

Romanian great leaders

~ Ph. D. Associate Professor **Oana Simona Hudea** (Faculty of Business and Administration, University of Bucharest, Romania)

E-mail: simona_hudea@yahoo.com

Abstract: Leaders may be encountered in any field of activity and at any level: we may talk about leaders of small groups, family leaders, institutional leaders, project leaders, national leaders and so on. As leaders are dominant individuals succeeding in coagulating other forces around, being highly successful as result of the leading actions carried out or remaining for a long time, sometimes forever, in the memory of people, becomes the attribute of a subdivision thereof, namely great leaders. The present paper is meant to reveal groups of Romanian great leaders, having proved their ability in bringing, directly or indirectly, their contribution, at economic, social or strategic level, to a prosperous evolution of their domestic country or having imprinted a direction towards such future favourable evolution.

Keywords: Romanian leaders, great leaders, institutional leaders, project leaders, national leaders

JEL Classification: M12

1. Introduction

All of us, the ones interested in management and leadership-related issues, have wondered, at least once, if there is a clear delimitation between managers and leaders, if one without the other one is possible and susceptible to bring significant advantages in the medium to long run for all stakeholders, if being a leader involves being the best or if there is a difference between being just a leader and being a great leader.

Such questions find more or less pertinent answers, because, as discussed in Literature review, rendered below, not only ambiguous differences are identified between the definitions of managers and the ones of leaders, in certain cases, but also the definitions given to the same item of the two are sometimes contradictory, as revealed by several sources.

Analysing, further, in such context, the distinction between leaders and great leaders, reveals an even higher level of incertitude in the matter.

Having this in mind, we are going to outline, thereafter, what represents in our opinion great leaders and, starting from that point, which would be some of the Romanian great leaders, people with high potential, as perceived by independent domestic and international organisms, people that have been or are still effectively involved in the destiny of our country.

Such ideas are revealed, step by step, along the following sections of the paper: Literature review, section 2, Research methodology, section 3, Results and discussions, section 4, and Conclusions.

2. Literature review

The most important when analysing a given topic is to clearly understand the meaning of each and every related concept used. Unfortunately, in many cases, it is quite difficult to have an accurate understanding of items, due to divergence of opinions, resulting in a lack of unanimity as for a single, non-ambiguous definition of the same.

In such cases, the best option at hand is to try to make an opinion of your own, based on the most frequently encountered convergent points of view, on the most relevant arguments brought in favour of one variant or another or just based on your personal perspective.

Dealing with simple, basic definitions of two items: managers and leaders, we will finally consider, after few official renderings of the same, mainly coming from dictionaries, our own point of view in the matter.

The Business Dictionary defines the manager as an individual "who is in charge of a certain group of tasks, or a certain subset of a company", often having "a staff of people who report to him or her", the leader being, on the other hand, a person "that holds a dominant or superior position within its field", being capable "to exercise a high degree of control or influence over others".

A manager is perceived, according to Vocabulary.com as being someone "who 'manages' or takes charge of something", the one who "oversees finances, scheduling, and the everyday operation of the business", who "controls resources and expenditures", the leader being the individual "in the charge", the person "who convinces other people to follow". The same entity sees the great leader as the one who "inspires confidence in other people and moves them to action".

Merriam Webster Dictionary gives a simplified definition for both items, the manager being a person “who conducts business or household affairs” and the leader, a person “who has commanding authority or influence”.

The manager is a person “responsible for controlling or administering an organization or group of staff”, while the leader “leads or commands a group, organization, or country”, based on Oxford Dictionaries.

According to Dictionary.com, a manager is an individual “who has control or direction of an institution, business etc., or of a part, division, or phase of it”, while a leader is an individual “that leads”, “a guiding or directing head, as of an army, movement, or political group”.

Given our background in the matter and passing through the multiple definitions encountered, from which we have rendered, within the previous lines, just several, for exemplification purposes, we might say that managers are individuals having particular positions allowing them to exercise certain authority-related rights like direction and control, being mainly encountered at institutional level, while leaders are individuals able to convince groups of people, be they part of an institution or not, to follow them, by virtue of specific characteristics that make such leading individuals special: their knowledge, their experience, their self-control, their persistence without borders, their persuasion power etc.

What orients us towards making our own definition of leaders is reflected by VTAIDE, seeing the leader as “a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal”.

As for great leaders, this emerges from the ideas launched by Inservice, stating that

great leaders “don’t tell people what to do, but instead take them to where they need to be”. After all, leadership “is all about action not position or title”.

We might conclude the range of definitions with the one provided by Ronald Reagan, revealing, from our point of view, the essence of great leaders: “The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”

Going on with our perspective, leaders need something more in order to become great leaders, namely to be able to give up to themselves for others, if circumstances impose it, to act so as to produce advantages, in the short, medium and long run for all members of the group, for all people involved, bringing benefits, after all, to a smaller or larger community.

If we talk about great leaders acting at the same time as managers in a public or private institution, of course that the prerogatives of such persons increase, doubled by an augmentation of expectations others might manifest as concerns them, the latter having as “task” to be successful, as the goals to be reached have effects on a larger range of individuals, more exactly on all related stakeholders of that institution.

3. Research methodology

The paper starts by approaching, purely theoretical, some largely known and, at the same time, pretty unknown or unclearly delimited concepts, trying to set a more coherent basis for the understanding thereof. The method used is, therefore, a descriptive and analytical one, this generating a layout fit for the second part of the study, dedicated to the

depiction of groups individuals identified by various independent, internal and external organisms, embodying the characteristics finally assigned by us to the related concepts. It is about great leaders originating and/or residing in our country, being or not in a managerial position, but having succeeded in bringing additional value in the matter, via their actions.

4. Results and discussions

Identifying groups of leaders can be done by resorting to well defined criteria, such as field of activity, level of achievements, number of stakeholders beneficiary of their successful actions, intensity and persistence in time, in the collective memory, of their greatness etc.

Financial Times, tries to reveal, by the related analysis, the Romanians having most contributed, via different projects, to the improvement of the society. In this list we encounter:

- Andrei Duncă – producer of the LiveRail software
- Dumitru Popescu – leader of the Romanian project Romanian Association for Cosmonautics and Aeronautics
- Raul Popa – CEO TypingDNA
- Dan Nechita – co-founder and President at Smart Everything Everywhere
- Avădanei Andrei – executive manager of Bit Sentinel Security
- Roxana Rugină – founder of Simplon
- Andreea Hanganu – co-founder of the Institute for Digital Government
- Radu Puchiu – co-founder and CEO at H.appyCities
- Attil Bustya and Andras Lenard – co-founders of Spider Drone Security

- Mihai Raneti, Claudia Dehelean, Adina Brutaru and Kacper Gogol – employees of Clepsisoft CyberFog, charged with the protection of organisations against any possible cybernetic attack

As we can see, these are individuals having imprinted their names in the history of their field of activity and, thereby, having influenced the life and activity of a large range of people.

According to Ziarul Financiar, the most appreciated Romanian business leaders, as seen through the lens of the Romanian managers, would be the following:

- Dragoş Pavăl and Adrian Pavăl – founders of Dedeman DYT Retailer
- Ion Țiriac – founder of Țiriac Holdings
- Florin Talpeş – founder of Bitdefender Security Solutions

Also on the business field focuses Business Magazine when revealing Romanian leaders. Among them, we encounter:

- Daniel Boaje – CEO of McDonald's România, the strongest player of the Romanian restaurant-related market
- Paul Cuza – CEO of Inditex, the largest Romanian fashion retailer
- Constantin Boromiz – founder of Boromir, one of the most representative Romanian bakery products producers
- Mihai Marcu – CEO and shareholder of MedLife, leader of the Romanian private medical services
- Felix Pătrășcanu – founder of Fan Courier Express, leader of the Romanian private courier services
- Doris Andronescu – founder of Sanador, one of the most important Romanian private medical groups
- Iulian Dascălu – known as King of

Malls, owner of most Romanian malls

- Daniel Dines și Marius Țircă – founders of UiPath, the most valuable Romanian technological company, specialized in providing outsourcing software solutions and automation robot-based solutions.

The last two classification reflect, as previously specified, leaders in business, most of them having come with an idea turned into a successful business covering not only the needs of their owners, but also of a significant number of beneficiaries, be they in the position of suppliers, employees or customers.

However, what looks more interesting is seeing leaders from a quite different perspective, more exactly from the one of people having become representative personalities of a nation and even beyond the borders thereof, models to follow, individuals having effectively changed, directly or indirectly, destinies, both at individual and at collective level. This is the point from where we might discuss in terms of really great leaders.

The Romanian Television reveals, from such perspective, as result of a national vote, the greatest Romanians of all times, to whom we might certainly assign a leader label. Surprisingly or not, most of the top ones are national leaders, art and literature leaders or sport leaders, not business leaders, this indicating us that, in time, those generating highly covering and long-run effects remain imprinted much more in the memory of people than the ones succeeding in bringing benefits at micro-economic or micro-social level. The list of such leaders includes:

- Ștefan cel Mare – prince of Moldavia
- Carol I – first Romanian ruler of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty and first King of Romania
- Mihai Eminescu – Romanian most influential poet

- Mihai Viteazul – Prince of Wallachia, Prince of Moldavia and first ruler of Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia

- Richard Wurmbbrand – evangelical Christian minister, author and educator

- Ion Antonescu – Romanian prime minister and Romanian leader during World War II

- Mircea Eliade – Romanian researcher, professor of history of religions and novelist

- Alexandru Ioan Cuza – first ruler of the United Principalities of Romania

- Constantin Brâncuși – famous Romanian modern sculptor

- Nadia Comăneci – renown Romanian gymnast

The perception in such circumstances might be different, from case to case, but, irrespective of the point of view, no one could ever contest the fact that the above-mentioned individuals have succeeded in turning into iconic, emblematic characters of our country.

5. Conclusions

Without trying to cover too extensively a topic that, at the same time, rises interest and generates fervent debates, we undertook, in the present paper, to lay the grounds for a deeper understanding of the manager-leader difference, as well as of the leader-great leader one, so as to expose thereafter, from a clearly delimited perspective, some of the most representative Romanian leaders, as perceived based on the analyses carried out by independent entities, focussed of revealing great individuals who should be valued accordingly at national level.

REFERENCES:

1. **Bellu, C.** (2016). *Cine sunt cei mai apreciați lideri din țară și din străinătate în viziunea managerilor români: Elon Musk, Steve Jobs, frații Pavăl și Ion Țiriac, în top (Who are the most appreciated leaders from our country and from abroad, in the vision of the Romanian managers: Elon Musk, Steve Jobs, Pavăl brothers and Ion Țiriac, in top)*. Ziarul Financiar. Retrieved from: <https://www.zf.ro/companii/retail-agrobusiness/cine-sunt-cei-mai-apreciati-lideri-din-tara-si-din-strainatate-in-viziunea-managerilor-romani-elon-musk-steve-jobs-fratii-paval-si-ion-tiriac-in-top-16032119>
2. **Popescu, N.** (2016). *Români în topul celor care au schimbat lumea (Romanians in the top of those having changed the world)*. Financial Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.activenews.ro/externe/Financial-Times-Romani-in-topul-celor-care-au-schimbat-lumea-138312>
3. <https://www.activenews.ro/externe/Financial-Times-Romani-in-topul-celor-care-au-schimbat-lumea-138312>
4. <https://www.businessmagazin.ro/lideri/>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_Greatest_Romanians
6. <https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/manager.html>
7. <https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/leader.html>
8. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/manager>
9. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/leader>
10. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manager>
11. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leader>
12. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/manager>
13. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/leader>
14. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/manager>
15. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/leader>
16. <http://inservice.ascd.org/what-it-means-to-be-a-true-leader/>
17. <http://www.vtaide.com/gleanings/leader.html>