

“Do leaders change?": A review of the contrasting behaviors of political leaders in ordinary-extraordinary situations

“Liderler değişir mi?": Siyasi liderlerin sıradan-sıra dışı durumlarda gösterdikleri davranışlarının karşılaştırılması üzerine bir değerlendirme

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ABSTRACT

The images of political leaders are affected by various factors such as their personality traits, leadership skills, behaviors, and attitudes. In times of crisis, the communication skills, leadership skills, and decision-making processes of political leaders are of great importance. The extraordinary situations brought about by the global pandemic constituted the focus of this study in order to determine and compare the behaviors of leaders in both ordinary and extraordinary conditions. In the study, the biographies, relevant scientific research, media, and official statements of the leaders of countries such as Germany, America, China, England, and Russia were transferred to the NVivo 10 program and examined, considering their pre-pandemic situations. The findings obtained reveal that the behaviors of leaders in ordinary and extraordinary situations vary. Angela Merkel moved away from stability during the period of uncertainty; Vladimir Putin maintained his authoritarian and oppressive leadership, but shifted from ideological leadership to pragmatic leadership. Boris Johnson, while defined as an ideological leader, has occasionally exhibited pragmatic behaviors. Donald Trump, on the other hand, adopted a pragmatic approach in ordinary times, but tried to strengthen this approach even further in extraordinary times.

Keywords: Extraordinary Leadership, Political Leader, Pandemic.

Jel Classification: H12, M10, M12.

ÖZ

Siyasi liderlerin imajları, kişilik özellikleri, liderlik becerileri, davranışları ve tutumları gibi çeşitli faktörlerden etkilenir. Kriz dönemlerinde, siyasi liderlerin iletişim yetenekleri, liderlik becerileri ve karar alma süreçleri büyük bir önem taşır. Küresel pandeminin getirdiği olağanüstü durumlar, liderlerin hem sıradan hem de sıra dışı koşullarda sergiledikleri davranışları belirlemek ve karşılaştırmak amacıyla bu çalışmanın odak noktasını oluşturmuştur. Çalışmada, Almanya, Amerika, Çin, İngiltere ve Rusya gibi ülkelerin liderlerinin pandemi öncesindeki durumları dikkate alınarak biyografileri, ilgili bilimsel araştırmalar, medya ve resmi açıklamaları NVivo 10 programına aktarılmış ve incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, liderlerin sıradan ve olağanüstü durumlarda sergiledikleri davranışların değişiklik gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Angela Merkel, belirsizlik döneminde istikrardan uzaklaşmış; Vladimir Putin, otoriter ve baskıcı liderliğini sürdürmüş ancak ideolojik liderlikten pragmatik liderliğe kayma göstermiştir. Boris Johnson, ideolojik bir lider olarak tanımlanırken zaman zaman pragmatik davranışlar sergilemiştir. Donald Trump ise olağan dönemde pragmatik bir yaklaşım benimsemiş, ancak olağanüstü dönemlerde bu yaklaşımını daha da güçlendirmeye çalışmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sıra Dışı Liderlik, Siyasi Lider, Pandemi.

Jel Sınıflaması: H12, M10, M12.



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1. Introduction

Leadership research has focused on the ability to manage change during the change process. It has been suggested that transformational leadership is at one end of the process of managing change and renewal, and transactional leadership is at the other end. Throughout history, leadership theories have been studied extensively. Charismatic, transformational, and strategic theories have been frequently studied and dominated, while other theories such as leader-member exchange, team leadership, systems approaches, and leader emergence approaches have not been studied as frequently (Meuser et al., 2016). However, regarding the emergence of leaders, Mumford (2010) has already suggested that different leadership approaches should be questioned. While the extraordinary conditions resulting from the uncertainties that arise during change processes require a refocus on what constitutes real leadership and leadership, they have also created the opportunity to question the extraordinary leadership born in a crisis environment. Because leaders can change and adapt their behavior, style, and approach according to the context and needs of the situation. Leadership is not a fixed characteristic but a dynamic process that can develop and change over time. One of the active actors in this process is political leaders.

Political leaders are people who are influential in the political processes of society and take on leadership roles (Özgül, 2022). The images of political leaders are shaped by factors such as personality traits, leadership skills, behaviors, and attitudes (Yaşar & Uğurhan, 2022). Communication skills of political leaders, along with their leadership capabilities and decision-making methods in times of crisis hold considerable importance (Yıldırım, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in which political leaders have taken an active role, the need for extraordinary leadership in professional practice has become even more evident. Crises such as pandemics place additional burdens on leaders, and developing extraordinary leadership is crucial to navigating challenging circumstances (Howard & Dhillon, 2022). Based on this, the changing conditions with the Covid-19 epidemic, the possibilities of the countries, and the development of technology have provided the opportunity to question extraordinary leadership in detail again. As a matter of fact, the purpose of the study is to compare the behaviors of political leaders and the decisions they made with the onset of the pandemic in ordinary and extraordinary situations. For this purpose, Özkanan and Yılan (2023) examined the behavior of national leaders in their study, considering the official dates of the coronavirus first appearing in Germany, America, China, England and Russia. In the research, the behavior of the leaders of these five countries before the extraordinary event occurred was examined and compared. Therefore, the study poses the inquiry “Do leaders change?” by comparing the behavior of Trump, Boris, Putin, Merkel and Xi Jinping while governing their countries in the normal period with their behavior in the extraordinary period. The answer to the question has also been sought.

2. Conceptual Framework

Leadership is the process of directing people toward a specific goal, motivating them and inspiring them. Throughout history leaders have been regarded as guides by their societies and institutions. Modern leadership theories argue that leadership is a set of skills that can be learned and developed rather than an innate talent. These theories emphasize that leaders should not only have knowledge and skills but also develop characteristics such as emotional intelligence, empathy, and effective communication (Goleman, 1998). The term “transformational leadership” coined by James MacGregor accounts that leaders not only fulfill tasks but also transform their followers and enable them to reveal their potential (Burns, 1978). In this context, vision, trust, and sustainable relationship-building skills lie at the core of effective leadership. However, the increasing

importance of vision and change in leadership research has revealed the need to re-evaluate different leadership approaches. Mumford (2010) suggests that uncertainties and extraordinary conditions, especially during change processes, require the concept of leadership to be redefined. While the extraordinary situations that emerge during times of crisis bring new focus to the question of what real leadership is, they also provide an opportunity to examine the extraordinary leadership styles that arises in these demanding/challenging settings.

2.1. Extraordinary Leadership

Observations about the situations that cause extraordinary leadership indicate that extraordinary leadership seems to emerge under conditions of crisis, change, and turbulence. (Beyer, 1999: 314). The first step in becoming an extraordinary leader is to decide whether his behavior is suitable for every behavior he wants his followers to do (Zenger, et al., 2009: 69). People pay significant attention to the leaders' behaviors, shaping their own actions in response to it.

Extraordinary leadership is defined by the characteristics, behaviors, and abilities that contribute to extraordinary performance. This type of leadership includes the ability to inspire and motivate others, communicate a compelling vision, and achieve extraordinary results (Mumford, 2006). Mumford's (2006) work has contributed to our understanding of extraordinary leadership; he has highlighted the importance of charisma in leadership through leaders' negotiation and persuasion skills. He also suggested that transformational leadership could facilitate the emergence of creative ideas and potential by motivating followers, providing vision, and providing intellectual stimulation (Zhang et al., 2011).

While ideological leadership emphasizes visions that have been established and shared in the past, charismatic leadership, similar to transformational leadership, offers a vision for the future by emphasizing the need for change. A clear distinction has been made between these two types of leadership (Cheng & Su, 2020).

Extraordinary leaders are defined by their ability to effectively communicate a vision, build trust, bring out the best in people, and lead by example (Howard & Dhillon, 2021). These leaders, who exhibit qualities such as charisma, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving (Poonamallee et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2011), are also known for their ability to navigate difficult and uncertain conditions, provide comfort, and make sense of complex situations (Sheaffer et al., 2011). In addition, the perception of extraordinary leadership may differ across cultures because it is influenced by culturally accepted implicit leadership theories (Rossberger & Krause, 2015; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2019).

Extraordinary leaders are viewed by their followers as inspiring, trustworthy, and capable of bringing out the best in others (Getz & Roy, 2013; Howard & Dhillon, 2021). In general, extraordinary leadership involves a combination of personal characteristics, behaviors, and abilities that enable leaders to achieve extraordinary results and inspire and rally others.

According to Zenger (2009), the prominent strengths of extraordinary leaders are as follows:

- The leader has a clear vision and communicates it effectively.
- The leader makes a great effort to achieve extraordinary results.

- The leader values people and contributes to their development.
- The leader exhibits a highly integrative approach and is committed to the principle of honesty.
- The leader has strong technical knowledge.

2.2. Extraordinary Leadership Types

Mumford (2010) suggested that crisis and chaos environments are effective in the emergence of extraordinary leadership and that these environments intersect with charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic leadership types. According to Mumford, charismatic leadership is a leadership style in which the leader expresses himself strongly, while it consists of followers who are visionary, self-confident, honest, and loyal to the leader. Ideological leadership is defined as a style in which the leader expresses a desire to return to an idealized past and attracts a small group of followers who are loyal to the leader's values. Pragmatic leadership is an approach that emphasizes knowledge management, expertise, problem-solving, and consensus building. In short, charismatic leaders focus on the future, ideological leaders focus on the past, and pragmatic leaders focus on the present.

Charismatic Leadership

Conger and Kanungo (1998) define charismatic leadership as the leader's capacity to mobilize followers through a powerful vision and persuasive communication style. These leaders create strong commitment by responding to social and psychological needs.

Yukl (2013) defines charismatic leadership as the leader's ability to motivate and direct followers through their personal charm and impressive characteristics. These leaders often exhibit high self-confidence and persuasiveness, which reinforces their followers' trust in them.

Charismatic leadership is a leadership style in which leaders demonstrate a strong personality, inspire people, and inspire trust. These leaders guide and direct their followers and support them with motivating behaviors. At the same time, they help their followers realize what is truly important in their lives by having a sense of mission. In this context, charismatic leaders encourage individuals to develop a positive perspective on the future, thus guiding them toward greater goals (Uyguç et al., 2000). In other words, their ability to encourage positive thinking about the future indicates that charismatic leaders enable their followers to progress toward a greater purpose. Therefore; charismatic leadership is not only about a leader's appeal but also how this appeal affects and directs others.

Ideological Leadership

Michael D. Mumford defines ideological leadership as leaders motivating their followers by acting with strong beliefs based on a certain moral or value system. Ideological leaders generally define the problems in their environment on a moral or ethical axis and offer solutions within this framework (Mumford, 2006). These leaders challenge existing social and cultural norms, convey their value systems to their followers, and try to guide them in line with these values. Ideological leadership can be particularly effective in times of crisis because it provides a strong value framework in the face of uncertainty.

Strange and Mumford (2002) define ideological leadership as a type of leadership based on vision; in this respect, it shares some similarities with charismatic leadership. However, unlike

charismatic leaders, ideological leaders do not present a vision for the future. On the contrary, they adopt a vision that is based on the virtues of the past and emotionally glorifies the past. For ideological leaders, this vision is shaped within the framework of values and norms that must be protected and maintained to build a just society.

Pragmatic Leadership

Pragmatic leadership refers to the leader's realistic and solution-oriented approach to events. Unlike ideological or charismatic leaders, pragmatic leaders do not act based on a specific vision or strong value systems; instead, they focus on producing practical and functional solutions to the problems they face. According to Michael D. Mumford, pragmatic leaders carefully evaluate their environment, use resources efficiently, and try to achieve concrete results by minimizing risks. These leaders prioritize developing sustainable and applicable solutions rather than large-scale changes (Mumford, 2006).

Pragmatic leaders constantly observe their environment and collect information on basic issues to understand the current situation (Qin and Simon, 1990). They can use the information they gain through these observations in problem-solving processes. However, while examining their environment, they are also likely to be influenced by other people, different ideas, and current positions (Ligon et al., 2008).

2.3. Influence tactics of extraordinary leaders

Leaders' influence tactics include the strategies they use to persuade, guide, and motivate their employees. Rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, consultation, soft persuasion, personal persuasion, coalition building, rewarding, or pressure are some commonly used influence tactics (Yukl, 2013).

Griffith and his colleagues (2015) conducted a study on the influence tactics of extraordinary leadership types. In their research, they identified three categories, which are categorized as soft, hard, and rational persuasion tactics (Kipnis et al., 1980).

Soft tactics refer to influence tactics based on the use of personal power based on characteristics such as knowledge, competence, etc. In other words, it is the method used by the leader to create an effect on his followers that is knowledgeable, has a command of the subject, and can achieve what he wants.

Hard tactics consist of pressure, accusation, and attack behaviors. The leader uses these tactics with the power he receives from his position. The use of harsh tactics can create fear, hesitation, obligation, and intimidation behaviors in the followers.

Rational persuasion, on the other hand, intends to convince the employees with logical arguments and data. It is the most widely used tactic and builds trust by providing objective information. A leader who uses rational persuasion tactics uses logic to influence followers.

Charismatic leaders tend to give positive messages about the future, so they use soft tactics such as inspirational appeals. Ideological leaders tend to focus on previous mistakes, failures, and negative events in setting goals and creating plans, so they use hard tactics such as pressure and coercion to influence followers. Pragmatic leaders use objective influence tactics and rational persuasion to influence followers. However, Falbe and Yukl (1992) suggested that influence tactics are more effective when used, or in combination. They stated that rational persuasion is more

effective when used with soft tactics such as consultation and inspiration rather than with hard tactics. They also found in their research that soft tactics are more effective than hard tactics.

3. Data and Methodology

During the pandemic era, which impacted the entire world and leaders were uncertain about the way forward, different approaches emerged among national leaders. Each country has tried to take measures using different methods, and approached the situation from different perspectives. In that way, the leaders demonstrated various leadership behaviors in their normal periods before the pandemic and reflected a type of leadership in this respect. In this study, the leadership behaviors of national leaders before the pandemic and the extraordinary leadership characteristics they exhibited after the declaration of COVID-19 a pandemic are examined comparatively.

The study, which aims to compare the leadership characteristics of country leaders according to ordinary and extraordinary situations by evaluating their behaviors, practices, and decisions before the pandemic and during the pandemic period in terms of their leadership approaches, was designed with a qualitative method.

Within the scope of the research, the leader of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, who was the leader of the country when the pandemic was declared, Angela Merkel, the leader of the Federal Republic of Germany, Vladimir Putin, the leader of the Russian Federation, Boris Johnson, the leader of the United Kingdom, and Donald Trump, the leader of the United States of America, were examined.

The data were examined using descriptive content analysis from studies conducted with the keywords "leadership characteristics, leadership behaviors" regarding the political leaders of the selected countries, which addressed the leadership characteristics of the country leaders before the pandemic. Descriptive content analysis is the method in which the general trend is determined by evaluating the results in a descriptive dimension by considering independent qualitative and quantitative studies on a certain subject (Jayarajah et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2014, Suri & Clarke, 2009; Cohen et al., 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). With this analysis, the leadership characteristics and behaviors of the country leaders were determined.

The data of the pandemic period are the results of the article titled "From Extraordinary Event to Extraordinary Leadership: An Evaluation on the Behavior of Country Leaders during the Pandemic Process," which was previously conducted by researchers and examined by content analysis of the statements of the country leaders in the news and press releases, as well as about the leaders of the selected countries in the literature review. The research was designed by the results of studies conducted with the keywords "leadership characteristics, leadership behaviors, extraordinary leadership." Leadership behaviors and characteristics during the pandemic period were also examined using descriptive content analysis. The Nvivo 10 program was chosen for the data analysis. Categories for the characteristics and behaviors of leaders were developed, and comparisons were made.

4. Findings and Discussion

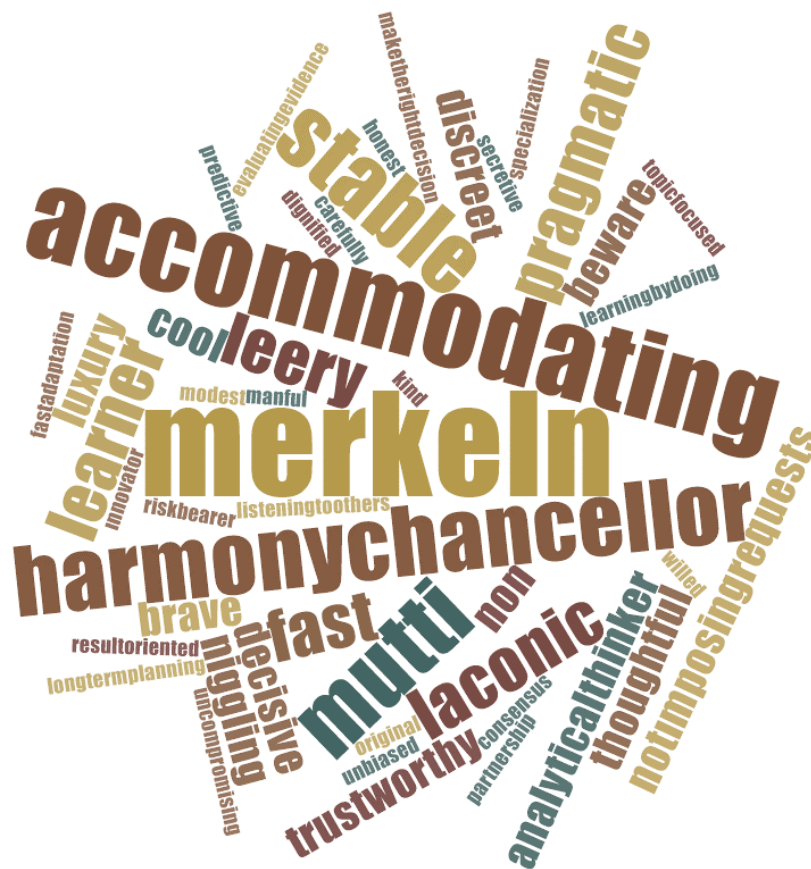
The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 disease a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and countries took precautions in different ways. The SARS-CoV-2 virus was first seen in the People's Republic of China on December 31, 2019, and then affected the whole world.

4.1. Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany is a republic with a federal structure consisting of 16 independent states located in Europe. Angela Merkel, who served as Chancellor of Germany between 2005 and 2021, is known by the nickname "Mutti (Mother)." Angela Merkel, who has always been known for her calmness and harmonizing qualities, is known for her stability and collaborative nature, which attaches to her political stance and expertise. In addition, Angela Merkel attracts attention with her impartial behavior by not imposing her wishes.

Angela Merkel, who served as Chancellor of Germany for three terms, managed to ensure social welfare with her production-oriented and income-increasing policies, thus increasing self-confidence (Hafizoğlu & Altan, 2021:50-51). According to Olsen (2011), Merkel, who is both original and able to influence the public, owes her success to her calmness, her calm and determined attitude, and her focus on results, away from anxiety about standing out. In addition, they did not adhere to strict party ideologies and instead sought pragmatic solutions to problems (Balducci, 2014; Rohrer, 2017; Mushaben, 2018:87). Krasno (2015) states that Merkel also offers a flexible leadership model by emphasizing her open-minded characteristics of being open to innovation, listening to her followers, and valuing different ideas.

Figure 1. Leadership Characteristics of German Chancellor Angela Merkel



Angela Merkel is an important example where the phenomenon of charisma is embodied in a female leader (Bryman, 1992; Ferree, 2006). Although Angela Merkel has always been described as a pragmatic leader, she exhibits more charismatic leadership qualities.

Katja Glaesner (2009) explains Merkel's success with seven skills that she attributes to female leaders:

1. The ability to communicate clearly, communicate with expressions that the public can understand, and listen to the public.
2. The ability to create a sense of trust, approach events with common sense and create a respectful environment
3. Loyalty, creating team spirit within one's own team
4. Willingness to learn, having a fast-learning curve
5. A positive future image with vision and long-term goals
6. Ability to gain the public's confidence with her competence to motivate
7. Having high emotional intelligence and the ability to empathize

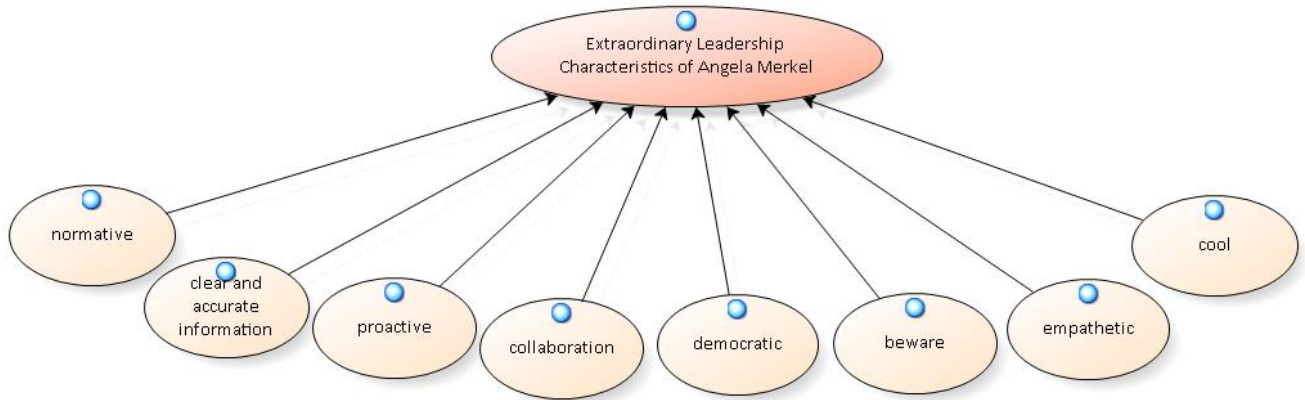
What made Merkel strong in the German administration was that she defended equality, freedom and democratic structure, and followed a policy that was simple and kept the distance from her people low, with reliable, balanced, rational and action-oriented work in this direction (Akbaş & Taner, 2017:205). In addition to these policies, the verb "merkeln", which emerged because Merkel waited for a long time without reacting to important events, has also become a German word with the meaning of "remaining inactive/doing nothing on important issues" (Ermağan, 2021:319).

While Angela Merkel thought that the virus would spread with the first case during the pandemic period, she is remembered for describing the pandemic as a "historical challenge" after a short time. As a common point of the epidemics, Angela Merkel is remembered for her calmness and clear information transfer during the pandemic period. With the leadership qualities exhibited by Angela Merkel, the Federal Republic of Germany has become the most successful country among Europe countries (Congar, 2020; D'Souza, 2020; Elsa, 2020; Wittenberg-Cox, 2022).

The first Covid-19 case in Germany was seen on January 27, 2020, and the first death occurred on March 9, 2020. Germany was evaluated as successful in the fight against the pandemic (Euronews, 2020), ranking second worldwide in the trust ranking and first in the European Region (Deep Knowledge Group, 2020). According to Narlikar (2020), the main reason for Germany's success is its preparedness in terms of medical needs.

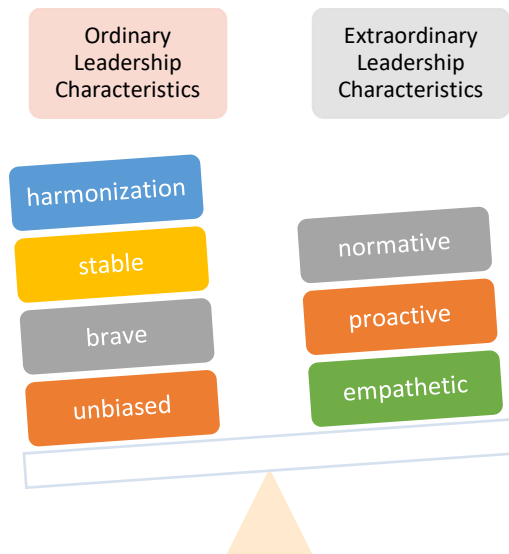
During this period, Angela Merkel maintained her calmness, collaborative and democratic approach, and belief in true knowledge, both in ordinary and extraordinary situations. All these features reveal that Angela Merkel was essentially an unchanging charismatic leader. In addition, leadership characteristics that change in extraordinary situations can be stated as follows:

Figure 2. Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of German Chancellor Angela Merkel



During the pandemic period, Angela Merkel exhibited charismatic leadership characteristics and ideological leadership characteristics.

Figure 3. Comparison of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Ordinary Leadership Characteristics and Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics



Angela Merkel followed a normative and proactive approach, leaving aside her harmonization and courageous attitude in extraordinary events. In addition, the uncertainty of the pandemic caused Angela Merkel to abandon this attitude, with the statements she made at the beginning of the pandemic, replacing her understanding of stable leadership.

4.2. Russian Federation

In the Russian Federation, which is governed by the Semi-Presidential System, the executive is divided between the head of state and the prime minister, the head of government (Türkölmez, 2017:25). Vladimir Putin, who took office as prime minister on March 26, 2000, started his duty with a strategy of re-strengthening the state (Kagarlitski, 2008:427). Putin, who was in a politically stronger position, became president in 2012. According to Ağır (2019), the political culture

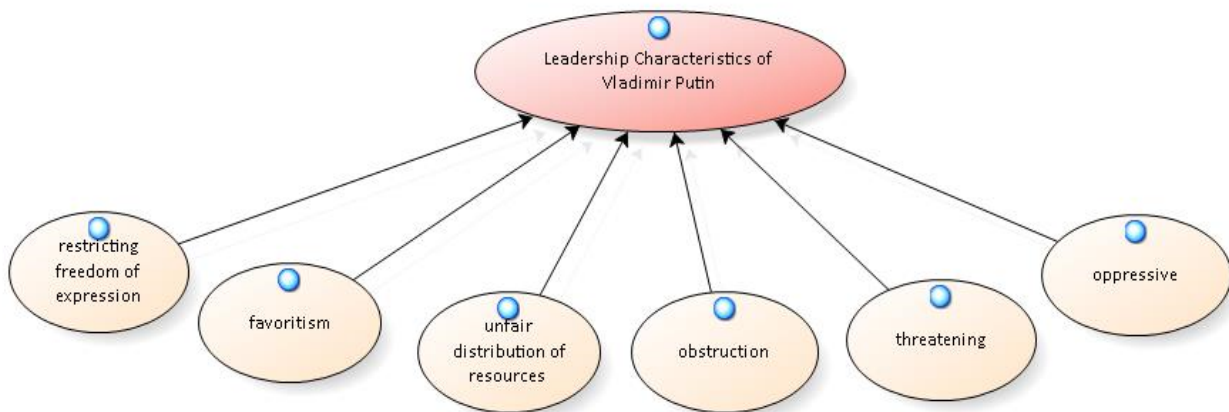
of the Russian Federation, the positive developments in the economy, the events and wars that took place, and Russia's ability to reach the position of a global actor again, and of course his characteristics, have made Putin a strong leader.

Looking at Russian political history, Russians have generally united around strong leaders and caused authoritarian leaders to come to the fore (Bugajski, 2010:9). Vladimir Putin, who has been serving as the President of the Russian Federation since 2012 because Russians want to be governed by a strong hand, is a leader that draws attention with his oppressive and authoritarian structure.

Putin's determined and fearless personality traits and the fact that he stands behind the decisions he made by not listening to anyone, combined with his unifying discourses, made him easily adopted by the public (Caner, Bozaslan & Serbest, 2020:253). In addition, due to his personality traits, he has an attraction beyond ordinary appreciation in the eyes of the public (Aykanat & Yıldız, 2016:202). This attraction has enabled Vladimir Putin to become a charismatic leader. Unlike other leaders, Putin does not fall into the ideological mold and exhibits a structure that produces practical solutions in line with the interests of the country (Hill & Gaddy, 2013:213). These behaviors can be evaluated as a pragmatic structure.

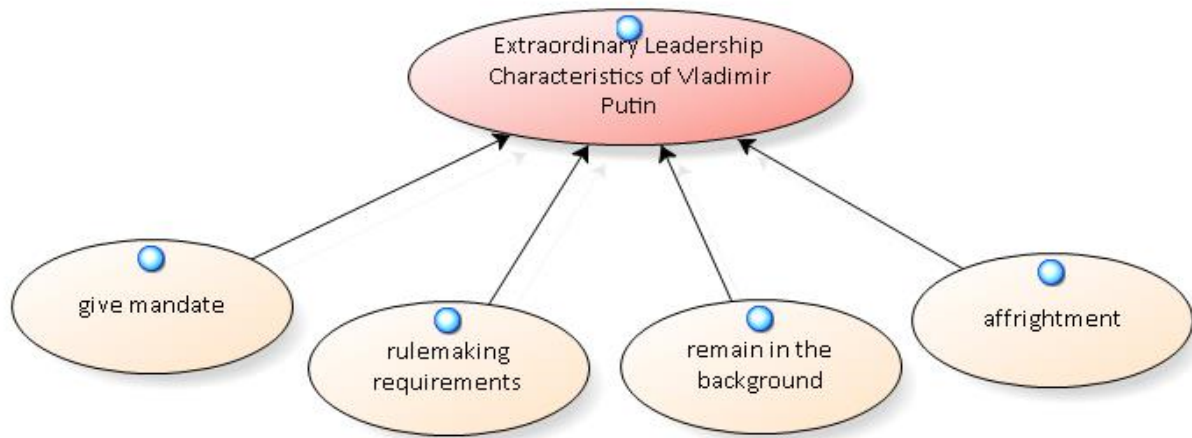
Vladimir Putin, described as "paranoid," continued his normative structure during the pandemic period and tried to keep the spread of the virus under control with various restrictions and heavy sanctions.

Figure 4. Leadership Characteristics of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin



Vladimir Putin also highlighted Sobyenin, one of his country's mayors, as the symbolic president in the fight against coronavirus, and he preferred to stay in the background during the crisis.

Figure 5. Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin

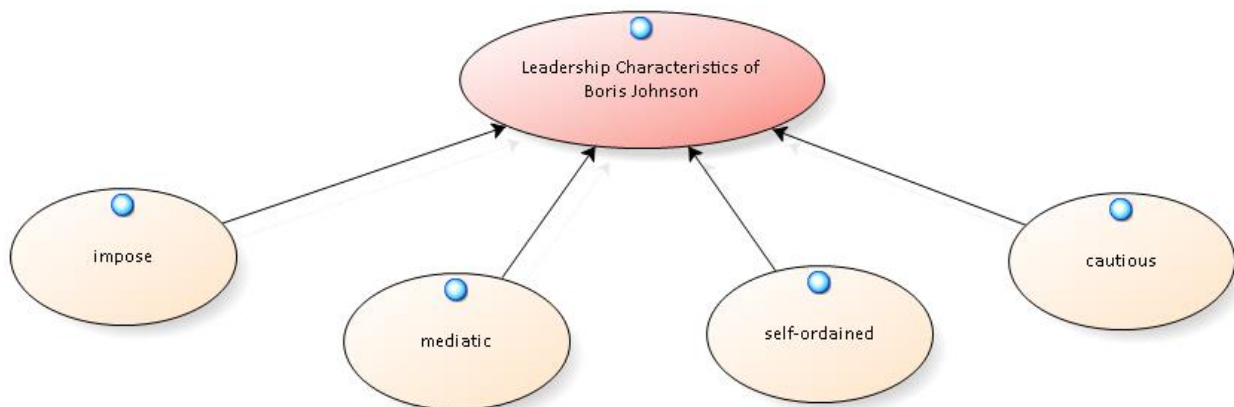


Vladimir Putin was defined as an authoritarian and negative leader under ordinary circumstances (Ashforth, 1994; Simonsen, 2000), and he continued this feature during the pandemic period. Vladimir Putin, who also exhibited pragmatic behaviors during the pandemic period, also exhibits ideological leadership behaviors from time to time during the normal period.

4.3. United Kingdom

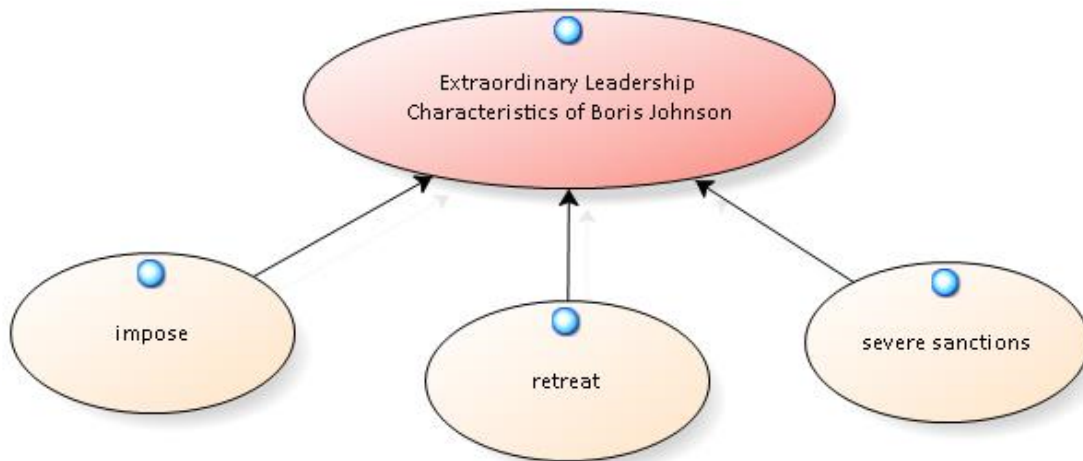
Boris Johnson took over the position of Prime Minister in the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in 2019 and continued until the end of 2022. In his election campaigns, Johnson emphasized "Brexit", that is, "the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union membership", and claimed to prove his maturity (Euronews, 2019). This claim can be evaluated based on making the country's idle powers and qualities useful to society and realizing ideologies.

Figure 6. Leadership Characteristics of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson



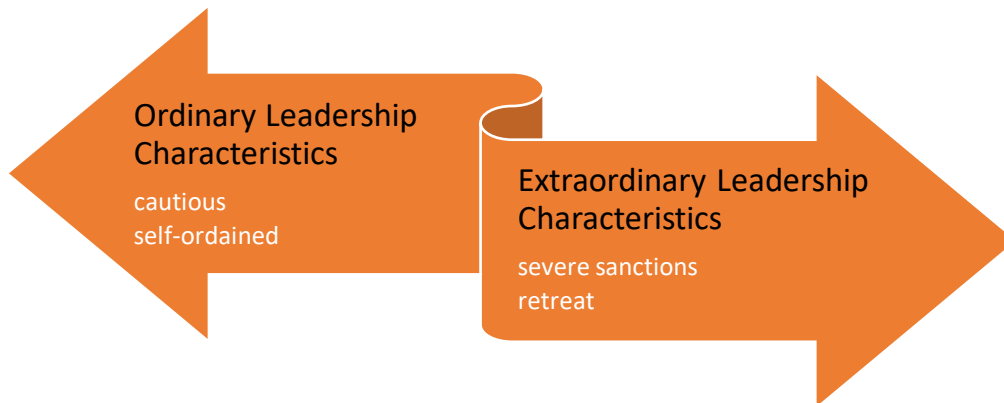
Boris Johnson, who managed to attract attention with his media-oriented attitudes and radical attitude, continued to display the same attitudes during the pandemic period.

Figure 7. Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson



Boris Johnson, who exhibited ideological leadership qualities in the normal period, displayed a pragmatic attitude during the pandemic period, and had to give up the policy he had implemented with herd immunity when the epidemic got out of control and the cases reached serious levels.

Figure 8. Comparison of United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Ordinary Leadership Characteristics and Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics



Boris Johnson's cautious approach was replaced by his retreat when extraordinary events occurred, and he did not give up his strong communication with the media. At the same time, Boris Johnson's attitude of not taking responsibility and looking for blame continued during the pandemic period and even went as far as imposing heavy sanctions.

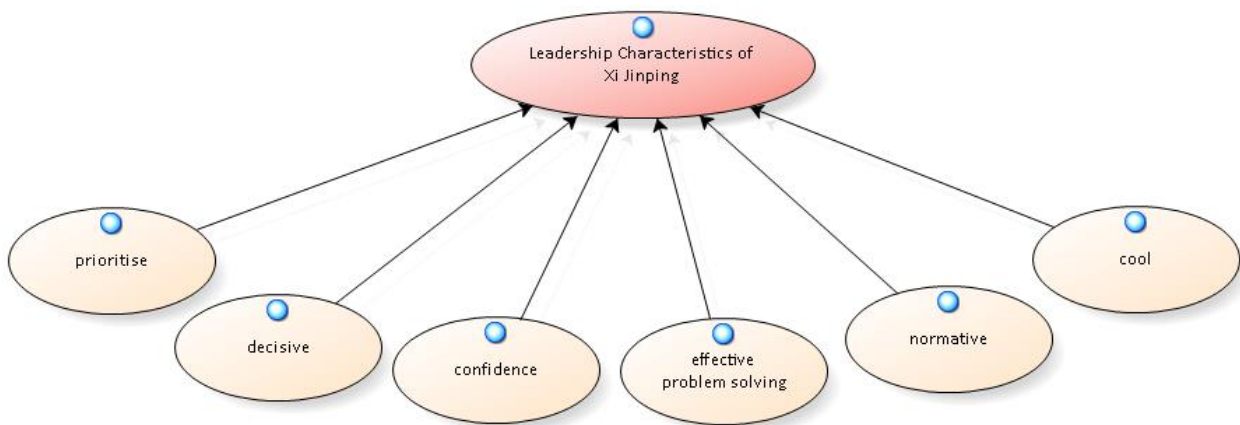
4.4. People's Republic of China

Xi Jinping, who has been the president of the People's Republic of China since 2013, when the coronavirus that affected the whole world first emerged, has received reactions from all over the world. It has been a difficult period for the whole world in the process of awareness, recognition, development of measures, and, of course, implementation of the coronavirus, and this period has also become a difficult period for the President of the People's Republic of China.

Studies are showing that Xi Jinping, who is a truly charismatic leader with his self-confidence, problem-solving skills, competence in determining his desires and priorities, and composure, also has visionary or authoritarian leadership qualities.

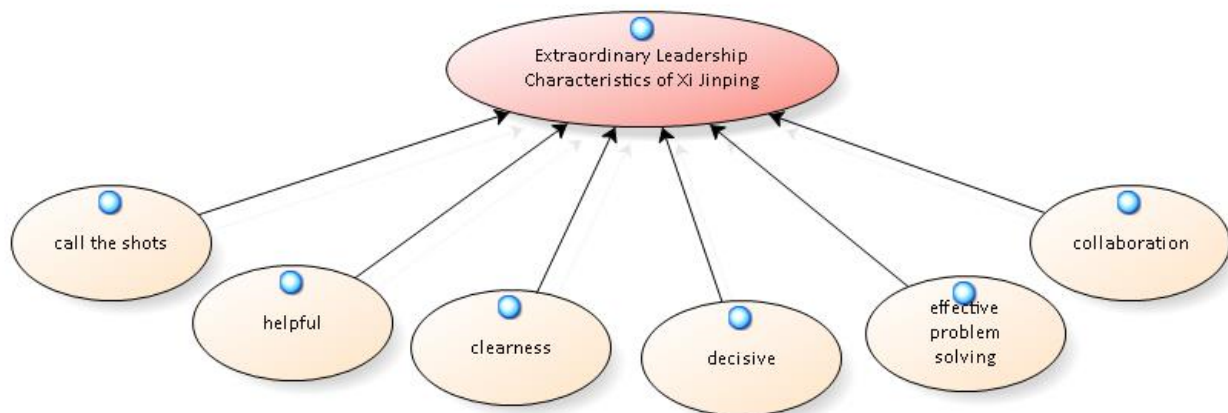
During the pandemic period, Xi Jinping first preferred to stay out of sight to resolve the issue and then cooperated with the World Health Organization. At this stage, he clearly stated that he always bears his responsibility. In fact, they once again demonstrated their self-confidence by declaring the vaccine they produced as a global public good.

Figure 9. Leadership Characteristics of Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China



During the pandemic period, Xi Jinping first preferred to stay out of sight to resolve the issue, and then cooperated with the World Health Organization. At this stage, he clearly stated that he always has taken his responsibility. In fact, they once again demonstrated their self-confidence by declaring the vaccine they produced for the global public good/health.

Figure 10. Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

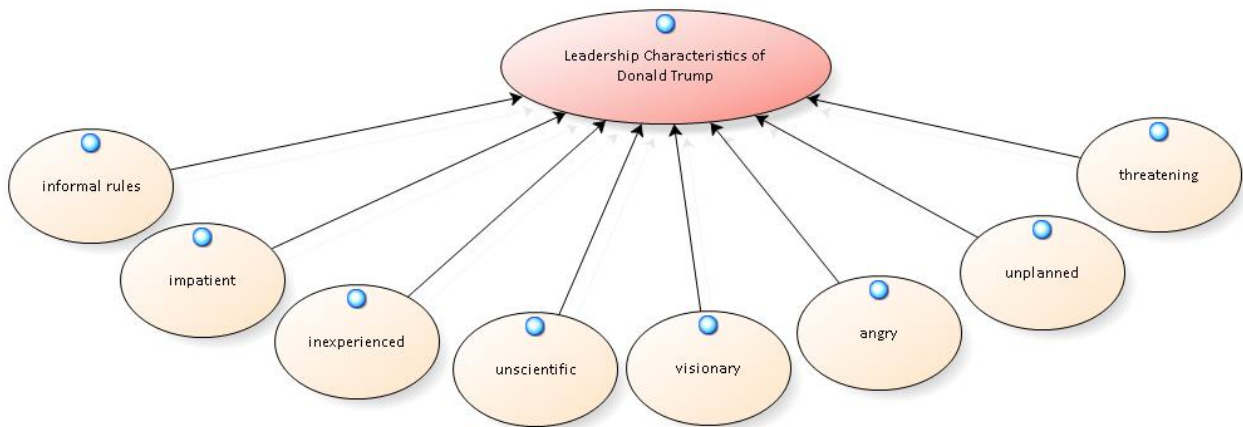


Xi Jinping continued his charismatic leadership behavior during this extraordinary period. Xi Jinping, who has always attracted attention with his determination and effectiveness in problem solving, manages to impress his followers with his self-confidence.

4.5. United States

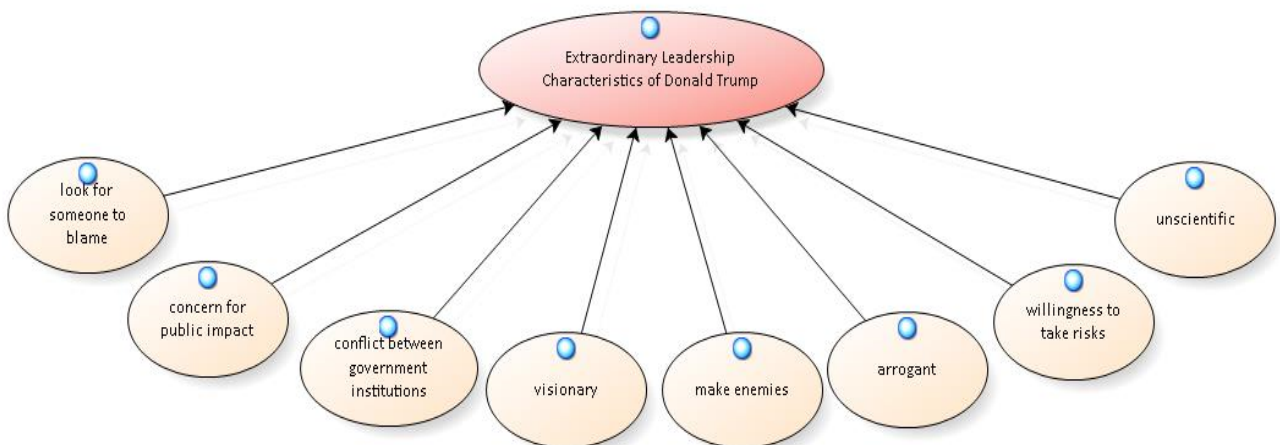
Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, won the election by running the most populist election campaign in US history in the 2016 elections with the slogan "Make America Great Again" (Tumulty, 2017). The re-expression in the slogan emphasizes that America's current period is far from the glorious periods of the past and emphasizes the image of a volunteer, willing and ready leader (Başkan, 2002:96).

Figure 11. Leadership Characteristics of Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States



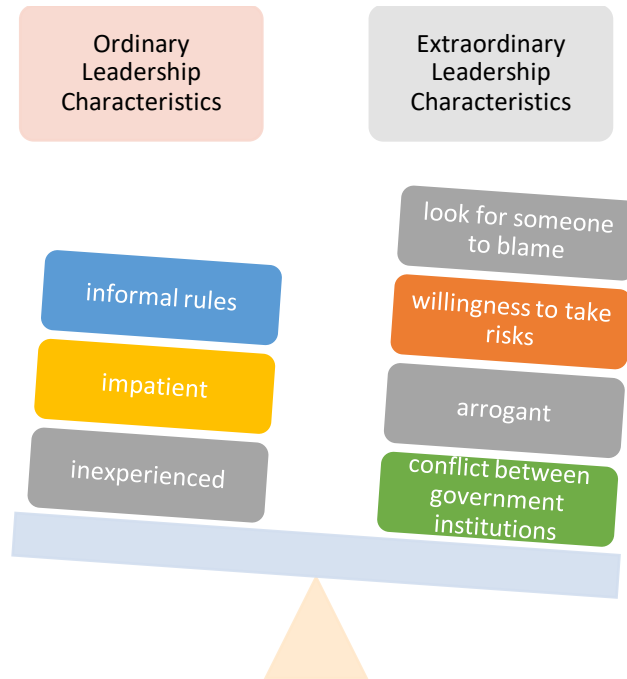
At the beginning of the pandemic period, Donald Trump did not take the pandemic seriously, thus putting it under great threat. Donald Trump, who has always had a dreamy and arrogant attitude, exhibits toxic leader, dreamer leader or pragmatic leader characteristics.

Figure 12. Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States



With the declaration of the pandemic, Donald Trump first made accusations against the People's Republic of China, and then, as the epidemic got out of control, this time he placed the responsibility on healthcare workers, misled the public by leaving science aside, and then left himself out of the event, causing public institutions to enter into conflict. Donald Trump, who draws attention with his adventurous, challenging and opportunistic nature, continued these characteristics during the pandemic period.

Figure 13. Comparison of Ordinary Leadership Characteristics and Extraordinary Leadership Characteristics of Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States of America



Donald Trump, who has always displayed pragmatic leadership qualities, did not change his pragmatic attitude during the pandemic period and wanted to manage the process by strengthening it.

5. Conclusion

Angela Merkel's leadership has reinforced Germany's strong position in the 21st century. Merkel has gained trust both in Germany and on the world stage with her approach based on expertise, impartiality, and pragmatism; she has been effective in ensuring social welfare and political stability. During the pandemic, Merkel has successfully guided Germany by maintaining her calmness and solution-oriented attitude even during times of crisis. While this approach of Merkel has ensured that Germany is considered one of the most reliable countries in Europe, her leadership style has also been seen as a model in terms of crisis management and harmonizing leadership. In other words, in this study, which seeks to answer the question "Do leaders change?" Angela Merkel, defined as a pragmatic leader, has set aside her harmonizing and courageous attitude in extraordinary situations and adopted a prescriptive and proactive approach. With the statements she made at the beginning of the pandemic, her stable leadership approach was replaced by an effort to cope with uncertainty; this process led to the evolution of Merkel's leadership style. This

shows how leaders can adapt under challenging circumstances and change their leadership style when necessary.

Vladimir Putin's leadership style has been shaped within the dynamics of the semi-presidential system of the Russian Federation. The power he has held since 2000 has been reinforced by the people's desire to govern under a strong hand, as a reflection of his search for strong leadership. With his determined and fearless personality traits, Putin has developed a discourse that unites the people by making decisions in an authoritarian structure. This has made him not only a leader but also a charismatic figure. Putin's pragmatic approach stands out with his ability to go beyond ideological patterns and produce flexible solutions in line with the country's interests. The strict restrictions he implemented by maintaining his normative structure during the pandemic period aimed to control the spread of the virus. His leadership style during this period reinforced his crisis management skills and the authoritarian tendencies in Russian political culture. As a result, Putin's strong leadership qualities and pragmatic approach have increased Russia's influence in the international arena while deepening the authoritarian tendencies in domestic politics.

Vladimir Putin has been described as an oppressive, authoritarian, and paranoid leader (Ashforth, 1994; Simonsen, 2000). Putin, who portrayed an authoritarian and negative leader profile in the normal period, continued these characteristics during the pandemic. However, he displayed a pragmatic approach during the pandemic and developed strategies appropriate to the situation. On the other hand, he also displays ideological leadership behaviors from time to time in normal times. This shows that Putin's leadership style contains both authoritarian and pragmatic elements and can change according to different conditions.

Johnson, who attracted attention with his media-oriented and radical attitudes, continued this approach during the pandemic. Johnson, who displayed ideological leadership under normal conditions, adopted the herd immunity strategy at the beginning of the pandemic; however, he was forced to step back from this policy infected cases increased rapidly.

Johnson, who lost his cautious approach in the face of extraordinary events, continued his strong media communication, was reluctant to take responsibility, and tended to avoid accusations. This attitude went as far as implementing heavy sanctions during the pandemic. In conclusion, Johnson's leadership style reflected a blend of both ideological and pragmatic elements, but the difficulties in managing the crisis created a picture that shook public confidence.

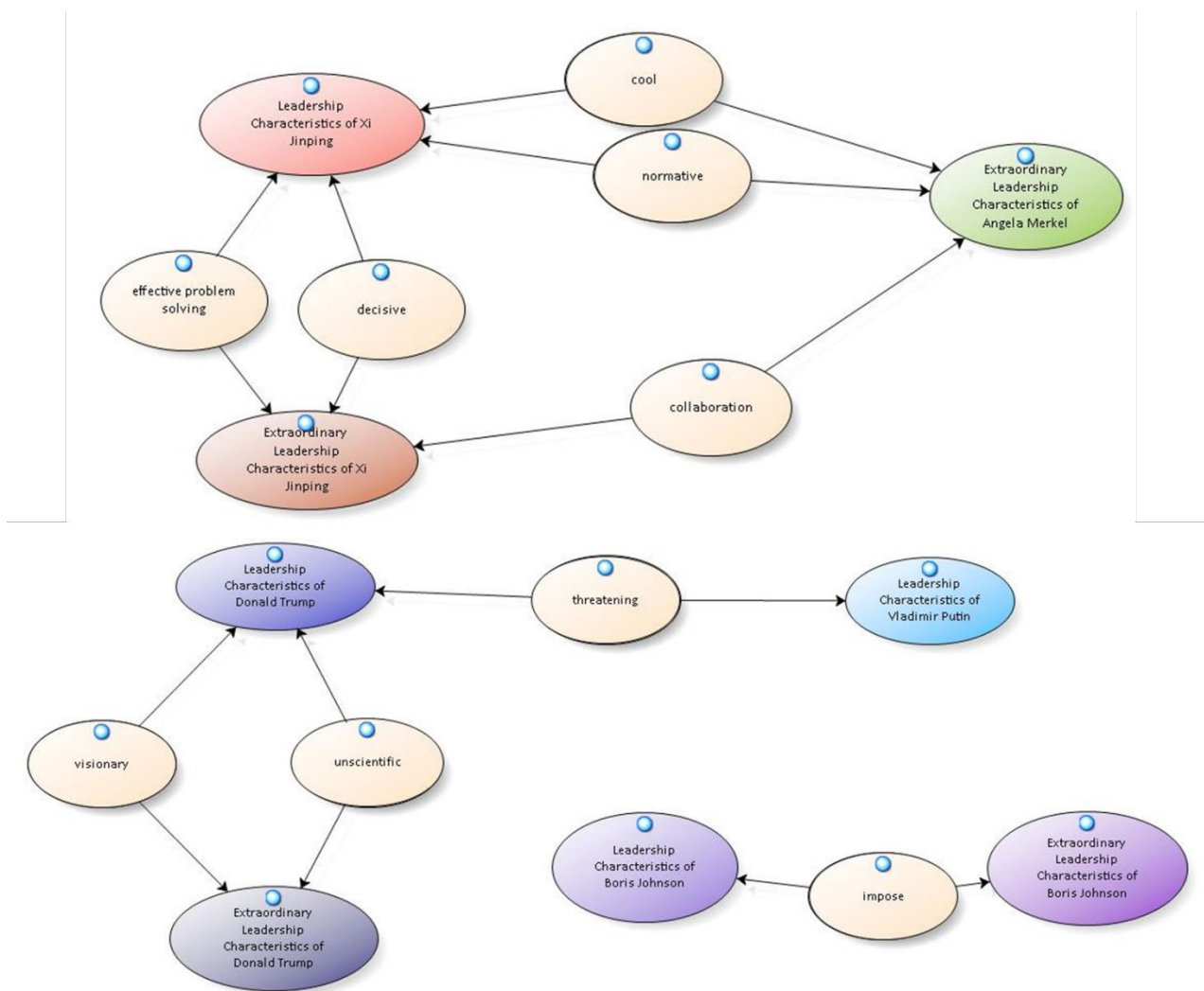
While Xi Jinping has been serving as the President of the People's Republic of China since 2013, the challenges he has faced during the coronavirus pandemic have tested his leadership skills. Standing out with his self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, and charismatic leadership qualities, Jinping has sometimes been described as a visionary and sometimes an authoritarian leader. Initially choosing to stay out of the spotlight during the pandemic, Jinping later openly expressed his responsibility by cooperating with the World Health Organization.

He also demonstrated his self-confidence in the international arena by declaring the vaccine produced by China as a global public good. Xi Jinping has always managed to attract attention with his determination and effectiveness in problem-solving; this attitude has shown how his leadership style and charismatic qualities can be maintained during the pandemic. As a result, Xi Jinping's leadership style has displayed an impressive performance even during difficult periods and has left a strong impression on his followers.

Donald Trump left his mark on US history with his populist campaign with the slogan "Make America Great Again" in the 2016 elections. However, his attitude during the pandemic has revealed the problems with his leadership style. Trump initially put the country under great threat by downplaying the pandemic; he continued his fanciful and arrogant attitude and misled the public with statements not based on scientific data.

During the pandemic, he tried to evade responsibility by making accusations against China and then created a public conflict environment by targeting healthcare workers. Trump's adventurous and opportunistic leadership characteristics became even more evident during this process. As a result, despite Trump's pragmatic leadership style maintaining its features during the pandemic, it was criticized for its tendency to evade responsibility and its problems in communicating with the public. This situation created a picture that questioned the effectiveness of his leadership and also revealed his incompetencies in crisis management.

Figure 14. Comparison of leadership characteristics according to leaders and their periods



As indicated in Figure 13, Xi Jinping has displayed effective problem-solving and a determined stance in both ordinary and extraordinary situations and has cooperated in extraordinary situations, like Angela Merkel. Angela Merkel has demonstrated Xi Jinping's calm and

determined attitude, which is one of his ordinary leadership characteristics, in extraordinary times. In addition, both leaders have demonstrated calm and normative behavior in ordinary and extraordinary situations. In addition, threatening, which is one of Donald Trump's ordinary characteristics, is seen as a leadership characteristic in Vladimir Putin. Again, Donald Trump has continued to display his visionary and unscientific characteristics in every period. Boris Johnson also reflects his imposed leadership characteristics in every period.

The findings of the study reveal that some aspects of leadership behaviors change while others remain stable. Adaptation of leadership styles and approaches is a dynamic process. Research shows that leaders tend to adapt their leadership styles according to the context and challenges they face. For example, in extraordinary situations, leaders may exhibit different behaviors than they exhibit in ordinary conditions (Geier, 2016).

While adaptive leadership focuses on the ability to respond to changing conditions and challenges, leaders with these skills can be more successful in dynamic environments (Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021). In addition, changes in leaders' behaviors can be influenced by the need for systematic change, encouraging respect, establishing positive relationships, and openly expressing ideas (Rixon et al., 2021). This shows how sensitive leaders are to environmental factors and how they manage change processes. As a result, leaders have the ability to change and adapt their behaviors, styles, and approaches. Leadership is affected by various factors (such as context, challenges, and the need for systemic change). Adaptive leadership, leadership development, and evolutionary processes contribute significantly to a better understanding of leadership changes. In this context, how quickly and effectively leaders can respond to environmental changes becomes a critical point that determines their success. The pandemic has presented how leaders can adapt themselves under challenging conditions and change their leadership styles when necessary.

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