Mastering Change
in a Globalizing World:
New Directions in Leadership

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Education Policy Studies Series

Education embraces aspirations of individuals and society. It is a means of strengthening human resources, sustaining competitiveness of society, enhancing mobility of the underprivileged, and assimilating newcomers to the mainstream of society. It is also a means of creating a free, prosperous, and harmonious environment for the populace.

Education is an endeavor that has far-reaching influences, for it embodies development and justness. Its development needs enormous support from society as well as the guidance of policies that serve the imperatives of economic development and social justice. Policy-makers in education, as those in other public sectors, can neither rely on their own visions nor depend on the simple tabulation of financial cost and benefit to arrive at decisions that will affect the pursuit of the common good. Democratization warrants public discourse on vital matters that affect all of us. Democratization also dictates transparency in the policy-making process. Administrative orders disguised as policies have a very small audience indeed. The public expects well-informed policy decisions, which are based on in-depth analyses and careful deliberation. Like the policy-makers, the public and professionals in education require a wealth of easily accessible facts and views so that they can contribute constructively to the public discourse.

To facilitate rational discourse on important educational matters, the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research of The Chinese University of Hong Kong organizes from time to time "Education Policy Seminars" to address critical issues in educational development of Hong Kong and other Chinese societies. These academic gatherings have been attended by

stakeholders, practitioners, researchers, and parents. The bulk of this series of occasional papers are the fruit of labor of some of the speakers at the seminars. Others are written specifically as contributions to the series.

The aim of this *Education Policy Studies Series* is to present the views of selected persons who have new ideas to share and to engage all stakeholders in education in an on-going discussion on educational matters that will shape the future of our society.

Mastering Change in a Globalizing World: New Directions in Leadership

Abstract

In this paper, the move toward globalization is described as the postmodern condition. The postmodern condition signals a shift to a new era that will replace the previous one. Where the postmodern condition is found, one may also typically find chaos and a lack of order, multiple truths, and a rejection of the grand narrative. Since the postmodern condition rewards leaders who maximize their conceptual agility and their organization's adaptability, an alternative to the legacy models of modern-era leadership is needed.

The interpretation of strategic leadership offered here bridges Newton's universal and ordered world with the postmodern world of chaos and complexity. It carries on with a detailed map of attributes and capabilities that leaders need to use in today's environment. This model of strategic leadership differs from previous models in that it pushes the notion throughout the organization, and focuses on developing a strategic mindset that encourages flexibility and adaptive behaviors. The strategic leader must make strategic choices about ends, ways, and means depending on their interpretation of the context in which they find their organization. Five strategies of strategic leaders are described but the focus of this paper is placed on the fifth strategy (applying the artist's paintbrush) because of its importance in meeting the needs of

globalizing organizations and societies. Its essence is that the strategic leader works in a multifaceted reality and must apply a multifaceted set of leadership actions. To know when to apply the actions, the pyramids of change are presented to guide leaders in mastering change.

> The world is becoming one place. We are all connected but no one is fully in charge. (Friedman, 2001)

We are losing our innocence about how the world we live in works. In the past, things seemed certain. Today, they are uncertain. The trust we placed in our old maps has dissipated. It seems impossible to predict long-term changes and influences when plotting our course. Answers and direction emerge without prior planning. Obviously, we are sailing through uncharted waters and need new maps.

The twenty-first century began with an interesting confluence of demands upon organizations and their leaders by globalization. The heritage of the previous century was a search for absolute truth and an attempt to fashion, in a Newtonian sense, a coherent global view and a focus on efficiency of results. This legacy resulted in approaches to leadership based on an efficiency of means, top-down decision-making, bureaucracy, leadership through management, and central control. These universal approaches, it was believed, would bring about organizational success. Yet, at the same time the Newtonian idea of order was reaching its apex. The new informational and globalization age created a new demand for an opposite approach to leadership — leadership based on

efficiency of outcomes, bottom-up decision-making, reduction in bureaucracy, transformational stewardship, and shared responsibility.

A fundamental shift in the environment(s) in which organizations work is taking place. The modern age with its emphasis on rationalization and stability is transitioning to the hyper-rationalization and chaos of the postmodern condition. This condition is marked by an emphasis on information and its interpretation, deconstruction, webbed relationships and chaos theory, contextual values and interpretation, post-industrialism, learning organizations, relativism, and ever-increasing complexity leading to chaos.

Today, the stability of all institutions is being challenged not by the small shifts of change as in the last century but by the rapid speed of change in the twenty-first century driven by nanosecond technology and shifting populations. This new era that all organizations have to contend with is fueled by an unrestrained, accelerated expansion of ideas, technology, competition, culture, and democracy, all captured under the banner of "globalization." The symbol of this movement is the Internet and its mantra is connectivity.

In a sense the world is becoming one place. Changing economies in Asia create problems for low-wage earners in Australia and the United States. The polluted skies of Eastern Europe and China create ozone holes in other parts of the world. On a global scale, organizations are faced with an evolving context. The paradigm shift from modernity has created further

demands for organizations to be responsive and agile in a landscape filled with uncertainty and change. These conditions are fueled by changing technology, the global economy, rapid international communication, and an international or global environment. The effects of globalization are putting leaders to the test.

The Postmodern Condition

Handy's (1994) use of the sigmoid curve (the S curve) is a good way of describing the era we are in today. As he points out, the S curve is the "story of the British Empire, and of the Soviet Empire, and of all empires always … and of many a corporation's rise and fall" (p. 51). The S curve represents a growth profile over time, which begins with a period of slow growth followed by a period of rapid expansion and ends with the period of stagnation. Near the end of a life cycle, a new S curve begins that eventually becomes the new paradigm. However, even though the slope of the current curve may be positive at a particular time, the top of the current curve will be reached after which growth will wane. Because of this phenomenon, an eventual move to the next S curve has to occur as seen in Figure 1. The common lexicon for this occurrence is "jumping the curve," meaning that well before the end of a life cycle, leaders must prepare their organizations to move to the next S curve.

As Handy (1994) points out, the area of intersection of two S curves is a "time of great confusion as two, or more, groups of people or two sets of ideas are competing for the future" (p. 53). His own sense is that "many institutions, many

Figure 1.   The Postmodern Condition Within the Sigmoid Curves
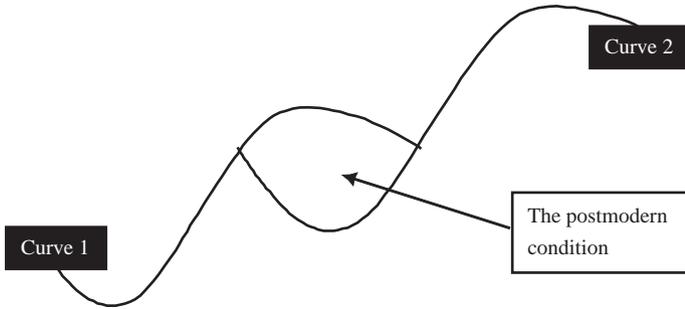
individuals, and even whole societies are" in a "great time of confusion, uncertainty, and fear" (p. 55). He calls this area the change from capitalism in the modern paradigm to a new capitalism that has to "reinvent" itself. The postmodern condition is different from the modern paradigm in that it signals a shift to an unknown paradigm or new era replacing a previous one. As the term is used here, it is simply the condition where there is a movement from one S curve to the next, as demonstrated above. These ideas of chaos and a lack of order, multiple truths, and a rejection of the grand narrative are typical of the postmodern condition.

The postmodern condition underlying globalization is the transformation of industrial capitalism to a new globalized information age economy which also creates the need of an alternative to the legacy model of leadership. Mandel (1975) divided capitalism into three fundamental moments which mark an expansion over previous stages. He identified these stages as original capitalism, followed by the monopoly (imperialism) stage, and the postindustrial or more appropriately multinational

capital stage (Jameson, 1991, p. 195). In Figure 1, the postmodern condition marks the beginning of an economic system of capital based on globalization and multinational business. Best and Kellner (1997) hold that capitalism is "undergoing a global reorganization based on new technologies and a transnational corporate restructuring and that consequently our contemporary moment is between a disorganized and reorganized capitalism, a situation that requires intense focus both on political economy and on technology and culture" (p. 105).

The globalization S curve is moving our societies from capital to information as the source of wealth and exchange (Castells, 1996; Friedman, 2005; Handy, 1994). Digitization of all information, the use of information, and the transformation of knowledge has become the new source of wealth that will determine both the individual and the group's ability to make material gain and achieve power. This is an essential tenet of the postmodern understanding of the present economy — the move from an industrial to an information society. Lyotard (1984) recognizes this when he points out that:

> [The] relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of community producers and consumers to commodities they produce and consume — that is, the form of value. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself; it loses its use-value. (p. 125)

As predicted by the postmodern condition, change is inevitable as a corporation or a society moves up the globalization S curve. Trying to steer clear of it is fruitless. Consider:

- Sudden and instant market changes, such as a sudden rise in oil prices, has caused demand for cars in the United States to shift from SUVs (sport utility vehicles) and gas guzzlers to sedans and hybrids in one year.

- E-mail and Blackberrys have reduced corporate communications turn-around from "15 business days" to "15 minutes."

- Chinese families are spending one-third of their income on education.

- Whole villages are making the transfer from poverty to wealth in one generation in China, India, and Thailand.

- Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia now find themselves spending more money importing goods than they make exporting commodities.

The Leadership Challenges
Presented by the Postmodern Condition

The dilemma institutions face in the global economy is that, the spoils go to the creative and not to the compliant. The frame of reference shifts to issues of competition, technology, culture, and democratization. Workers must be able to collaborate, socialize, and innovate. The postmodern condition's challenge for leaders is to meet the new demands in the face of local constraints. During this time of uncertainty, new demands and

changes create a web of tensions that challenge organizational leaders. Figure 2 displays two dialectical tensions found in the postmodern condition. "What is" is in tension with "what could be" and "what is right" is in tension with "what is possible."

Figure 2.   The Leadership Challenges Presented by the Postmodern Condition

What could be?

What is possible? ← → What is right?

What is?
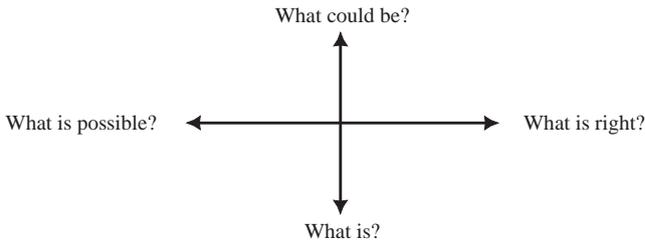
    Leaders in every country and walk of life must meet demands emanating from a globalized society with local constraints. It has been said that leaders account for only 10% of an organization's productivity. But, it is during times characterized by the postmodern condition that leadership is important. It takes good leaders to cope with change. Ensconced in the postmodern condition, leaders are faced with three options: (a) work to alter the environment, (b) change the organization to conform to the environmental demands, or (c) perish. The challenges before us are not easy and there is no clear path toward success. What is known is that where the postmodern condition exists, the legacy model of leadership is not sufficient to create major and lasting change effectively. A theory of leadership is needed that will bridge the gap between the fading modern S curve and the developing globalization S curve. The problem before today's leaders is clear. Is there a

model of leadership where on-going and redirecting change happens even though the road to achieve that change is unclear? The design of such a theory needs to consider the following three requirements of the postmodern condition — learning, coordination and collaboration, and leadership as an art.

Organizations confronted with the postmodern condition require leaders who can adaptively balance four counterweights of need: change, stability, ethical action, and political possibility. The leader's effectiveness in maintaining this balancing act determines his or her relevance, competence, and acceptance by their organizations. The ability to balance provides leaders with the flexibility and endurance to survive because they have the capability to continually adapt their strategy to the changing environment. Leaders must "fit" their organizations to its environment in order to survive. Fit organizations have the ability to perceive the themes in their environment and evolve appropriately. Because the environment is constantly changing, the application of this principle necessitates a continual rethinking, revising, and restructuring of the organization in order to stay connected to the environment, and the establishment of a learning process to ensure that organizations continue to develop. What is required, then, is that organizations learn how to learn from their environments (i.e., become learning organizations).

The postmodern condition rewards leaders who maximize their conceptual agility and their organization's adaptability and flexibility. Leaders must shift from an over-reliance on the command and control (hierarchical) skills of the twentieth century to a greater reliance on the coordinative and

collaborative (horizontal) skills necessary to practice their craft in the twenty-first century. Command and control will not be replaced but the emphasis must change toward the opposing end of the continuum. Inherent in the postmodern condition is the existence of modern needs and the styles that accommodate them. What is needed is a theory of leadership that allows leaders to dynamically shift between the old Newtonian and the new globalized world views depending on the context in which they find themselves. To do less will not meet the requirements of the postmodern condition.

The postmodern condition requires leaders who can practice as artists. They must be flexible and able to adapt to different circumstances and conditions. At times, the artistic leader exerts this influence by using task and relationship behaviors. At other times, they use power, authority, persuasion, bargaining, and incentives to influence followers. But most of their effort is spent on pursuing four tasks: creating and articulating common values and direction, establishing cohesive structures and cultures, building the capacity of their organizations, and creating learning communities which are able to manage themselves. Leaders, through all their artful behaviors, maintain stability and challenge the status quo simultaneously. The essence of what leaders do is to take advantage of opportunities associated with the ensuing era of globalization.

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership is a strong model that bridges the new and the old and shows great promise to overcome the failure of

leaders who practice from a legacy leadership perspective in an increasingly postmodern environment. The author's thoughts on strategic leadership are rooted in lessons taken from the athletic field, the graduate classroom, the crucible of leadership, the scholarly bench, and the podium of leadership classes taught at three universities. Following Chilcoat (1995), the author of this paper defines strategic leadership as "the ability (as well as wisdom) to make consequential decisions about ends (goals), ways (strategies), and means (actions) in ambiguous environments." Ends describe the strategic intent of the organization in a purposeful manner. Ways and means are the strategies and actions leaders use to mobilize and align their organization with its strategic intent. Strategic leaders make strategic choices about ends, ways, and means depending on their interpretation of the context in which they find their organization. This ability to determine the vital signals emanating from context allows for proactive leadership in consideration of circumstances of both the internal and external environments of the organization. Success in this model of leadership is dependent on how proficiently the organization responds and readapts to its ever-evolving context and how effective the leader is continually renewing the systems of learning and knowledge driving the organization.

This form of leadership should not be confused with strategic planning or strategic management which relies on long-term planning, linearity, and rationality. Merely depending on the strategic planning process will not meet the requirements of the postmodern condition. Furthermore, strategic leadership is not and should not be just within the purview of executives as traditionalists suggest. It must reach to the lowest levels of

the organization. The notion offered here is that all leadership levels within an organization — supervisory, managerial, and executive — should be prepared to lead strategically. It should be recognized, however, that some strategies will be more useful at the managerial and executive levels.

The use of strategic leadership at all levels may be challenged by those in management or supervisory roles who indicate that they do not have enough discretion to fully make strategic choices. This perception is a relic of the legacy model of leadership. It is true that the greater the internal and external constraints — whether they stem from demography, ideology, or personality — the less discretion the leader enjoys (see Cannella & Monroe, 1997, for a full discussion of this point). However, with today's emphasis on flatter organizations and pushing the authority to act down the chain of command, more leaders possess more discretion. They may not perceive that they have discretion or they may not want the responsibilities that come with the ability to make strategic choices, but it is a question of their own personal transition to the new conditions. Whereas discretion increases the likelihood that leaders will seize opportunities and influence the direction of the organization, most leaders in lower echelon positions still have strategic choices to make regarding the ends they promote and the ways and means of implementation in their sphere of responsibility. These leaders just see organizational mandates as another factor to consider when learning their labyrinth.

We are all aware of leaders who are better at understanding, interpreting, and leading in these multi-polar "messy" environments. Such leaders understand that change is inevitable

and trying to avoid it is fruitless. They are able to live with, and in, an environment replete with vague roles, contradictions, and ambiguities, and view change as an opportunity and a challenge. They are successful because they understand that their organization needs to be in constant development. They prepare themselves and their organizations to take advantage of opportunities associated with change. They guide the transformations with a profound appreciation of stability. Their mantra is common values and adaptable ways and means. These leaders act strategically. They work at understanding their environment, determining ends, creating a coherent organization, establishing relationships, and crafting a responsible learning organization. These strategic leaders guide a process which scans the environment for themes and forces while building a set of common aspirations, values, and beliefs that fit the organization's direction with the environment. As the organization moves in this direction, leaders continually adapt their strategies and actions to the changing internal and external environment. A few examples might help our understanding of strategic leadership.

The Vignettes

Some strategic leaders are only partially successful. Consider the example of Henry Ford who demonstrated the ability to make consequential decisions about ends, ways, and means. First, he created a mass-produced car in an environment where mass production was not understood. With this strategic decision and utilizing the legacy model of leadership, he created and dominated the new automobile market and made it conform to his point of view. He became extraordinarily wealthy and

a national icon. However, when Alfred Sloan at Chevrolet introduced annual styling changes, planned obsolescence and began to make cars more inexpensively and in many colors, the environment changed. Henry refused to change with it, thinking that the black Model T and later the Model A were all that the market needed and should need. He wound up losing his monopoly to new companies that understood that the consumers were not just concerned with usefulness but also about fashion and costs. His success was making correct strategic choices on ends that successfully altered the car-making business. His failure was that once the environment changed he refused to recognize the change and adapt, thus losing market share.

Carly Fiorina, the ex-CEO of Hewlett Packard, is another example of a leader who demonstrated the ability to make consequential decisions about ends. At Hewlett Packard Ms. Fiorina championed the controversial purchase of Compaq Computer, a move to transform the printer-based company to one offering a full range of digital products and computer services to businesses and consumers alike. Evidently, the decision to acquire Compaq was one with which her board of directors was comfortable. However, they sought a new executive who was able to maneuver the company out of a predicament caused by competing across a wide arena, from printers and personal computers but failing to gain market share in any of them.

Her failure was in limited ability to make the consequential decisions concerning ways and means and was therefore released from Hewlett Packard. Fiorina's charismatic top-down

legacy leadership style which made her a celebrity CEO and also made her the target of Wall Street who accused her of neglecting the hands-on management needed to carry out her vision. Being right about the direction was not enough. She also needed to be right about the strategies and tactics she employed to carry out the direction Hewlett Packard crafted under her stewardship. As Bolman and Deal (2003) noted, "a vision without a strategy is an illusion" (p. 256). Yet Fiorina's vision was probably correct considering the way the market has rewarded Hewlett Packard since her demise.

Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal, is another partially successful strategic leader. At the early age of 28, he served as the French vice-consul in Alexandria, Egypt. After several other diplomatic postings and a few missteps, de Lesseps found himself out of work at the age of 44. However, his dream to build a canal that crossed the strip of land connecting the Mediterranean to the Red Sea persisted. It was an ambitious project that would reduce sailing to the far western countries on the Pacific Rim by ten thousand miles right at a time when short trade and supply routes were in demand for the imperial needs of the full-blown Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century. Returning to Egypt, he reacquainted himself with the Turkish governors who ruled Egypt at the time and received a "firman" or decree by Viceroy Said to run the Canal for 99 years after completion. By 1859, the finances were in hand and the work began to join the two seas by building a sea level canal without locks. The flat desert strip next to the Sinai Peninsula proved easy to excavate and the canal was finished and functioning in less than ten years.

Emboldened by his success, de Lesseps next held the Isthmus of Panama in his sights. The task was seemingly the same — create a direct route between two oceans, thus eliminating the need to sail around an entire continent. Married to the strategy he used at Suez, he proposed a canal without locks even though the terrain in Panama was hilly and humid compared to the flat and dry topography of the Egypt desert. Like Suez, he proposed that Panama should be privately capitalized. Unlike Suez, the venture was a massive failure. De Lesseps and his team failed to correctly estimate the excavation needed for a sea level canal without locks in the hilly Panamanian terrain, and the toll that mosquitoes and tropical conditions would have on the work and men. He turned to politicians, money changed hands and soon investigations began that would lead to charges of fraud. Twenty-one years later, the United States took control and completed the project in 1919. De Lesseps failure was due to not understanding that leadership is contextual. In Suez, a land he was familiar with, he succeeded. In Panama, a land he was new to, he tried to impose the same model and failed. Since he did not learn the labyrinth confronting him in Panama, his strategic choices regarding ways and means were fruitless.

Lou Gerstner, the former CEO of IBM, is an example of a successful strategic leader. When IBM hired Gerstner, plans were well underway to break up IBM into smaller, more nimble businesses. Nevertheless, as Gerstner (2002) wrote in his best seller, *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance*, while customers no longer wanted to be locked into one supplier for their technology needs, they still desired an integrator who takes all solutions

and delivers a working solution to the customer. Gerstner felt that IBM, with its size and reach, was uniquely positioned to fill that role.

Gerstner called the decision to keep IBM together "the most important decision he ever made" — not just at IBM, but in his entire business career. Yet he also made it clear that it was the easy part of turning around IBM. He made a string of strategic decisions to implement his decision to keep the company together. For example, he launched the successful strategy of offering "solutions" to customers that might well include hardware and software manufactured by IBM competitors. He committed IBM to open standards so that its products could be used by competitors and vice versa. Gerstner sent out a steady stream of e-mails to employees to keep them posted about what was going on. He changed the rules for promotions and the compensation system so that rewards were based on total corporate performance rather than division or unit performance. He demanded implementation and did not allow push back. As a strategic leader, he successfully scanned the environment for themes and forces, forcefully set common aspirations, adapted IBM to its external environment while creating the appropriate internal environment to achieve those aspirations.

Rudy Crew presents another image of a strategic leader. He is the current CEO of Miami-Dade Schools (and former CEO of New York City schools) which serves 1.1 million students. He understands how to maneuver through the labyrinth of leadership. He has been described as "a person who has

a gardener's patience, a politician's oratory, and a jazzman's flair for improvisation" (Pinzur, 2004). Under his leadership, a whole school district within the city gained national recognition for innovation and increased academic success. His former deputy outlined his abilities when he ran New York City and his reflections provide further testimony to Mr. Crew's skills. "He sees multiple angles, and he can anticipate what the angle is going to be.… He can size up a political situation and find the win-win here, the hill to die on, and the issue this guy's going to lose face on. If he cannot win by persuasion, he is perfectly happy to win by force" (cited in Pinzur, 2004).

Dave Brubeck is one of the most well-known jazz pianists of all time; the first to make the cover of *Time Magazine*. His classic Dave Brubeck Quartet formed in 1951 lasted for 17 years and became one of the most successful jazz groups in history. Once when asked how he would like to be remembered, he answered, "As someone who opened doors." But the quartet's story is not their longevity or their popularity. After three years of struggling to find their sound the band began to click. In 1959, they produced the first ever million-selling jazz album (*Time Out*), toured the world many times, and introduced enormous numbers of people to the jazz sound. One song on the album (Take Five) became a synonym for jazz and a monument to cool. Why did this song stand out and have so much impact? The reason for this was that most of the music in the album was written in, what at the time was "strange" time-signatures. Time-signature is a term used to indicate how the rhythm of a song is constructed. It helps listeners count along

with the number of beats to a measure and the note that takes a beat. Most songs are written in the 4/4 time-signature. This means that one measure has 4 beats, and the quarter note represents one beat. This means that you can count along to these songs as one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four. A listener can easily count along, thus adding to their pleasure.

Dave Brubeck felt that the music was too tame, that there was more to jazz than the usual 4/4 time and the occasional 3/4, or waltz, time. With the album *Time Out*, he broke away from the usual time-signatures. The first track startles you immediately with a dazzling 9/8 rhythm, grouped as 2–2–2–3, a rhythm that Brubeck picked up in Istanbul, as he heard street musicians play music in this rhythm. Then there was a track in 6/4 time, another track in which the time-signature constantly vacillates between 3/4 and 4/4. These were followed by a track in 5/4 time (Take Five). There were 5 beats in one measure, and the quarter note represented one beat. With Brubeck on piano and bassist Eugene Wright, they kept repeating the 5/4 time sound so the listener wouldn't loose count. Joe Morello picked it up on drums and the famous Paul Desmond on liquid sax improvised off the time-signature. The great achievement of this album is that Brubeck succeeded in creating coherent music out of a musical style that at the time was considered inaccessible and inappropriate for jazz. Until his retirement Brubeck could not play a concert without a rendering of "Take Five." Of course, the Dave Brubeck Quartet continued to experiment with time-signature and building up tension, releasing it and repeating the process.

The Lessons

All of these vignettes exemplify what strategic leadership makes possible. Strategic leadership is organized around four key tensions that confront leaders at all levels and in all walks of life. These tensions are between "what could be" and "what is" and between "what is right" and "what is possible." They are found in political leaders who know and do what is right and in ethical leaders who know and take advantage of what is possible, in transforming leaders who can manage and in efficient managers who can transform.

The Ford and Fiorina vignettes are illustrative of the early strategic leadership research focus on ends. Unlike Fiorina, Ford's saga also demonstrates the consequential decisions on strategy and actions. He failed to continue to stay connected to the context in which he found himself and lost market share to Chevrolet. Like Ford, de Lesseps failure in Panama is attributed in large part to the assumption he made that lessons learned in one part of the world would work equally as well in another part of the world. De Lesseps might have salvaged his name and legacy — and Ford might have maintained his company's primacy — if they had understood that leadership is almost always situated in a context and the strategy must fit the context.

What we can learn from Gerstner is that we should not view a strategic direction and implementation as separate entities. A successful strategic leader must possess strategic clarity as well as a clear set of strategies and tactics. Like Rudy Crew, strategic leaders manage, lead, and then manage. They also juggle the political realities required to promote their

ideas while following the values identified as important by the organization. Balancing leading and managing while considering politics and values are at the heart of strategic leadership.

Brubeck is listed as a strategic leader because he took the time to understand the context in which he worked. He learned the labyrinth by traveling and listening to different rhythms around the world and then changed the paradigm from 4/4 time to 5/4 time. In doing so, he created a platform for his colleagues to work and improvise from; much like Bill Gates of Microsoft did and Sergey Brin and Larry Page of Google fame are now doing. All of these leaders have found new innovations that successfully met an unrecognized need in the environment. The most successful ones do it over and over again.

The Empirical Research

The empirical research on strategic leadership is of three types. Most studies focus on the activities of upper echelon leadership such as making strategic decisions; creating and communicating a vision of the future; developing key competences and capabilities; developing organizational structures, processes, and controls; managing multiple constituencies; selecting and developing the next generation of leaders; sustaining an effective organizational culture; and infusing ethical value systems into an organization's culture (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Cannella & Monroe, 1997; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Hickman, 1998; House & Aditya, 1997; Hunt, 1991; Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Priem, Lyon, & Dess, 1999; Selznick, 1957/1984; Zaccaro, 1996.)

Other studies focus on the roles and capabilities needed by strategic leaders such as the cognitive complexity of leaders (Hunt, 1991; Quinn, 1988), flexibility and social intelligence (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Hooijberg, Hunt, & Dodge, 1997; Zacarro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991), ability to learn (i.e., absorptive capacity) (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990), ability to change (i.e., adaptive capacity) (Black & Boal, 1996; Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Hambrick, 1989), and ability to perceive variation in the environment and capacity to take the right action at the right time (i.e., managerial wisdom) (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Malan & Kriger, 1998).

A few studies argue that strategic leadership occurs in an environment embedded in ambiguity, complexity, and informational overload based on the argument that the environment surrounding organizations is becoming increasingly hyper-turbulent (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hambrick, 1989). Virtually no studies reported on extending strategic leadership throughout the organization.

My impression from all these sources is that the commonality among strategic leaders is that they possess the preconditions necessary for leading: attributes, foundational administrative skills, and a strategic mindset. Armed with these preconditions, strategic leaders work hard to understand their environment, determine ends, and create coherent but not comprehensive plans. They act to achieve the goals by establishing power networks and craft a responsible and continuous flexible learning organization. The best strategic leaders prepare their organizations for change by generatively

creating a vision, based upon shared values, and articulating guiding principles. By "charting the course" in this way, organizational colleagues are free to act independently by understanding the direction in which together they are heading. The work of individuals in following the course must be supported by leaders' motivational actions, which include facilitating and encouraging organizational learning. By "raising the sails," through these actions, leaders help to maintain forward momentum. The actions of the strategic leader and colleagues in working toward a shared vision cause effects that, in turn, creates feedback. The strategic leader monitors this feedback, using it for renewal, and embedding new knowledge in the organizational culture. By "dropping the anchor" in this manner, the strategic leader cements change in the organizational culture to achieve lasting change. These three preconditions and five strategies — learn the labyrinth, chart the course, raise the sails, drop the anchor, and apply the artists paintbrush — are briefly described in Table 1 and fully described in the author's forthcoming book, *The Strategic Leader*.

Graphically these conditions and strategies are displayed in the conceptual framework found in Figure 3.

The construction of the full strategic leadership model suggests six propositions that relate to leader success when working in the postmodern condition:
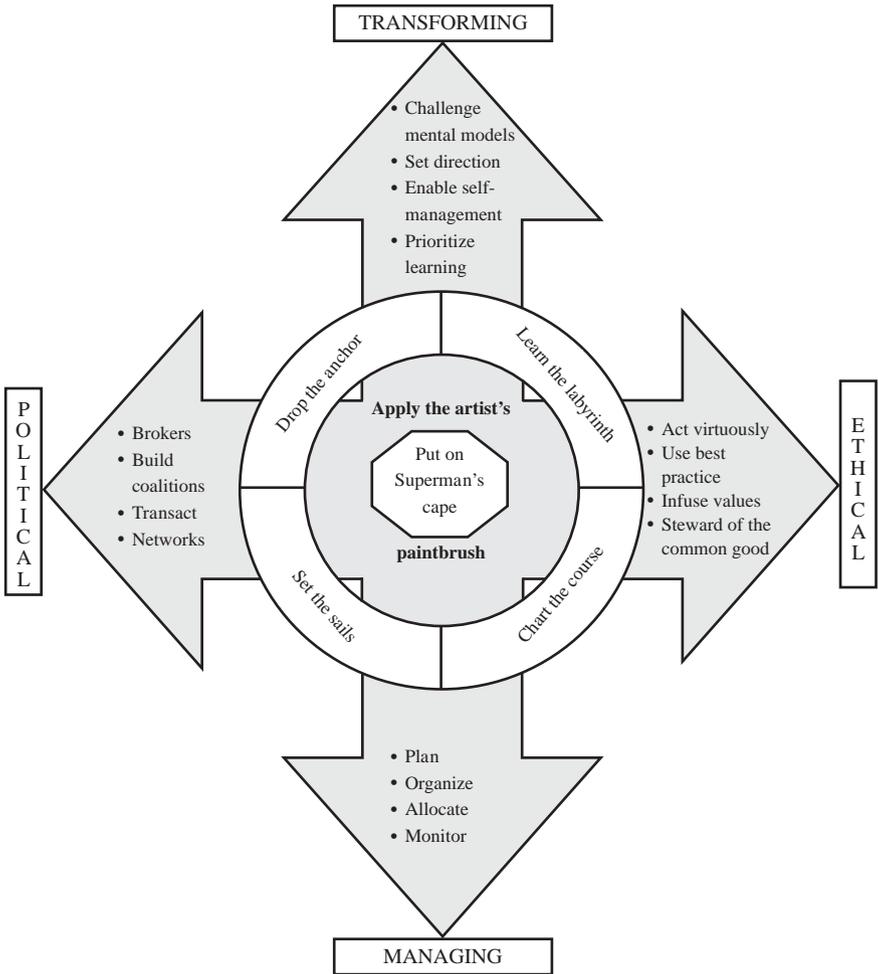
- *Proposition 1* — Leaders trained in, and relying upon, linear thinking mindsets will be less successful in situations characterized by ambiguity and complexity.

Table 1.   The Five Interlocing Strategies in Leadership

Precondition	Description	Metaphors
Precondition 1	Possess a majority of the eight leadership attributes associated with successful leaders: aspiration, adaptation, attraction, assertiveness, character, confidence, connection, and competence.	Putting on Superman's cape
Precondition 2	Possess and can effectively apply the administrative foundational skills of decision-making, communicating, motivating, and conflict management.	Putting on Superman's cape
Precondition 3	Possess and can effectively apply a strategic mindset.	Putting on Superman's cape

Strategy	Description	Metaphors
Strategy 1	Study and understand the internal and external environment in which one practices leadership.	Learn the labyrinth
Strategy 2a	Clearly establish strategic intent by identifying shared values and beliefs, creating a flexible set of priorities in order to exploit opportunities presented by the environment and inducing followers to join in a common purpose.	Chart the course Light the way Plan on a page
Strategy 2b	Practice strategic opportunism by analyzing the strategic context of the organization and preparing to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, thereby creating organizational advantage, and success.	Run to daylight
Strategy 3a	Build organizational capacity and cohesiveness, thereby gaining internal support for organizational direction and priorities.	Raise the sails
Strategy 3b	Use power of networking to connect the leader and his or her organization to powerful forces in the internal and external environment, thus gaining support for organizational direction and priorities.	
Strategy 4	Establish a process for renewal and accountability to embed the organization's direction, beliefs, values and priorities into the minds and spirit of colleagues, leaders and other stakeholders in order to develop a self-managed organization.	Drop the anchor Set the glue
Strategy 5	Constantly and consciously make strategic choices to employ some combination of the political, ethical, transforming, and managing action sets to guide the organization through the maze of change.	Apply the artist's paintbrush

Source: Pisapia (2006).

Figure 3. The Constructs of Strategic Leadership

TRANSFORMING

- Challenge mental models
- Set direction
- Enable self-management
- Prioritize learning

POLITICAL

- Brokers
- Build coalitions
- Transact
- Networks

ETHICAL

- Act virtuously
- Use best practice
- Infuse values
- Steward of the common good

Drop the anchor

Learn the labyrinth

Apply the artist's

Put on Superman's cape

paintbrush

Set the sails

Chart the course

- Plan
- Organize
- Allocate
- Monitor

MANAGING

Source: Pisapia (2006).

- *Proposition 2* — Leaders who are unable to identify critical societal and institutional forces impacting their environment have difficulty in connecting their organizations to the major themes associated with success.

- *Proposition 3* — Leaders whose concept of change is linear overuse quantifiable parameters in the change process and seek to rationally plan their way to success.

- *Proposition 4* — Leaders who do not see their organizations as dependent upon the actions and views of other organizations and individuals are less able to connect with significant forces on their critical paths of success.

- *Proposition 5* — Leaders who do not connect the principal concepts of necessary organizational changes to the minds and spirit of their followers are less able to empower and enable and create self-managed organizations.

- *Proposition 6* — Leaders who use a limited set of leadership actions to influence followers to join in a common cause are effective only when conditions match their one-dimensional set of leader actions.

These propositions are currently being tested through empirical research. Pisapia and his colleagues have created and tested two instruments to test the theory in practice settings. The first instrument called the Strategic Thinking Questionnaire (STQ) (Pisapia, Reyes-Guerra, & Coukos, 2005; Reyes-Guerra & Pisapia, 2006) was created to test Proposition 1. Two studies relating the possession of a strategic mindset to success have been completed using the STQ. Pisapia, Reyes-Guerra, and

Yasin (2006) studied the proposition that successful leaders think differently than less successful leaders. The study sample included 138 for-profit and not-for-profit managers and executives. This initial study determined that: (a) strategic thinking capabilities are significantly related to leader success; (b) the use of three systems thinking capabilities (systems thinking, reframing, reflection) could distinguish between more and less successful leaders; and (c) while systems thinking explained much of the variance in the success variable, there was a cumulative impact of the use of all three capabilities. Pang and Pisapia (2006) conducted a study of 543 school principals in Hong Kong. They found that: (a) the use of strategic thinking could distinguish between more and less successful leaders; (b) school leaders' understandings of system dynamics had significant effects on leadership effectiveness; and (c) while systems thinking explained much of the variance in the success variable, there was a cumulative impact of the use of all three capabilities.

A second instrument called the Strategic Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Pisapia, Yasin, & Reyes-Guerra, 2006) was developed to study proposition 6. Yasin (2006) compared the use of the four action sets (managing, transforming, political, and ethical) by Malaysian and North American college deans. He found that the most successful deans in both contexts used a wider array of leader actions than did less successful deans. The study also demonstrated that the use of a multifaceted set of leader actions was modified by leader age. Furthermore, neither cross-cultural nor gender distinctions were found to modify the relationship of actions and success.

The Fifth Strategy: Applying the Artist's Paintbrush

The fifth strategy is the strongest determinant of leader and organizational success. It is a particularly important contributor to being successful in mastering change in a globalizing world. Taking a cue from proposition 6, it is assumed that leaders operating in the postmodern condition must possess and use a wide variety of actions that depend on what the context and situation requires. Strategic leaders manage the current situation and lead the organization to a new future. They must be future-oriented and order-driven. Strategic leaders constantly and consciously make choices among four action sets to guide the organization through the maze of change: the choice between political and ethical actions and between managing and transforming actions. They are involved in a constant cycle of leading and managing, sometimes simultaneously. They must also juggle the political realities required to sell their ideas to those who enact them while following the values identified as important by themselves, colleagues, and the organization. The following paragraphs briefly describe the palette of managerial, transforming, political, and ethical actions the leader can draw from to meet the postmodern condition.

During the Renaissance in Italy, architects and artists investigated the question of how to draw three-dimensional objects on flat surfaces. They began to think of a painting as an "open window" through which the viewer sees the painted world. They also developed a system of mathematical rules known as linear perspective to help painters achieve their goal of realism. Leonardo da Vinci learned the rules of perspective and practiced using the window as a device for drawing

perspective correctly while he was an apprentice in Verrochio's studio. Artists during Leonardo's era said that perspective is nothing more than seeing a place or objects behind a pane of transparent glass upon which the objects behind the glass are to be drawn. However, Leonardo's studies of perspective yielded an important distinction. He noted that a measured relation between object and image is only possible if the object is visible. Using the perspective window, only visible objects could be traced; invisible objects could not. Leonardo's interpretation of perspective led to the quest to find invisible objects in a scene and make them visible.

Leonardo extended his lessons in perspective and became skilled in the use of other techniques such as his work in chiaroscuro (the light-dark technique of painting in which the figures portrayed have no clear outlines) and sfumato (the technique of coating objects in a picture with layers of very thin paint to soften edges or blur shadows). By extending his skill in the use of chiaroscuro, figures can be shown emerging into the light from shadows. By adding the skill of sfumato, he created a dreamlike effect of atmospheric mist or haze. Leonardo was the most skilled practitioner of perspective, chiaroscuro, and sfumato in the Renaissance. These techniques can be seen in his paintings *The Virgin of the Rocks* and *The Mona Lisa*.

Leonardo's window provides several lessons for strategic leaders. First, they must be able to pause, feel, and get into the moment. Second, they should look for the invisible and find things that are not in the present picture but belong there. Third, they notice new possibilities and paths in a map-less terrain.

Finally, analogous to Leonardo's use of multiple techniques of perspective, chiaroscuro, and sfumato, leaders must employ a multifaceted set of actions, which they blend into a coordinated effort to achieve an end. Leadership that meets the postmodern condition requires balance and the intuition to recognize which set of actions will be the most effective in any given situation. The author calls this lesson applying the artist's paintbrush.

The word "art" comes from the Greek word *arr*. It is a verb that means to "arrange or put things together." In my terms, artful leaders act in ways to put resources and people together. The fifth strategy presents a palette of four actions that leaders can put together to meet the requirements of the postmodern condition. Figure 4 depicts the four leader actions along two continua — the managing/transforming and the ethical/political, rather than the two sets proposed earlier by Bass (1990), Blake and Mouton (1964), Burns (1978), Fiedler (1967), Hersey and Blanchard (1988), and the Ohio State University (1952).

Figure 4. The Fifth Strategy of Strategic Leadership: Applying the Artist's Paintbrush
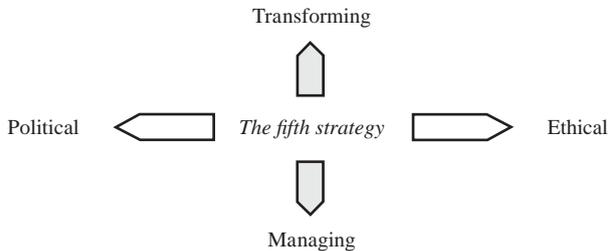
Source: Pisapia (2006).

On the managing/transforming continuum, actions taken to make the current machine run harder, faster, and be more productive are in tension with actions that create change and transform the very nature of the organization. The managing set of actions focuses on the stabilizing aspect of leadership. The adaptive or change orientation lies in the transforming set of actions. The managing and transforming sets of action respectively focus on the need for order and stability and the need for change. These two action sets form the central directional activities of the fifth strategy.

On the political/ethical continuum, "what is possible" is juxtaposed against "what is right." Thus, the actions in both continua are opposites and create constant tensions, which influence the leader's thinking and decision-making. Political and ethical considerations constantly pull and push against each other, compelling the organization to adapt and refocus actions to maintain order or change. The focus of the political and ethical sets of action enable, suppress, or hinder the organization's purpose- and direction-setting actions. The political and ethical actions act as opposing forces in this model at times and at other times are joined to enable frame-sustaining or frame-breaking change.

The relationship between transforming and managing action sets and ethical and political action sets can also limit each other. This happens when the ends of ethical actions (doing what is right) are limited by the ends of political actions (doing what is possible) and vice versa. When these two sets of ethical and political actions are in opposition, they become limiting.

However, in the same way that they limit each other when they are opposed, they enhance each other when they are moving toward the same ends. When "what is possible" and "what is right" converge, the strategic leader is empowered to either effect a high level of management or a high level of transformation in the organization.

Leaders who are able to use a wide array of actions will be more effective in dealing with these tensions than leaders who use a narrower array of actions. The strategic leader is one who is able to use actions in each of the four windows — managing, transforming, political, and ethical — to adapt his or her approach to the circumstances of a given situation as needed. After being introduced to the windows of strategic leadership, Ed Tutland, the CEO of a small medical supply firm, described this strategic model of leadership as a compass (E. Tutland, personal communication, April 15, 2000):

> I viewed this strategic leadership model as a compass, with the transforming facet being "true north." The managing facet is viewed as "south"; always correcting to remain "stable" under the directional arrow. The "east and west" directions of this "compass" are the political and ethical aspects of leadership.
>
> Political forces cause the organization to veer or vacillate off course, addressing those issues that require tradeoffs and bargaining for power to find the answer to the question, "What is the best solution for the system?" The ethical facet forces the organization to vacillate in the direction that is best described as doing "the right thing right" or determining "what is the best solution for the

organization." The ethical facet is intriguing because it includes acting from best practice as well as from a moral base.

A leader must know and understand these vacillating facets of leadership and work diligently to "rechart" the organization toward goal attainment. The leader does this by focusing on leading for stability at times and change at other times.

I think that the foundation of leadership lies in the managerial aspect. In times of stability, it is the leader's job to maintain the pattern of work in the organization and modify or eliminate inputs or behaviors, which are not standard to the organization. On the other hand, the more stability organizations enjoy the more difficult it will be to change when appropriate. From this perspective, I think the future of leadership lies in the transforming aspect. The transforming leader continually positions the organization within its environment. When the need for change presents itself, organizational structures must be revamped to meet changing conditions and allow for better goal attainment. The exceptional leader is able to anticipate change and establish new relationships by linking internal and external environments. In this way, they "chart the course" for the never-ending dance of stability and change.

It's like a car. You spend 80–100% of the engine's power to get it moving and in the direction you want it to go. Once you are moving, then you only use about 20% of the power under the hood to continue that movement. Likewise, if you are balancing back and forth between management and transformation, the organization is in motion and therefore does not stop innovating.

None of the strategic action sets are comprehensive enough to be sufficient in leading for long-term success when used exclusively. Strategic agility is achieved when leaders learn to think as artists by blending managing/transforming approaches with political/ethical leadership constructs. In this way, they guide their organization through the postmodern condition and the maze of change. The strategic leadership framework presents a multifaceted approach that embraces all the leadership actions used by the manager, the transformer, the political networker, and the judge. It requires the paintbrush of the artist. The major advantage of this approach is that management, leadership, politics, and ethics can be brought together to create one overall picture much the same way that da Vinci used his tools of perspective, chiaroscuro, and sfumato.

Managing Change in the Postmodern Condition

Organizational change is often characterized as an anomaly — an unusual one-time-only encapsulated process that is set in motion by a change in executive leadership or organizational crisis. That was the case not too long ago. However, if we operate in the postmodern condition, an environment characterized by constant change, then organizations cannot do other than also constantly change. Therefore, leading change while in the postmodern condition is less about groundbreaking change processes kicked off deliberately as a reactionary measure, but a constant shifting — sometimes in reaction to environmental forces, other times in anticipation and preparation; sometimes frame-breaking, other times frame-sustaining; sometimes systemic, other times departmental; sometimes led by executive leadership at the top of the

organization, other times led by the leaders at lower levels within the organization.

Frame-breaking or Frame-sustaining Change

The notions of frame-sustaining and frame-breaking are imperative to this new view of strategic leadership. By frame-sustaining change, it is meant change that enables the organization to adapt and work more efficiently on the things it is already doing. By frame-breaking change, it is meant change focusing on shifts in direction, procedures, and culture that enable organizations to work more effectively. In the postmodern condition, leaders do not need to learn how to lead change so that they can practice it at that one golden hour when frame-breaking change is needed. Rather, they need to learn to lead change as a way of life. It is like white-water canoeing. The first step is to learn to paddle efficiently on calm level-1 rapids. From then on, every new advance to more difficult category of rapids requires bringing your knowledge and skills to the situations that the canoe, the river, and the rocks present. So too, leading in a globalizing world is a constant learning experience that is wholly individualized and very much a problem of adapting one's knowledge and skill to the current situation. The analogy is that almost anyone can lead when there is moving water with few ripples, small waves, and few or no obstructions. However, it takes experience and courage to lead when the river is extremely difficult, long, and with very violent rapids. In relatively stable environments, one way of leading is sometimes enough. However, in ambiguous, complex, and chaotic environments, the leader must stay firm and be flexible at the same time.

The first of several consequential decisions of the strategic leader is whether frame-breaking or frame-sustaining changes need to occur. Leaders like Gerstner and de Lesseps make at least two consequential decisions that are crucial to their success. Many leaders like de Lesseps try to bring solutions that have worked in other contexts to the task at hand. Other leaders like Lou Gerstner try to find out what needs to happen in the organization and then build a change agenda. The first consequential decision facing new strategic leaders is between sustaining and changing organizational direction. Like Gerstner, they should ask, "what needs to happen here?" When the leader determines a need to sustain the current frame, managing actions are emphasized to make the machine run faster, more efficiently, and more productively. On the other hand, where there is a need to reexamine a fissure between external needs and internal beliefs, then frame-breaking change is required and transforming actions are emphasized to provide long-term stability to their organization.

As leaders move to either sustain or break the frame, they are confronted with a second consequential decision. Should the leader stand firm and do what is right, or be flexible and do what is possible. The leader balances ways and means by utilizing the political actions while being guided by ethics. In one application, the leader can be totally enabled politically and totally right ethically, and precede full steam ahead. In reality, these supportive aspects of leadership are not "either-or" propositions. While the majority of the time leaders must stand for what is right, they also realize that being right might not be enough. Further they understand that what is right to

one person or group may not be right to another person or group, so they learn not to "die on every hill" in order to bring about the changes needed. The ability to lead purely through ethical actions is almost always balanced by the reality of political needs. Successful strategic leaders are comfortable in both arenas and are constantly able to balance political and ethical forces in support of frame-breaking or frame-sustaining change.

While it is possible to lead through any of the four sets of actions, most of the time the decision is between stability and change while negotiating the tension between the ethical and political aspects of the situation. The managing actions focus on the stabilizing aspect while the significant change orientation lies in the transforming facet. As seen in Figure 5, no matter which action set is chosen, managing or transforming, these actions are balanced by political and ethical considerations.

Figure 5. The Pyramids of Strategic Change
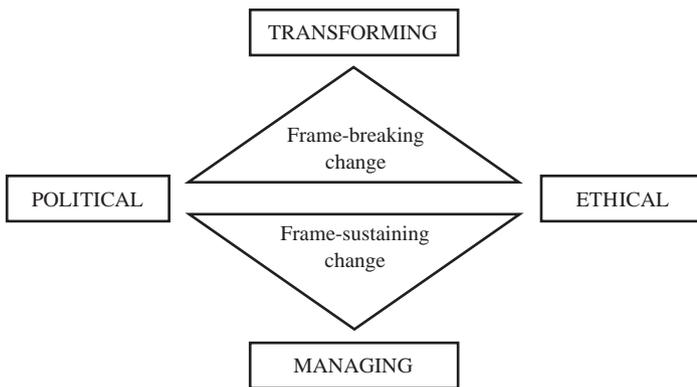
Source: Pisapia (2006).

From this point of view, the model represents two pyramids. One pyramid is focused on managing actions and is balanced by political and ethical actions. When the leader is pursuing a managerial goal, the constant pull and push of political and ethical issues are present and must be dealt with. Conversely, when the leader is focused on transforming, the constant pull and push of political and ethical issues are also present and must be dealt with. The clash of the politics and values of the context are always present and must be considered in applying the strategic actions.

The Pyramids of Strategic Change

The pyramids of strategic change, as illustrated in Figure 5, guide the strategic leader in making choices among the four action sets. They act as triggers for leader actions. For example, is there a "fit" between the organization and its environment? If the answer is yes, the leader uses frame-sustaining actions. In frame-sustaining change, the organization adapts and learns to work more efficiently on the things it is already doing. If the decision is to sustain the current frame, then the leader applies managerial, political, and ethical actions.

If the organizational fit criteria cannot be met, then the leader should use frame-breaking leader actions. In frame-breaking change, the organization alters direction and procedures in order to work more effectively. Frame-breaking change is the pyramid composed of transforming, political, and ethical actions. In either case, frame-sustaining or frame-breaking, the leader uses political and ethical actions to support the use of managing or transforming leader actions.

Using the notion of the pyramids, strategic leaders choose one of the two approaches:

- Frame-breaking leaders focus on the triangular relationship between the political, ethical, and transforming actions to bring about the change desired;

- Frame-sustaining leaders focus on the triangular relationship between the political, ethical, and managing actions to maintain continuity and order.

Of these four action sets, the managing and transforming sets are directional. The directionality of these two leadership sets is toward stability (management) or change (transformation). Leaders who are seeking to sustain and reinforce the stability of their organizations engage in managing actions. This is described as "frame-sustaining" (managing) leadership. On the other hand, leaders who seek to move the organization to meet the demands of the external and internal environments engage in transforming leadership, or "frame-breaking" (transforming) leadership.

The directional leader actions (transforming and managing) are each coupled with supportive ethical and political action sets. For example, when a leader is engaged in transforming leadership, the leader uses these supporting action sets to determine what is right (ethical) and what is possible (political). These action sets differ in that they are used in conjunction — as supporting actions — to the directional transforming and management actions. They are therefore necessary components of strategic leadership actions. While all four actions can be used individually as in the case of the ethical leader or the

manager, the transformer or the politician, they are more useful when used in combination depending on the need for frame-breaking or frame-sustaining change. The pyramids of change suggest three additional propositions to the core six previously discussed:

- *Proposition 7* — Leaders who use political and ethical action sets in combination with either managing or transforming actions are more successful than leaders who use them singularly.

- *Proposition 8* — Leaders who combine managerial, political, and ethical actions are more successful than leaders who do not in frame-sustaining situations.

- *Proposition 9* — Leaders who combine transformational, political, and ethical actions are more successful than leaders who do not in frame-breaking situations.

Summary

The twenty-first century began with an interesting confluence of demands placed upon organizations and their leaders and a retrenchment of the legacy approach to leadership. This new era is fueled by an unrestrained accelerated expansion of ideas, technology, competition, culture, and democratic capitalism captured under the comprehensive banner of "globalization." This new age also requires that the legacy model of leadership be revised.

This paper described the environment created by these changes as the postmodern condition, a stage which differs from the modern paradigm in that it signals a shift toward a new era

which will replace the previous one. Where the postmodern condition is found, one may also typically find chaos and a lack of order, multiple truths, and a rejection of the grand narrative. Since the postmodern condition rewards leaders who maximize their conceptual agility and their organization's adaptability, an alternative to the legacy models of modern era leadership is needed. To replace these models, a new conceptualization of strategic leadership to serve as a bridge to the era of globalization was offered. The body of this paper described strategic leadership as the ability (as well as wisdom) to make consequential decisions about ends (goals), ways (strategies), and means (actions) in ambiguous environments. Ends describe the strategic intent of the organization in a purposeful manner. Ways and means are the strategies and actions that leaders use to mobilize and align their organization with its strategic intent. The strategic leader must make tactical choices about ends, ways, and means depending on their interpretation of the context in which they find their organization. Five components of strategic leadership were described, with the focus placed on the fifth strategy (applying the artist's paintbrush). Its essence is that the strategic leader works in a multifaceted reality and must therefore apply a multifaceted set of leadership actions. Finally the pyramids of change were presented to guide leaders in mastering change.

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