Next Generation 2025
Leadership in a Complex World

speech delivered by: Prof. dr. Freek Peters

TILBURG ◆ UNIVERSITY

Understanding Society

Freek Peters studied economics and psychology at (what is now) Tilburg University. He has been active in a number of diverse organizations for over thirty years, both as an organizational psychologist and as a management consultant. He understands both private and public sectors, from bureaucratic Molochs to wildly pioneering enterprises, from fast research pools to honorable Councils of State. Freek is a partner of The Galan Group consultancy in Baarn, the Netherlands.

A specialist in leadership issues and the development of managers and directors, Freek is always fascinated to see the striking effects the human factor has on how an organization functions. He is especially interested in matches and mismatches in leadership.

In 2011, Freek obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on the subject of contemporary leadership effectiveness in relation to organizations faced with strategic challenges.

As a professor of Contextual Leadership at Tilburg University, Freek focusses on the contextual influences on the leadership and management of contemporary and future organizations and institutions.

Motto: new times call for new forms of leadership.

Next Generation 2025

Leadership in a Complex World

Prof. dr. Freek Peters

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/ Introduction

Standing here today holds a special significance for me. This is where I started as a young student of economics at the *Katholieke Hogeschool Tilburg*, some forty-odd years ago. Where I graduated as a psychologist from the *Katholieke Universiteit Brabant*. Where I became a doctor of philosophy in humanities at the *Universiteit van Tilburg*. And where I'm now a professor at Tilburg University's School of Humanities, next to my work with the Galan Group. All on the same stage, in the same auditorium in which my student band and I once performed at the annual *Dies Natalis* celebration.

At first glance things still look very similar. But the reality is, of course, that there has been an enormous amount of change, to this university as well. And I will talk to you about management and leadership in 2025, which is another ten years down the road. At which point I might already be a professor emeritus. I wonder what this place will be called by then...

This brings us to the leading theme of my oration; if we consider the field of organizations and institutions, it may look like not much has changed, but beneath the surface we are faced with enormous shifts. Shifts in the way in which organizations relate to their environment, the ways in which the outside world is looking in, the amount of changes coming their way and the speed at which these changes occur. Changes in paradigms, organizational structures, management structures, in standards and values.

Forty or fifty years ago, we went to schools our parents picked out for us, mostly based on the religious pillar or denomination they belonged to. Our civil servants were incorruptible specialists, secure in their jobs and livelihoods – a security which stretched well into their retirement. Our hospitals were peopled with capable doctors who knew exactly what we needed to stay healthy, and our banks were faultless and stable institutions that carefully looked after our savings.

We could put our trust in our authorities: mayors, directors, commissioners, deans, professors... And in our perception, things were organized to perfection behind the golden walls of these organizations and institutions.

Well, "It sometimes still looks the same, but things are very different now."

My oration is structured as follows:

- The perspective: management and leadership ten years ago
- Megatrends towards 2025
- The playing field of organizations
- Complexity Science and Complexity Leadership
- Leadership and organizations ten years from now
- Professorship Contextual Leadership TSH TiU.

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The perspective

Next generation 2025. The next generation of leadership.

First, let's look back over that same period of ten years, using a game I like to play with management and leadership students, because I think people should know the past in order to understand the present. Who was:

Dutch manager of the year in 2000?
Dutch top executive of the year in 2005?
Dutch entrepreneur of the year in 2008?
What about the Dutch management book of the year in 2003?

The answers to these questions illustrate the important changes the world of management and leadership has undergone in these past few years. In fact, it had been turned completely upside-down. People who were heralded as heroes back then are today's villains. Things that were clever and enterprising in 2005 have become short-sighted and immoral. And leadership mantras such a 'one focus is best' (like in shareholder value) and 'bigger is better' have been mercilessly cut down.
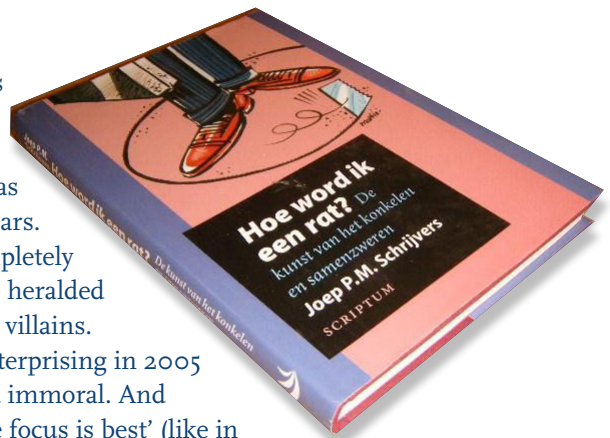
What caused this complete change? Societal indignation, the economic crisis, the power of social media, the press, politics?

In truth, all of the above. Together these and other factors gave us the final push we needed as a society to view leadership from a completely different perspective. But the underlying foundation for this change was already in place. The context of economy and organizations was already extremely turbulent and, in fact, still is.

Thomas Friedman on 'ten years ago':

The Cloud was in the sky, Twitter was a bird sound, 4G a parking place, Linked-In a prison, Big Data was a rap star.[1]

"In only one decade, we have seen this fundamental, non-linear explosion in all the tools to create, connect, compete and collaborate! But what is even more interesting is that there are about 3 billion or 4 billion people - and now also machines - wired together on this platform, and we are heading for universal connectivity"

The first iPhone was launched in 2007, the first iPad in 2010. Facebook has only been available in Dutch since 2008.

We live in interesting times. Times of major developments and transitions. Not just the transition from an economy dominated by production and service industries to a knowledge and innovation economy, but also, as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman put it, a transition to a 'liquid society'[2]. A society in which the old denominational pillars, institutions and securities have evaporated and in which each human being is searching for their own individual way. 'United we Stand' has been replaced by 'Divided we Shop'.

Or, as prof. Jan Rotmans says:

Not an era of change, but a change of era. [3]

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[1] Thomas Friedman, That Used to Be Us (2011)

[2] Zygmunt Bauman, Liquid Times (2007)

[3] Jan Rotmans, Verandering van Tijdperk (2014)

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Megatrends

Futurologists look to the future and detect longer-term developments in the shape of trends. The term 'megatrend' is applied to developments with a 10 to 30-year horizon, that develop alongside societal values and standards.

In their book 'Leadership 2030', in which they join together many futurological studies, Vielmetter and Sell formulated six summarizing megatrends.
The term 'megatrend' is defined as,
"a long term transformational process with a global reach, broad scope and fundamental impact"[4].

- Globalization 2.0   'glocalisation'
- Environment & Sustainability   'environmental crisis'
- Individualization   'power to the person'
- Digitalization   'the virtual human being'
- Demographics   'growth and aging'
- Technology   'nano-bio-cognition combinations'

Globalization 2.0
- expansion of the economic playing field to a global but strongly localized scope
- former developing regions as equal business partners, consumers, owners

Environment & Sustainability
- reduction, regeneration and circularity – the transformation of processes and business models
- CSR, social responsibility as a vital market issue

Individualization
- a growing impact of personal needs and multiform values, separate from denomination or target demographic
- differentiation, customization, diversity, networking and changing loyalties

Digitalization
- open information and virtual collectivity, new relationships between suppliers and consumers

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[4] Vielmetter & Sell, Leadership 2030 (2014)

- the digital generations as consumers, employees *and* stakeholders

Demographics
- population growth and ageing puts social structures and relations under increasing pressure
- a scarcity of talent, generation gaps, questions concerning diversity

Technology
- the pooling together of knowledge and techniques forces product, market and distributional innovation, disruptive
- 'the Knowledge Era': an emphasis on development & innovation, knowledge-intensive organizing

The results of these megatrends can be seen in all kinds of aspects of our society and economy, and from it derive consequences for our organizations and the way in which we view management and leadership. From this we transition to the most important changes in the context of leadership:

1. *Upscaling, uncertainty, turbulence, disruptions,*
    A key term here is disruptive, disorganizing; which means that 'something new and small' can elbow out 'something established, large and sluggish' in little to no time. During which the old world – to the surprise of those who took the new initiative – stands watching from the sidelines, paralyzed, 'letting it happen'.

Disruptions are of all times, but over the last ten, twenty years, their numbers have exploded. Consider for example the developments in private transport: we have gone from striving for freedom with everyone possessing their own car to sharing a car with Greenwheels, to lending or borrowing with SnappCar or My Wheels, or catching a ride via Uber or UberPop.

Disruptions occur in other areas of the 'home and garden economy' as well, created by services such as Spotify, Airbnb, Blendle and Xvideos. These are all stark demonstrations of such a change in of era.

Many are wondering whether or not their sector of industry will even still exist five years from now[5].
Strong disruptions are about to occur in sectors such as media, retail, telecommunications, energy and finances. And, due to a combination of individualization, globalization and technology, in the worlds of healthcare and education as well.

2. *An 'open house'*
   Organizations as 'open houses' that people can walk into and out of as they please, but also as 'glass houses' where everyone can look into every drawer and cabinet – literally these days, with job site Glassdoor, where employees can review their employers.

3. *Virtual connections and loyalties*
   For which social media provides both enormous opportunity and enormous instability.

4. *New forms of working and working together*
   This contributes to the creation of new forms of working and working together, including with people you don't or barely know.

5. *Diversity – across the board*
   Diversity not just in terms of society and markets, but within organizations as well; gender, heritage, outlook on life, generation, expertise and work procedures.

6. *Ethics, integrity, reputation, attributing meaning*
   Partly due to depillarization, diversification and especially after the economic crisis in the first decade of this century: a strong emphasis on morality and social responsibility.

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5 Ismail, van Geest, Malone, Exponentiële organisaties (2015)

IV
The playing field
expands...and becomes
more complex

This all leads to a sharp increase in the amount and variety of stimuli organizations are faced with, and in the variety of ways in which organizations can and must respond to this. When this is placed in a coordinate system[6] and the axes are seen as the boundaries of the playing field on which an organization operates, we can see that this playing field is expanding – to an enormous degree in some cases. The market, the chain, technology, rules and regulations, supervising bodies, the consumer, the media – the list goes on and on. It's all much less standardized and easily surveyable than it used to be.

Furthermore, these new terrains of that playing field are very diverse in shape and (types of) connections; it's all becoming more diffuse, dynamic, multi-facetted, less predictable. We call this complexity.
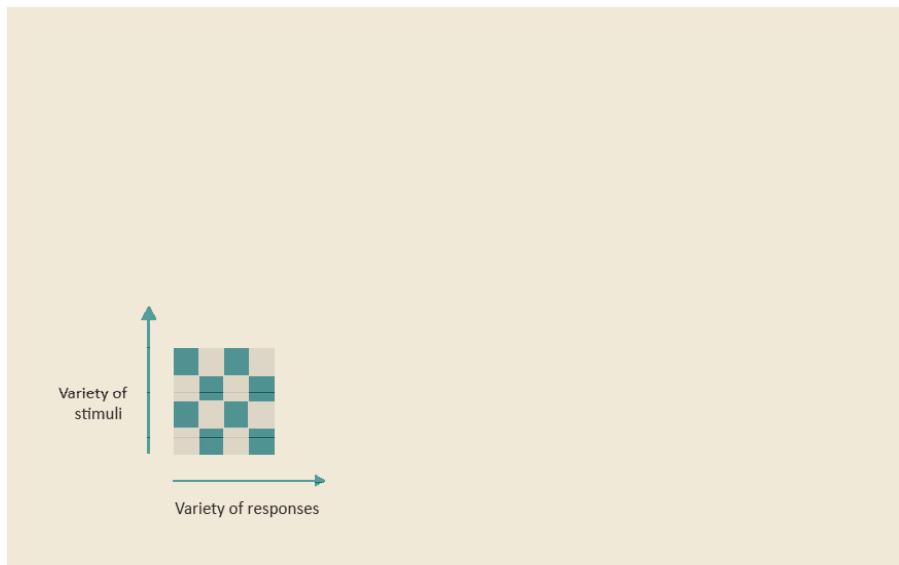
Here it is essential whether or not this contemporary playing field requires organizations to act as a complicated system or as a complex system. These words are very similar but they each mean something completely different in this context.

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[6] Boisot & McKelvey, Integrating modernist and postmodernist perspectives on organizations (2010)

Complicated means that our organizations function as machines that – though intricate – are nonetheless predictable and controllable. Like a large clock in which all cogs interact in synchronicity, working together to reach a precise result, separate from what's happening outside that clock. As is the case for a commercial airplane, a nuclear power plant, a chemical factory.

Complex on the other hand means that our organizations are required to act as flexible systems, adaptively responding to the changeable reality around them, having to find solutions to diffuse issues, working closely together with their environment. As is the case for a flock of birds migrating for the winter, for battling an infectious disease, for the way in which a voluntary organization develops, or for a crowdfunding system.

Why is this – subtle – difference between complicated and complex so important? With complicated systems, the focus is on 'being in control', like a pocket watch. Closed off from the outside world, the cogs mesh together to indicate the correct time, regardless the circumstances. And this is often just as well – with a commercial airplane or a nuclear power plant.

With complex systems, a system is *a part of* the outside world and there is added value in interacting and adapting, which leads to new patterns and solutions. These things can't be controlled, the secret is in letting them happen.

> *Aside: I once studied economics here, in a time when the economic establishment was seen as a rational complicated system that could be understood and controlled with the use of quantitative models. Ah, well...*
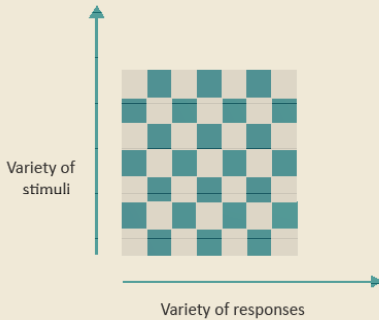
Consider the management paradigm: complicated systems can be managed cybernetically, focusing on a predictable and controllable reality. And should that reality become unruly, you strengthen that management in order to keep things under control.

Complex systems, that act in a reality that is changeable and that calls for continuous adaptation, are only paralyzed by this, because it inhibits the freedom of movement and energy of vital components. Consider the Dutch healthcare system – even the professional association of accountants is currently warning that the system has gone overboard in terms of rules, frameworks, inspections and supervision, which they say seriously threatens the accessibility and quality of care. [7]

Back to the playing field: we are used to intricate but controllable contexts, but we haven't yet really gotten used to the nature and dynamics of the new era.

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[7] NBA, Open brief voor de curatieve zorgsector (2015)
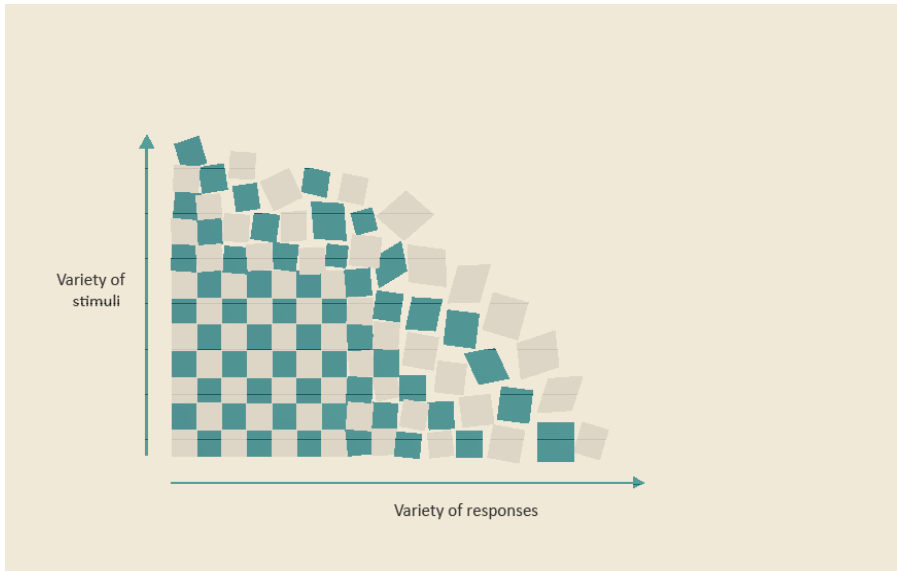
In the 20th century, we became well-versed in controlling complicated issues.

We have developed concepts, methods and instruments for managing and controlling complicated processes.

But in the 21st century we must learn to deal with complexity.

V
Complexity Science

This is the study into the behavior of interacting units in dynamic, ambiguous and uncertain circumstances. Last year I had the privilege of staying at the Santa Fe Institute in New Mexico, the birthplace of interdisciplinary complexity science. Here it becomes clear that an approach that originated from the fields of physics and biology can also be applied to completely different issues in which a certain theme moves in complex contexts, such as in the spreading of infectious diseases, the regenerative power of electricity networks, the ups and downs in the economic establishment and the development of fast-growing cities. Situations that all involve an element of unpredictability and uncontrollability, which means they must be handled attentively and adaptively[8].

The same approach can be used to consider the characteristics and dynamics of organizations that find themselves in dynamic, ambiguous and uncertain environments. Complexity as glasses or a lens through which or a perspective from which to consider today's economic and societal context, and from which to view current issues concerning management and leadership

The key term in complexity science is the Complex Adaptive System (CAS). Complex adaptivity means that a system behaves in a way that can't really be predicted (at most it can be explained in hindsight), that the individual components are interconnected and interacting (network), that things are always moving (dynamics), that it adapts (adaptivity) and that changes can emerge from within (emergence) in the shape of learning, renewing, innovating, but it also means that a system can fall into chaos outside its existing order (entropy).

Within a total organization, such as a conglomerate or concern, complex adaptive systems are the 'little networks' that make up the organization as a whole. Heterogeneous networks of interacting elements that move towards a common direction together, influencing one another and reaching innovating results, often in the shape of innovating solutions to new issues, which cannot be drawn from an existing routine.

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[8] Melanie Mitchell, Complexity, a guided tour (2009)

Examples of organizations that are primarily made up of CAS are all around: Airbnb, Uber, Quirky, networks of independent professionals and cooperative types of organizations such as Buurtzorg, De Netwerkschool, etcetera. It can also be found in a recent report from the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD):

The transformation of jihadism in The Netherlands, swarm dynamics and new strength.

> *"The jihadist movement in the Netherlands has taken on the characteristics of a swarm. By this we mean that it is highly decentralised, with numerous individual elements that are largely autonomous. Collectively, however, they maintain their cohesion and direction almost as if a single entity, despite sometimes seeming capricious and unpredictable. That common dynamic results not so much from the influence of a few guiding figures as from collective self-governance at the decentralised level. In the absence of a strong hierarchy and leadership structure, the main driving force within the movement is horizontal influence by friends, relatives, neighbours and other like-minded individuals, in both the online and the offline world [9]."*

We can imagine that fighting this phenomenon requires vastly different methods than traditional safety approaches, as well as a good understanding of how such a complex adaptive system operates.

Transformatie van het jihadisme in Nederland
Zwermdynamiek en nieuwe slagkracht

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[9] AIVD rapport, Transformatie van het jihadisme in Nederland (2014)

VI
Complexity Leadership

What does complexity mean for leadership?
Complexity leadership concerns leading and managing complex adaptive systems and the conglomerates that comprise such little networks. It's a young field of expertise, born around the start of the 21st century, which aims to comprehend the context and dynamics of leadership in a complex world. It received a large boost with the arrival of the financial crisis of 2007 and Henry Mintzberg's groundbreaking 2009 article *'Building Companies as Communities'* [10].

The classical 20th–century leadership theories stem from the Industrial Age and have their foundation in that paradigm as well – focused on managing and influencing employees in clearly demarcated organizations and departments in order to reach pre-set goals using fitting management methods; output, return, critical achievement and process indicators, etcetera. This teaches us how leaders, from formal hierarchical structures, can influence, motivate and attune others towards goals determined by upper management.

In today's context, a complex, volatile world with a much more individualistic and knowledge-driven economy (the Knowledge Era), there are – in addition to, rather than instead of – other issues that are important: learning, adapting, innovating, dealing with speed, dynamics, plurality, insecurity. Handling the complexity of the modern world.

This calls for different forms of leadership; complexity leadership.
At the core of this approach is the notion that the power and quality of individual networks isn't aligned, suppressed or fitted into a desired structure, but is given all the space it needs, and that intra-organizational interactions and dynamics are stimulated rather than discouraged. This is done in order to unlock the collective innovative and problem-solving capacity of all parts of the system. In short: a management style suitable to complex adaptive systems [11].

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[10]   Henry Mintzberg, Rebuilding Companies as Communities (2009)
[11]   Barrett C. Brown, Complexity Leadership (2010)

In terms of leadership, this entails a number of fundamental shifts, which can be summarized into the creed:

"We don't need another hero!" [12]

Which implies:
- *from leaders to leadership*

- *from directing to enabling*

- *from means to meanings*

- *from hard power to soft power*

And in what this means for the behavior and attitude of leaders we – if we combine a large number of authors and studies – can see a number of main categories taking shape:

- *connections;* stimulating network building
- *innovation and agility;* causing disequilibrium, 'shaking up' existing patterns
- *connecting and meaning;* creating a sense of togetherness, meaning and pride in the company
- *integration;* into a larger bureaucratic whole (because not everything will become CAS – complicated configurations also have their use and will continue to exist; the back office, the laboratory, the factory)

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[12]   Britten & Lyle, Soundtrack of Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome (1985)

VII
Organizational
structures 2.0

And what will our organizations look like in ten years' time?
As early as 1937, Nobel Prize winner Ronald Coase[13] asked, "why do firms excist?"
He argued that the reason why organizations excist as companies or institutions
(firms) was traditionally rooted in the ability to manage things that the market
couldn't manage itself, mainly organizing the availability of knowledge, labor
and capital goods. Organizations could combine and commission these factors
of production in volumes in which individuals could not.

But with today's possibilities, this monopoly is no longer as absolute as it once
was, especially in a more knowledge-oriented environment. The power and
impact of organizations as institutions is decreasing, the impact of individuals
and individualized networks is growing. This is apparent in the rise of so-called
exponential organizations, network-like structures operating with minimal
management and overhead, which can realize extremely rapid growth (e.g.
Uber and Airbnb).

Looking ahead, I think that the following will be true for the shape and
structure of future organizations:
- complex dynamics will become increasingly relevant, demanding a higher
  degree of flexibility, innovative strength and connective ability;
- the impact of organizational structures will decrease and institutions (firms)
  will or will have to further expand their borders;
- in larger contexts, the complex adaptive systems (CAS) will have to be
  integrated;

Additionally, cybernetic systems will continue to be important ('administration,
operating rooms, factory') and formal contexts will require substantial attention.

As far as I'm concerned, the future will present us with two types of challenges:
1. *combining complex and complicated configurations* for which both have their
   own functional context, which requires connection without mixing. This
   leads to an increase in hybrid organizational structures in which various
   structuring principles will be employed side by side [14].

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[13]   Ronald Coase, The Nature of the Firm (1937)

[14]   de Bruijn c.s., Nieuwerwets Organiseren (2014)

2. *connecting complex networks to formal systems:* while some still feel differently, I think that for organizations this concerns structures that still have an administrative and managerial 'shell', are required to provide orderly annual accounts, have personal obligations and responsibilities, etcetera. Jihadism isn't taxable, but most other organizational structures are.

I have described the organization of the future: an open conglomerate, a combination of little networks (CAS) outside and inside of that conglomerate, tightly organized cybernetic processes where applicable and three different functions (i.e. roles) of leadership. As Uhl-Bien and Marion[15] put it:

- *Leadership of action: adaptive* – CAS as a starting point, informal, dynamic
- *Leadership of context: administrative* – hierarchical, formal, creating frameworks
- *Leadership of process: enabling* – catalyzing the CAS conditions, connecting with formal frameworks.

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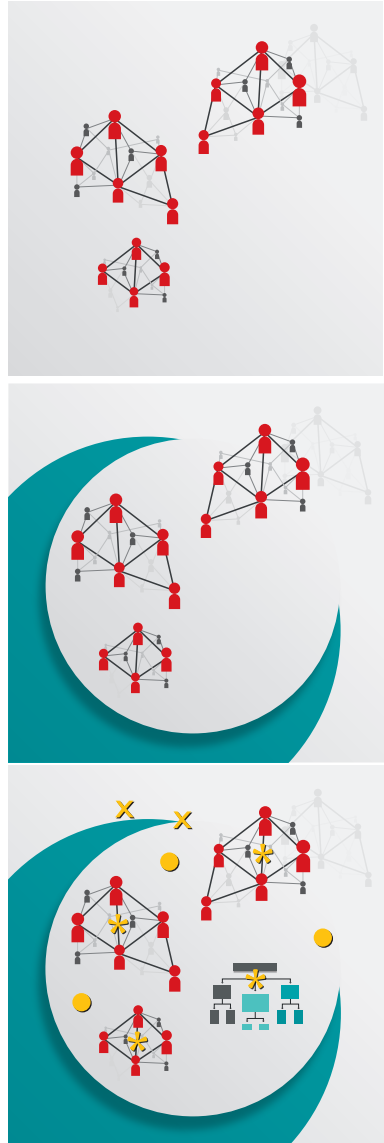
[15] Uhl-Bien, Marion, McKelvey, Complexity Leadership Theory (2007)

VIII
Leaders and leadership
ten years from now

Let's go back to the theme we started with; 'things still look the same, but they have become very different'. This means that when you use your old reflexes to react to a new reality, you might miss the mark entirely.

You'll see someone who's established themselves as a capable manager stumble as the chairman of the Board of Directors of an Amsterdam university. See a resolute, old-school minister for justice leave his ministry in an almighty mess[16]. See flawless commissioners of large banks do very silly things in regards to top management bonuses.

These are people applying an old standard to a new reality. The old standard is that leaders should be 'in control' while the new reality is that you *can't* be in control in a complex context, and that this fact should be dealt with effectively and intelligently.

New times call for new forms of leadership. And this is what I based my prediction/expectations about the generic qualities for the future on, related to characteristic leadership qualities of the past.

These classical qualities mostly focus on direction and directing: vision-course-charisma-autonomy-strength. The qualities for 'tomorrow's leaders' focus on shifting gears and teamwork:

Contextual perspective
• insight into context, with an open mind and a broad view

Equifinality
• plurality in goals and the roads we take to reach them

Altocentrism
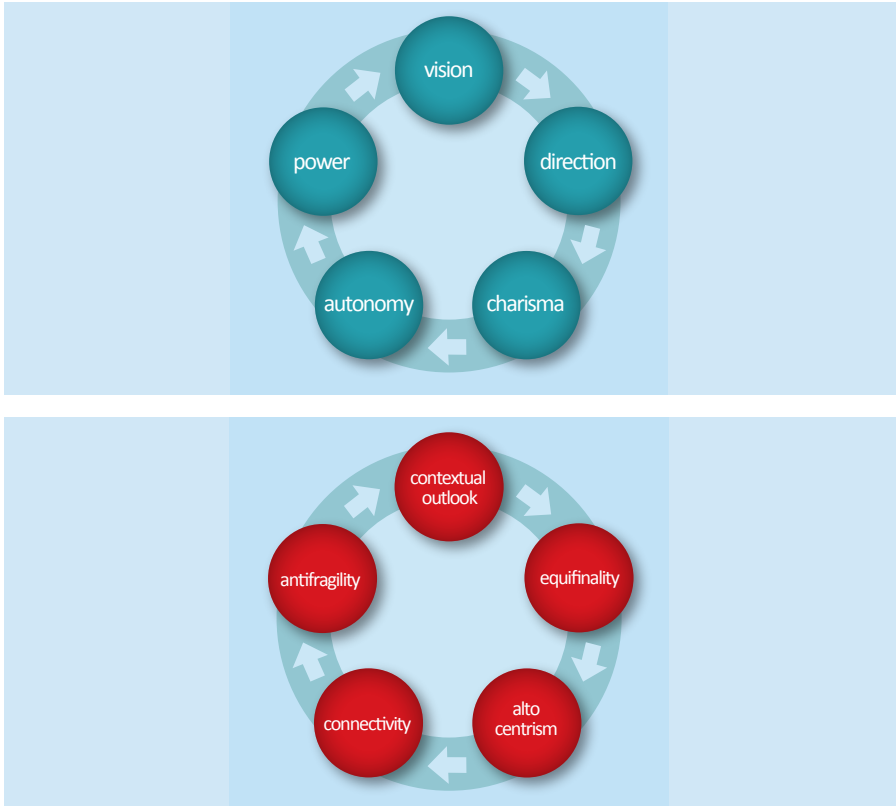• focusing on others and being able to adapt to this change in focus

Connectivity
• system awareness: understanding human processes and networks

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[16] RC, De 7 plagen van het ministerie van Veiligheid & Justitie, 9 juli 2015

Antifragility
- cheerful resilience: growing under pressure – a term derived from Nassim Taleb's *'Antifragile'* [17]

The future seems to be for the lightfooted pragmatist,
who creates room for movement by keeping his head above water,
who is smart enough to see which shoals he's navigating,
strong enough to persevere where necessary
and real enough to remain credible and connected.

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[17]   Nassim Taleb 'Antifragile - things that gain from disorder' (2013)
[18]   Volkskrant, Het mysterie Rutte, 30 mei 2015

Maybe.....? [18]
You can imagine this has enormous implications for the way in which we detect leadership qualities, recognize talent, train young people and help the old dogs to continue to develop. A thorough recalibration of talent pools, management development programs and business studies.

There is a question I like to ask senior management: "Is the person who can take over your role in this organization in ten years' time someone with the same background and the same character structure as you?" And: "What is the next generation, who will then make up the 30-to-35-year-old backbone of your organization doing now? Busy pursuing an MBA at Nyenrode Business University and dreaming of driving an Audi 6? Or are they backpacking across the Himalaya, on their way to a meaningful project?"

These are great questions, that get interesting answers. I can see a line developing, but this needs to be elaborated upon.

IX
Contextual leadership at the Tilburg School of Humanities

The music that was playing when you came in was Paul Simon's Boy in the Bubble. A song about technological advancement and the ambiguous impact it has on mankind. Reduced to its essence by Peter Gabriel [19]. Complexity made manageable. 'You cannot be a boy in the bubble anymore'.

Leadership 2025. While the phenomenon of leadership is probably as old as mankind itself, we've only started to discuss it as a stand-alone branch of science in the last hundred years or so, starting with the publication of Frederic Taylor's *Scientific Management* in 1911. In our dissertation, four years ago, Ineke Strijp and I argued that there have been a number of very different paradigms over this period of time [20]. We made a distinction between the traditional, the transformational and the contextual eras, and characterized these with three leadership metaphors: the Lion King, the Pied Piper and the Surfer.

We felt like we were on the cusp of the contextual era after – partly due to a number of financial crises – a large number of transformational leaders (i.e. 'pied pipers') had taken a tremendous nosedive.
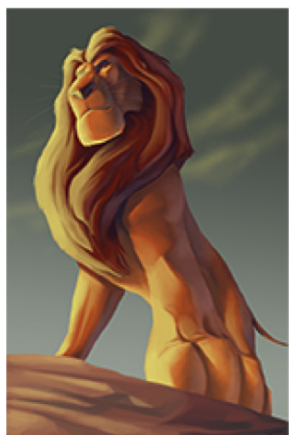
And now, with the professorship of contextual leadership, I try to gain a better understanding of and base for contemporary and future leadership, symbolized with the metaphor of the Surfer.

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[19]   Peter Gabriel, The Boy in the Bubble (Paul Simon), 2010
[20]   Peters & Strijp, Leiderschap & Strategische Opgave, 2011

The Great Man

The Visonary

The Surfer

Humanities
Tilburg University's theme is 'understanding society'. And, in the words of dean Willem Drees, Humanities' theme is 'understanding the self-understanding of humans'.[21]
Translated to leadership: how do we understand the – invisible – mental foundation from which we structure our organizations and their management?

Contextual leadership is about the paradigm from which the management and leadership of organizations and institutions is being structured and which, as a cultural system, explicitly and implicitly determines the framework of standards, the knowledge and the daily working practices; 'this is how things are supposed to go'. And what it can mean when the context shifts, for example from complicated to complex.
What can we say about tomorrow's leadership and what does that mean for us here and now? This is the research theme for the Contextual Leadership professorship.

The way in which people view leadership is surrounded by much folklore and wishful thinking. We want to consider this from a more distant and objective perspective, by linking it to societal developments and the strategic challenges organizations are faced with.

The question of 'what's happening to leadership' should be approached through questions such as: What's happening to the world? What's happening to society? What's happening to the economy? And what's happening to organizations?

As someone who works in the field, I am a great fan of valorization: turn scientific knowledge into something applicable and seek to answer questions from the field. I gladly invite both scientists *and* people from the field to join me for this.

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[21] Willem Drees, Naked Ape or Homo Sapiens, The Relevance of Human Humanities, Oratie 2014

X
Acknowledgements

I feel incredibly privileged to be allowed to create this chair here, at my old university, around the theme that is so close to my heart: 'where are organizations and leadership going and how does that affect us here and now?'. My gratitude goes out to the Tilburg University Board of Directors for the trust they have put in me.

Many thanks to the man who guided me in my own process, my then-promotor and now-colleague, Arie de Ruijter.

To the late Frans van Dooren, my erstwhile professor of industrial and organizational psychology, whom I warmly remember. A father figure, who would each year invite his students to his home so they could finally taste some decent wine. "You go into the field, son. You're much too pragmatic for science, you cut off all the bells and whistles."

Thanks to my cherished clients, colleagues and partners in the field, the network of relations that has built up during my thirty years in the field. To my family and friends, who always followed my professional and scientific wanderings with much interest and who generously tolerated the accompanying peculiarities.

To my colleagues at and surrounding the Galan Group, with which we have formed a fun and successful consultancy for a long time. A Complex Adaptive System *avant la letter*, without even knowing that that was what it was called. And many thanks to Paula, Sabine and Laury, for being such a close-knit family, a safe haven where you can always trust everyone to have each other's backs.

Finally: I love reflective practitioners, people who look for insights and depth in the field. And who – like has happened to me – can come here to delve into and, in the end, obtain a doctorate on themes that are close to their hearts, bringing much relevant know how and mature experience to the table. And when I look around me, in this university, in this auditorium; at this diversity of heritages, backgrounds and ages? I look forward to considering the challenges and solutions for the management and leadership of our future organizations together.
With today's leaders, yesterday's leaders, and tomorrow's leaders.

I have spoken.

XI
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Freek Peters studied economics and psychology at (what is now) Tilburg University. He has been active in a number of diverse organizations for over thirty years, both as an organizational psychologist and as a management consultant. He understands both private and public sectors, from bureaucratic Molochs to wildly pioneering enterprises, from fast research pools to honorable Councils of State. Freek is a partner of The Galan Group consultancy in Baarn, the Netherlands.

A specialist in leadership issues and the development of managers and directors, Freek is always fascinated to see the striking effects the human factor has on how an organization functions. He is especially interested in matches and mismatches in leadership.

In 2011, Freek obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on the subject of contemporary leadership effectiveness in relation to organizations faced with strategic challenges.

As a professor of Contextual Leadership at Tilburg University, Freek focusses on the contextual influences on the leadership and management of contemporary and future organizations and institutions.

Motto: new times call for new forms of leadership.