 2014) considers that the leaders' decisions should be more comprehensive, differentiating two levels in responsible behaviour: avoiding harm (proscriptive morality) and doing good (prescriptive morality). Avoiding harm refers to decisions that prevent bad consequences for the stakeholders and for society, while doing good covers contributing to improve society. Stahl and Luque (2014, p.238) define the behaviour of a responsible leader as "intentional actions taken by leaders to benefit the stakeholders and the larger society", in line with proscriptive morality.

According to Maak and Pless (2011), the whole point of responsible leadership is to create relationships of trust with the stakeholders, achieve common goals and, at the same time, share the business vision. For these the authors, five aspects must be taken into account for these goals to be attained: 1) responsible leadership should consider the stakeholders within and outside the organisation; 2) responsible leadership has goals both in organisational and societal terms; 3)

responsible leadership is based on inclusion, collaboration and cooperation with the different stakeholders; 4) responsible leaders take decisions taking into account the impact on all stakeholders; and 5) responsible leaders are proficient in harnessing change as a way to achieve higher social goals.

Liechti (2014) argues that the action of responsible leaders should cover five specific competency dimensions: (1) stakeholder relations; (2) ethics and values; (3) self-awareness; (4) systems thinking; and (5) change and innovation.

Euler and Hahn (2007), as cited in Muff et al., (2020) probe deeper, suggesting that in each of these areas three further domains must be considered: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Concerning stakeholder relations, the knowledge domain should cover methods to integrate the different stakeholders and deal with their different interests. The domain of skills includes moderation, consensus and the ability to build long-term relations. The domain of attitudes involves empathy and the desire to be of assistance to others (Muff et al., 2020).

In the area of ethics and values, the knowledge domain covers the grasping of dilemmas, knowing right from wrong and understanding these values. Skills refer to the ability to be critical and the ability to act in an ethical and value-based manner. The attitudes domain covers being honest, integer and responsible (Muff et al., 2020).

The dimension of self-awareness refers to the importance of reflection throughout the entire process and knowledge of one's self (including emotions, interests and needs). The skills domain covers the ability to learn from one's mistakes and reflect upon one's own behaviour. Skills concern the ability to share the challenges of one's own development (Muff et al., 2020).

In thinking systems, the knowledge domain requires understanding how the system works, grasping the interdependencies and interconnections as well as the opportunities for sustainable change. Skills refer to the ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity, foresee the consequences of decisions in the system. Attitudes involves working in various subject areas, advocating a long-term vision (Muff et al., 2020).

Finally, in the competency dimension of change and innovation, the knowledge domain refers to understanding the meaning of a motivating vision in a process of change, and understanding the conditions, the functioning and the dynamics of the process of change. The skills dimension concerns the development of creative and innovative ideas. Attitudes covers being curious, flexible, able to adapt and be visionary in the search for solutions to problems in general (Muff et al., 2020).

Kempster and Jackson (2021) bring in a new dimension: place. These authors state that, following the proposition advanced by Rost (1991), it is necessary to put aside "peripheral concerns and we seek to enable leadership to become anchored in the responsibilities of leadership – responsibilities oriented to realizing value for stakeholders with a deepened appreciation of the significance of place." (2021, p. 50).

Shared Leadership

The dominant paradigm considers leadership as a command unit, stressing the behaviour and personal traits of the leaders (Bass, 1990; Bass, 2008). This paradigm focuses on the influence that leaders exert on those hierarchically below, i.e., their subordinates (Pearce, 2004). This influence is imbued with formal authority and power (D´Innocenzo et al., 2015). However, over recent years, this leadership paradigm has been called into question with the emergence of other visions about leadership (Pastor et al., 2002). Leadership is beginning to be seen as a more dynamic process where it is considered that various individuals can perform leadership roles according to the group's needs (Morgeson et al., 2010). Shared leadership is based on the idea that more than one member of the team can lead the team (Han et al., 2018). The new leadership models define it as that socially constructed among the members of a group and moulded by the group context (Wellman, 2017, p.614). Moreover, a rising number of changes are occurring at a rapid pace, where it is increasingly more difficult for a single individual to be able to grasp the different perspectives on a particular issue and thus take the best decision (Fitzsimons, 2016). It is in this context that the theory of shared leadership emerged.

In sum, shared leadership is not limited to a single individual but rather dispersed among those who influence the collective action (Bilal et al., 2019). These authors note, for example, that in the case of public higher education establishments, shared leadership involves three aspects which are participation in decision-making, communication and power. Shared decision-making implies that an organisation's members can actively participate in taking decisions. Communication implies that all suggestions for improvement of work practices should be heard. And power implies that it should be sufficient to decide upon the best way to carry out tasks in the context in question, a vision also shared by Khasawneh (2011).

Various definitions of shared leadership are found in a literature review, with one of the most feasible being proposed by Pearce and Conger. These authors specify shared leadership as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals" (2003, p.1). Hiller et al. (2006, p. 388) state that "The epicentre of collective leadership is not the role of a formal leader but the interaction of team members to lead the team by sharing in leadership responsibilities".

A little later, Pearce et al. (2010, p.151) state that shared leadership "occurs when group members actively and intentionally shift the role of leader to one another as necessitated by the environment or circumstances in which the group operates". Some authors define shared leadership as "An emergent and dynamic team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members (D´Innocenzo et al., 2015, p. 5). While others define it as "The form of leadership that is distributed and shared among multiple participating individuals, rather than being produced by a single individual (Meuser et al., 2016, p.1390). More recently, shared leadership is seen "in terms of how different individuals enact leader and follower roles at different points in time (Lord et al., 2017, p.444).

Despite the differences in the existing definitions of shared leadership, two aspects feature in all of them: the interaction between the different team members

and the possibility of a change in the roles of each person in the team, who may shift between being a leader and a follower.

 Zhu et al. (2018) detect three common aspects in the definitions in the literature on shared leadership: (1) the existence of lateral influence between peers; (2) it is a group phenomenon; and (3) it requires the roles of leadership and influence to be dispersed among the team members.

The first aspect is related to the sources of leadership associated to teamwork, being most distinct in vertical leadership or in shared leadership (Nicolaides et al., 2014). In shared leadership, in contrast to vertical leadership, the key element is not the formal leader, but rather the interaction of the team members during the process of leadership of the team (Hiller et al., 2006). In shared leadership the interaction between the different team members is fundamental. It is in this interaction that the team members negotiate the responsibilities inherent to the leadership (Carsom et al., 2007; Zhu et al., 2018). In relation to the second aspect, it should be noted that leadership does not reside in the formal leader nor in any team member but is shared collectively between the team members (Zhu et., 2018). Lastly, the third aspect is that the leadership's influence cannot be exerted by any particular member of the team (Zhu et al., 2018).

According to Zhu et al. (2018), apart from identifying the common features of the different definitions of shared leadership, it is equally pertinent to answer two questions: i) what is shared? and ii) how does the shared leadership work?

Concerning the first question, there are two lines of investigation. One investigational line argues that almost any type of leadership can be shared (Yammarino et al., 2012). The second line considers leadership generically by aggregating individual leadership in terms of the team (Crason et al., 2007).

In relation to the second question there are also two visions. One considers that the process of sharing can occur when the team members start working together towards leadership activity (Zhu et al., 2018). Another version believes that the process of sharing can develop over time with the team members progressively emerging as informal leaders (Lord et al., 2017).

Various authors refer to the benefits associated to shared leadership. Crevani et al. (2007) classify this at four levels: (1) individual; (2) group; (3) organisation; and (4) societal.

At the individual level, it could be said that individual leadership is actually more absorbing and could contribute to high levels of stress and anxiety. To the contrary, shared leadership enables greater balance between personal and professional life (Fletcher, 2004; Crevani et al., 2007).

At the group level, it could be argued that younger people are used to working in teams with some degree of shared leadership. When these youngsters reach higher hierarchical levels, they tend to choose a more shared leadership style, resisting the temptation of control by a single individual (Sally, 2002; Crevani et al., 2007).

At the organisational level, leadership by a single individual can never reflect the entire complexity manifest in organisations. Indeed, organisations increasingly require very diverse competencies and skills. Shared leadership more easily meets those needs (Crevani et al., 2007). Furthermore, organisations can benefit from the cognitive and behavioural skills of a wider number of individuals (Crevani et al.,2007).

At the societal level, we know that when power is concentrated in the hands of a few this could pave the way to less ethical and more immoral conduct (Lambert-Olsson, 2004). Shared leadership could contribute to inhibiting this type of behaviour as power is more dispersed. In fact, it has never been scientifically proved that the unit of command in the leadership would be the most effective form of leadership (Crevani, et al.,2007).

Various other studies conducted up to date on shared leadership offer evidence of the effects that it could have on collective performance (D´Innocenzo et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014). It appears as a better predictor of success than vertical leadership (Ensley et al., 2006) and strengthens the efficacy of group decision-making (Erkutlu, 2012; Hoch, 2013). Shared leadership is also associated to a set of positive outcomes, such as teamwork, team cohesion, team confidence and trustworthiness, team resistance, team performance, better mental health

and wellbeing of the team members (Zhu et al., 2018). The literature also points to a positive relationship between shared leadership and innovation (Hoch, 2013) and likewise between shared leadership and emotional intelligence (Shiji and Pandey, 2020). A study conducted by Pearce (1997,) demonstrated the connection between shared leadership and the prevention of potential acts of corruption.

Good leadership practices at times of major unpredictability

Unpredictability and change are increasingly part of daily life. The circumstances that we are currently experiencing are proof of this. This type of context requires a reading of reality from diverse perspectives and various solutions. This task could be more difficult when carried out by just one person. In fact, each context has its own particularities and in order for its interpretation to be appropriate to meet the needs of the moment, different perspectives must be considered which is more arduous for a single individual.

There is a rising need to integrate unexpected situations in organisations, with unplanned changes appearing to prevail over planned changes. Flexibility and the adaptability are crucial for the response of organisations. For leadership, flexibility and adaptability are reflected in the taking of the best decisions.

The features associated to shared leadership thus become relevant in this type of context, especially because decision-making is no longer dependent on a single person as there may be a distribution of the functions inherent to the leadership (Tafvelin et al., 2019).

In circumstances of unpredictability and complexity, of rapidly ongoing change, the individual may simply not be able to provide the best response in view of the difficulty of foreseeing and analysing the manifold perspectives (Fitzsimons, 2016). Shared leadership could constitute an alternative to leadership exercised by a single person, enabling the different issues that continuously emerge to be examined from various points of view, thus increasing the chances of a suitable response to the arising difficulties and uncertainties. Kang and Ha (2019) point

precisely to the existence of an association between share leadership and organisational capacity, organisational performance and innovation.

In a study conducted recently, among health professionals in Spain, who work in a Covid-19 unit, Vanilla et al. (2020) conclude that the high degree of exchange of information and collective coordination, as well as collective support, proved to be crucial for the low levels of contagion in that unit. The advantage of shared leadership is also advocated by Clegg et al., (2021), who argue that in organisations and very specifically in leadership it is increasingly necessary to encourage collaboration within teams.

The distribution of functions inherent to the leadership over various members of the group should consider the different areas of knowledge and skills of each of these members, enhancing the possibility of sound decision-making. A sound decision is one that takes into account the diverse scenarios as well as the impact of the decision on the entire surrounding environment, from that closest to the most distant.

Along these lines, a recent study conducted by por Love et al., (2020), concluded that an environment centred on shared leadership and on the creation of value is required for the transition to a new leadership paradigm where, in addition to the production of economic benefits, the surrounding environmental benefits must also be included. Shiji and Pandey (2020) refer to an association between shared leadership and emotional intelligence, where the latter is essential to assess our own feelings and the feelings of others, which, in a context of crisis, proves to be extremely important.

Responsible leadership can also contribute to good leadership practices in times of major unpredictability. As noted above, one of the premises of this theory is grounded on the relationship of trust established with the stakeholders. This relationship will be built around inclusion, collaboration and cooperation. While clearly essential at all times, these aspects are even more important during periods of uncertainty as they strengthen interaction and the possibility of mutual help between all the stakeholders, whether internal or external, making it easier to achieve common goals. But, if collaboration is fundamental to attain common goals, it is equally important to consider the potential impacts of decisions in

general terms. For such, it is necessary to intensify the value given to actions with a stronger ethical dimension.

Various studies provide evidence of the relationship between responsible leadership, shared leadership and the efficient management of organisations. A study conducted by Haque et al. (2018) demonstrated that responsible leadership can boost the workers' commitment. In a new study, currently underway in the health area, Haque (2021) reveals that responsible leadership directly impacts organisational sustainability and the wellbeing of the workers, leading to greater satisfaction of the patients and better performance by the professionals in the present context.

Likewise, a study carried out by Mousa and Puhakka (2019) in Egypt, in which 360 doctors participated, unveiled a positive association between responsible leadership and organisational commitment, between responsible leadership and organisational inclusion. Organisational commitment is a psychological tie that links the workers to their organisation, having a strong impact on their decision to remain at the organisation. In addition to reducing intentions to leave, organisational commitment affects organisational efficiency. In view of the current context that we are experiencing, it is hardly difficult to consider the importance of nurturing the workers' commitment, particularly among the workers of the health sector. Naturally, the leader's role is fundamental in this task.

Zhao and Zhou (2019), demonstrated that responsible leadership is an essential precondition for the development of organisational citizenship behaviour, which is crucial as it contributes to the effective functioning of organisations. And Voegtlin et al., (2019) suggest that leaders who act responsibly are able to achieve particularly positive outcomes in contexts in which the business confidence is lower, as under our present circumstances.

Afsar et al. state that "Compared with traditional leadership from the dyadic leader–follower perspective, responsible leadership contributes to the improvement of personal sustainable behavior, regarding employees as key stakeholders. Therefore, organisations with responsible leaders should generate superior sustainability practices due to their emphasis on aligning a responsible

leader's perspectives or beliefs with the internal personal environment efforts (2019, p.308).

Thus, taking into account the various principles underlying the theories of responsible leadership and shared leadership, and following Lietchi (2014) on the actions of responsible leaders, we present a proposal for good leadership practices in times of unpredictability. We believe that in contexts of major unpredictability the action of leaders should be based on five principles: (1) consider that leadership can be shared by various individuals; (2) valorise diverse competences and skills; (3) strengthen the relationship of trust with the stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation and communication; (4) appraise the impact of the decisions taken on all the stakeholders; (5) valorise the ethical dimension in decision-making.

Let us look at each one of these principles in particular. The first principle considers that the leadership can be shared by various individuals. Leadership exercised by a single person might not be the most effective way in light of the series of responses that are necessary in a short space of time. Berjaoui and Karami-Akkary (2019) argue that the distribution of responsibilities involving the leadership could be more effective in a crisis. Furthermore, the quality of the decisions could be higher as various perspectives on the question in hand are debated (Kezar and Holcombe, 2017). Moreover, it is probable that the team members will uphold a higher level of motivation as the decisions have greater amplitude (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020).

The second principle establishes that diverse competences and skills should be valorised. This principle follows from the previous one. If the distribution of the responsibilities inherent to the leadership and the inclusion of various perspectives in the debate is assumed, then individuals with different competences and skills must necessarily be included to support a diverse range of perspectives.

The third principle envisages strengthening the relationship of trust with the stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation and communication. Inclusion, collaboration and cooperation gives everyone the right to participate through joint work in which concern for the collective is essential. The leaders

should work towards achieving common goals and share their business vision. For example, in view of the present need to comply with social distancing, the leaders' communication should take into account the need to encourage the different stakeholders and, at the same time, consider other means of communication that also consider the preferences of these stakeholders (Fenandez and Shaw, 2020). The importance of communication became obvious with the crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Leaders must succeed in passing on clear, empathetic and positive messages, but that are also realistic and balanced, that contribute to lower the anxiety and concerns of the different stakeholders. It is also necessary for leaders to explain the path designed to face and overcome the current difficulties. Only in this way, will they be able to gain the confidence of all the organisation's stakeholders (Dirani et al., 2020).

The fourth principle lays down that leaders should ponder the impact of their decision-making on the primary and secondary stakeholders, as all are affected by the actions taken by the leaders in an organisation. Based on the extended stakeholder view, the leaders' decisions should not only prevent harm (proscriptive morality) but also do good (prescriptive morality) (Stahal and Luque, 2014).

Lastly, the fifth principle covers the ethical dimension in decision-making. The credibility and the integrity of the leaders is crucial during times of crisis and unpredictability (Fernadez and Shaw, 2020). Transparency and simplicity in communication are essential for the stakeholders to know precisely what direction will be followed to overcome the issues being faced and which values underlie the decisions taken.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic scenario that we are currently experiencing has visible effects on public health, on the physical and mental health of individuals, on the economy and at many more levels. In organisations, individual wellbeing is also affected, whether by the absence or reduction of work or due to a shift to telework, with the changes that embodies, in particular, the difficulty in drawing a line between work

and personal life, feelings of isolation or the lack of sharing of experiences with colleagues. These issues are worrying, as they can be reflected in lower levels of organisational inhouse satisfaction and performance.

This context has clearly strengthened the discussion that existed before the pandemic about the roles of leaders in organisations and in society in general. Leaders are now, more than ever, an indispensable element. The disparity that sometimes exists between what they should be doing and what they are actually doing is increasingly pertinent, with research linked to ethics in organisations and the role of their leaders as drivers of good practices being an expanding field and the role of leadership being an important aspect in research on business ethics.

Our literature review left no doubts as to the advantages of responsible leadership and shared leadership, and their contribution to the management of organisations. The first is that it enables the creation of relations of trust with all the stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation and communication, where decision-making should consider the impact on all stakeholders. In a shared leadership model, the unit of command shifts away from the individual (the manager who influences the others) and towards the different people who can contribute to the overall process of leadership, thus maximising the engagement of all the organisation's human resources.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, various studies recent studies have reinforced the importance and efficacy of these leadership models in organisational structures during the present context, leading us to believe that our proposition could prove to be useful, as it is underpinned by what the studies related to these topics put forward as being decisive and innovative factors for an efficient management of people for people, especially in circumstances of unpredictability.

Covid-19 has strengthened the idea that leaders should be able to resolve a series of increasingly more comprehensive and profound problems. For this reason, it is expected that a leader should have certain qualities such as, for example, the ability to foster collaboration, cooperation, integration and communication. In practical terms, it is desirable that leaders boost organisational resilience, share leadership, prioritise the employee's emotional stability, by

communicating in a clear and honest manner, and acting in an ethical form showing respect for all stakeholders. In other words, leaders should foresee the consequences that their actions could have in the sphere of all the stakeholders, from the workers to the supervisors and the community at large. At the same time, it is important that leaders require those they engage with act in conformity with the same principles.

Hence, a series of leadership good practices have been drawn up that we believe could be beneficial in the present context: (1) leadership shared among various individuals; (2) valorisation of different skills and aptitudes; (3) strengthening of relations of trust with stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation and communication; (4) assessment of the impact of decision-making on all stakeholders; and (5) valorisation of the ethical dimension in decision-making.

We think that it would be interesting, in the future, to explore the impact of both responsible leadership and shared leadership at other levels, beyond the organisational, such as, for example, at a national and even transnational level, and whether the specific cultural atmosphere of each country could have any differentiating effect on the applicability of these leadership models.

Acknowledgements

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