EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD
CRISIS MANAGEMENT
A New Deal

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I RISK AND CRISES

A – Risks New Frontiers From accidents to the unthinkable
- Severe accidents *Prestige* oil spill, Toulouse explosion
- Network disruption critical infrastructures
- Emerging worldwide crises climate, public health, violence

B – Management New Frontiers
Emergency
Well known problems / well known answers

Emergency Response
- Immediate
- Technical
- Specific

References stable contexts
For each problem
- frontiers, references
- knowledge
- people in charge
- norms, codes of pratice
- probabilities
- gravity
- **strongly fixed**

Governance subculture
- «Control and Command»
- "experts know the answers"
- "everything's under control"
- "don't panic"

Crisis
- **Strong uncertainties**
- Large increase in **numbers** of stakeholders
- Huge **communication** problems

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Emerging crises Paradigm shifts
Scope
- from specific, to generic and global challenges

References a shattering dynamics
- mindsets, rules, norms, codes of practice

Expertise
- from uncertainty to ignorance

Communication
- Worldwide "Larsen" effects

Dynamics
- Disaster to mankind or mere road incident ?
- Leap in the dark, split, irreversibility

Governance
Loss of sense and references
- disarray
- distrust
- decoupling

From probability to… bet
- "Isn't it here that you take a half step wrong and wake up a thousand miles astray ?"
(Sun Tzu, quoted by Y. Dror, 1990)

II –MANAGEMENT PITFALLS *Normal Fiascoes*
A - Emergencies
When people and organisations are not prepared

Poor tactical capacity
- No alert procedure
- No emergency organisation
- No logistics
- No training
- **No leadership**

B - Crises
When people and organisations are not prepared

1. Before the crisis
Strong separations between bureaucraties
- No collective preparation against surprise "we are here to solve problems, not to ask questions"
Suspicion towards outside world
- secret rather than communication

2. The onset of the crisis
- Massive shock "everything's under control"
- Weak signals
"wait and see"
"it's not our business"
"nothing has been proven yet"

2. The ontset of the crisis (2)
System degradation
- bunker dynamics
- mess and confusion
- entire bureaucracies disappear
- Communication
- "we don't know or understand anything,
- but it can't be serious, everything's under control" external perception "every man for himself"

3. Crisis development
Protection
- territory defense
- formal rules rather than taking charge
- active search for people to blame if useful

Paralysis
- no systematic search for information
- poor internal information
- high levels disappear, then do others' job

3. Crisis development (2)
Poor management
- poor capability to handle crisis teams' work
- approach strictly technical
- no policy

Terrible communications
- "you have lost a child, but you will be paid so much !"

System disintegration global disruption
End of crisis fiascos

4. After the crisis
- No debriefing
- No lessons, or wrong lessons
- Problems not corrected
- Credibility loss
- Legitimacy collapse
- Dignity collapse

5. Training avoidance at the top
- "We already have made plans"
- "We already went through the exercise (5 years ago)"
- "No use there will be no serious debriefing!"
- "We don't have the time" ; "It's not a priority"
- "Much too sensitive Pandora's box"
- "Unacceptable given leadership problems"
- "You're not going to tell me I don't know how to do my job!"
- "**An illigitimate request**"

C - Emerging crises
When people and organisations are not prepared

Deep challenges
- Not on the agenda
- Top level managers absence
- Stakeholders ignored, then rejected
- The communication trap

III –MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Culture
"At least 90% of textbooks on strategic management
- are devoted to that part of the management task which is relatively easy
- the running of the organizational machine in as surprise-free a way as possible.

On the contrary,
the real management task is that of handling the exceptions, coping with and even using unpredicability, clashing counter-cultures.
the task has to do with instability, irregularity, difference and disorder."
- Ralph STACEY, Strategic Management & Organizational Dynamics, Pitman, London, 1996 (p. XIX-XX).

Routines, and emerging unconventional crises
- "Life is simple when you have so many ***precedents*** to follow".

But they are like computers
- put them into a ***new*** crisis,
- for which they've ***not been programmed***,
- and their brains ***short-circuit***"

"Yes, Prime Ministe", BBC, p. 344

A - Emergencies
When people and organisations accept to prepare

Preparation
- Prevention
- Instant response struture and capability
- Drills

B - Crises
When people and organisations accept to prepare

Crisis team

Crisis management
- Anticipation and surveillance
- Rapid information flow, even with weak signals
- Crisis teams
- Open, shared leadership
- Top quality communication from beginning to end
- Management to the very end
- Post-crisis healing initiatives

- **Strategic intelligence**

Crisis management *Training*
Training for
- Senior managers, their teams and their systems

Crisis tools, crisis organisation,crisis communication
Crisis culture
- collective ability to handle critical surprise
- cultural competence to create links and trust

C - Emerging crises
When people and organisations accept to prepare

Emerging crises references
Leaders
- getting to the core of problems
- open the field of action, open the field of stakeholders,
- key initiatives

Management
- from the field empowerment

Communication
- around **questions,** rather than answers and certainties
- around **processes,** rather than results

Emerging crises references
Strategic intelligence
- anticipation, far from pre-established certainties
- favour long-term visions over immediate responses
- invent and practice new collective processes
- find decisive symbolic moves

Emerging crises preparation
Aim
- Not to predict the unforeseeable, the unconceivable…
    - but to get trained to face it

Practice
- advanced questioning
- early debriefings of the most complex cases
- bold simulations
    - handling critical surprise
    - creating links and trust in times of severe turbulences

think-tanks on emerging strategic questions

The Challenge
Three overlapping theaters of operation
Emergency
- tactics faster and more efficient than ever

Crisis
- policy comprehensive response

Emerging crises
- culture collective preparation to the unknown

From official paralysing anxiety to official self-confidence
- Collective
- Innovation

References
Patrick Lagadec is Director of Research at the Ecole Polytechnique (Laboratory of Econometrics), Docteur d'Etat in Political Science (1980), a former student at the ESSEC (1972), and a graduate of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales (School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences), (1972).

He is an Officer of the National Order of Merit, and winner of the Engelberg Forum Prize, 1999.

Originator of the concept of Major Technological Risk (1979), he is a specialist in the prevention and management of crises - whether these stem from technical breakdown, or are of a public health or social nature. He is currently extending his research to a broader problematic the governance and management of organisations and large systems in situations of rupture. His research is closely linked with active participation in the executive committees of large companies, public administration management boards, international organisations (the United Nations, the European Union), voluntary associations and NGOs, both in France and abroad.

He is a founding member and member of the Governing Council of the European Crisis Management Academy (ECMA).

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