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Leadership of Changing Universities: A Case for Criticality

Thesis submission in consideration for the
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Presented by

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Declaration of Authenticity

I, John Fitzgerald Gates, do hereby declare that the work contained herein, expressed under the title *Leadership of Changing Universities: A Case for Criticality*, is my own, authentic thesis, submitted in consideration for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree, Institute of Education, University of London.

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Declaration of the Number of Words

I, John Fitzgerald Gates, do hereby declare the word count of this thesis to be 63,050.

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Thesis Abstract

Contemporary universities are changing universities that function under conditions of uncertainty, even unknowability, to meet often-unclear demands from within and outside their walls. The complexities of changing universities render unfeasible a singular perspective by which to guide them. At issue is how leaders might understand, correlate, and utilize the awarenesses within their universities to develop a sense of institutional knowing. It is hypothesized in this thesis that, given the above conditions, the effective leadership of changing universities necessitates a critical method. Case studies of the CEOs of three universities, one in Great Britain and two in the United States, form the empirical basis of the study. From the case studies three interlocking themes (knowledge frameworks, institutional identity, and social exchange) emerged. The study revealed that in a time of change and uncertainty, the effective leadership of universities requires a means by which to transform information into knowledge, knowledge into knowing, and knowing into being. The study further revealed that 1) knowledge frameworks (cognitive structures for understanding) are adaptable; 2) the leadership of changing universities is largely transactional; and 3) leaders and staff make their way amidst change and uncertainty through their collective efforts to address institutional issues. Based on Barnett's (1997) idea of criticality, which encompasses critical knowing, critical action, and critical being, *criticality for university leadership* is here developed as a set of theoretical propositions for the practice of university leadership under conditions of change and uncertainty. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge on, and aid in the examination of, the leadership of contemporary universities as well as the sociology of organisations.

Part I: Leadership of Changing Universities

1: Leadership of Changing Universities

Introduction

In contemplating the contexts of modern organisations, Wheatley (2006) posits that:

> Nothing today is simple or slow. This means we can't make sense of the world using the analytical processes we were taught or understand the complexity of modern systems by reductionism. In a complex system it is impossible to find simple causes that explain our problems or to know who to blame. A messy tangle of relationships is responsible for these unending crises. We need a different way to understand and work in this new world of continuous change.... (pg. 101).

That universities are undergoing continuous change is clear in both the literature, as reflected in the statement above, and in the stories of the institutions examined in this study. In this thesis, it is argued that "changing universities" need critically-imbued leadership. Middlehurst makes the point that:

> The link between leadership and change can therefore be made from both a context-centered and a person-centered perspective: change creates the need for leadership and leaders are, or are perceived to be, initiators and drivers of change (1995, pg. 87).

Whereas the link between leadership and change, as articulated by Middlehurst, may be clear, the connection between leadership and institutional knowing is not (Barnett 2000). Barnett holds that the world is "radically unknowable," given a proliferation and contestation of frameworks by which to know. He terms this a condition of "supercomplexity" and argues:

> All the available stories of the university are suspect. Both singly and in combination, they present problems. Where, then, can we turn? What cluster of concepts or ideas is going to furnish us both with a realistic sense of the position of the modern university and with a

notion of how it might constitute itself productively and effectively in the world in which it finds itself? (Barnett 2000, pg. 61).

Barnett's argument may be extended beyond his concept of "the university" to a notion of leadership. According to his thinking, and in line with the reasoning and data that inform this thesis, the world has changed with such profundity as to ever-more elevate the significance of knowing in advancing organisations' futures. Wheatley (2006) contends:

> The organization that knows how to convert information into knowledge, that knows what it knows, that can act with greater intelligence and discernment—these are the organizations that will make it into the future (pg. 145).

However, the rapidity with which information flows, the unpredictability of institutional environments, and the changing nature of work itself, makes knowing, whether individual or collective, difficult—perhaps even impossible—to achieve. At issue for leaders, then, is how to lead changing universities as knowledge enterprises against this backdrop of uncertainty. According to Kotter (1996):

> Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should be like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles (pg. 25).

Here presented is a study of the leadership of changing universities, the data for which are drawn from three case institutions, one in Great Britain and two in the United States. The study is partly conceptual, as the investigative intent was to fashion a sense of how the leadership of changing universities might conceivably evolve, via an exploration of how it presently works within actual institutions. Thus, in the study, the conceptual is rooted in and derived from the empirical, resulting in *criticality for university leadership* as a set of propositions by which to guide changing universities.

Leading Universities

In its emphasis on social exchange, Bryman's (1986) designation of leadership as a "process of social influence whereby a leader steers members of a group toward a goal" (pg. 2) is useful in contemplating leadership as a nonlinear activity in which one engages with others. The literature reveals that the leadership of universities, unlike that of corporations, is less concerned with command and control than with influence (Bensimon, *et al.* 1989; Vecchio 1997; Smith 2000).

Multiple factions, including academic staff, students, and governing bodies, lead universities. Academics lead universities through curricula reform, for instance, so as to reshape institutional priorities. Likewise, students influence universities by means of the experiential, political, and social demands they place on institutions that prompt a refashioning of practices (Barnett 1997; Dearing 1997). Additionally, funding and governing bodies influence universities through their resource allocations and imposition of standards, such as through an impetus to increase access to higher education (Dearing 1997; Rhodes 1998; ACE 2004). University leadership, therefore, is neither prescriptive nor strictly associated with a function. However, because they are presumed to exert influence over the entirety of their often segmented institutions, the role of the university chief executive is the focus of the study.

Inexorable Change

Despite the uncertainties that accompany the leadership of universities, change is one universal constant (Duderstadt 2000; Astin and Astin 2001). Examples of this phenomenon include growing and variable demands from governments and funding

bodies regarding universities' activities and outputs (Clark 1998; Warner and Palfreyman 2001; Middlehurst 2004); shifts in student demographics and preparedness for university study (Muhammad 2002); a transition from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based economy (Scott 1995; Coffield and Williamson 1997; Muhammad 2002); and a rise in new forms of educational institutions and systems of delivery (Levine 2001). These shifts are beyond the typical control of universities, causing some to reconstitute themselves to compete, or even to survive (Clark 1998; Duderstadt 2000; Bok 2003).

Change (social, operational, environmental, and epistemological) appears now to be a permanent condition of higher education (Green and Hayward 1997; Barnett 2000; Astin and Astin 2001; Muhammad 2002). Observers argue that academe is undergoing a paradigm shift from parochial to more global concerns, in response to societal expectations that universities help solve macro-social problems, which, in turn, influence institutional directions (Coffield and Williamson 1997; Green 1997; Keller 1997; Duderstadt 2000; Delanty 2002). Consequently, some scholars and practitioners believe universities need a new kind of leadership that is no longer reliant on fixed assumptions about how universities work (Birnbaum 1995). Rather, they call for leadership that is able to steer institutions through ambiguity (Rhodes 1998; Smith 2000; Freeland 2001). Otherwise, the argument goes, universities may come to lack any control over their circumstances and be hostage to unrestrained modifications to their identities, as they seek to respond to the world around them (Green 1997; Duderstadt 2000; Levine 2001). At issue is how leaders might understand, adjust, and align the diversity of perspectives within their universities in ways that permit their institutions to grapple with uncertainty.

Key Concepts and Definitions

To explore the leadership of changing universities, several key concepts are employed throughout the thesis and are outlined below.

University
What constitutes a university is debated in the literature (Barnett 2005; Rhodes 1998; Readings 1996). A university may be understood as an institution of higher education, whether a college or a research body, that is structured and governed in accordance with law or charter to grant academic degrees. Or, a university may be seen as a collection of buildings and resources that constitute a campus. For some, there exists an idea of "the university;" that is, an idealized community with common values and tenets, comprising mostly academics who are committed to research, scholarship and teaching (Barnett 2005). Throughout the study, "the university" is used to reference the sum total of the above understandings.

Knowledge Frameworks
The term "knowledge frameworks" is developed in the study to refer to the cognitive structures for understanding by which people and organisations make sense of and function in the world. Built on the underlying perspectives by which people and organisations construct awareness, knowledge frameworks are elemental to any sense of knowing because people and organisations engage with the world through the sense they make of being in it (Weick 1990, Varela 1991). From an institutional perspective, the leadership of changing universities needs an appreciation for, if not a comprehension of, the innumerable knowledge frameworks that underpin them.

Complexity

Complexity means "complicatedness," a situation with many interconnecting parts that cannot be easily understood (Battram 2001). Fundamental to complexity theory is an idea that the contemporary demand that universities learn to thrive in the midst of environmental change and uncertainty renders traditional "command and control" models of management increasingly archaic. Complexity theory stresses that the non-linearity of organisations requires leadership to be innovative and adaptive (Battram 2001).

Supercomplexity

According to Barnett (2000), supercomplexity is a condition of proliferating and competing viewpoints that collectively present as unknowability. Supercomplexity signifies that universities operate in the midst of mystery, what Barnett calls a "constellation of fragility": uncertainty, unpredictability, contestability, and challengeability (Barnett 2000; 2001). Rooted in an absence of knowing, whether self, others, or the world, supercomplexity is a condition of incomprehensibility in which our frameworks for knowing are themselves in question (Barnett 2000).

It follows that there is likely to be a tension between supercomplexity and leadership, since the former suggests inexplicability while the latter is presumptive about the future (Bowen and Shapiro 1998; Bargh, *et al.* 2000). Barnett argues:

> For the university in an age of supercomplexity, where no framework of valuing, acting and knowing can be relied upon with any security, a suitable ethos is not to be found by resorting to any idea that itself relies on some sense of security. Accordingly, ideas such as the neutral umpire, excellence, authenticity and a self-critical academic community all have to be rejected (2000, pg. 122).

The study will explore the interface between supercomplexity and the 'neutral umpire' (leadership) by questioning whether supercomplexity opposes leadership or, perhaps, compels and makes room for it as a way of stabilizing institutional environments.

Organisational Learning

Organisational learning is a concept involved in an attempt "to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others" (Allport 1985, pg. 3). Senge (1990; 1999) indicates that organisations learn as the people within them persistently engage together in thinking critically about organisational issues. He calls these enterprises "learning organizations" and premises them on "creating meaning and setting perspective" through: 1) vision, values, and integrity; 2) dialogue; and 3) systems thinking (Senge 1990, pg. xii). Senge maintains that organisations may learn their way forward, and suggests that organisational visions, values, and integrity are created and sustained by leaders and staff collectively.

Learning organisations typically emphasize collectivity over the charismatic leader, reason over intuition, and systems thinking over isolationism, implying that the parts of organisations are insufficient representations of the whole. In other words, learning organisations are concerned with the processes by which complex enterprises gain perspectives. Learning occurs when organisational perspectives are subjected to ongoing critique that results in new understandings (Senge 1990; Duke 2002).

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is what Weick refers to as "frames of mind about frames of mind ... with a set of ideas with explanatory possibilities" (Weick 1995, pg. xi). Accordingly, sensemaking may be understood as a means by which to simplify complex information into useful discernments. Sensemaking involves: 1) organisational identities, 2) retrospection, 3) sensible environments, 4) social context, 5) ongoing processes, and 6) plausibility (Weick 1990; 1995). The goal of sensemaking is to structure meaning through reflective analysis to determine the reasonability of given perspectives.

If Barnett is correct that in a supercomplex world "there is no security...any semblance of stability is just a self-imposed delusion, a mere comforter" (Barnett 2000, pg. 77), then sensemaking may be a way out of this morass. Weick asserts that people innately make the world knowable through the sense they make of being in it; people construct reality from their reasoning and experiences. Whereas the views of Barnett and Weick may be in conflict, it may also be that sensemaking offers a partial means of comprehending what Barnett maintains is beyond understanding. However, sensemaking's dependence on retrospection and plausibility may be problematic for the effective leadership of changing universities because it assumes that the past is an appropriate indicator of the present and future. Such an assumption may be unworkable given that universities, as described, are ever changing, and their environments are increasingly uncertain (Middlehurst 1995; Ramsden 1998).

Bounded Instability

Stacey argues:

> Of course, everything is not unknowable. Most [leaders'] jobs in fact
> are dominated by the knowable. But at the same time, in the same
> organization, it is necessary to practice frame-breaking [leadership], in
> which [leaders] conflict, question, learn, and make new discoveries
> (1992, pg. 8).

Stacey (1992) takes a view that degrees of volatility should be introduced into organisations' environments in order to stimulate new responses to issues. He offers an idea of "bounded instability" in which the role of leaders is to disturb the status quo and stimulate both organisational learning and change by intentionally altering how the organisation works. Thus, under the terms of bounded instability, leaders initiate organisational disquiet by deracinating that which is held by members to be elemental to the identity or integrity of the organisation (Stacey 1992). Middlehurst (1993) would seem to agree with Stacey in noting:

> To effect change, a sense of dissonance with the present combined
> with excitement about the future must be created so that a debate can
> be opened in which the desirable and the possible are illuminated
> alongside the necessary steps to their achievement (pg. 84).

Whereas the creation of instability may be easily achieved, bounding it, especially in an age of uncertainty, may not be.

Organisational Change

Organisational change is an often conscious act of altering the nature of an enterprise (Torraco, *et al.* 2005). Organisational change may take numerous forms: teleological (or planned), social-cognitive, and evolutionary, for instance. However, it is planned and social-cognitive change that relate to this study, because planning implies an examinable consciousness that social cognition may help to illuminate. From these concepts a structure by which to address the research questions develops.

The Study

Research Problem and Question

Uncertainty of knowing presents a problem that the effective leadership of changing universities would seem called to address. It is reasoned that given the uncertainty, possibly the unknowability, of institutional environments, leaders need a process (or number of processes) by which to develop institutional knowing iteratively. The central question of the thesis is, therefore: *How might university CEOs enable their institutions to be self-directive against a backdrop of uncertainty?* Secondary questions are:

1. Does uncertainty of knowing hinder, make room for, or compel institutional leadership?

2. Can (and, if so, how do) university CEOs effectively shape institutional knowing?

3. If achievable, does ability to direct institutional knowing reinforce the effective leadership of changing universities?

Importantly, while these questions are partly conceptual, the findings and offered theoretical propositions have their basis in an empirical analysis, as informed by the literature, of the actual practice of university leadership.

Significance

The contributions of the study to university leadership and theories of institutional change are: 1) new awarenesses about how social-cognition theory is able to explain and strengthen institutional leadership, and 2) a new set of propositions by which to lead changing universities that may be applied across institutional types and contexts.

Limitations

Although it is recognized in the study that universities are imbued with many forms of leadership, the focus of the study is the role of university CEOs (presidents/vice chancellors) to form a view of the executive leadership of changing universities. Further, the central question of the study may be considered through multiple lenses, but it is herein approached through cognitive-resource theory, because it provides for an appropriate structure by which to explore the mindsets that underpin respondents' enactment of leadership. Finally, there is a presumption at the outset of the thesis that organisations do learn. However, it is necessary to consider the empirical evidence of whether organisational learning actually occurred as a result of the leadership and leaders profiled in the study.

Summary of Chapters

The study is comprised of three parts. Part I (chapters 1-3), titled *Leadership of Changing Universities*, conveys the contexts in which the leadership of contemporary universities is enacted, explores relevant literature on university leadership and change, and examines possible approaches to the leadership of changing universities. Part II (chapters 4-7), *The Study*, lays out the study's rationale and methodology and analyses case-study narratives through three overarching themes that were derived from the data: 1) the impact of leaders' knowing on institutional knowing and vice versa; 2) how conflicting institutional identities impact leadership effectiveness; and 3) the role of social exchange in institutional leadership. Part III (chapters 8-10), *Rethinking the Leadership of Changing Universities*, discusses the study's findings, constructs an idea of criticality for university leadership and applies it to the data, identifies implications and limitations of the research, and suggests possible areas for future study.

Conclusion

Although universities are widely studied and increasingly understood to be in persistent modes of change that occurs in environments of uncertainty, there are few accounts of what constitutes effective leadership of changing universities (Duke 2002). This study examines the leadership of three changing universities to ascertain how, and the extent to which, leaders' knowledge frameworks underpin their facilitation of leadership under conditions of uncertainty. The study thesis offers "criticality for university leadership" as a cognitive and operational instrument by which to lead changing universities.

2: Theories of University Leadership

Introduction

A review of the contemporary literature on university leadership makes it apparent that leadership has numerous descriptors: visioning, valuing, and sensemaking, among others (Yukl 1999). Scholars such as Bensimon (1989), Bogue (1994) and Kezar (2002) predominately associate leadership with position, power, influence, meaning-making, and organisational change. Still, these conceptions differ, suggesting that leadership is contingent upon the lenses through which it is interpreted and the circumstances to which it is applied (Bolman and Deal 2008).

The above suggests that leadership is complex and irreducible to a single understanding or theoretical structure, and, further, requires multiple, even competing, frameworks to comprehend (Middlehurst 1993; Yukl 1999). Even so, examination of the phenomenon necessarily begins with a designation of its meaning. Adapted from Bryman's (1986) definition, we may take leadership to be a process of social influence to guide diverse constituencies towards achievement of collective goals. Embedded in the above definition are three assumptions:

1.   Leadership is a matter of persuading rather than commanding others.

2.   A sense of collectivity (or shared aims) amongst institutional members with their leaders is both desirable and achievable.

3.   Leadership is at least partially conditioned by institutional circumstances and environments.

These understandings support the exploration of the leadership of changing universities in allowing for consideration of the diverse contexts in which universities

operate. The definition of leadership offered above is also pertinent in considering how the variety and changeability of the forces with which university leaders contend might influence the effectiveness of their leadership.

In this chapter, theories of leadership are examined that are relevant to the research question: *How might university CEOs enable their institutions to be self-directive against a backdrop of uncertainty?*

Theories of Leadership

There are three "popular images" of leadership (Middlehurst 1993). The first image is of an act of shaping the behaviours of others. The second image is associated with professional roles and functions, such as university CEOs. The third image centres on charisma (Yukl 1999). Although leadership theory is now a multi-disciplinary field of study, central to the above concepts, and, indeed, to most formulations of leadership, is a concern with how social and mental processes determine action (Cayla 2004). From Sir Thomas Carlyle's nineteenth-century conceptualizations of the "great man" (only men were thought capable of being leaders at that time), to more recent ideas rooted in organisational learning (Kezar 2002), social psychology has been instrumental in shaping leadership theory (Considine 2006).

The contemporary study of organisational leadership began with The Ohio Leadership Studies (Fleishman 1953), which paralleled The Michigan Studies (Kahn and Katz 1952). The Michigan Studies identified three leadership "behaviours" that are associated with effective leadership. The first was that effective leaders are task-oriented and differentiate their tasks from those of their staff. The second finding was that effective leaders are relationship-oriented; they were conscious of their

relationships with their staffs and recognized the value of intrinsic rewards in addition to extrinsic reward in acknowledging staff contributions. Thirdly, the Michigan Studies found that effective leaders use a participative style of management in which their role was to build a cohesive team that worked together rather than a set of individual contributors.

The Ohio Leadership Studies also identified a focus on task ("Initiating Structure") and people ("Consideration") as two characteristics of effective leaders. Moreover, the Studies determined that leadership is associated with both formal and informal positions and roles (Yukl 1999). Here, "formal" refers to functions that are understood to carry authority, such as a university CEO (position) or auditor (role). Conversely, an informal exercise of influence occurs when one is able to persuade others of the value of one's stance even though one does not occupy a formal role or have broadly recognized authority. In examining the Ohio and Michigan studies, Bowers and Seashore (1966) discovered common findings, namely that:

1.   Leadership goes beyond formal structures to enhance a sense of self-worth amongst followers;

2.   Organisations work best through mutually satisfying group relations;

3.   Goals stimulate higher levels of achievement and performance;

4.   Work facilitation in the areas of planning, coordination, and technical assistance produces greater productivity (Middlehurst 1993, pgs. 15-16).

The above ideas have implications for the leadership of changing universities. First, that leadership is able to add value to the self-concepts of individuals suggests that leadership has a role in helping people and the organisations they serve to develop. Second, as a matter of relating and guiding, leadership appears to be dependent on

people's perceptions of the personal attributes or "traits" of leaders. Third, outcomes

matter in the advancement of leadership (Birnbaum 1992). According to Allan *et al.*

(2006):

> In contrast to traditional leadership models, contemporary theories
> describe how leadership is produced by social power, context, and
> relationship (pg. 43).

In addressing newer theories of leadership, Yukl (1999) maintains:

> The new theories emphasize emotions and values, which are necessary
> to understand how a leader can influence followers to make self-
> sacrifices, commit to ideological objectives, and achieve much more
> than they initially perceived possible. The new theories...recognize the
> importance ...of the role of the leader in making events meaningful to
> followers (pg. 33)

The new theories of leadership are divisible into three branches of social psychology:

power and influence theories (1970s to present), cultural and symbolic theories (1970s

to present), and cognitive resource theories (1980s to present).

Power and Influence Theory
In contrast to "great man" theory, which is predicated on leadership being a condition

of birth rather than of learning, power and influence theory hinges on relational

interfaces between people (Baldridge 1971; Moodie and Eustace 1974). Allen (1999)

offers three ways of conceptualizing power: (a) power-over, (b) power-to, and (c)

power-with. Power-over, akin to the traditional view of power offered above,

encompasses domination, control, and hierarchy, but is achievable in either active or

passive ways and need not be intentional. Power-to is the "ability of an individual

actor to attain an end or series end" (Allen 1999, pg. 126). Power-to refers to "the

power to be self-determining, to act rather than react, to choose the terms on which to

live one's own life" (Freeman, *et al.* 2001, pg. 10). Finally, power-with emphasizes

the human ability to act in concert with others to achieve a desired end. It is the view

of Astin and Leland (1991) that power is "an expandable resource that is produced and shared through interaction" (pg. 1).

According to Middlehurst, "influence is identified as the use of power, and power as the resource behind it" (Middlehurst 1993, pg. 29). Middlehurst notes four sources of power: charisma (the appeal of a leader's persona), expertise (practical knowledge), authority (position/sanction), and political influence (an ability to affect strategically the views of others and outcomes of events). Moodie and Eustace (1974) argue that with regard to universities, power and influence (along with the authority to enable them) are aspects of the same phenomenon. In their view, power is based on an issuance of threats, enforced by sanctions and the control of rewards, to ensure the compliance of others with leaders' wishes. The use of power may be done coercively, and engender resistance from those whom leaders seek to influence (Baldridge 1971; House 1988). Conversely, influence, say Moodie and Eustace (1974), involves an element of persuasion that is based on reason.

Proponents of power and influence theory suggest that leadership is an act of bringing people together to foster positive organisational outcomes (Pfeffer 1992; Eddy 2003). Nonetheless, power and influence theory may be problematic for university leadership in that it may too often possess a political tendency that could result in distrust and antagonism amongst followers towards university leaders (Hill and O'Hara 2005). Moreover, power and influence theory may be antithetical to the characteristic of universities as open, democratic, and critical spaces (Barnett 1997). Rather than aiding leadership, power and influence, used injudiciously, may stimulate a cultural

dissonance that undermines leadership (Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). Yukl (1999) takes a different view in arguing:

> Leaders use power and influence to overcome resistance, [rather than as] a source of energy that enables people to collectively (sic) make better decisions about what type of change is needed (pg. 39).

Power and influence theory is nevertheless useful in thinking about the leadership of changing universities because the leaders of these institutions, like all organisational leaders, exert power and influence in the execution of their duties (Pfeffer 1992). University leaders exercise power in institutional activities, priorities, and visions (Schein 1992). They exert influence in academic planning and development, in faculty promotion and tenure, and in institutional direction-setting, meaning-making, and identity construction (Schein 1992; Vecchio 1997). Thus, power and influence theory helps to explain how leaders may give their institutions direction.

Political Leadership

Political leadership is based on recognition that conflict is inherent in social groups and requires mediation (Schuller 1995). Political leadership is, therefore, concerned with mediating conflict (Baldridge 1971; Dooris and Lozier 1989). Schuller (1995) maintains that political leaders are likely to see the leadership task as "one of controlling information and resources and making use of status and power differentials to divide, rule and gain advantage" (pg. 85). Accordingly, political leadership suggests an element of cunning that may result in followers and leaders distrusting one another (Bennis 1989; Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). Political leadership is concerned with executing agendas to gain advantage and extend leaders' authority, and can be divisive when applied in ways that pit groups and ideas against each other (Ramsden 1998). Barnett (1997; 2000) argues that the pitting of groups and

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ideas against each other is fundamental to universities as knowledge organisations (Birnbaum 1992) and that such leadership is often necessary to bring about institutional change.

An important form of political leadership has to do with leaders' autonomy. According to Allan *et al.* (2006), an idea of autonomy exists within broader discourses of enlightened humanism, in which the self discovers the self and makes decisions devoid of societal encumbrances. Code (1991) identifies the autonomous leader as:

> ... Self-sufficient, independent, and self-reliant, a self-realizing individual who directs his efforts toward maximizing his personal gains. His independence is under constant threat from other (equally self-serving) individuals: hence he devises rules to protect himself from intrusion. Talk of rights, rational self-interest, expediency, and efficiency permeate his moral, social, and political discourse (pgs. 77-78).

The autonomous leader acts without concern for the will of followers, and often takes on a persona of hero, warrior, statesman, or, conversely, tyrant (Allan, *et al.* 2006). He or she assumes a posture of moral superiority, advancing his or her own values and beliefs (Code 1991). Opposite autonomous leadership is leadership based on social exchange.

Social Exchange Theory
Social exchange refers to a reciprocity in which leaders and followers exchange things of value, such as consent to follow a desired direction in exchange for job security (Blau 1964). Social exchange is premised on an idea that leadership is based on leaders and followers mutually shaping phenomena, as each (i.e., leaders and followers) seeks to meet the other's expectations (Blau 1964; Birnbaum 1992). Social

exchange theory suggests that the context in which leadership is undertaken is determinative of the sort of leadership that will be needed, a view echoed by Yukl (1999). Social exchange theory differs from power and influence theory in that the former emphasizes the mutuality of leaders and followers in shaping institutional directions, while the latter suggests that the role of leaders is greater than that of followers.

There are two principal forms of social exchange related to leadership theory: transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Transactional Leadership

In his book Leadership, political scientist James McGregor Burns (1978) coined the term "transactional leadership." For Burns, transactional leadership is a form of organisational relating in which the cooperation of followers is exchanged for receipt of something of perceived value (Yukl 1999). Thus, transactional leadership is based on a consensus between leaders and followers to take agreed-upon courses of action; it refers to a give-and-take in which leaders and followers press the other to comply with their wishes (Birnbaum 1992; Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). Transactional leadership further emphasizes a concern with maintaining stability while challenging the status quo (Bass 1997). Martin and Epitropaki (2001) indicate that:

> Transactional leaders guide and motivate people to accomplish the goals they have set. They reward employees for achieving specific performance levels and take action only when things go wrong (pg. 250).

Bass (1990) maintains:

> In many instances..., transactional leadership is a prescription for mediocrity. This is particularly true if the leader relies heavily on passive management-by-exception... (pg. 20).

Still, "in a changing environment where the boundaries of the known and the valued are no longer clear or certain" (Middlehurst 1993 pg. 85), it may be that rapid adjustments to the ways that universities operate will be too disruptive to be effective. If so, then transactional leadership may be helpful to leaders of institutions whose cultures or circumstances make rapid and pervasive change inappropriate or otherwise too difficult to undertake (Vecchio 1997).

Transformational Leadership
In opposition to Burns' idea of transactional leadership, Bass (1985) framed transformational leadership, noting:

> Knowledge work will dominate the 21st century. It requires more envisioning, enabling, and empowering leadership, all of which are central to transformational leadership. [This] leadership must go beyond the transactional reward-punishment exchange relationship (Bass 1997, pg. 35).

Bass' view is that transactional leadership and transformational leadership differ in that the former is a "lower form" of leadership that focuses on contractual obligations, whereas the latter seeks to "inspire, motivate, engage, and empower the follower by fostering deeply rooted values, convictions, and principles" (Allen, *et al.* 2006, pg. 43). Says Bass (1990):

> Superior leadership performance – transformational leadership – occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate new awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (pg. 21).

Martin and Epitropaki (2001) take a more nuanced view, indicating that transformational leadership "augments transactional leadership in predicting employee satisfaction and performance" (pg. 251). These authors suggest that a

reward system such as the one indicated by transactional leadership is an incentive

that leaders may exploit to create institutional transformations, particularly because

without an inducement to gain followers' agreement to change, transformations may

not be possible (Bass, *et al.* 2003).

Transformational leadership is predicated on leaders' ability to inspire followers to

engage in deep and abiding change through appeals to their desires to contribute to the

organisation beyond their own self-interests (Yukl 1999).

> Transformational leadership calls upon the leader to be capable of
> envisioning a new future (what can be) while at the same time being
> analytical about the current reality (what is today). The
> transformational leader employs and fosters creative thinking (outside
> the box) while being proficient in the administration and business
> (inside the box). He or she is energetic (power within) and knows how
> to empower others (tapping power in others). Finally, the
> transformational leader is a results producer and knows how to build
> community to attain results (Hacker and Roberts 2004, pg. 76-77).

Transformational leadership hinges on shared visions and perspectives between

leaders and followers, creating an atmosphere in which visions are more compelling

than individual interests (Bass 1997; Hacker and Roberts 2004). Kezar and Carducci

(2006) contribute:

> Transformational leaders attend to the individual needs of followers
> and offer inspiration and motivation to organizations and their
> constituents by providing meaning to their work rather than rewards
> (pg. 34).

Transformational leadership depends on people rising above their self-interests to

achieve a greater common good. According to Bass (1997):

> Although leader-member exchange may begin with a simple
> transactional relationship, for effectiveness, it needs to become
> transformational (pg. 130).

Bass suggests that whereas organisational movement is often transactional (negotiated between leaders and followers), sustaining such movement calls for transformational leadership which enlists followers' allegiance to the goal.

Researchers have applied the idea of transformational leadership to contexts within universities (Chaffee and Jacobson 1997; Clark 1998; Eckel, *et al.* 1998; Hauck 1998), some arguing that transformational leadership may be well-suited to advancing change in universities (Clark 1998; Bargh, *et al.* 2000). Says Middlehurst (1993):

> At the heart of transformational leadership is the notion of higher-order change.... It entails both leaders and followers raising each other's motivation and sense of purpose by appealing to ultimate values such as liberty, justice or equality.... In the process, collective and individual behaviour and aspirations are transformed (pg. 34).

This view is modified in the research findings of Kezar and Carducci (2006), who indicate that:

1. Transformational leadership behaviours such as visioning are often but not necessarily associated with higher levels of leader effectiveness and follower satisfaction than transactional leadership. Conversely, transformational leadership may have the result that followers feel left behind and dissatisfied with their work experience.

2. Transformational leadership articulates a clear and compelling vision that matches and even transforms followers' understandings of the needs and values of their organisations.

However, Birnbaum (1992) notes that there are "infrequent opportunities to provide transformational leadership" in universities as it calls for "outcomes ordinarily not attainable" in those environments (pgs. 205-206). This view is echoed by Bensimon and her colleagues (1989), who question whether the sort of profound impact implied

by transformational leadership is viable within universities. They argue that the nature of universities as knowledge enterprises, peopled with competing and often unclear perspectives, renders counterintuitive transformational leadership in academic settings where shared governance suggests that fundamental change is unlikely to be swift. In other words, transformational leadership is difficult to achieve in universities because: a) universities are slow to change, and b) the nature of universities is such that securing consent of the many to effect change is a doubtful, perhaps even unwelcomed, proposition (Kezar 2002).

The literature makes clear that a key feature of transformational leadership is a concept of "vision" (Bass 1997, Yukl 1999)

Vision

There are three predominant ways to think about vision: 1) as the articulated aim of leaders, 2) as shared aims across organisational boundaries, and 3) as a way to approach the creation of shared aims (Schein 1992). Our current understanding of vision is biblically rooted in Proverbs 29:18, which states: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Peter Drucker (1980) asserts that leadership and vision are synonymous, and Kouzes and Posner (2002) that we should "envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities" (pg. 130). Senge (1999) maintains that a shared vision is a critical means by which

> ... people learn to nourish a sense of commitment in a group or organization [and develop] shared images of the future they seek to create, and the principle and guiding practice by which they hope to get there (pg. 32).

Schein (1992) maintains that visionary leadership may serve to provide a sense of security that permits organisations to both change and maintain some constancy. He,

like Middlehurst notes, however, that an introduction of new visions necessitates a period of "disconfirmation," or challenge to self-understandings, so that new self-representations are able to emerge and have presence. He maintains that the reason organisational visions change is that the organisation is "consciously or unconsciously hurting because of an accumulation of discomforting information" (pg. 301). Thus, in Schein's view, vision results from scrutinizing organisational self-images in light of their contemporary realities and desired futures.

Wall, Sobol and Solum (1999), authors of The Mission Driven Organization, write that without a unifying vision that establishes a sense of direction and purpose, organisational members are likely to work at cross-purposes, in such a way that organisational effectiveness is limited. The authors maintain that leadership is fundamental to the efficacy of organisational vision because "without enlightened leadership, vision collapses and dies" (pg. 33). Perhaps most important to the leadership of changing universities, however, is an idea offered by Hacker and Roberts (2004), that vision, which they call "life's purpose," is important to creating meaningful organisations, arguing that "vision's connection to purpose is critical to producing an on-purpose life and leading a life of meaning" (pg. 106).

Charismatic Leadership
A corollary school of thought, first introduced by House (1988) under the domain power and influence theory, charismatic leadership is now part of the "new leadership" under the transformational paradigm (Yukl 1999). House offers a view that charismatic leaders elicit support through appeals to shared values and perspectives. His argument is contingent on leaders winning adherents by appealing to

commonalities in the belief systems of leaders and those they seek to influence, thereby encouraging a process of interrelation (Bass 1985).

Yukl (1999) notes that "charismatic leadership theories reflect [a strong] bias toward heroic leadership. Researchers with this bias seek to identify attributes that increase both a strength and weakness of a leader" (pg. 40). Johnson and Scholes (2002) offer a view of the charismatic leader as change agent:

> Charismatic leaders ... are mainly concerned with building a vision for the organisation and energising people to achieve it, and are therefore associated with managing change (pg. 550).

Shamir *et al.* (1993) note that charismatic leaders motivate followers to produce social change, and that charismatic leadership is concerned with engaging the self-concepts of followers in the articulated mission of leaders. Charismatic leadership heightens the value that followers feel their efforts contribute to organisational purposes by connecting the efforts and goals of the organization to followers' core identities. Finally, Shamir *et al.* (1993) note that charismatic leaders increase followers'

> Self-efficacy and collective efficacy by positive evaluations, communicating higher performance expectations of followers, showing confidence in followers' ability to meet such expectations, and emphasizing followers' ties to the collective (Fiol, Harris 1999, pg. 7).

In their review of the literature on charismatic leadership, Fiol, *et al.* (1999) found:

- Charismatic behaviour (visionary, change oriented, non-conservative) is either implicitly or explicitly central to new leadership theories, because, says Bass (1990):

> Intellectually stimulating leaders are willing and able to show their employees new ways of looking at old problems, to teach them to see difficulties as problems to be solved, and to emphasize rational solutions (pg. 21).

- All of the theories emphasize dependent variables that appeal to followers: symbolic leadership behaviours, visionary and inspirational ability, nonverbal communication, appeal to ideological values and leader expectations for follower self-sacrifice and performance.

- The primary focus is on affective rather than cognitive dependent variables. Affective variables include such categories as mission identification, followers' trust in leaders, self-esteem, and heightened intrinsic motivation.

- Theories that describe leaders as charismatic, visionary, or transformational generally proffer positive effects on followers and organisations that exceed the effects they have on the leaders.

Much of the above is informed by a meta-analysis conducted by Lowe, Kroeck and Sivasubramaniam (1996), which measured 32 correlations between leaders' perceived charisma as based on Bass' (1985) Multifaceted Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This meta-analysis was followed by a second meta-analysis, based on 15 correlations between perceived charisma and subordinates' ratings of superiors' effectiveness, demonstrated a correlation of .81 (very strong). However, the studies did not account sufficiently for conditions of change and uncertainty that signify modern universities (Fiol, *et al.* 1999).

Given the above considerations, charisma may be instrumental to leadership and a fundamental source by which some organisations are directed (Yukl 1999; 1990).

Trust

Trust underpins the above social-exchange theories about leadership. Transactional (along with political) leadership minimizes the role that trust plays as a function of

leader-follower relations, because leaders and followers operate on the basis of *quid pro quo.* Here, the element of trust relates to the parties abiding by their agreements. In contrast, transformational (along with charismatic) leadership hinges on followers trusting leaders' motives, intentions, and instincts (Fiol, *et al.* 1999). This is not to say, however, that transactional leadership is independent of a need for followers and leaders to be trusting of each other. To the contrary, argue Kouzes and Posner in The Leadership Challenge (2002):

> Knowing that trust is key, exemplary leaders make sure that they consider alternative viewpoints, and they make use of other people's expertise and abilities. Because they're more trusting of their group, they're also more willing to let others exercise influence over group decisions. It's a reciprocal process.... Trust begets trust (pg. 247).

Trust is essential to believability and belief alike. Believability refers to the perceived validity of the messages that leaders proffer, and belief to the convictions and values that bind people together (Bass 1997). A lack of trust amongst followers of their leaders' convictions, judgment, and truthfulness, and leaders' lack of trust of their followers, hinders the effectiveness of leadership as a process of social exchange (Kouzes and Posner 2002). Kouzes and Posner argue that by keeping their thoughts open to challenge from followers and others, leaders engender trust. Moreover, they assert, trust is likely an outcome of collaboration and feelings of personal connection between leaders and followers. The authors note that "trust, *the* central issue in human relationships within and outside organizations," is at the heart of effective leadership (Kouzes and Posner 2002, pg. 244). They conclude that

> People who are more trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than are those who view the world with suspicion and disrespect. We like people who are trusting and seek them out as friends. We listen to people we trust and accept their influence. Thus the most effective leadership situations are those in which each member of the team trusts the others (pg. 245).

Trust inspires credibility; write Kouzes and Posner, which is a hallmark of the sort of leaders whom people willingly follow. Their study showed that followers consider trustworthy leaders to have the characteristics of honesty, vision, competence, and inspiration (pg. 24). Honesty refers to truth-seeking and truth-telling; vision to being forward-looking, competence to know-how, and inspiration to an ability to motivate. Each of these was shown to correlate strongly with followers' trust of leaders. By extension, when these elements were not there, an attenuation of trust was shown to exist. In opposition to trust is distrust, which Hill and O'Hara (2005) argue may haunt the background of a trusting situation and serve to undermine leadership.

> Trust and distrust can, and often do, coexist. In most relationships, the parties trust one another with regard to some matters and yet distrust one another with regard to other matters. More specifically, developing a relationship with somebody often involves acquiring an overall residual sense of how trustworthy a person is, as well as a sense of the person's trustworthiness in particular contexts (pg. 1).

Trust is a matter of reasoned judgment about another person's motives. Given the complex human networks within universities, it may be impossible for leaders to have personal relationships with all members and thereby build a basis for trust. Neither can it be expected that all followers will agree with a leader's reasoning, notwithstanding the leader's honesty, vision, competence, and inspiration. To manage both of the aforementioned challenges, it is important for leaders to create cultures of trust, wherein followers hold themselves and their leaders accountable.

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard 1977) is a term that is broadly applicable, as all leadership may be said to be situational (Yukl 1999). Situational leadership is based on an idea that leadership styles and behaviours have to adapt to the conditions to which they are applied. According to the four-part development

model first established by Hersey and Blanchard (1977), situational leadership may be divided into the following functions:

- Directing: Leaders define and direct the roles of followers.

- Coaching: While defining and directing the roles of followers, leaders engage them in thinking about the task.

- Supporting: Leaders give followers day-to-day responsibility for the achievement of tasks.

- Delegating: While leaders are involved in decision-making and problem-solving, responsibility for determining the nature and extent of leaders' involvement rests with followers.

Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) model is helpful to understanding how leadership might be applied under different circumstances, such as when a use of transactional leadership is preferable to transformational leadership. Yukl (1999) makes the point that:

> A key situational variable determining the optimal mix of behaviors is the external environment faced by the organization. Change-centered leadership seems more appropriate in times of environmental turmoil when it is necessary to make strategic changes to deal with major threats and opportunities. A "managerial" orientation seems more appropriate when the external environment is relatively stable (pg. 36)

However, situational leadership does not address how to cope effectively with organisational complexity, uncertainty, and change. Rather, it presumes that leaders and followers arrive at given levels of preparedness for the situations they encounter. But such a presumption about human and organisational development, whether or not it is valid, nonetheless requires a basis by which to understand the degree of organisational readiness to change and a way to nurture change (Bolman and Deal 2008). Thus, situational leadership, while an important principle within leadership

theory, is a necessary but insufficient approach to the complex task of leading contemporary universities.

Cultural and Symbolic Approaches

In the late 1980s, researchers began to focus on the cultural and symbolic nature of leadership. Cultural theories of leadership are rooted in a view that universities are complex social spaces in which the role of leadership is "invented or created among people" and not as a social reality that is discovered (Kezar and Carducci 2006, pg. 51). According to scholars like Bensimon and Neumann (1989), cultural and symbolic approaches to leadership are rooted in an understanding of leadership as a process of meaning-making within a context of institutional values, interpretations, histories and traditions, and circumstances (Kezar and Carducci 2006). Since meaning-making results from shared experiences and understandings, leadership is a pivot around which organisations renew themselves and create shared meaning (Yukl 1999). Cultural and symbolic perspectives on leadership emphasize that:

1. Organisations are fluid entities that function in accordance with their cultures.

2. Facts are less important than interpretation, as facts are filtered through human perceptions. Interpretations, then, become a means by which leadership is enacted and understood.

3. The role of leadership in such a changing and uncertain environment is to help followers make sense of organisational circumstances (Bensimon, *et al.* 1989).

Accordingly, leadership is seen to be the management of meaning, the aim of which is to alter organisational cultures through interpretation, articulation, and reinforcement of meaning (Smith and Peterson 1988; Watson 2000). In so doing, leaders' perceptions become ubiquitous throughout their organisations (Yukl 1999).

Further, cultural and symbolic approaches take leadership to be situational; that is, shaped by the circumstances it faces (Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). An institution that is in decline may need a transformational-leadership approach, whereas one that is stable may call for a transactional form of leadership. Says Bass (1999)

> Since 1980, general findings have been assembled that the best of leaders are both transactional and transformational. For many situations, the circumstances may not make that much difference. In fact, the leadership behavior may affect the contingent condition more than the reverse. Thus, the transactional leader works within the constraints of the organization; the transformational leader changes the organization (pg. 132).

Cultural and symbolic leadership approaches suggest that leadership can influence organisational cultures and understandings over time. For this to happen, it is said, leadership and organisational cultures need to be aligned with one another (Hunt 1991; Birnbaum 1992; Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). To scholars who adopt a cultural and symbolic view of leadership, shared meaning is dependent on the presence and preeminence of shared understandings to provide the boundaries within which leaders and followers work (Smith and Peterson 1988; Yukl 1999).

Cognitive Resources Theory
Closely associated with cultural and symbolic approaches to leadership is cognitive resources theory, which is based on a belief that the thinking of leaders and followers is of consequence to their construction of reality and negotiation of meaning (Cayla 2004). Cognitive resources theory suggests that an amalgamation of knowledge frameworks operating within an organisation may constitute organisational knowledge frameworks. However, Varela *et al.* (1991) makes the point that:

> Either we have a fixed and stable foundation for knowledge, a point where knowledge starts, is grounded, and rests, or we cannot escape

some sort of darkness, chaos, and confusion. Either there is an absolute ground or foundation or everything falls apart (pg. 140).

According to Varela *et al.*'s view, institutional self-understandings need to be anchored in core beliefs, as they are too complex and fluid ever to be absolute. Middlehurst (1993) notes that what is needed to grapple with institutional uncertainty is cognitive complexity:

> Different degrees of cognitive complexity are ... likely to be required in different [organisational] contexts, to match the complexity in the critical tasks of leaders, the complexity of the internal and external environment and the time-scale of organizations' operation (pg. 41).

Kezar and Carducci (2006) tell us that complexity theory attempts to address "postmodernism's questioning of the belief that leadership is or can be a predictable and generalized phenomenon" (pg. 31). By their very nature as knowledge enterprises, universities are imbued with cognitive complexity in that they spur new thinking and challenge assumptions (Barnett 2000). The cognitive complexity about which Kezar and Carducci speak has to do with that which is developed over time and through intentional engagement with organisational issues. Cognitive complexity suggests changes in organisational thinking, which may result in changes in organisational behaviours. If sufficient cognitive complexity can be achieved, then what Delanty (2002) calls "cognitive shifts" may occur. Analogous to the "series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions" that Kuhn (1970) calls paradigm shifts, a cognitive shift suggests that people are able to move from one perspective to another. Unlike paradigm shifts, however, cognitive shifts result in a reform of knowledge and knowledge frameworks rather than of practice (Hunt 1991).

Cognitive resources theory emphasizes that the meaning and importance of leadership are not realizable by examining leaders' traits and behaviours; rather, it is necessary to

understand leaders' thought and interpretation processes because it is within these processes that leaders' mindsets and values are revealed (Cayla 2004). These mindsets and values are indicative of the "mental models" about which Bolman and Deal write in Reframing Organizations (2008). According to the authors, leaders tend to examine situations through multiple lenses or cognitive orientations, as differing situations may call for specific frameworks by which to view them. For instance, according to Bolman and Deal, in a university where power and influence are the normative means by which leadership is exercised, a political frame may be justified. Conversely, in a highly democratic and collegial institutional culture, a human-resources or followers-centered approach may be appropriate. According to cognitive resources theory, leaders' perspectives about and ideas for their universities are formed by their understandings of their institutions' dominant cultures (Birnbaum 1992).

Social Cognition
Combining the disciplines of sociology and psychology, social cognition is concerned with leaders' shaping of organisational stories, in order to influence organisational behaviours (Weick 1990; 1995; Eddy 2003). Above all else, however, social cognition theory is concerned with the construction and transmission of meaning (Kezar 2001). Some social constructivists hold that universal meaning is not available given the innumerable perspectives by which people interpret their experiences of being in the world (Cayla 2004). Others argue that although each person's interpretations of experience will differ, shared understandings are both available and essential to live in a world of uncertainty (Stacey 1992; Ramsden 1998; Nowotny, *et al.* 2000). Thus, social cognition, which Delanty (2002) refers to as "cultural cognition," emphasizes group (social) meaning-making (cognition) that is then socialised (dispersed). Delanty

notes that cultural cognition has particular significance to higher education in an era of change and uncertainty:

> The task of the university [is] to enable people to construct an intellectual vision of a new world and weld together information and experience. It may be suggested ... that an adequate view of the university must see it as being linked not only to the productions [*sic*] of knowledge but also to the deeper level of experience. In this sense the university is a zone of mediation between knowledge as science (or academic knowledge) and cultural cognition (2002, pgs. 12-13).

According to Delanty, a primary function of universities is to facilitate a broadening of people's worldviews, in part by being spaces wherein ideas gain presence, knowledge is created, and meaning is made. Delanty's analysis suggests that universities are intellectually vibrant and open spaces. Yet, a question remains about what to do when such circumstances materialise. The literature reveals that university cultures may lack in the leadership necessary to call upon and empower the vivacity within them (Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). A social cognitive approach potentially provides for a form of leadership that is concerned with creating and maintaining the sort of intellectual and democratic environments that support group meaning-making.

A social cognitive approach to university leadership has merit in that it:

1. Challenges leaders to assist often-disparate groups to arrive at shared understandings as a means of advancing institutional change efforts.

2. Suggests that group understandings can be developed.

3. Implies that because groups are able to make shared meaning, they are able to develop shared ways of being in the world that permit them to live effectively with change and uncertainty.

It follows that social cognition may be a useful process by which to grapple with contemporary institutional environments.

Conclusion

In this chapter, three predominant theories of leadership were framed: power and influence, cultural and symbolic, and cognitive resources. Each theory functions under an assumption that leadership is intended to move people and organisations towards a desired state. As such, power and influence theory is a structure by which to shape the actions of followers; cultural and symbolic leadership institutes change by altering the cultures of organisations; and a cognitive resources approach seeks to comprehend and capitalize on the meanings that followers make of organisational occurrences (Schuller 1995). Importantly, however, each form of leadership may be enacted with deceit and malice. Power and influence may be wielded too bluntly, cultures may be unduly disrupted, and meaning may be constructed speciously (Baldridge 1971: Eddy 2003). In such instances, leadership may be administered in a context of deception that undercuts followers' trust in leaders (Bennis 1989; Vecchio 1997). On the other hand, leaders employ power and influence in daily decision-making, cultural and symbolic leadership in appealing to followers' senses of mutuality with their leaders, and cognitive resources in shaping the meanings that followers take from institutional occurrences (Yukl 1999). Each form of leadership may be necessary under particular circumstances (Yukl 1999).

In each of the examined theories, leadership is directed towards influencing the thinking and actions of followers. It may be deduced, therefore, that:

1. Leadership is dependent on followers' loyalty to their organisations and/or a particular leader.

2. Leadership involves the shaping of meaning.

3.   Perceptions of leaders and followers about their institutions form organisational perspectives that matter to the exercise of leadership.

Each of the theories explored in this chapter contributes to a view of leadership as a process of social influence to guide diverse constituencies towards achievement of collective goals. For Kezar and Carducci (2006):

> Our understanding of leadership now embraces the way culture affects leadership, the importance of leaders' developing cognitive complexity, the impact of leaders' and followers' mental models on the leadership process, and the effect of leaders' backgrounds and experiences (pg. 135-136).

Yet, questions about the nature of contemporary university leadership linger. Why and how does the shaping of perception matter to the leadership of changing universities? How do leaders know that their perspectives are correct? Why and how do leaders and followers negotiate their relationships, and to what ends? To address these questions, it is necessary to review the literature on institutional change, which is undertaken in the next chapter.

3: Mediating Institutional Change and Uncertainty

Introduction

Not since the rise of "managerialism" in universities in the 1980s has the focus on change in higher education been as pervasive as it is today (Green 1997; Bok 2003). The raison d'être for universities to change—in mission, size, and performance—twenty-five years ago was to shore up higher education in an environment of constrained resources and increased public demand for accountability (Duderstadt 2000). Today, change is intended to help universities survive in the wake of increased competition, globalization, greater disciplinarity, and an uncertain funding environment (Duke 2002; Green and Hayward 1997).

As a consequence of these and associated forces, institutional change is *de rigueur* in the literature and in the daily activities of most universities (Bess 1999; Kezar 2001; Duke 2002). The literature indicates that institutional change is often accompanied by increased complexity and uncertainty of knowing, due, in part, to the operational nature and role of universities in society, as outlined in Chapter 1. Watson notes in the forward of Ford, *et al.*'s Managing Change in Higher Education: A Learning Environment Architecture (1996):

> Higher education institutions are immensely rich and complex
> environments. Much of that richness and complexity has risen, over the
> years, from their ready acceptance of certain kinds of change: change
> as it reflects the development of disciplinary and interdisciplinary
> paradigms; change as individuals and groups absorb and reflect upon
> new discoveries; and change as the academic community responds to
> the host society (Ford, *et al.* 1996, forward).

Notwithstanding higher education institutions' ability, and propensity, to change in focus and outputs, universities are now being pressed to adjust their thinking to cope with a world of "radical uncertainty" (Barnett 1997, 2003). The implications are

numerous, with Cohen and March (1986) arguing for changing presidential leadership to facilitate a change in institutional self-understandings; Kerr (1979, 1991) and Barnett (1997) for universities to change in order to function in a milieu of mission, ideological, and operational complexity; and Bok (2003) for universities to change to achieve competitiveness in a shifting marketplace. According to Duke (2002):

> The task of the [leader] is not however to make and manage change in a gung-ho contest in restructuring which is inimical to productivity and reduces adaptive capacity when it results in loss of identity, confidence, and sense of purpose. The task is to manage the tension between continuity and change, to combine opportunism with vision, future with past, ideas with action (pg. 7).

Barnett (2003) maintains that "in a world of change, uncertainty is generated" (pg. 43). This chapter explores approaches to institutional leadership in light of the environmental and cognitive uncertainty that imbues changing universities. It examines dominant institutional change models in the literature in relationship to the research question: *How might university CEOs enable their institutions to be self-directive against a backdrop of uncertainty?*

Institutional Change

Researchers describe institutional change (also referred to as organisational change) variously. Hargrave and Van de Ven (2006) define institutional change as "a difference in form, quality, or state over time in an institution" (pg. 866). Burnes (1996) describes it as enterprise-wide alterations that impact individuals and groups across functional boundaries. Kezar (2001) posits that it is best understood by its intent, targets, and effect. Notwithstanding these variations of meaning, researchers agree that institutional change likely involves responses to universities' external environments (Rowley, *et al.* 1997).

Watson (2000) makes the point:

> The academy has to change, not least to meet the needs of a rapidly changing host society as well as a more diverse, plural and democratic internal community. But it also has to cling on to some bedrock convictions about what higher education *is* and, even more emphatically, what it is *for* (pg. xv).

According to Watson, leadership is necessary for higher education institutions to adjust to their changing environments and to maintain their character as institutions for the advancement of knowledge and society.

Change Models

The literature shows that institutional change tends to be unpredictable, ongoing, and dynamic (Smircich and Morgan, 1982). The literature also indicates that vital to effective institutional change leadership is an ability to detect, interpret, initiate, and leverage alterations in institutional circumstances (Chaffee and Jacobson 1997). Hargrave and Van de Ven (2006) write:

> Change in an institutional arrangement can be determined by observing the arrangement at two or more points in time on a set of dimensions (e.g. frames, norms, or rules) and then calculating the differences over time. If there is a noticeable difference, we can say that the institution has changed. If the change is a novel or unprecedented departure from the past, then it represents an institutional innovation (pg. 866).

Such an activity requires a mode of leadership that searches for and responds to anomalies within an institution's environment (Burns 1978).

Contemporary institutional change models cluster within three dominant schools of thought: evolution, planning or teleology, and social cognition.

Evolution

Theories of evolutionary change are premised on a belief that institutions change because their environments demand that they do so (Kezar 2001). The aim of evolutionary change is to achieve balance between universities' external pressures (such as government regulation) and internal capabilities (Kezar 2001). Evolutionary change theory views institutions as living organisms, whose environments provide feedback to their agents (leaders), who, in turn, stimulate adjustments to the institutions' internal workings. Birnbaum (1992) asserts that feedback is a process in which:

> the boundaries that guide interpretations of reality and the preferences
> of groups and individuals within these boundaries establish constraints
> on each other (pg. 191).

When enacted, feedback forms an interrelationship (or loop) of interpretative data and responsive action that may be visualized as follows:

Interpretative and Responsive Action Feedback Loop (Diagram 3.1)
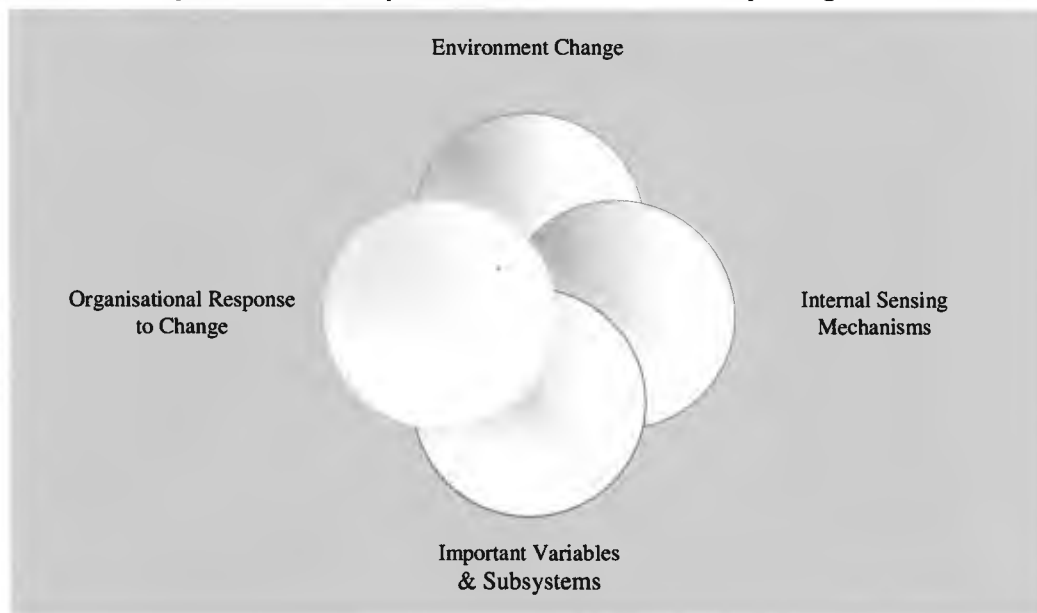
Diagram 3:1. Adapted from Birnbaum's Cybernetic Loop (Birnbaum 1992, pg. 192)

Underpinning the above diagram is an idea that feedback loops are fueled by environmental shifts, which occur over long periods and prompt adjustments to institutional practices (Birnbaum 1992). However, according to Birnbaum's cybernetic loop theory, universities are social systems that have internal mechanisms to detect environmental shifts that might threaten the survival of the system. These mechanisms are:

- People within the systems who look for and consider important variables, and likewise analyze potential problems and opportunities;

- Institutional cultures, which provide the boundaries within which change is able to transpire.

A theory of evolutionary change suggests that organisations evolve to cope with the complexities of their environments (Morgan 1998).

Biological Evolution

Biological evolution is based on an assumption that institutional change is conditioned by "a slow stream of mutations, gradually shaped by environmental influences" (Kezar 2001, pg. 28). Biological evolution suggests that there is a continuing, organic (re)alignment of the natural world and its inhabitants. However, such a view fails to consider either the constancy and variability of change, that institutional complexities may require human agency (leadership) to be understood and managed, or that biology may be unable to account for socio-cultural phenomena such as those facing changing universities (Birnbaum 1992).

Social Evolution

According to Homans (1950), and noted in Bainbridge (1997), social groups, and

later, theories to explain them

> originally came into existence as an effective means for mediating
> between the individual and the natural environment (Homans in
> Bainbridge 1997, pg. 92).

Change theory based on social evolution accepts that institutions need periodic

renewal to have relevancy and vitality and that change requires collective effort and

leadership (Kezar 2001). Social evolution occurs when institutional behaviours are

modified based on adjustments to the thinking of their members. It requires detection

of alterations in the environment that disconnect group norms, values, and

understandings from their external world (Bainbridge 1997). A problem with social

evolution is that while it may signify institutional development, its subordination of

human agency to the natural world leaves institutions vulnerable to external forces

and control.

Within a framework of social evolution is dialectical change as outlined by Hargrave

and Van de Ven (2006). Dialectical change models are premised on a belief that

change involves a conflict between evolution and revolution that results in an impasse

of knowing that necessitates mediation:

> The overall process of change...reflects the working of a dialectical
> model in which a synthesis of new institutional policies and structures
> emerges from conflict and contestation among colliding groups
> espousing opposing theses and antitheses (Hargrave and Van de Ven
> pg. 865).

According to dialectical change models, group meaning is made and change occurs

when knowing is contested (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006). However, as noted by

Kezar (2001), "there is a dialectical tension related to change and whose interests are

being served" (pg. 43). These ideas indicate that dialectical change is political in its

emphasis on power, conflict, and cultural dominance. In their comparative analysis of organisational change processes, Hargrave and Van de Ven indicate:

> ...institutions developed through a political process in which actors contributed to a larger solution by recombining inherited practices, technologies, and institutions to address their own unique and partisan interests (pg. 865).

A theory of dialectical change is fashioned on a promotion of self-interests that results in a mediated outcome (Kezar 2001). Dialectical change theory indicates that when institutional members perceive things to be going well (resources are plentiful and needs are met), they tend not to engage in institutional change efforts (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006). Conversely, when institutional members are dissatisfied (resources are constrained and needs appear to go unmet), they tend to engage in power struggles that pit diametrically opposing ideas and demands against each other in a contest of power and will (Kezar 2001).

Academic Strategy

In Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education, Keller (1983) emphasizes a link between strategy and planning, and a need for both in the effective management of universities. He argues that strategy is essential for universities to shape their own destinies in the wake of powerful external forces, noting:

> To have a strategy is to put your own intelligence, foresight, and will in charge instead of outside forces and disordered concerns. The priorities are always there. The question is who selects them. When the pressures are in charge the present gets attention, not the future. Strategy means agreeing on some aims and having a plan to defeat one's enemies—or to arrive at a destination—through the effective use of resources (Keller 1983, pg. 75).

In Keller's concept of strategy, universities have a capacity to think their way out of the confusion of their environments—to map their futures. Like theories of evolution discussed in Chapter 2, academic strategy considers the unique environmental forces that influence higher education institutions, including public policy, demographic shifts, and economic trends. However, it is presumptive of environmental stability that may not exist (Stacey 1992; Bargh 2000).

Planned Change

An important branch of organisational change theory is planned change, also known as teleology, scientific management, and institutional design (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006). Planned change is understood as the creation or revision of an institution to achieve specific goals (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006). Along with managerialism in the 1980s, planned change became a dominant mode by which universities have sought to exercise some control over their fates, given that their environments are increasingly beyond their control. Watson notes that:

> In the UK, ... most institutional planning processes are carefully constructed around what they perceive as Funding Council [FC] 'requirements' and the FCs in turn call 'advice' or 'best practice.' (2000, pgs. 46-47).

The above implies a politicisation of plans and planning, and raises questions about how to balance institutional realities with understandings assigned to them by their stakeholders.

Planned change entails a conscious decision to do something differently, meaning that universities press themselves towards an envisaged state (Torraco, *et al.* 2005). Conversely, unplanned change suggests a push to change by external forces to an unknown state (Cayla 2004). Planned change may be a conduit by which to align

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universities' self-understandings with their environmental realities (Duke 2002). Nonetheless, if Duke (2002) is correct, while the intent of planned change can be clear, its outcome will be tentative:

> Complete prior planning and control are unattainable. Prescriptive short-run strategic planning and performance appraisal limited to previously agreed objective and targets are elusive, or unattainable except at too high a cost. Success depends on a confident grasp of direction and purpose and on spotting and taking opportunities, making alliances and creating synergies... (pg. 22)

The above calls into question whether contemporary universities are rational systems that can be planned. It also places in doubt whether a model of institutional change based on planning is sufficient to enlarge institutional understandings such that universities are able to operate effectively amid uncertainty.

Strategic Planning

Some scholars (Swenk 2001, Watson 2000, Conway 1994) agree with Keller (1983) that strategy and planning are two sides of the same theoretical coin. These authors agree that strategic planning is:

1. A political exercise of developing institutional agendas, setting priorities, and allocating resources;

2. An effort to articulate clear, achievable, and measurable goals and timetables;

3. An outline of steps and resources needed to achieve organisational goals.

Notwithstanding the importance of forethought in the leadership of institutional change, strategic plans are limited by the assumptions on which they are built (Johnson and Scholes 2002). Still, that such instruments apply an understanding of an organisation's present condition to the development of its goals and change agendas

for the future is a strategic exercise (Johnson and Scholes 2002). Strategic planning has been shown to be a useful approach to institutional reflecting and visioning (Dooris and Lozier 1989), but it is, nonetheless, an inadequate tool to address the condition of uncertainty that besets changing universities because it too assumes environmental stability.

Social Cognition

Scholars have sought to address the problem of knowability as a leadership challenge through social-cognition theory (Kezar 2001; Stacey 1992; Weick 1990). Social cognition theory holds that because uncertainty of knowing renders universality of meaning unobtainable, it is necessary for leaders to construct meaning. Kezar (2001) notes that

> Social-cognition models examine how leaders shape the change process through framing and interpretation, and how individuals within the organization interpret and make sense of change. The environment is seen as a lesser force, because it is socially constructed and multiple (pg. 46).

Although social cognition implies group knowledge, as a theory of change it predicates a belief that change can be enacted and understood only through the agency of a leader. A view of change leadership that is rooted in social cognition assumes that a shared reality amongst organisational members is possible, even preferable, but not automatic (Cayla 2004). Rather, in a social-cognitive construct, organisational habits and identities are examined as obstacles to change and, consequently, are modified to support change (Cayla 2004).

Another way to contemplate social cognition as a theory of change leadership is as social movement. Quoting Rucht (1999), Hargrave and Van de Ven (2006) offer that social movement is

> An action system comprised of mobilized networks of individuals, groups and organizations which, based on a shared collective identity, attempt to achieve or prevent a social movement, predominantly by means of a social protest (pg. 868).

The authors view social cognition through a lens of "collective action" in which the goal is to "remedy social and ecological problems" (pg. 868). In this sense, social cognition is contingent upon people subjugating their own judgments in favor of a leader's portrayal of their assessments—that people accord greater validity to someone else's view of the world than to their own. Whereas social cognition is attentive to the construction of meaning, it is premised on a belief that meaning can and should be shaped rather than permitted to form naturalistically (Weick 1990). Duke (2002) cautions that in the uncertain environments in which changing universities operate "living with mess, untidiness, paradox, being able not to be entirely in control..." (pg. 142) is normative, and that under such circumstances:

> It may be necessary to live with opposites, be a pragmatic visionary, and keep a clear sense of long-term direction, which allows opportunism to get good results (pg. 142).

Bolman and Deal (2008) also recognize the limitations of social-cognition theory in asserting that:

> An environment filled with complexity, surprise, deception, and ambiguity makes it hard to extract lessons for future action. Yet an increasingly turbulent, rapidly shifting environment requires contemporary organizations to learn better and faster just to survive (pg. 27).

The authors point to organisational learning as an approach to the leadership of institutions in uncertain times.

Learning
The concept of institutional learning developed in response to the condition of uncertainty and unpredictability that characterises contemporary organisational

environments (Weick 1990). Says Duke, "confronted with turbulence, relativism and heightened unpredictability...learning came to feature more strongly in the literature" (pg. 41). Institutional learning is premised on a belief that by using their intellectual capacities, universities have the wherewithal to learn their way to knowability. In this sense, learning combines elements of social evolution and social cognition into a life-cycle framework of organisational change (Kezar 2001). As indicated in Chapter 1, Senge's model of organisational learning has a six-point construction: 1) organisational identities, 2) retrospection, 3) sensible environments, 4) social context, 5) ongoing processes, and 6) plausibility (Senge 1990). According to Senge, "we learn best from our experience" (Senge 1990, pg. 23). Duke asserts that the "successful university, the entrepreneurial university, has to be a learning university" (pg. 143), looking to both itself and others for new knowledge to cope with uncertainty. By this, Duke means that institutional uncertainty requires that universities adopt and adapt ways of thinking about the issues that confront them.

Institutions learn when their members apply their insights to issue resolution in new ways that expand institutional awarenesses (Duke 2002). As such, learning may occur on multiple levels: cognitive, operational, epistemological, and ontological (Duke 2002). Cognitive learning reflects enlargement of understandings. Operational learning suggests a growth in skills. Epistemic learning indicates increased awareness of the external world. Ontological learning signifies development of ways of being in the world. Each form of learning is important to the leadership of changing universities, if Duke is correct that "the non-learning organization has a poor life expectancy" (2002, pg. 37).

Duke's statement should perhaps have a caveat that without human agency, organisations cannot actually learn (Cayla 2004). As with a process of gleaning knowledge, organisations may come to learn by integrating their members' learning into their workings. Cayla (2004) indicates that organisational learning is an amalgamation of learning amongst organisational members when that learning is prompted by or prompts intentional changes in organisations' "rules systems in order to adapt the behaviour of their members to the changing state of the world" (pg. 9). Given this definition, and the environments in which higher education institutions operate, organisational learning for universities (institutional learning) necessitates flexible knowledge frameworks by which members are able to develop knowing (Duke 2002).

Institutional learning can be thought of occurring at three stages (Cayla 2004). Stage I learning is a quasi-directed change in people's informal rules systems (attitudes and routines), without a change in the formal rules systems of the organisation (Cayla 2004). Senge (1990) refers to this phase as the development of "new cognitive, linguistic capabilities" and asserts that in it:

> People see new things and can speak a new language. This allows them to see more clearly their own and others' assumptions, actions, and consequences of both. Typically, they find it hard to translate these new cognitive and linguistic competencies into fundamentally new action. They may begin to behave differently, but the basic rules, assumptions, and values are the same (1990, pg. 377).

Under Stage I learning, people generate new awarenesses through critique of their experiences and attempt to apply the resulting knowledge to other aspects of their worldviews. Stage I learning is the first step, not the final destination, of learning organisations.

Stage II learning refers to changes in the formal rules systems (behaviours and understandings) within an organisation without changing the objectives of the organisation (Cayla 2004). Senge (1990) posits:

> As old assumptions loosen in response to the cognitive insights of members of [Stage I], people begin to experiment with action rules based on new assumptions so they can see what they yield. They may need to rely on the new language to produce new actions, and they will find it difficult to access or string together new rules when under stress (pg. 377).

For Cayla and Senge, Stage II learning is about "new action rules" with uncertain outcomes. The new action rules are dependent on generation and application of untested new assumptions, from Stage I learning, while jettisoning those that previously served to stabilize the organisation. It is a precarious stage of the learning process.

Stage III learning occurs when there is a deep modification of the rules systems such that:

> People can string together rules that reflect new action values and operating assumptions. They can enact these rules under stress and ambiguity, continuing to aid their own and others' learning. By this stage, people will have adapted the rules into their own particular model, speaking in their own voice (Senge 1990, 377).

In Stage III learning, organisations navigate uncertainty continually by stimulating existing understandings and developing new ones.

The above suggests that within organisations, people's learning may be adapted in such a way that they are able to transfer their personal awarenesses to the organisations they inhabit to create organisational learning. However, while learning

offers a way to construct meaning from and to live with uncertainty, it does not necessarily structure or explain the leadership of institutional change.

Sensemaking and Supercomplexity

Long suggested in the psychological writings of Heider (1959), Hartshorne (1962), and Goffman (1974), sensemaking was established in the literature on corporate leadership and organisational behaviour by Weick (1990; 1995), and in performance studies by Counsell (1996). Weick (1995) writes that:

> Sensemaking is about such things as placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of understanding, and patterning (pg. 6).

Whereas Weick suggests that sensemaking is a mode of information processing and issue analysis that leads to collective understanding, Counsell maintains that sensemaking gives meaning and substance to individuals' construal of the unknown.

Sensemaking is a practice of interpreting organisational environments through a process of challenging and constructing understandings (Anacona and Schaefer 2006). In a recent study, researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology identified sensemaking as one of four core competencies of effective leadership, the others being visioning, relating, and inventing (Anacona and Schaefer 2006). Five major tasks comprise sensemaking: observing, questioning, acting, reassessing, and communicating (Anacona and Schaefer 2006, pg. 1). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology schema suggests that through examination of what and how people think and behave, leaders may raise questions that challenge members' knowing, thereby setting the stage for an alteration of their perspectives. Reconstitution of knowing, the study suggests, represents change, or a critical action yet to be realized, that needs

ongoing reassessment in light of the circumstances to which it is applied. Finally, communicating with institutional members the rationales, processes, and hoped-for outcomes of change is critical to a leader's ability to develop "a persuasive story and align their organization to achieve effectiveness" (Anacona and Schaefer 2006, pg. 3). Accordingly, sensemaking is "thinking while acting and creating while seeking signs of change" (Anacona and Schaefer 2006, pg. 1).

Sensemaking structures meaning by analyzing occurrences retrospectively to determine the validity of perspectives. If, as noted in Chapter 1, uncertainty is a problem of university leadership, then sensemaking may be a way to lessen its complication. However, because people experience the world differently and develop unique perspectives that vie with one another, supercomplexity may give rise to a cognitive free-for-all by calling into question people's most fundamental assumptions; namely, knowing and identity (Duke 2002). When this happens, people search for meaning; the difficulty being that "when you are lost, any old map will do" (Weick 1995, pg. 54).

Barnett asserts that the contemporary university exists in an age of supercomplexity— of multiple, proliferating, and, often, contending frameworks for knowing that *en masse* make the world unknowable.

> The world is radically unknowable. *Every* framework for knowing and every sense of our world, of ourselves and of our relationships to the world and to each other, is contestable. We cannot know who we are or what the world is like. Not just every proposition and theory, not just every stance, principle or action, but every set of assumptions, tacit understandings and inner belief from which those thoughts and actions spring: all are challengeable (2000, pg. 77).

Yet Weick (1990) asserts that people innately make the world knowable through the sense they make of being in it; they construct reality. Barnett and Weick would appear to be in disagreement, but it may be that they have different views of a double-sided mirror, one side of which evidences a haze of images (supercomplexity) and the other a reflection borne in the mind's eye (sensemaking).

From a perspective of sensemaking, meaning is created and plausibility inferred from the multiple perspectives that individuals hold. According to Barnett,

> There are no large stories or general descriptions of the world that are available to us any longer. All we have are our local stories, activities and projects. There cannot be any real communication between them either, for they are characterized by incommensurable language games (1997, pg. 24).

Nonetheless, says Duke (2002), we must add to the descriptions of modern university leadership as "meaning maker, at a time when the liberation and libertarianism of postmodernism have left many bereft of confident meaning" (pg. 65). If Barnett and Duke are correct, then sensemaking without critique may lead to what Cohen and his colleagues refer to as a "garbage can model of organizational choice" (Cohen, *et al.* 1972), according to which ideas are placed in a bin and power elites determine which are to be rescued. Yet, in a world of supercomplexity, any attempt at meaning-making is likely to be contested, and that is the environment in which institutional choices will have to be made.

Inquiry Systems and Supercomplexity
Scholars have sought to grapple with issues of cognitive and operational uncertainty, such as those perceptible in an idea of supercomplexity, through a framework of inquiry systems (Churchman 1971; Boggs 2007). According to Churchman, inquiry is

an activity that produces knowledge, whereas knowledge reflects the ability to adjust behaviour to changing circumstances. As such, knowledge may be realised when applied to "the problems we create and encounter" (Vandenbosch, Fay, and Saatçioglu 2005) in the world. Yet, supercomplexity suggests that knowledge is so abundant that deciding on a single reality is implausible. To aid in the understanding of how people choose from amongst competing truths and worldviews, Churchman constructed a model of inquiry styles based on the theoretical underpinnings of five leading philosophers: Leibniz (rational), Locke (empirical), Kant (ideal), Hegel (dialectic) and Singer (Singerian).

Vadenbosch, Fay, and Saatçioglu (2005) offer the following outline of leadership philosophy and ontology in relation to Churchman's framework.

Archetype	Descriptor	Indicators
Leibnizian	Incrementalist	Takes small steps; ideas are usually for modest changes
Lockean	Consensus Builder	Focuses on agreement among stakeholders rather than ideas per se
Kantian	Searcher	Combines information from diverse places; ideas result from unusual associations
Hegelian	Debater	Argues with him or herself to develop ideas
Singerian	Renaissance Person	Seems to be infinitely objective and flexible

The authors assert:

> These five [aforementioned] inquiry styles can be summarized in terms of the idea possibilities that emerge. Leibnizians take small steps. Their ideas consist of incremental change. Lockeans are focused on consensus; hence; their ideas are usually the lowest common denominator, but they do not usually focus on ideas *per se*. Kantians' [sic] are searchers. Their ideas result from associations and combining information from diverse places. Hegelians construct ideas through internal debate of all the factors. ... Finally, Singerians do it all (Vandenbosch et al 2005, pg. 116).

Whilst each of the systems has merit, each also has deficits, as informed by Boggs (2007).

- Leibnizian Inquiry Systems are founded on logic and data to establish a hierarchy of truths that lead to an *ultimo ratio* or ultimate cause.

- Lockean Inquiry Systems contain a community of experts who act as inquirers and determine what is to be taken as truth, based on data and their consensus about the meaning of the data.

- Kantian Inquiry Systems have a basis in idealism, assign equal weight to data and theory, and accept that for every *a priori* model there exists a contrasting model.

- Hegelian Inquiry Systems are dialectic, setting as rivals divergent perspectives in a battle for preeminence.

- Singerian Inquiry Systems accept that theory needs pragmatic applications; that no one model will be right for each circumstance; that knowledge necessitates multiple, adaptive models for knowing; and that it is necessary to adopt an ontological stance of reflexivity to live effectively amidst change and uncertainty.

An important aspect of Singerian inquiry is that inquirers tend to disregard "what is" in favour of what "is taken to be" (Wiliam 2008, pg. 436). Says Churchman,

> The "is taken to be" is a self-imposed imperative of the community. … Hence the linguistic puzzle which bothered some empiricists—how the inquiring system can pass linguistically from "is" statements to "ought" statements—is no puzzle at all to the Singerian inquirer: the inquiring system speaks exclusively in the "ought," the "is" being only a convenient *façon de parler* when one wants to block out the uncertainty in the discourse (Churchman 1971, pg. 202)

Singerians define their universes and problems by affirming "starting points" from which to build knowledge. In this way, the Singerian takes a stance that would seem

to place boundaries around supercomplexity and thereby limit its potentially negative effects. Scholar Dylan Wiliam (2008) says of the Singerian inquiry system:

> Such an approach requires a constant questioning of the assumptions of inquiry systems. Tenets, no matter how fundamental they appear to be are themselves open to challenge in an effort to cast a new light on the situation under investigation. This questioning leads directly and naturally to examination of the values and ethical considerations inherent in theory building (Wiliam 2008, pg. 436).

Based on the above, it may be reasoned that since the Singerian inquiry system and supercomplexity share a common premise that all knowledge is challengeable and interpretable, the Singerian inquiry system may be best suited to explore the presumptive unknowability signaled by supercomplexity. Vandenbosch et al present a view of Singerians that parallels supercomplexity:

> Singerians employ all systems of inquiry. They are characterized by frequent, dramatic, and unpredictable change. Convergence or consensus does not indicate progress to a Singerian. Rather, it indicates that it is time to revisit. Finding an answer is less important than finding a better question. Singerians alternate between making things simpler and making them more complicated. They are comfortable with a myriad of information sources (pg. 115).

Notwithstanding the above, however, a question remains about how to bring the Singerian inquiry system, which Churchman identifies as having pragmatic application, into being. Like supercomplexity, the Singerian inquiry system recognizes the involvedness of modern organisations, but also necessitates a means by which to take on a self-critical stance.

Criticality
Although not prevalent in the literature on sensemaking, criticality may be understood as a form of sensemaking. As suggested by Bloom (1987) in The Closing of the American Mind and outlined by Barnett (1997) in Higher Education: A Critical Business, criticality has a basis in reflexive critique of experience and awareness.

According to Barnett, criticality is rooted in an agenda for student and pedagogical development that is both emancipatory and transformational. Curzon-Hobson (2003) notes that the philosophical nature of Barnett's argument, though, "means that the defended ideals can be applied to a diversity of situations that reach far beyond its immediate research context" (Curzon-Hobson 2003, pg. 202). Barnett offers an idea of criticality that is useful in thinking about university leadership under conditions of change and uncertainty. Criticality has a three-part construct of critical knowing, critical action and critical being, as depicted below.

Criticality (Diagram 3.2)
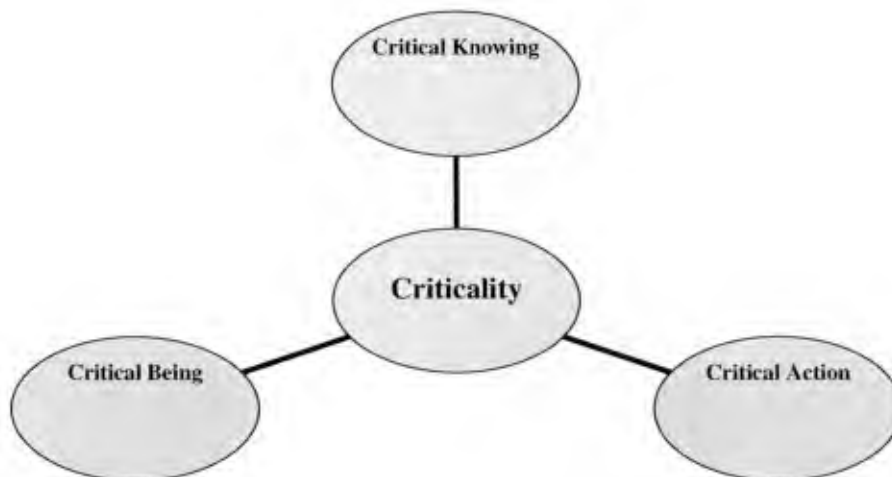
Adapted from Barnett 1997

Critical Knowing

Critical knowing is a way of reasoning that permits a construction of reality from the meanings made of experience. Its basis is in an application of logic to a situation of cognitive uncertainty. Critical knowing is concerned with expanding awarenesses through a practice of ongoing examination of commonly held truths, and would appear to be necessary to grapple with supercomplexity's dual challenge to knowing.

The first challenge is that supercomplexity renders all knowing circumstantial. The second challenge is that competing frameworks for knowing have to be mediated to allow for the possibility of forming shared understandings (Duderstadt 2000).

Critical Action

Critical action requires that university leaders bring criticality into the real world of institutional problems, complexities, constituencies, and choices.

> ... Action is required. Decisions have to be made and, usually in commercial or professional life, based on inadequate evidence. In complex organizations, those making the decisions (that is pretty well everyone) may not carry out the resulting actions themselves but they have to take responsibilities for those decisions (Barnett 1997, pgs. 128-129).

As Barnett suggests, university leaders necessarily act and live with the results of their actions. Action means to do something, to take a position regarding something, or to proceed in relation to something. It is, therefore, operational, intentional, and able to be evaluated. The something to which action relates may include formation of internal competencies, practices, and realisations that bring ideas into relationship with each other to form conceptions of the world (Barnett 1997). Being critical suggests discernment: detection of diverse meanings in the exercise of judgment. Hence, we are able to understand critical action as an execution of judgment based on what seems to be known, whereby both the execution of judgment and judgments themselves are held under scrutiny.

Placed in an organisational context, critical action suggests an evaluative facility and reflective awareness in diagnosing and creating ways to grapple with issues. Critical action is an intentional process of thought and sensemaking to underpin organisational

change. This view has leadership implications, for "whenever humans need to change a deeply structured belief system, everything is called into question" (Wheatley 2005, pg. 71).

Critical action is characterized by a consideration of as many variables as possible before reaching a point of decision. It is forward-thinking, shuns narrow-mindedness, challenges presuppositions, aims to be developmental, values dialogue, and avoids demagogy and mountain-top pronouncements. It is principled and inextricably linked to institutional character. Critical action is neither the means nor the end of decision-making or leadership. Instead, it is a cognitive and operational tool by which to contemplate the modern world of uncertainties. Barnett calls this act "emancipating," for it potentially frees organisations from insidious decision-making by anchoring actions in the ideals that hold organisations together, even as "what we take a university to be…, in terms of human transactions, is changing" (Barnett 1997, pg. 57). In the wake of such fundamental uncertainty, it may be reasoned, a laissez-faire approach to university leadership that is instrumental but not prophetic, active but not overly engaged, is no doubt preferable.

Critical Being
Critical being is a state of profound reconsideration of awareness that challenges assumptions in order to enlarge understandings. Critical being heightens discernment through ongoing critique, which, Senge (1990) tells us:

> … does not mean throwing out our assumptions, suppressing them, or avoiding their expression…. Rather, it means being aware [of them] and holding them up for examination (pg. 243).

According to Barnett (1997), critical being calls for the establishment of an enduring state of reflexivity whereby there develop capacities and mechanisms for self/system-evaluation and renewal. For Barnett, reflexivity is a conscious state of awareness that constantly nurtures learning. It is elemental to change and a framework whereby ongoing organisational self-revelation occurs. According to Curzon-Hobson:

> Barnett's notion of the critical being...is...constituted by the recognition and celebration of the non-necessity of all, and the becoming nature or potentiality of our relationships within all realms of experience (2003, pg. 209).

From a leadership perspective, critical being implies a higher state of consciousness that constantly searches for meaning. As such, reflexivity is dependent on a thought process that is established in critique and concordant with action that is both progressive and understood by those it is meant to influence. The attainment of this higher state of awareness requires a pattern of communication that is accessible, value-driven, and assimilated throughout the organisation. The role of leadership is to encourage and explicate discourses, detaching them from the universe of the unknown.

Conclusion

This chapter considered four change strategies—biological evolution, social evolution, planning, and learning—within the framework of an idea of uncertainty. Of these theories, biological evolution is incompatible with guiding organisational uncertainty in its premise that change is an organic process that operates independently of human agency. Social evolution is equally unable to cope with uncertainty in that it disregards the human condition in favor of attending to the external world. Planning is insufficient to cope with the uncertainties of contemporary

institutional environments because of its dependence on rationality and predictability in an often irrational and unpredictable world. While social-cognition theory underscores the role of human agency in shaping meaning, it is problematic in that its assignment of meaning is inherently value-laden and subjective. Finally, while learning offers a promising way to approach institutional uncertainty, without a critical underpinning, it may lack the objectivity and strength of examination necessary to make sense of the unknown. Given all this, Kezar's (2001) point that no single change theory is likely to be well-matched to the complexities of modern universities has validity.

Institutional change, therefore, may be less about novelty than about balancing internal understandings, less about a search for stability than about detection and alignment of discontinuity, and less about individual agency than about collective action to cope with uncertainty (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006). Effective institutional change would indeed appear to be a matter of learning, but the form and structures of said learning are, at this stage of the research project, unclear. At issue is how to make sense of and live with uncertainty. Two approaches—sensemaking and criticality—have been offered.

Sensemaking is offered because it traverses and interconnects the domains of organisational knowledge, action, and change and may be understood as an organisational activity that is important under conditions of uncertainty (Wagner and Gooding 1997). Criticality is offered because it provides a cognitive and ontological framework by which to adopt a leadership posture that constantly seeks enlightenment. Thayer (1988) posits that leadership is "concerned not with the things

of the world, but the way people mind the things of the world" (pg. 259). Sensemaking and criticality present means by which to "mind" changing universities.

Part II: The Study

4: Design of the Study

Purpose

This study is intended to develop a grounded formal theory for the effective leadership of changing universities. As shown in the preceding chapters, much of the literature on university leadership assumes that leaders possess knowledge to help them understand and make decisions about the institutions they serve (Kezar 2001). Whether it concerns social exchange theory, power and influence theory, or cognitive resources theory, the literature is predicated on a sociological awareness to delineate the world, thereby enabling people and organisations to function in it. The literature also makes clear that university environments have evolved in ways that render certainty of knowing, whether epistemological or ontological, implausible, raising questions about the nature and efficacy of contemporary university leadership. These are "changing universities" whose leadership cannot be aptly located within standard theoretical frameworks (Duke 2002). As such, empirically-based propositions are needed to account for the leadership effectiveness of these institutions. At issue here is how the CEOs of the case study universities coped with leading their institutions under conditions of change and uncertainty, and the generalisations that may be drawn from such knowledge. Developed empirically, in juxtaposition with the literature, "criticality for university leadership" emerges as a set of theoretical propositions by which to lead changing universities.

Thesis

The thesis of the study is that the effective leadership of changing universities requires a critical method by which to transform information into knowledge, knowledge into knowing, and knowing into being.

Research Problem

The preceding chapters reveal that traditional theories of institutional leadership do not account sufficiently for conditions of uncertainty that beset universities today. Without suitable, grounded theories to illuminate the leadership situation of contemporary universities, practitioners and researchers will be ill-equipped to manage and examine the ever-widening unknowability of institutional environments, and, perhaps, of contemporary university leadership itself. Indeed, not having the cognitive tools needed to address the problem of institutional uncertainty undermined the effectiveness of at least one of the respondents in the study. The study is an attempt to lessen this void in the literature.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses frame the study:

- Given the complexities of changing universities, a single paradigm by which to lead them is both unworkable and unattainable.

- Alongside, and in some cases in place of, discrete leadership theories, we need a set of theoretical propositions (substantive and formal theories) that may be mapped onto particular institutional circumstances.

- Whereas a single paradigm by which to lead changing universities is unlikely to be realised, there exist in the empirical evidence generalisable categories

and properties that buttress the effective leadership of these institutions.

- By locating the underlying categories and properties, a theory to explain, predict and enact the effective executive leadership of changing universities may be outlined.

Origins of the Study

The study originated with my attempts to establish the reasonableness of Barnett's (1997) idea of supercomplexity in relation to contemporary university leadership. According to Barnett, the world is too multifaceted, variable and interpretable for certainty of knowing to exist. As such, he argues, we live in a world of "radical uncertainty," of "unknowability."

From my perspective, as a researcher and university leader, supercomplexity, both conceptually and practically, calls into question the role and merit of contemporary university leadership. For, if university leaders cannot know the future with any surety, and if commonly-held understandings are readily contradictable, then how can university leadership be enacted? Supercomplexity would seem to be incompatible with ideas that leadership is "a process of social influence whereby a leader steers members of a group toward a goal" (Bryman 1986, pg. 2), as argued throughout the study thus far. If, in fact, supercomplexity is a consequential leadership condition, then a question arises: Should and how might it be countervailed?

Hence, the study originated from my identification of a problem in the literature that needed redressing. This recognition led to the origination of goals for the study, which were: 1) to verify the meaningfulness of supercomplexity as a problem for university

leaders, 2) to develop a theoretical framework to grapple with it, and, in doing so, 3) to establish ways to re-conceptualize it.

Approach to the Study
My research approach may be understood as a methodological pyramid (modeled below) in which concepts and evidence form levels of mutually supporting awarenesses, by which I mean knowledge, as an element of knowing.

Methodological Pyramid (Diagram 4.1)
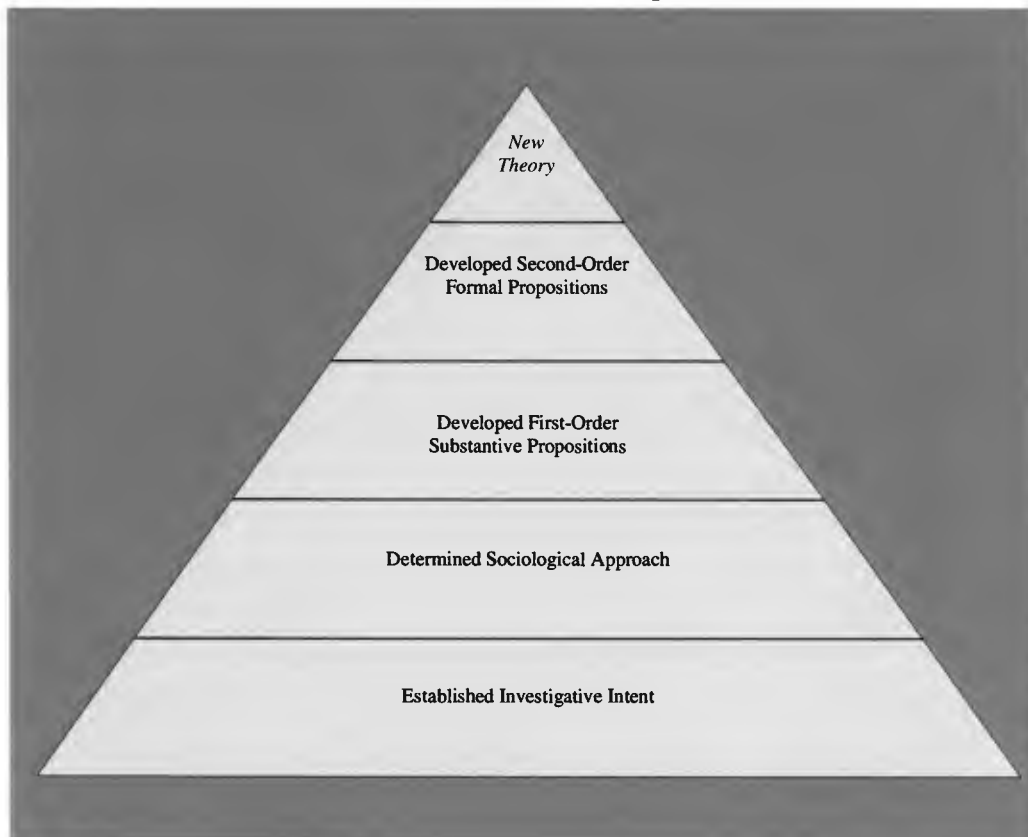
The above diagram indicates that through the establishment of the investigative intent, three fundamental elements of formal theory-building took shape: 1) the sociological approach was determined, 2) substantive propositions were made known, and 3) a set of formal propositions were formulated (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The

result of these activities was the materialization of a formal, grounded theory for the effective leadership of changing universities.

However, as with many qualitative studies, this theory-building was not linear. It occurred iteratively, through an evolutionary process of honing and reassessing the research questions, using the comparative method.

Comparative Analysis
Glaser and Strauss (1967) use the term "comparative analysis" to refer to the generation of theory. They assign the comparative method "its fullest generality for use on social units of any size, large or small, ranging from men or their roles to nations or world regions" (pgs. 21-22). Comparative analysis emphasizes "theory as process," meaning that theory is a continually developing phenomenon from which there cannot be a perfected product. Comparative analysis also depends on a process of coding data to reveal categories and properties (themes), which are discussed below.

The comparative method is purposed to replicate facts with analogous evidence in order to eliminate the conceptual categories and properties that underlie and link them. In this way, theories are contingent upon identification of conceptual markers— large ideas that emanate from the data, as well as from the investigator's interactions with the data. Glaser and Strauss point out that given the circumstantial nature of qualitative analysis, not all evidence will be accurate (pg. 23). Rather, evidence may have nuances that present as significant variations from the originating evidence. Such differentials are satisfactory, according to the comparative method, because this method is based not on the facts on which theories stand but rather on their conceptual

markers. Indeed, while evidence may change, conceptual markers "only have their meanings respecified...because other theoretical and research purposes have evolved" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, pg. 23).

Numerous germane points of comparison emerged in the study, including leadership styles, behaviours, and outcomes, along with institutional histories, circumstances and ambitions. From these comparisons, a theoretical framework began to take shape that involved cross-analysing university executive leadership within specific institutional contexts. Thus, and by design, it was not possible for me to study the leadership of changing universities without accounting for the actual circumstances to which that leadership is applied, which necessitated an empirical study.

Constant Comparative Method
The "constant comparative method" combines the procedures of comparative analysis with intentional, explicit and concurrent juxtapositions of data. It is a dual strategy of permitting data to unfold while also analysing them. Moreover, say Glaser and Strauss:

> No attempt is made by the constant comparative method to ascertain either the universality or the proof of suggested causes or other properties. Since no proof is involved, the constant comparative method...only requires saturation of data—not consideration of all available data, nor are the data restricted to one kind... The constant comparative method...is more likely to be applied in the same study to any kind of qualitative information, including observations, interviews, documents, articles, books, and so forth (1967 pg. 104).

Saturation means that no additional data are evidenced such that new categories or properties are likely to emerge; that is, the data have told us what they can. Analysis of all forms of data gathered for the study—interviews, observations, publications, planning document, and public records—continued until theoretical saturation was reached.

Ongoing debates among sociologists about the power of qualitative studies to verify data are not at issue here, since constant comparative analysis "both subsumes and assumes verification and accurate descriptions, but *only* [original emphasis] to the extent that the latter are in service to the generation of theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Research Design

Using the constant comparative method as offered by Glaser and Strauss, described above, four design pillars buttress theory building and the study:

1. Comparisons of incidents applicable to each category

2. Integration of categories and their properties

3. Delimitation of the theory

4. Writing of the theory

Based on the above, I determined that it would be essential to select a segment of the leadership population as the key unit of analysis for comparison. It was my view, again based on the literature and my own experiences working in university executive leadership, that university CEOs would be most relevant to the study's aims because they were thought most likely to be concerned with long-term institutional strategy and sense-making. Further, I reasoned, given the dearth of recent literature on how university CEOs approach issues of unknowability, there was a need to observe university CEOs as they grappled with the problem. Speaking to the realities of universities and their CEOs called forth a case study design. Thus, the general approach to the study began and remained one of developing theoretical propositions,

categories, and properties to address the research problem, based on empirically derived insights.

Case Study

A case study is an empirical enquiry that:

1. Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its actual context, when

2. The boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which

3. Multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin 1989, pg. 23).

Given the research aims, the examination employs a multiple-case-study design to allow for sufficient intricacy of data to be triangulated and applied across institutional types. In writing about case-study research, design, and methods, Yin (1989) notes that:

> In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context [sic] (pg. 13).

Use of case studies was important to the research design in that the case studies provided the context for the development of a theory for practice. Many areas of social science research employ case-study design: political science, public administration, psychology, sociology, economics, and policy, along with organisational and management studies, for instance. Yin (1989) notes that case studies should be generalised to form theoretical propositions:

> A common complaint about case studies is that it is difficult to generalize from one case to another.... The problem lies in the very notion of generalizing to other cases. Instead, an analyst should try to generalize findings to "theory," analogous to the way a scientist generalizes from experimental results to theory (pg. 44).

In moving from analysing case studies to theory-building, it was necessary to set out, test, and refine propositions in light of empirically-derived data (Yin, 1989).

Campbell (1975) indicates that by linking data to propositions, one may match patterns of meaning or occurrences from which theory may be built. I took up this dual task of pattern matching and meaning-making through the use of a sample study (see below).

The Research Process

Based on my understanding of the research problem, I employed a two-pronged approach to the study, conceptual and empirical, in five phases, as depicted below. As shown in the diagram, the final step of the research process remains unrealised to indicate that while the conceptual portion is the finale of the study, it should not be the end of the research into the subject.

The Research Process (Diagram 4.2)
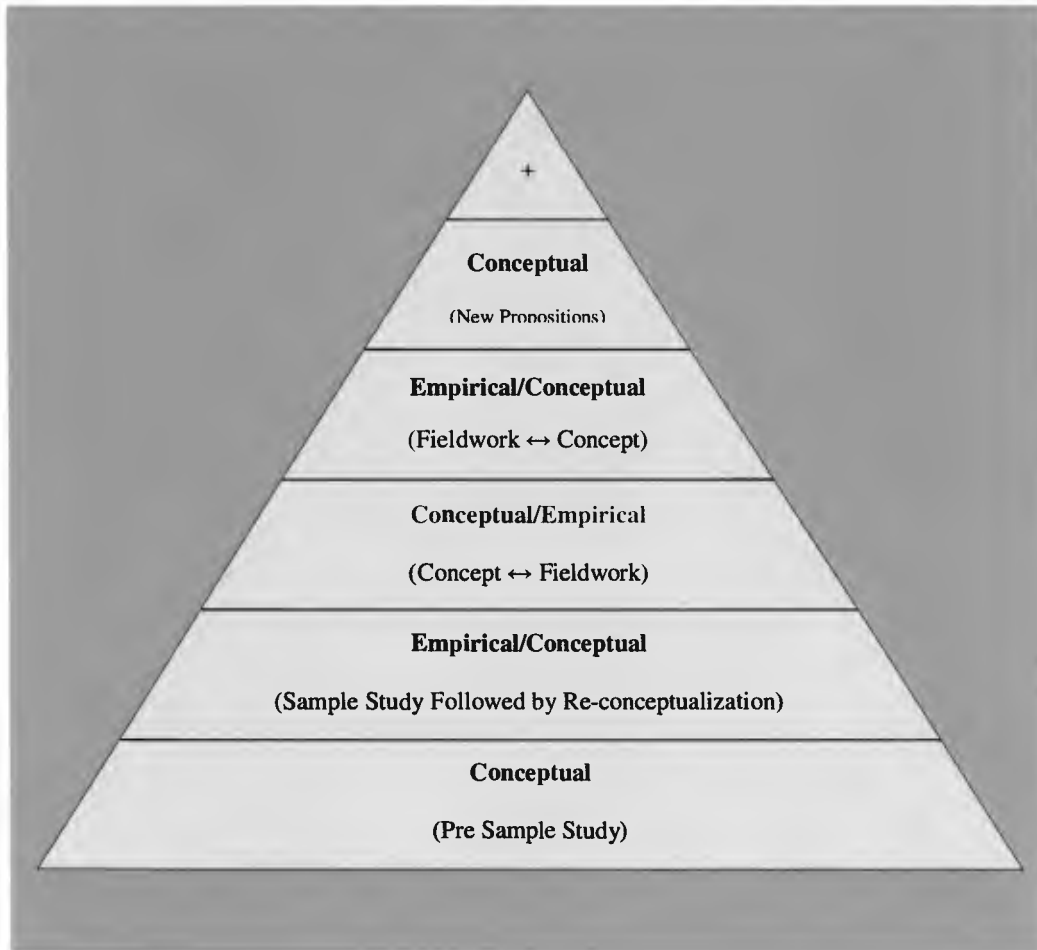
Conceptual Phase I: The initial conceptualisation of the study, as described above, was to address what I perceived to be discordance between supercomplexity and the reality of university leadership. The concept of supercomplexity became known to me during my initial examination of the literature on the contemporary university: its aims, challenges and leadership. The germination of the concepts developed throughout the thesis was that contemporary universities could be led effectively by making sense of institutional uncertainty and unknowability.

Empirical Phase I: Resulting from my initial theoretical conceptualisation, a research question was formed: *What effect does supercomplexity have on the leadership of*

universities? To test the capacity of the research question to address supercomplexity and, indeed, whether supercomplexity is a meaningful leadership concern, a sample study was undertaken.

Sample Study

The comparative method of qualitative research as outlined by Glaser and Strauss indicates that when seeking to develop theory, it is standard practice to undertake a sample study. Sample studies permit investigators to a) test their assumptions and hypotheses; b) develop initial research questions, scope and design; and c) pinpoint initial research problems and areas of future focus. Hence, sample studies are important in developing the overall character and aims of the examinations to which they refer.

The sample study began with my identification of a case institution to examine. Criteria for selecting the sample case were that:

- The university be undergoing institution-wide change, which was both intentional and examinable;

- There was a willingness on the part of the institution's chief executive to be part of both the sample study and the primary study; and

- I considered the case appropriate and desirable for primary study.

I believed, based on my knowledge of contemporary institutional concerns, that the leadership complexities and particularities of black-American universities warranted study, while also being generalizable to other institutional types. Although numerous institutions fit the above criteria, I determined that for the sample study, I would select a historically black American university. I chose to study a black-American institution

because they enrol a quarter of all black American students, graduate nearly a third of all black Americans who earn baccalaureate degrees and, so, are a critical segment of the American higher education landscape.

I chose as the sample study what is here named "Black American University" (BAU). The particularities of BAU are akin to those one might find at special focus institutions such as gender-specific, religiously-affiliated, or civically-oriented institutions—all of which are found in the United States. In addition to the above characteristics, the selection of BAU was underpinned by the investigator's familiarity with the institution's history and change objectives as well as with its chief executive. While it was neither possible nor desirable to control the outcome of the study, I sought to maximize the probability of a successful research process by studying a university where I had some rudimentary connections and understanding, and would have less difficulty negotiating access, making connections, and orienting myself. Importantly, prior awareness of the institution did not substitute for the investigator working diligently to understand, devoid of presupposition, the realities of the leadership situation as they presented themselves. This research strategy proved useful in the overall conduct of the study.

I contacted the chief executive (president) of BAU via telephone about being part of the study. After learning the aims of the study and the aspects of his institution that presented a productive opportunity for study, the chief executive agreed to take part, and asked his chief of staff to follow up with me. After a brief telephone conversation with me, the chief of staff sent me a set of background materials that included the institution's organisational chart, mission statement, and history, along with a

grouping of presidential speeches and writings related to his leadership. This became the second part of data collection, as the first part was derived through my initial gathering of information in the public domain and private queries of persons familiar with the leadership situation at BAU. The chief of staff also arranged for me to spend one week on campus to conduct interviews of the university's senior management team and members of its Board of Trustees, to observe preparations for and attend a Board meeting, and to generally gain a sense of the campus dynamic.

Having "gained entry" (Ely 1997) into the research site, I focused my efforts on observing occurrences and making sense of the developing data. Research questions were developed to assist the investigator in initiating and guiding the "interview conversations." The open-endedness of the questions permitted respondents to let the data unfold naturally. Respondents seemed to probe their own consciousnesses for meaning. In this way, the data were drawn out through exchanges between the respondents and myself. It will be seen later that "interview conversations" were not always possible. However, interview conversations were normative at BAU. In terms of the research depth, then, conversational interviews proved to be preferable to standard question and answer sessions (Ely 1997).

The first interview conversation, which lasted one and one-half hours, was with BAU's chief executive. This interview was the second substantive conversation (quasi-interview) between me and the respondent—the first being our initial telephone conversation. The interview conversation began with me expressing gratitude to the chief executive for his agreeing to be part of the study; recapitulating the study aims, and eliciting any new ground rules or other information that the institution wished to

convey to me (there were none). With this, I asked the chief executive to "tell me about how you lead your university." This interview conversation was followed by others with the university's chief academic officer, chief development (fund-raising) officer, chief enrolment officer, and chief financial officer. All respondents were candid and seemed comfortable speaking both on and off the record.

During my first campus visit, I observed the senior management team as they prepared to (and subsequently did) present the university's new strategic plan to the Board of Trustees. I followed this observation with observing the Board in full and committee sessions as they debated the strategic plan. The details of this observation were noted contemporaneously and considered when writing up the sample case, initially in compliance with a class assignment for my studies at the Institute of Education, and again when writing up the final study. Observations were followed by second-round interviews with the chief executive, chief academic officer, chief development officer, and chief enrolment officer. The second-round interviews were confirmatory of data, and served to clarify my understandings of some occurrences, and to further develop the research questions.

The data were coded to draw out their theoretical categories and properties. Coding was achieved in three ways: first by use of a computer-based (Microsoft Excel) tabulation, second by use of ATLAS.ti, and finally by a return to Excel, because the ATLAS.ti program did not provide sufficiently for the nuances of the data in the materializing of theoretical categories and properties.

The data revealed that:

1. Supercomplexity did not present as a material leadership concern. To the contrary, rather than being overwhelmed by the impact of proliferating cognitions on their ability to guide their institution, as supercomplexity would suggest, respondents were concerned with remediation of a culture in which critical thinking seemed to them to have been abandoned.

2. Respondents presumed awareness of and control over the future, rather than ignorance and helplessness.

3. With no confirmatory evidence to support it, supercomplexity would have no direct usefulness in the development of a grounded formal theory for the enactment of university leadership under conditions of change and uncertainty. Consequently, the concept of supercomplexity could not anchor the study.

4. In addition to grappling with how to change BAU, respondents were contending with uncontrollable forces of change: national pressures for black American colleges to compete with majority institutions for dollars that had once been earmarked for the former, and changes in student makeup and preparedness for university study, for instance. Respondents were attempting to overlay a "controlled" change onto their institutions' uncontrollable environments. This reality recast the study to a concern with how to lead changing universities, where uncertainty is a mainstay.

Hence, the sample study answered a key research concern; namely, that supercomplexity did not in this case present as bearing materially on institutional leadership. Consequently, supercomplexity was shown to be unhelpful to the study as a research concept. That supercomplexity was shown not to be a useful concept in considering the leadership problem resulted in my changing the focus of the study

from a purely sociological concern with leadership enactment to a socio-cognitive concern with "knowing" as an element of leading changing universities.

Conceptual/Empirical Phase II:

With the abandonment of supercomplexity as a concept around which to frame the study, it was clear that I needed to rethink the research questions, assumptions, and hypotheses.

The initial research questions had been predicated on supercomplexity as a leadership challenge and normative condition of contemporary universities. With this understanding rendered irrelevant, the research questions turned to how university CEOs lead amidst a backdrop of change and uncertainty. The nature of the revised focus, then, made it possible to analyse what university CEOs were actually doing to steer their institutions. This was a modification not only to the study's focus but also to its character. In other words, findings from the sample study caused the formal study to undergo major conceptual shifts that were then applied to the data derived from the sample. This structural modification is evidence that the data from the sample study were sufficiently rich to overturn my conceptualisation of the research problem, to enhance the research aim toward a greater concern with theory development rather than theory validation, and to provide for alternative ways of viewing the leadership situation of contemporary universities.

In this way, there was a persistent interplay between the data and the research aims and design. With this new understanding, I sought to broaden the study by adding two institutions to the sample case, each with distinct characteristics, problems, ambitions,

and leadership situations. The purpose for this course of action was to develop a leadership theory that accounted for multiple differences among the institutions and, therefore, would be broadly generalisable.

Conceptual/Empirical Phase III:

Following the re-conceptualisation of the research problem as described above, I began the process of selecting cases for study. Based on my desire to develop a grounded formal theory, my conceptual emphasis in case selection was to choose different institutional types so that the constant comparative method could be employed and in order to maximize generalisability.

Case Selection

Criteria
The following criteria were used in the selection of institutions for the formal study. It was necessary for the selected institutions to be:

1. In a process of large-scale change or reflecting on a recent institutional change;

2. Significantly different from each other;

3. Committed to a two-year period of investigation;

4. Willing to provide me access to respondents and, within reason, documents relevant to the study;

5. Permission for me to attend relevant meetings of the institutions' governing bodies during the course of data collection.

Number of Cases

Based on guidance offered in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) work on grounded theory, I

concluded that it would be necessary to study three universities. This determination

was based on my belief that three institutions would ensure sufficient complexity of

data to account for leadership in different settings and under different circumstances,

which would allow for suitable triangulation of findings, while being manageable as

a research project.

The intent in selecting cases for study was to ensure diversity of institutional issues,

contexts, and leadership approaches, all of which I, based on Glaser and Strauss'

method, believed was necessary in order to develop a robust theory for practice. In

addition, my personal background helped define the choices of institutions to study. I

wanted the study to reflect both American and British contexts so that a trans-Atlantic

perspective could be extrapolated from the findings, and so that the data would be

suitable for future multi- and cross-national examinations. Thus, the selection of cases

was based in part on my anticipation of how other researchers might be able to use the

data.

The Cases

With the above in mind, the process of canvassing universities to include in the study

began. Choosing the black American institution was easy since BAU, the university

from which the sample study was derived, had already agreed to participate in the

formal study.

The second American institution was more difficult to settle on, given the plethora

from which to choose. The process began with me developing a list of ten institutions

that would be suitable for the study and to which I believed I could gain entry for the purposes of the study. These institutions consisted of research universities (including one at which I was working at the time), elite liberal arts colleges, and public institutions.

The research university at which I worked declined to participate in the study because the university's chief executive felt that I might have been too familiar with the institution to be impartial and/or to be privy to confidential data. Consequently, the university was removed from consideration, and, weighing the likelihood that such issues might materialise among other prospective cases, I discarded five others from consideration. Among the remaining four American universities under consideration, I chose one that is here termed "American Business School" (ABS). ABS had recently undergone a change effort, and was reflecting on the results of this effort.

The British university proved most difficult to determine. Of the choices available, including "new universities" in England, it was an institution known herein as "British Research University" (BRU), which seemed best-suited to the study. Indeed, BRU was contemplating a radical shift in its identity and mission that put the institution in a position of increased uncertainty. There had been newspaper articles written about BRU's plans for change and about the vision of the chief executive to enhance the university's prominence that provided me with an independent view of the institution's leadership situation and an increased interest in examining it. It was helpful that I was familiar with the CEO, who, upon learning of the study, agreed to participate.

I recognized that given its unique history and heritage, BRU may not be fully representative of British universities. However, the intent of the study was not to undertake a "representative" analysis of the leadership of British universities, as doing so would be unmanageable in the absence of collective agreement about what constitutes a representative British university. Rather, the institution was selected because it suits the aims of the study to outline a complex leadership situation and demonstrate the CEOs' approach to it.

Individually and in combination, the case institutions:

1. Allow for an exploration of the leadership of changing universities under differing circumstances and across national boundaries.

2. Permit suitable comparisons on which to build a leadership theory.

It is the differences between the institutions, rather than their similarities, that make them suitable subjects for the study. That Britain does not have a historically black institution, or America a replica of the British research university, was important not only to case selection, but to accounting for institutional differences when examining the data.

The empirical part of this phase of the research project came by way of case fieldwork developed over two years, which provided findings that led to a rethinking of the research problem. Following the paradigm outlined for the sample study, I made contact with the CEOs and gained approval to examine their institutions. I asked the CEO of each institution to provide a recommended list of people, to include the senior management team, to participate in the study. The CEOs informed their staffs of the research project via internal communication and let them know that the chiefs of staff

would follow up. Hence, with the exception of the CEOs and chiefs of staff, I did not communicate directly with respondents until I arrived on campus for the empirical part of the study.

My work at the black American university, which had served as the sample case, went smoothly. I had met and interviewed most people on the CEO's list, and so had a preliminary relationship with them. This made the research project more efficient than at other cases because it was as though the research project took up where the sample study left off. Although there were numerous new data gathered and insights gleaned, there were no complications with the research process itself.

I had not been previously engaged with the American business school beyond telephone and email correspondences with the CEO and chief of staff. Still, the research process worked very much as described above. However, staff were more open to talking about their institutional leadership and circumstances than I had imagined would be the case, exceeding the openness of the black American university. The reason for this seemed to be that the business school's recent transformation efforts had resulted in numerous publications, and so the idea of being "studied" was not anomalous to them. Moreover, the institution had recently come out of a difficult period in its history, a time when many had questioned the former CEO's leadership. Thus, with a precedent already established, there was a certain willingness to examine the leadership of the current CEO. What was more surprising was that the new CEO agreed to be a subject of the study.

<u>**Conceptual/Empirical Phase IV**</u>:

Following the initial data collection, the next conceptual phases involved analysis of the data and reconceptualization of the research problem and questions. Was the problem one of inadequate guideposts by which to lead changing universities? To answer the question, I outlined a series of new propositions based on the literature, which were then tested in the field, refined conceptually in light of the findings, retested empirically, and refined yet again conceptually. The initial fieldwork was conducted in 2002 and supplemental fieldwork conducted in 2003-2004. Thus, there were two phases of empirical enquiry. The new understandings that emerged from the research were pivotal in reframing the research questions, rethinking the data, and fashioning theory.

Research Questions and Secondary Hypotheses
The primary research question is:

> § *Can and how do leaders create institutional knowing?*

Secondary questions are:

> § *To what extent does ability to direct institutional knowledge frameworks assist leaders in the study in directing their universities?*
>
> § *Are there parallels between the knowledge frameworks of the leaders in the study and the approaches by which they understand their institutions?*

The study is further informed by two secondary hypotheses.

1. Contemporary university leaders are concerned with directing institutional change by lessening uncertainty through the management of institutional

meaning.

2. The task of directing institutions amidst change and uncertainty necessitates a critical approach to leadership.

Data

The study makes use of multiple data sources: interviews, public and private communications, strategic plans, marketing materials, and press reports. Each institution provided initial informational materials that included organisational charts, financial statements, and confidential planning documents. Subsequent materials were requested and received. As with most qualitative research, the interview was the primary data source, as it provided the clearest way to probe respondents' thinking and actions. The institutions' mission and vision statements along with their most recent planning and assessment dossiers were examined to fashion an understanding and portrayal of them. Based on findings from the data, the research perspective and questions were honed. Consequently, the data are reflected in both the research findings and in the formulation of theory.

Observation

I spent two fortnights over a two-year period in residence at each case institution, in order to observe their leadership. Observation was both formal and informal. Formal observation took place in meetings, during which my goal was to observe the proceedings. Informal observation took place through casual but intentional interactions with respondents, permitting me to view respondents under conditions in which their discourses and actions were less inhibited than in formal observation settings. As a result, in the course of the research process, inconsistencies in what respondents said, how they behaved, and in the perceptions of respondents held by

their senior-management-team colleagues were noted. From these accumulated impressions, a process of attempting to accurately depict the institutions, along with their actors and issues, emerged.

Observation was critical in countering what may have been a reticence on the part of some respondents to be forthcoming in their interviews. It was imperative for me to gain a sense of these respondents' thinking about and approaches to leadership that were not evident in their interviews and to distinguish respondents' theories-in-use from their espoused theories of leadership. For instance, several respondents who characterized themselves as transformational leaders were observed to practice transactional leadership, while others' self-concepts as democratic leaders were challenged by their autocratic responses to their institution's circumstances. These discrepancies between respondents' self-characterizations and observed behaviours underscored the need for data triangulation.

Interview
I conducted twenty-five initial interviews across the institutions over a six-month period. Each interview was approximately two hours in length, resulting in fifty interview hours. In most instances, interviews were tape-recorded, and I also took notes. After the interviews, I jotted down extemporaneous ideas for later reflection. All first-round interviews were formal, occurring in the office of the respondent. These initial interviews helped me to define and contextualize the research problem. The first-round interviews were thus exploratory. In this manner, I gleaned from respondents, all of whom were executive leaders, the issues that they thought were important to their work. Based on information gathered from the first round of

interviews, I re-conceptualized the study from how to lead change in universities to a more nuanced view of how to lead universities that were themselves changing. Differences between the concepts of leading change in universities and leading changing universities relate to intentionality and control. I reasoned that to lead change suggests the presence of intent and control, whereas to lead changing universities suggests an absence of these factors. Approximately two months after the initial interviews were conducted, and having given respondents time to reflect on and revisit their earlier statements, I re-interviewed all respondents—for a total of seventy-five total interview hours.

The second round of interviews was invaluable in elucidating the challenges that each respondent was grappling with and the methods by which he or she did so. These were "conversations" more than interviews, during which I provided the situational context and research questions, but respondents guided the dialogue. The second-round interviews were dynamic, taking twists and turns that had not been anticipated. In each case (BRU, BAU, and ABS), I undertook a third-round of interviews of the CEOs in which these respondents were invited to comment on some of the initial research findings.

Trust

To overcome what appeared to be distrust amongst some respondents of me as an outsider looking into their universes of knowing and action, the research process, or, perhaps, the research subject matter, I increased my engagement with the institutions and re-interviewed subjects, which added a year to data collection; rather than taking one year as planned, the interviews spanned two years. By prolonging engagement, I

hoped it would be possible for me to gain the trust of nearly all respondents. Prolonged engagement meant my being at each campus more than had been anticipated, talking to people informally over lunch and dinner, attending meetings, and becoming more knowledgeable about the institutions. Nonetheless, data are limited by the degree to which respondents were in fact willing to engage with me and, in some cases, themselves, regarding the issues confronting their leadership of their institutions. Thus, trust was contingent on respondents' openness and honesty about the state of their institutions, their own relationships to and responsibilities for those conditions, and a willingness to explore previously unexamined possibilities for the meanings and implications of their actions as leaders.

Categories and Properties

The above processes and coding systems were useful to my identification of the themes that serve as the basis for the study. Themes were directed by the nature of the concern with whether leaders' cognitions were consistent with their leadership. In exploring the issues in light of the data, three recurring concepts emerged: knowledge frameworks, institutional identity, and social exchange. The data, and the literature, pointed to leaders' use of cognitive structures for understanding in the development of their approaches to leadership. Secondly, the data pointed to a recurring concern amongst respondents with managing their institutions' identities. Thirdly, there was clear evidence that respondents were all engaged in forms of social exchange or mediation of conflicting communal desires in order to steer their institutions.

Writing Their Stories

Storytelling is to describe and interpret the realities of others in a narrative form (Ely, *et al.* 1997). It necessitates, therefore, lenses through which to view and triangulate data. Qualitative research demands that narratives be written without undue restraint imposed on the data by investigators (Wolcott 2001). Scholars tend to agree that perhaps the biggest problem in "writing up" qualitative research is determining what data to leave out (Wolcott 2001). However, Geertz's (1973) assertion that it is "not necessary to know everything in order to understand something" (pg. 20) implies that, indeed, one can tell the story of another with concision and meaning. Geertz reflects that case narratives seek to describe, analyse, and interpret a phenomenon in such a way that the reader is able to glean both the content and context of a study (Geertz 1973). To achieve this end, the institutional stories represented in this thesis are described in pen portraits, and content analyses are offered throughout the remaining chapters.

Limitations of the Study Design

The study is limited to the senior management teams at the three institutions examined, with a central focus on the CEOs. The study does not account for the attitudes and impressions of academic staff, as they were not part of the research design or questions. Nor does the study consider the perspectives of the case universities' former leaders. Rather, the study investigates how the current chief executive officers, along with their senior management teams, approached their leadership roles given the complex circumstances that they and their institutions faced. As such, ideas surrounding institutional culture are not explored deeply herein, as they are beyond the scope of the study.

As with all self-reporting, it was necessary for me as a researcher to report the comments of respondents with a degree of skepticism, so as not to take their narratives at face value and short-circuit the analytical process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It was further necessary for me to impose standards by which to consider whether the comments of respondents were complete, truthful, and/or biased. I found that a mechanism for "fact checking" was likewise necessary. Although it was impossible to be assured that all self-reporting by respondents was complete, truthful, and unbiased, use of iterative analysis permitted me to cross-reference data, corroborate and/or refute propositions and first-order analyses, and uncover inconsistencies in respondents' statements on given topics. This fact-checking exercise allowed me to compare and contrast the sentiments of respondents on the issues at different times and under different circumstances within the period of data collection.

In two of the three cases, I considered that respondents' negative assessments of their predecessors' leadership effectiveness were prejudiced in favour of the respondents themselves. In two of the three cases, some of the responses of the CEOs, and in particular their negative assessment of the effectiveness of the leadership of their predecessors, appeared to be motivated by a desire to show their own actions in a more positive light. This was especially important, given the sensitive subject matter and my desire to understand how the current leaders of the institutions examined really approached their leadership role. It was incumbent upon me to permit respondents freedom of expression, without an imposition of critique during the interviews.

The study is bounded by time, covering the period from 2002 to 2004, and does not offer facts or opinions about the effectiveness of the institutions' change strategies beyond this timeframe. Finally, the study centres on recently appointed institutional chief executives who were also new to the university presidency. It does not consider how the approaches of longer-serving CEOs might have differed from recently appointed chief executives.

Ethical Issues

Like most qualitative research, the study prompted ethical issues with which I had to contend. These ethical issues related to me as a professional and researcher and to respondents as professionals sharing their insights on sensitive subjects that had the potential to affect their careers. How much would be asked of respondents? How deeply would issues be probed? How would potentially controversial responses be conveyed? How would the stories be told while attempting to ensure the anonymity of the institutions and respondents?

I made clear to respondents that while every effort would be made to hold their comments in utmost confidence, both during and after the research project, limited and veiled ascription would be necessary in the text in order to provide for the authenticity of respondents' narratives, claims, and thinking. In all cases, save three instances at BRU, respondents agreed to limited ascriptions. The intent of this was to permit the unfolding of their stories while also protecting their anonymity, and so that no data would be disclosed to any third party. Although these three respondents did not agree to the research terms, they did agree to be interviewed in order to provide the investigator with a fuller view of the perspectives at work. However, their

interviews were neither recorded nor in any way referenced in the study. It was also agreed by all respondents that, should the thesis be published beyond its intended purpose as a work of scholarship restricted to the investigator's fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree, further effort would be taken to conceal the identities of the institutions and respondents. However, in attempting to convey their stories, I found that the data were too sensitive to permit any ascription, and so I made every effort to ensure the complete anonymity of each institution and respondent.

Professionally, I was challenged not to permit my awarenesses of the case institutions and their leadership to influence my engagements with them. It was important, I believed, that a respectful distance between me and the institutions be established and maintained during the course of the study. Although in no instance did a chief executive prod me for information about his senior-management team members, some team members sought information about their standing in their institutions or asked about my thoughts on their chief executives. In these situations, study subjects were urged to refocus their thinking on their roles as institutional leaders.

It was challenging, during data analysis and theory construction, to permit the data and literature to drive the development of theory. This issue was addressed through iterative analysis, the aim of which was continually to seek to understand the data in relation to the literature.

Conclusion
This is a study of the practice of institutional leadership under conditions of change and uncertainty. Its basis is both theoretical and empirical, and its outcome is a proposal for the practice of university leadership. The study considers that the role of

leadership is to help universities thrive in milieus of seeming unknowability. It employs case-study design to gain a practical understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary university leadership. The cases aided in the examination of three themes: knowledge frameworks, institutional identities, and social exchange. The following sections will consider these themes in relation to the research question.

5: Knowledge Frameworks

Introduction

The first theoretical category derived from the data is "knowledge frameworks." In this chapter, the cases are contextualized within an examination of the knowledge frameworks that influence respondents' leadership of their institutions. The chapter divides into two parts: the first is a set of pen portraits of the perspectives by which respondents recognize and lead their universities, and the second is a discussion of respondents' knowledge frameworks vis-à-vis their leadership of institutional change.

British Research University (BRU)

British Research University (BRU) was founded to train doctors, teachers, and clergy for its community, and lawyers and administrators for public service (BRU 2006). A century later, a medical school was established nearby, and together the two schools served the region until they merged to form BRU in the nineteenth century. As was customary at the time, women were not permitted to enrol at BRU (BRU 2006). However, at the end of the nineteenth century, the university opened all of its faculties to women, quickly enroling and graduating its first group of female students. By the dawn of the twentieth century, women made up a quarter of BRU's student body (BRU 2006). At the time of the study, BRU comprised faculties of arts and divinity, biological sciences, clinical medicine, economic and social sciences, engineering, mathematical and physical sciences, law, and education. Its student body numbered more than 10,000, of which greater than half were women (BRU 2006). BRU was ranked highly in Britain's university league tables (BRU 2002; *Times*-London 2006). Shortly before the study, Dr. Sexton was appointed CEO of BRU.

The data reveal that three knowledge frameworks situate Sexton's leadership: alternative funding streams, international competitiveness, and institutional autonomy.

Sexton's Knowledge Frameworks (Diagram 5.1)
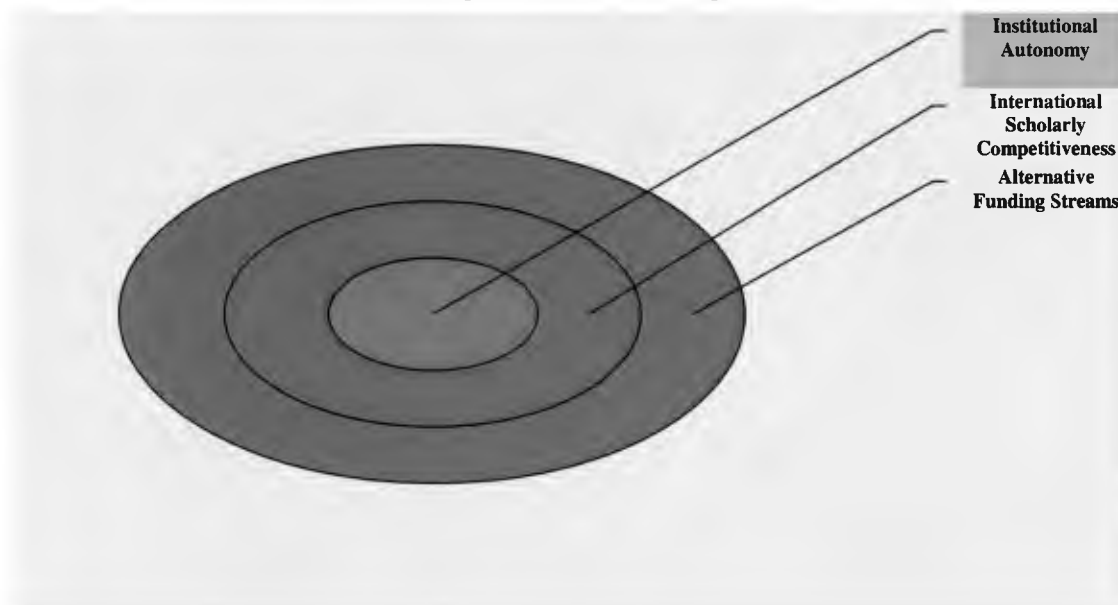
Through the Eyes of the Vice Chancellor
Vice Chancellor Sexton's leadership of BRU bears the mark of two decades of experience working in privately funded and relatively autonomous American universities. Sexton brought to his vice chancellorship an Americanized sense of the university chief executive as visionary, meaning-maker, and mind-changer. For Sexton:

> BRU constantly has to be reminded of the extent to which it has to be competitive, and constantly consider adopting new reactions or practices (Sexton 2004).

He believed that although BRU's academic staff were engaged researchers, the university lacked the international reputation that he desired it to have. Sexton felt that by changing staff's thinking about themselves as professionals and in relation to the institution, he might be able to influence BRU's trajectory: "I wanted to do everything

I could to persuade colleagues that they were part of an international scholarly establishment" (Sexton 2004).

Sexton's view of BRU upon his arrival was of a university that was largely controlled by external forces and agendas, most notably the British Funding Council. He further believed that BRU's historical focus on serving its region in Britain was antithetical to the university's long-term viability (Sexton 2004).

Sexton intended to develop within BRU both a concern with life beyond its region and a new awareness of the university's challenges, arguing:

> It's a Hobbesian world in which if you don't get better, you basically decline and you get goaded off. It's a – "well, we won't get goaded off but we might well decline." Decline might really mean staying the same or not getting better fast enough. Everybody else is getting better as well, which is really the sad story. You know, in the old days our universities tended to stay more or less the same, much more comfortable to [maintain a status quo] (2004).

Sexton saw his role as one of guiding people within BRU to new ways of thinking about the institution:

> It is often difficult for colleagues to understand where our social inclusion agenda [for the region] sits when they hear about being an internationally distinguished research university, rhetoric about excellence, and rhetoric about producing students of high potential who will go on to leadership positions. Perhaps because of my experience in America, my view is that these activities are entirely compatible (2004).

To guide the thinking of BRU's members about the institution, Sexton adopted a strategic conceptualization of BRU as a "broad-spectrum university." The metaphor was intended to emphasize BRU's many areas of present and prospective engagement and to underscore that whereas BRU has multiple, sometimes competing mandates, it also has the responsibility to manage them. Moreover, Sexton's terminology of a broad-spectrum university supported his belief that BRU needed to change its self-

concept in order to succeed in a world that is increasingly borderless—that service to its region alone would not permit the institution to advance. He struggled with a dual position of attempting to direct BRU towards significant change, and to introduce the value of change and competitiveness, while retaining a humane and collegial environment. He remarked:

> It's important on that as we go through huge change ... to keep a community together by insisting that it be to some degree humane (Sexton 2004).

Sexton's emphasis on collegiality was important to how he approached and conceived of institutional change, as both a personal and a strategic position. Sexton's position was personal in that he believed academic institutions work best when they are collegial. It was strategic in that he did not believe BRU would accept a fundamentally disruptive change strategy, and so avoided undertaking one. The emphasis on humanity, then, was both part of and corollary to Sexton's guiding knowledge frameworks. In Sexton's view, the disorder that might attend forced institutional change would be antithetical to his own approach to leadership as well as to the culture of BRU.

External Funding Streams

Sexton's concern about BRU's dependence on the state was vital in framing his vision to:

> pioneer the model of a British university which worked as American universities do—on the basis of funding contributions from the private sector, the commercialization of intellectual property, private feeds, as well as the state (Sexton 2004).

Sexton's vision indicates his view that BRU needed to change its funding paradigm in order to secure its future. He wanted to avoid a repeat of the turbulence that BRU had endured decades earlier when the Funding Council reduced its financial support to the

institution and BRU went into a period of retrenchment that took a toll on its self-image. Sexton noted:

> There was a sudden cutback where the then-Funding Council began to look at the amount of money universities actually needed, and determined that we had been over funded and had to take about 20 percent out of the budget. It was therefore an extremely rocky period for an institution which had been reasonably comfortable over the years, when one of my predecessors … heroically set about cutting everything out and getting [the university] down to a scale where it could afford to operate (Sexton 2004).

Sexton understood that through its allocations, the Funding Council exercised financial influence over British universities. He believed that, like their American counterparts, British universities needed to aggressively pursue external funding sources, including philanthropic gifts, as a way to shore up their financial baselines. In promoting an American model of philanthropy to higher education institutions in Britain, Sexton noted:

> It is only since 1945 that we have been able to rely on government and ignore philanthropy. My own university was established many years ago on charitable donations—so were many others—long before our US competitors or the welfare state were established. Philanthropy is not the sole solution to the funding question. Rather than our relying on government, we must accept that philanthropy has become an option we cannot afford to ignore (Sexton 2004).

Sexton and others initiated a multi-million pound fund-raising campaign for BRU. Three years later, the fund-raising campaign had raised from individual donors/philanthropists, foundations, and alumni, far more than Sexton imagined it would by that time, and increased alumni giving (BRU 2002). He argued that, in part, because of these fund-raising successes, BRU was establishing a paradigm by which to direct its own future.

International Scholarly Competitiveness

Sexton was further concerned with helping BRU gain distinction beyond its region by

advancing an agenda of internationally recognized research with particular relevance

to its region. He commented:

> My idea is that there may be a paradigm for a university like this with
> a noble history and some genuine intellectual capital that could do a lot
> on these areas for the region, but do them so well that one could
> extrapolate and then make a new raw material for internationally
> competitive scholarly work (Sexton 2004).

Sexton felt that the part of the British higher education system in which BRU operated

under-emphasised the sort of competitiveness that guides modern universities.

> I am constantly trying to spread the message that we must become
> more and more and more competitive because that's the way the
> modern university really works (2004).

Sexton saw it as his role to guide BRU's staff in rethinking how the university

engages with the world, as he had done at an institution in the United States. Thus,

international scholarly competition, as a way of advancing a university, was a well-

developed concept in Sexton's mind. However, he sensed little interest at BRU in

participating in the world beyond its region. Others on Sexton's team challenged his

perspective, noting BRU's numerous international engagements: from study abroad

and faculty-exchange programs to research and teaching activities (BRU 2004).

However, Sexton's concern was less with BRU's activities than with the mindsets that

he felt localised its self-concept. He believed that BRU needed to broaden its way of

thinking and its self-understandings in order to succeed.

Institutional Autonomy

The third knowledge framework guiding Sexton's leadership of BRU is that of

institutional autonomy. Reflecting on BRU's relationship to the Funding Council,

Sexton believed that BRU was too "close to its paymasters" to be self-directing. He stated:

> The [power] matrix [between the state and universities] is tilted very significantly [in favour of the state] because the agenda is so political due to funding being politically derived (Sexton 2004).

Sexton decided to co-opt the British Funding Council's higher education agenda for BRU to serve its region as a means of pursuing his desire to increase BRU's autonomy from the state. He adopted an agenda of international scholarship for the advancement of the region, through which BRU attracted international students and scholars (Sexton 2004, BRU 2004). In doing so, Sexton was able to press forward his vision.

Black American University (BAU)

Following the American Civil War, between 1865 and 1890, more than 100 schools, including the two that would become Black American University (BAU), were founded to educate newly freed slaves (Jones, *et al.* 2006). Like BAU, most of these institutions began as primary and secondary schools, since teaching slaves to read and write was unlawful in America prior to 1865, when the country abolished slavery (Jones, *et al.* 2006). Located in an urban city in the South, BAU resulted from a merger between two academic institutions.

Since its founding, BAU has been responsible for notable academic and social achievements. In its first decades, it was known for its scholarly faculty, engagement in the American Civil Rights Movement, and education of people who would become leading social activists of their time (Boykin 2004; Jones, *et al.* 2006). Some thought that BAU was at its best under the leadership of Dr. Massey, who served as president

for nearly two decades. Dr. Massey was a charismatic leader who often commented on social issues of the time. He was fiscally conservative and was said to exercise an authoritarian leadership style (Confidential 2004). By the time of Dr. Massey's retirement, the BAU Board of Trustees (governing body) had begun to consider that the university needed a change in direction (Trustee 2004). Dr. Mays, a longtime government official and part-time academic, became president of the university.

A President's Perspective

Dr. Mays remarked on finding an institution that, although financially stable, had fallen into decline and needed reinvigorating:

> The school had reached a kind of point where it had lost just about all of its energy.... I thought BAU had really lost a kind of impatience with mediocrity (2004).

Indeed, enrolment was stalled at 1,600, representing a decline of thirty percent over the previous two decades. With few exceptions, the academic staff were not producing scholarship or engaged in academic communities outside of BAU. The campus infrastructure and buildings were deteriorating. There was no strategic plan (Mays 2004). Based on accounts of respondents, BAU was in a tenuous position— unable to rely on its achievements to steady it in a changing and uncertain world, yet insufficiently attentive to its future. President Mays developed a strategic view of BAU as a "turnaround" institution that needed spiritual as well as structural change.

Three knowledge frameworks underpinned Mays' leadership of BAU: engagement, planning, and standards.

Mays' Knowledge Frameworks (Diagram 5.2)
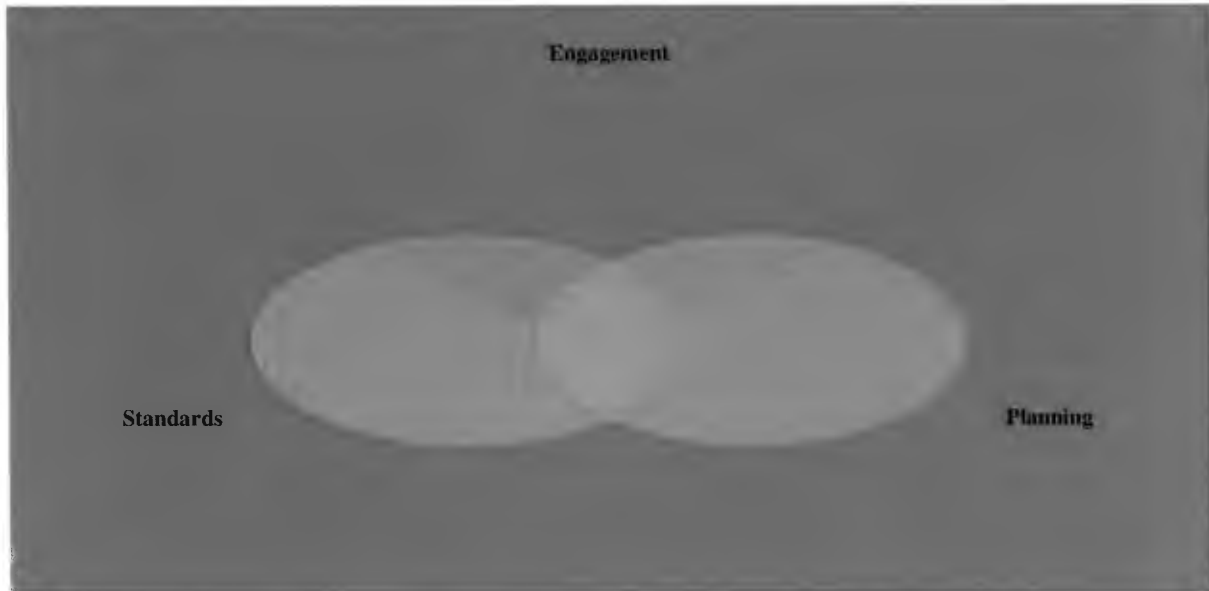
An Idea of Engagement

To counter what he believed to be an uncritical culture at BAU, Mays adopted a

leadership strategy of engagement:

> To me, leadership is engagement and taking the active and not the
> passive [stance], whether that is as a citizen: not just voting but
> contributing, running for office, and all of that (2004).

For Mays, engagement was both personal and institutional. From a personal

perspective, he felt that he had to be "always out front" as a consistent presence at

BAU in order to signal a new direction. Akin to Vice Chancellor Sexton of BRU,

Mays expressed the importance of his being an active participant in civic life and in

national dialogues in order to give BAU a voice beyond its gates. Mays' perspective

on engagement is consistent with the literature, which indicates:

> Leaders own, align, set expectations, model, communicate, engage,
> and reward; [knowing that] what they do affects the organization
> (Kezar and Eckel (2000), pg. 297).

Institutionally, Mays felt that BAU's academic staff needed to engage in redefining the university and their relationships to it, that the Board needed to engage in macro-problem solving, and that BAU needed a structured change process. Through his idea of engagement, Mays provided a personal perspective on what he believed to be the stages of institutional change:

> The first two years of a new administration are always a honeymoon.
> In year two [and thereafter], your real supporters are galvanized but so
> are your enemies (Mays 2004).

Indeed, change at BAU was resisted:

> There were a lot of very unattractive scenes, you know, anything that
> [resisters] could do to undermine [our change efforts] (Mays 2004).

Although the literature indicates that organisational change may be predicated on conflict—whether of mission, vision, or personalities—it may also be that the depth, intensity, and uncertain effects of the changes that President Mays promoted so threatened BAU's cultural stability and staff's personal security that they exacerbated some people's negative views of the change process. If so, then resistance to change at BAU may be part of an institutional acculturation, which rendered its staff reluctant to accept new knowledge frameworks, as vice president for enrolment management, Mr. Ran suggested:

> Unfortunately, sometimes in very bureaucratic structures [like BAU's
> was], there is this little passive dynamic with people, and they feel beat
> down, [and that becomes] what they're used to (Ran 2004).

While there is no objective proof of the accuracy of Mr. Ran's assessment of BAU's culture prior to the arrival of Mays, his views were echoed by other members of the senior staff. It was said that resisters questioned the knowledge frameworks by which Mays and the new staff understood BAU. Mays' leadership challenge was to stimulate and (re)shape peoples' relationship with the institution from what he

perceived to be one of apathy to a new level of connectedness to its mission and aspirations.

Planning

It was Mays' view that black American colleges in particular lacked a tradition of planning; that they were primarily reactive to the changes in their environments, rather than directive of those changes (BAU 2003; Mays 2004). He believed that "with a plan and a lot of energy and persistence, you could turn things around" at BAU (Mays 2004). Offered by Mr. Ran, and corroborated by other respondents and the records reviewed:

> When I arrived at BAU two years before President Mays, I found a "business card" mentality. It was just like "let's hope we make the class, but we're not going to do any strategic planning, any cost analysis.... None of that stuff was happening here (Ran 2004).

Shortly after his arrival, Mays and his team developed BAU's first strategic plan in which the leadership sought to address the campus' failing physical and nearly nonexistent technological infrastructures. Mays recalled:

> I think we came up with close to $20 million in the first round of activity. And at the same time, [we were] putting together an aggressive and creative recruitment plan, which was something that not many of the black colleges were doing, and we really learned the science of enrollment management and put that to work here (Mays 2004).

The vice chair of the Board, Dr. Taylor, noted:

> [Dr. Mays] didn't say to us, "We need to go for a bond offering because we need to build this infrastructure because here's this campus that looks good but it's really crumbling." He talked about [change] in the context of what it did not mean. [His message was], in a sense, that [addressing BAU's problems was] necessary in order for it to be the place and destination, a desired place, to attract more and more students, to attract a higher quality student, to put BAU in that trajectory in terms of the 21st century. So he had a very cohesive, very aggressive, but logical plan (Taylor 2004).

The plan started what became a planning ethos at the institution, with all BAU study respondents referencing their area's planning documents and processes in their interviews as barometers of their leadership. Provost White believed:

> If it's worth doing at BAU, it's got to be in the plan. If it's not in the plan, you don't do it because if you don't know where you are going, any path will take you there. So you end up anywhere. I guess part of the challenge in higher education is to know where you are going (White 2004).

Provost White's indication that worthwhile activities and expenditures should be in the institution's strategic plan corroborates the importance of planning to BAU's change process.

Standards

Reflecting on his perspective of BAU upon arriving, President Mays said:

> I came in July, and, in October, I presented the Board of Trustees with a sort of State of the Institution. They didn't know how bad the facilities were, how all the [talk] about work quality, not quantity, just really didn't hold [here]. The school was by so many standards just underachieving, and everybody was in a kind of delusion. This was all denial or delusion that they were operating under (2004).

Mays was concerned with creating processes and standards by which to plan and measure BAU's effectiveness. This effort had special significance for the academic staff:

> We set standards [for faculty tenure and promotion]. Faculty approved them, but then we started applying the standards. We are down to one lawsuit now.... We have settled a bunch, and some were thrown out, but we have maintained our standards (Mays 2004).

The above statement indicates that the setting of academic standards proved challenging (and litigious) to academic staff and to the university, but became a core value by which BAU was led. The imposition of new standards represented a change that was "very traumatic for the institution, and unpleasant and costly" (Mays 2004).

As a body, the academic staff called for the standards to be investigated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which censured the university for its processes but found no fault in its intent (BAU 2002, BAU 2004). Still, nearly a third of the faculty lodged complaints against BAU for misconduct in the application of the standards. Most of the charges were set aside in court, and numerous academic staff were terminated for not meeting the standards (BAU Confidential 2004). Said Provost White:

> We had faculty members who had been here thirty years as assistant professors, and who hadn't done anything other than show up every day. So I said: "Here's the deal. Everybody has an opportunity to stay at BAU, and here are the things that you have to do to stay... I am going to give you two years." After two years, we had thirteen people who had taken no action, actually one who had taken foolish action. I gave them all letters of non-renewal. [My feeling is] if you, as a faculty member, are not going to respect the tenets of your profession [to teach, conduct research, and provide service], I would rather meet you in court than in the classroom (White 2004).

Provost White was Mays' surrogate and reflected his approach to institutional change, which, as evident in the above statement, meant being direct, forceful, and revolutionary in the context of BAU.

American Business School (ABS)

American Business School (ABS) was founded by a successful businessperson to train the sons of local entrepreneurs in sound business practices. In establishing ABS, the founder was concerned that privileged young men were inheriting their fathers' wealth, businesses, and legacies without the necessary training to succeed (ABS 2006). Thus, ABS began training pupils in four areas of study: practical economics, finance and management, psychology (a precursor to human resources), and personal efficiency (ethics, hygiene, and interpersonal relationships). The school's early

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curriculum did not focus on liberal education, as the founder assumed that students would familiarize themselves with the arts and sciences, but the curriculum later expanded to include the liberal arts (Turner and ABS 2003).

At the time of the study, ABS comprised an undergraduate and graduate student body of a few thousand, from seventy-five countries; academic departments in accounting, law, arts and humanities, economics, entrepreneurship, finance, history and society, technology and operations, management, marketing and mathematics, and science; and numerous research centres focused on different aspects of business. Further, the school had just completed what it considered and observers deemed a "transformation" of its curriculum, which repositioned it from a "sleepy regional school" to one of national standing (Keller 2004). Now, however, ABS was in a period of self-reflection, questioning the efficacy and sustainability of its transformation.

On many of the major issues of this study, ABS straddles a corporate and academic identity, and the knowledge frameworks that President Morris and his team bring to bear are redolent of this duality.

A CEO's View
A graduate of ABS, President Morris spent his career working in the corporate sector, becoming a senior officer in a Fortune 50 company. His primary connection with university administration was as chair of the ABS Board of Trustees. As Board chair, Morris supervised the university's then-president, herein referenced as President II. Morris believed President II

didn't have the skill set, the passion to do what needed to be done: provide leadership from both a fund-raising standpoint and from an academic standpoint..., the energy, the passion, all those intangibles that are necessary to be a successful leader in any organization (Morris 2004).

Several years before data for the study were collected, Morris had been instrumental in the removal of President II. Morris said of the university's condition:

There was vision lacking, there was no strategic plan. It makes it difficult to make decisions in a resource-constrained environment without these kinds of tools as a frame of reference. The most immediate challenge I faced was the realization that we had a real budget deficient brewing that had to be dealt with (2004).

Implicit in Morris' statement is his sense that it was his job to address the university's deficit by re-examining its recent growth. From his perspective, "this is a school that is run more like a business than like an academic environment [sic]."

Viewing ABS in a context of business, his dominant knowledge framework, permitted Morris to make sense of the university's complex character. The chart below depicts "institutional strategy" as Morris' knowledge framework in use.

Morris' Knowledge Framework: A Constructed View (Diagram 5.3)
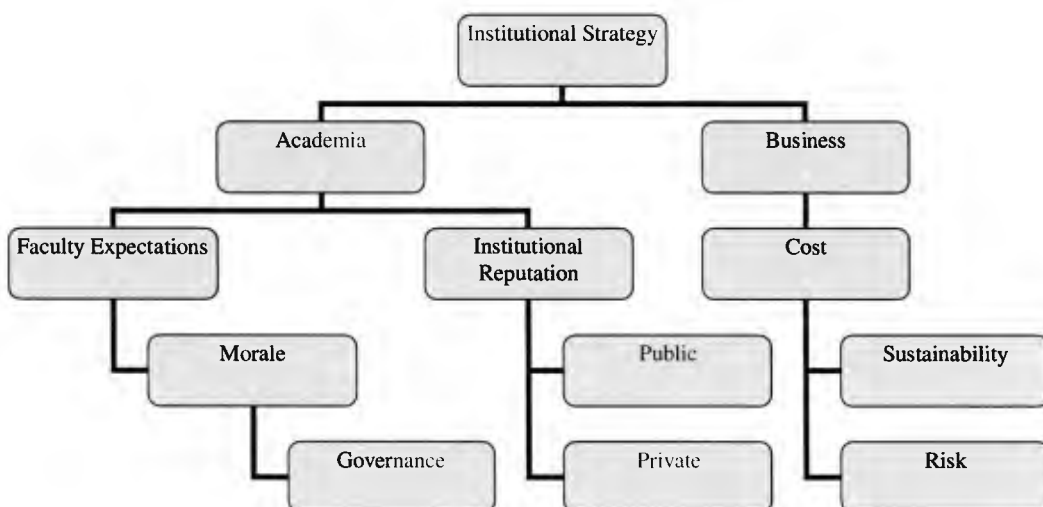
Institutional Strategy

Institutional strategy refers to directing a university to change. Moore (1992) posits:

> Whether it is termed general management, business policy, corporate strategy, long-range planning or corporate management, the sector has addressed the same issue: the determination of an organization, in its entirety, can best be directed in a changing world (pg. xi).

President Morris noted that ABS had no strategic plan when he became president and that it was imperative for him to begin a planning process that included a review of the university's mission statement, establishment of a vision statement, and institutional articulation of values. He recounted:

> My experience of the private sector is that most quality businesses have a set of core values when you walk into the lobby. They are displayed there, or they are on the back of their annual report. And that basically is your foundation for a strategic plan. You've got core values, you've got a mission, and you've got a vision. And I believe that any good strategy is steeped in the traditions of the institution, which the core values help define. It builds on the successes of the past but it also looks to the future (Morris 2004).

In Morris' view, looking to the future required reflection on the past.

Reflection

Morris called for ABS to reexamine its growth in light of its financial situation.

> Everything sounds good, you can make an argument for almost anything and we in fact did and in fact invested in about everything. That strategy was not particularly harmful when we had the wind at our backs through the 90's like most other places. But when choices had to be made and you began to really reflect, it was fairly obvious that some [initiatives were] nice to do but not key to a strategy because we didn't have one (Morris 2004).

Underlying President Morris' statement is that ABS was running a structural deficit of $10 million per year. Its fund-raising campaign had stalled, and the costs of its curricular reforms were increasingly evident. Morris stated:

> I don't think people realized what kind of deficit we were looking at. Certainly, from the manner in which the financials were presented to the Board, it was not obvious. No one anticipated that the endowment would start shrinking [as a result of the financial decline of US markets following the events of September 11, 2001]. No one anticipated the annual fund projections falling as short as they did for at least a year (2003). I think the manner in which initiatives were funded caused a tendency to rely on annual funding of specific initiatives, never building these things into the base budget. All of a sudden, when these external funding sources dried up, we are sort of committed to these things (Morris 2004).

Thus, some of ABS' difficulties were not of its making. However, Morris wavered on taking responsibility for what was within the institution's purview during his tenure as chair of the Board. When invited to comment on this period, Morris said:

> It is not something that I would have thought the Board would have necessarily paid attention to but would have expected the administration to pay attention to.... That's how we got in trouble. That is why the president/CEO was replaced, along with the chief administrative officer and the chief financial officer. There were deficiencies of the management team and you could say that the Board should have been more diligent or less believing and done more probing, but we had never had an issue before. There is almost no explanation (Morris 2004).

Others on the senior management team reported that they believed Morris had a personal desire to correct what he believed, but did not articulate, was his own leadership responsibility as Board chair to grasp the management challenges that ABS faced during his oversight (ABS Confidential 2004).

A Problem of Dualities

Risk-taking has been part of ABS' culture from its inception, and underpins Morris' leadership strategy. He believed that President II feared failure, which undermined his leadership of ABS:

> ... failure is not something you should fear, because if you fear failure you are never going to take risks, and I don't know how you ever get anything moving forward, other than at the margin, without taking risks (Morris 2004).

The fear of failure, Morris believed, caused his predecessor to be unwilling or unable to set institutional priorities, to make difficult financial decisions, or to engage with the academic staff around unpopular issues—which, in Morris' view, meant an absence of leadership. He believed that effective leadership entails intangibles such as energy and passion, which differs from his business training where he learned to measure success by the numbers. Yet Morris measured President II's effectiveness, in part, by his dearth of fund-raising and accumulation of a structural deficit.

Discussion

Each case institution has a unique identity and set of challenges, and each appointed a chief executive whose background and thinking was in line with the institution's mission and aspirations. The institutions looked to their leaders for vision and guidance, and the leaders looked to their own knowledge frameworks when setting their institutions' direction. These knowledge frameworks, then, informed most respondents' thinking about and leadership of their universities. For instance, at BAU, President Mays' ideas about engagement, standards, and planning were analogous to his perceptions of the university's challenges as well as to his thinking about his own leadership attributes. At BRU, Sexton thought that the university needed to increase its international engagement, notwithstanding the fact that it had graduated a number of Nobel laureates. Sexton was predisposed towards internationalization of universities and had successfully spurred an international agenda at another university where he had been vice-chancellor. Thus, internationalization was conceptually intuitive for Sexton. It was an area in which he had been effective and which he thought might distinguish both BRU and his own vice chancellorship. President Morris of ABS had strengths as a businessperson, and there was concern on the Board

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about the institution's financial standing. Morris constructed his presidency around what he believed were areas in need of business improvement. By implication, a connection exists between institutional circumstances and the knowledge frameworks that respondents brought to bear in managing them.

The data, thus far, suggest two propositions:

1. Leaders' knowledge frameworks link inextricably to their experiences.

2. Leaders employ their knowledge frameworks to provide a lens by which to make institutional meaning and effect change.

Proposition I

The first proposition—that leaders' knowledge frameworks link to their experiences—is shown in the following analysis.

In the case of BRU, Vice Chancellor Sexton arrived at a time when the institution had declining financial support from the British Funding Council, increased external engagement with the institution's operations, and a waning enrolment base. In line with his training in the private sector of American higher education, Sexton sought to make sense of what was happening at BRU, primarily through an international lens. He considered that BRU was too reliant on the state to effectively direct its operations, and too entrenched in a localized context to succeed in a global marketplace. Sexton's experiences in America guided his thinking that BRU needed to reach beyond its region, both in its intellectual focus and in its operational presence. This was necessary, he believed, in order for the university to attract the best students (and the financial support that full-fee-paying international students

would bring), and the best scholars (along with the enhanced institutional reputation and added research dollars that they would bring). His goal was to make BRU more relevant in a contemporary world, and less dependent on the state for its existence. Sexton recognized that in order for the cultural, political, and operational changes that he promoted to succeed, he needed to hold the institution together on a basis of collegiality, which again he learned from managing institutional change and conflict in America.

Sexton wanted BRU to emerge as a research university that was prepared to play on the international stage. He noted: "We are constantly comparing [BRU] internationally and asking how can [we] be improved?" (Sexton 2004). Sexton engaged consultants to help his senior management team think through how BRU might gain international strength were it to expand its recruitment of foreign students, faculty, and researchers; become less dependent on the British Funding Council for operating budgets; and focus academic programmes to gain efficiency (BFC 2002; Sexton 2004). Some members of the senior management team expressed a belief that for BRU to succeed in a changing environment, it needed to succeed nationally (meaning in Great Britain) in terms of drawing in students, faculty, and reputation. The team's strategy was to enhance BRU's standing by strengthening its national focus, as both an incubator and disseminator of knowledge. However, it was Sexton's vision that prevailed. Noted Sexton:

> As for the university itself, I did think that ... bringing people into an international, competitive matrix might be an important contribution. And that sort of thing seemed to me to be missing from the British culture and something that I thought I could impart (2004)

Sexton was convinced through his experiences working in America that BRU needed a global agenda that was rooted in an increased sense of competition.

In the case of BAU, President Mays' knowledge frameworks were informed by his idea that in order for an organisation to succeed, its members have to be engaged, and that the role of leadership is to stimulate engagement. He came to this view through his decades of experience working in government, during which he had to champion and negotiate change. In coming to BAU, he also had an idea of what an engaged institution would be like—a version of the intellectual and cultural excitement that he alluded to in talking about the BAU of the Harlem Renaissance (also known as the "New Negro Movement"): a period from the 1920 to 1940 in which there was a unique convergence and celebration by black Americans of black American art, literature and culture of the time. He believed that black American universities have a dual mandate: to their historic missions to educate often under-prepared black students, and to promote excellence. For BAU, Mays' conceptualisation of excellence meant:

- Restoring the institution's belief in itself and raising its standards;
- Creating an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and cultural stimulation;
- Becoming recognized as a competitor with schools that he thought were the best black colleges in America.

However, Mays had another compelling knowledge framework that guided his leadership of BAU. He had graduated from one of the four institutions that BAU sought to emulate. Mays felt that his undergraduate experience was a defining period for him and for how he perceived BAU: "I think a lot of it goes back to [my undergraduate experience]." Mays had attended a private, predominantly black college that became a model of prestige and personal/spiritual awakening that he

wanted BAU students to have. Thus, the knowledge frameworks that Mays employed in his leadership of BAU were an amalgamation of his experiences.

This is also true of President Morris, who approached his leadership of ABS through his insights as a businessperson. Unlike Sexton or Mays, both of whom brought a depth of experience in public-sector leadership to their roles, Morris took a different view of leadership:

> You create a buzz in a community, whether it's a company, or a division, or ABS, that this place ... is on the move. I think that through the manner in which you conduct yourself, your personal style, your presence, you don't ask anybody to work any harder than you do. If you put in more hours than everyone else, you set a good example. Those are all ways that I think you display leadership (Morris 2004).

Unlike Sexton and Mays, Morris did not identify as a priority a concern with establishing a moral centre by which to lead ABS. He sees ABS from a business perspective, noting:

> Most quality businesses have a set of core values when you walk into the lobby.... ABS had no such core values that were written. They had them. We just had to discover what they were (Morris 2004).

Although Morris talked about the need for organisations to have core values, he did not mention any that he believed were necessary for ABS to succeed. Moreover, there is little evidence that he encouraged others to think critically about the institution beyond the school's financial capacity and market position. Morris' knowledge frameworks, then, do not reflect the sort of emphasis on community, collectivity, or intellectual engagement that underpins those of Sexton and Mays, although they do reflect his experiences.

Proposition II
Proposition II is that leaders' knowledge frameworks provide them with lenses by which to make institutional meaning and change. Sexton thought about BRU as a "broad-spectrum university;" Mays viewed BAU through the lens of the Harlem Renaissance and as a "turnaround institution," and Morris reflected on strategy as ABS' mantra for change.

In advancing an idea of a broad-spectrum university, Sexton sought to provide the "space" necessary for BRU to conduct its many activities, and to add a greater degree of international competitiveness. Sexton believed that he could not effect positive change at BRU were he to seek to discontinue its long-established activities, most of which involved service to its region. However, he saw that he could gain traction for his change agenda by helping those concerned with BRU understand the competitive landscape in which the university operates, and that service to the region and international recognition could be compatible ideas.

However, whereas Sexton saw Britain as secondary and engagement in the broader world as primary to his agenda for BRU, he recognized that in order for his message to resonate at home in Britain it needed to be structured around the expectations of the British Funding Council. Thus, he focused his rhetoric on the needs of his region and on what BRU could do to help the region as a means to advance his desire for BRU to become an international competitor. While Sexton's knowledge frameworks buttressed his change agenda for BRU, they were structured to his target audience: BRU staff and British political elites. Thus, he applied his knowledge frameworks strategically.

Mays also displayed an understanding of his institution and of the knowledge frameworks that would help him to advance change. In promoting the theme of engagement, Mays sent a message that BAU needed to raise its level of commitment to and participation in the various activities that make universities what he believed they should be—vibrant places of scholarly and personal growth. He developed an image of what BAU could be that was rooted in its past. This emphasis on the past as a metaphoric bridge to the future was the most salient knowledge framework for Mays, who understood his role as two-fold: first, to help BAU recall its greatness, and second, to bring the institution into a contemporary universe of intellectual engagement.

Finally, the knowledge frameworks of President Morris are evident in his leadership efforts. He believed that ABS needed to operate more as a business and that it needed a strategy for success. Throughout his interviews, he underscored the importance of ABS' strategic plan. However, his senior staff members were less sanguine that a plan would be enough to resonate with academic staff. Morris felt that because ABS was principally a business school, its academic staff would think like businesspeople, but that was not the case, as he conceded:

> [The] faculty is completely out of the loop on governance...; they
> don't know the financial situation of the college, and they don't care
> to. They are faculty, not business people. They are much more like
> history professors than they are like businessmen (Morris 2004).

If the above statement is correct, then Morris may have adopted knowledge frameworks that are inconsistent with how ABS works, a concept supported by the literature (Birnbaum 1988) and the other two cases. It may be that Morris did not appreciate the necessity of gaining the support of academic staff for his change initiatives, or in articulating rationales for what he sought to do. Neither did he

advance a sense of collectivity and shared understanding that are central to the change efforts of BRU and BAU.

Conclusion

Leading institutional change within changing universities requires knowledge frameworks by which to imagine and help others imagine universities anew. In each case, leaders' knowledge frameworks underpinned their conceptualizations of their institutions. The data indicate that respondents' personal knowledge frameworks structured their institutional perspectives and change agendas. Sexton's knowledge frameworks were rooted in his perspectives on competition, internationalisation, and institutional autonomy. These then became the basis of his concept of BRU as a "broad-spectrum university" and the crux of his leadership. Mays' knowledge frameworks were engagement, standards, and planning, which he used to formulate BAU's self -"reclamation." Finally, Morris' knowledge framework of strategy was central to his quest to correct ABS' structural deficit while maintaining the core of its curricular reforms. Hence, these leaders' adopted knowledge frameworks were the primary lenses through which they viewed their institutions and the bases on which they structured their leadership.

6: Institutional Identity

Introduction

Institutional identity is the second theoretical category to emerge from the data. Gioia and Thomas (1996) argue that institutional identity reflects the attitudes and impressions that are held within an organisation. Here the desired identities of the case-study institutions, as promoted by their CEOs, are explored in light of their institutional change efforts. The chapter has two parts. First is an examination of the shaping of institutional identity at the case universities. Second is discussion of the role of identity in the institutional change process at the case universities vis-à-vis the literature.

Part I: Framing Institutional Identity

Higher education's chief measure of success is institutional identity and reputation, which have long been drivers of change (Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Torraco, *et al.* 2005). In their study of how top management teams make sense of issues when managing strategic change in academic institutions, Gioia and Thomas (1996) hold that strategic change in universities involves a combination of identity, image, and issue interpretation, where:

> ... identity, in particular, is typically taken to be that which is central, distinctive, and enduring about an organization (pg. 370).

In the sense offered by Gioia and Thomas, institutional identity has much to do with the knowledge frameworks that staff employ to make sense of their institutions. "Image" refers to the representations of universities held by staff and others. According to Gioia and Thomas, since staff experience the world differently, they will identify with their institutions differently. At issue is whether leaders are able to

coalesce these diverse prisms so that staff identify with their institutions in similar ways. Conversely, given the environment in which universities operate—their role in knowledge creation and diversity of perspectives within them—it may be impossible or undesirable to band them together. Barnett (2003) is correct that as incubators of knowledge in an ever-changing world:

> The university ... moves in spaces that it only partly constructs.... [The university's] key activities ... are configured ... by [the] vigorous currents that swirl around it.... The intersecting of key activities with these wider currents produces, for each university, an *institutional identity* [original emphasis]. It is clear that this identity is not just dynamic but what else it is cannot be captured in any simple way, either by the institution itself (whether in its mission statement or its corporate plan) or by interested observers (pg. 47).

Given the variety of activities attached to universities, along with the innumerable perspectives by which staff account for them, an institution's identity is neither singular nor stable. Yet, according to Gioia and Thomas, institutional identity also refers to how an institution sees itself. Given their diversity of mission and perspectives, it may be necessary for universities to amalgamate and align the knowledge frameworks through which staff come to understand and shape their institutions. As such, multiple institutional identities, some of which may not be apparent, are likely to exist at any given time within institutions. Within this milieu, the leadership of changing universities arises.

Part II: Identities in the Case-Study Institutions

British Research University (BRU)
Vice Chancellor Sexton's leadership of BRU was shown in the preceding chapter to be defined by three knowledge frameworks: alternative funding streams, international

scholarly competitiveness, and institutional autonomy. The Vice Chancellor held views that:

- The university needed to be more engaged with the world.

- Scholarship should be judged within an international arena.

- BRU needed to broaden its academic profile by adding professional and vocational education as a means of attracting new students and revenues, and of having greater relevance in contemporary society.

These perspectives structured Sexton's idea of BRU as a "broad-spectrum university," as shown below.

BRU as a Broad-Spectrum University (Diagram 6.1)
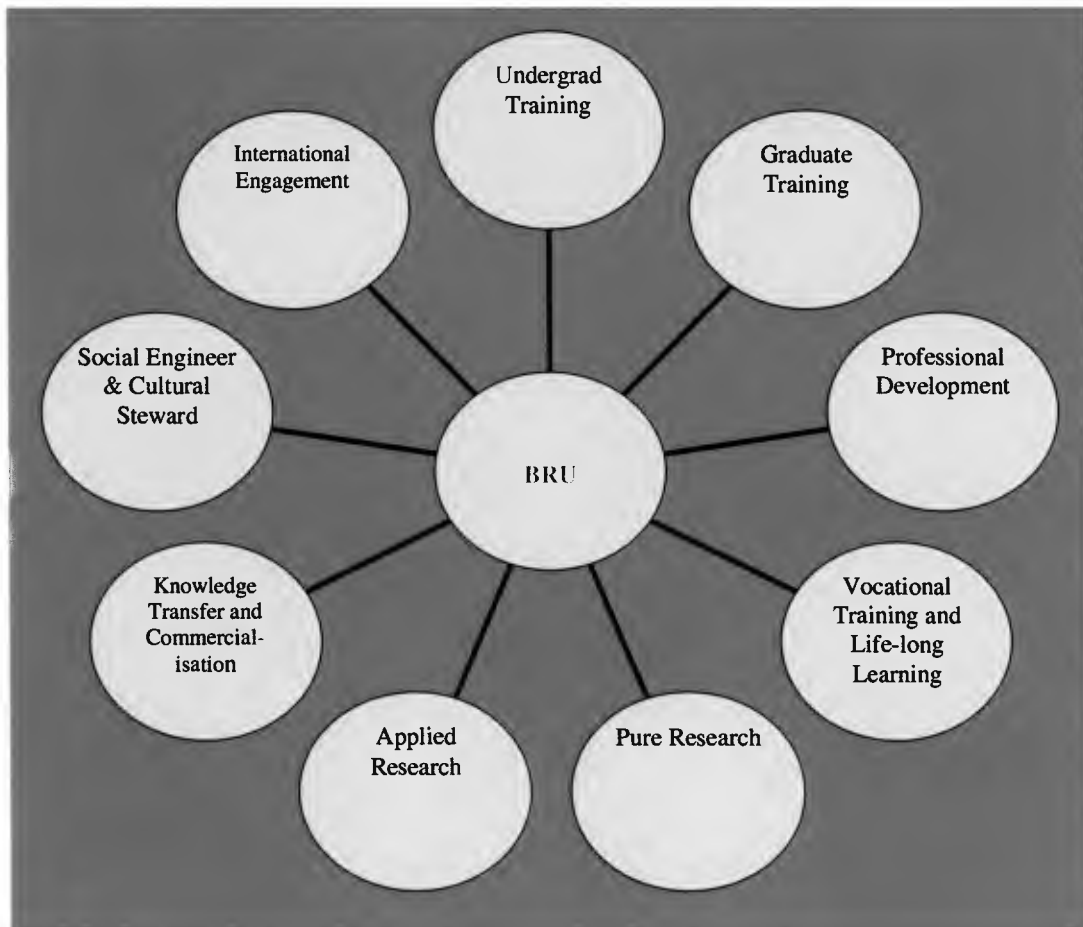
Broad-Spectrum University

Said Sexton:

> When I arrived [at BRU] I started to use the phrase 'broad-spectrum university' to describe us. By this I meant a university which has many levels of activity—technology transfer, commercialization, applied research, pure research, graduate and undergraduate training, vocational and extension teaching, professional development, and continuing education (Sexton 2004).

Sexton's idea of a "broad-spectrum university" emphasized BRU's areas of present and prospective activity and underscored that whereas BRU has multiple, sometimes competing aims, it has a responsibility to manage them all. Sexton's terminology of a broad-spectrum university supported his belief that BRU needed to change its self-concept in order to succeed in a world that is increasingly interdisciplinary and borderless. Underlying Sexton's ambitions for BRU is a tension between his desire for the university to gain greater international visibility and his desire to make the university more relevant to local citizens.

Sexton was concerned that, upon his arrival, BRU's curriculum did not extend beyond the traditional arts and sciences. With the exception of the school of medicine, there were no professional schools. Regionally, BRU was losing prospective students to other institutions that offered vocational training (BRU 2002). Moreover, sectors of British higher education were undergoing planned restructurings to reduce the number of higher education institutions through closings and mergers (BFC 2002). Sexton was successful in acquiring an education school to expand BRU's focus. However, doing so was met with resistance from some of BRU's academic staff, who believed that "education" was not a scholarly discipline and should not be included in BRU's academic portfolio. Sexton noted:

> I spend a great deal of time trying to defend the idea – that we must treat very seriously our new education faculty, because I think teaching people to be teachers is about as noble a calling as you can have. And to try to prove that [teacher preparation] in an [academic] community means ... value, and I think it is a terribly important part of leadership (Sexton 2004).

Sexton hinted of his challenge to change the minds of some members of the BRU community about its activities. His perspective was influenced by two other realities:

1. The Funding Council had mandated that BRU, along with other British universities, realign its activities to be more pertinent to its sectors of the British higher education market, which Sexton called "pushing the required agenda."

2. An education school would bring new students and revenues to help other areas of academic operation, such as the arts, that did not have external funding (Sexton 2004).

Sexton felt that he could not ignore the Council's agenda to optimize economic and social benefit to the region; nor did he fully want to, given his desire for a vocational school to be added to BRU. He took a strategic decision to advance the Council's agenda to realign British higher education institutions to be more efficient by expanding BRU's academic offerings, thereby strengthening its financial base. BRU's expansion meant that the Council would no longer fund a stand-alone school of education in the region, which facilitated the Council's goal of streamlining (BRU 2004). Thus, that BRU subsumed the education school served a dual purpose: (1) to extend the university's offerings and capture a market theretofore unavailable to it and (2) to advance the Council's economic agenda. This was an intentional outcome on the part of Sexton, who said:

> [I am] constantly trying to give the signal [that] we do splendid stuff [in the traditional disciplines]; but at the same time, pushing the

required agenda, and above all, I suppose, the dignity of the people who do the required agenda (Sexton 2004).

A second attempt to promote Sexton's view of a broad-spectrum university failed with the university's collapsed merger negotiation with a neighbouring and mostly vocational institution. Here too, Sexton was concerned with meeting the demands of the Council while also advancing BRU's financial independence from the state. The proposed merger was met with opposition at both BRU and the vocational college. Sexton shared:

> Part of my constant job is simply to encourage people to be as intellectual as they can, but at the same time, to try to get it across to them, as I did during our merger talks with the vocational college, that there is absolutely nothing disgraceful in work which is in your market. That you can have as much intellectual integrity in something which is vocational as in pure mathematics or symbolic logic.... That we actually have an obligation to [be a broad-spectrum university] (Sexton 2004).

The proposed merger failed, largely because the staff of BRU, and to a greater extent those of the vocational college, were threatened by a diminution or loss of institutional identity (BRU 2004; BRU 2004). The staff of BRU questioned whether merging with a vocational school would have a negative impact on their research agenda and reputation, as their orientation was more international and research-inclined than that of other institutions in the region (BRU 2003). Concurrently, staff of the vocational college were concerned that their institutional identity would be subsumed by that of BRU, leaving the vocational college faculty with what they perceived to be a loss of identity. It is within this context that BRU contemplated altering its character by becoming "a new model university" as a result of the merger. Given that the merger did not materialise, the university, at the time of the study, was contemplating how to realise its aspirations.

Black American University (BAU)

The data reveal that the identity construction buttressing BAU's change efforts under

President Mays are: reclamation (of the university's past luster), renewal (of the

university's environment, physical structures, and self-understandings), and

responsibility (for the university's heritage and future), as depicted below.

BAU's Identity Construction (Diagram 6.2)

Reclamation

Responsibility

Renewal
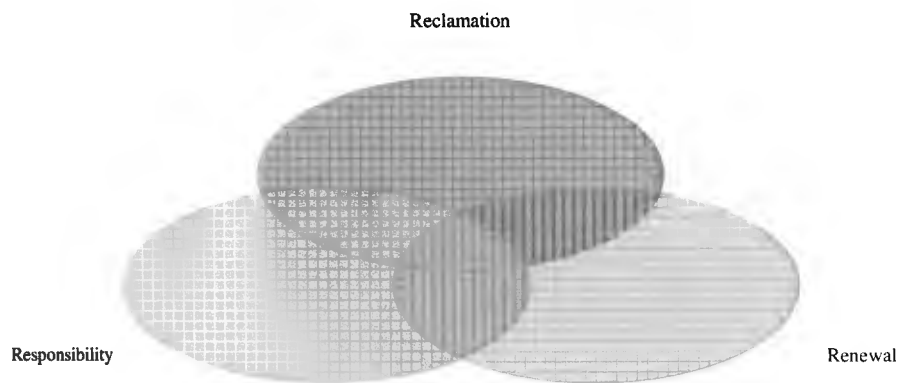
Reclamation

Mays wanted to reshape BAU's identity by creating a "culture of excellence." He

believed that by setting high standards and insisting on accountability, he would be

able to help BAU "reclaim" itself:

> [We needed to] reclaim that high academic standard; attracting bright
> students, regardless of economic background and giving them an
> education that teaches people how to live a life, and not how to earn a
> living. It was really helping the institution remember what it had been
> established to achieve, and to re-energize that and galvanize people
> around that vision (2004).

Mays called upon BAU's staff and other members to regain what he perceived to be

the university's rightful place at the apex of black American colleges and universities,

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and to see itself in the realm of elite liberal-arts institutions, regardless of racial heritage.

Mays believed that BAU had the capacity to change from relative obscurity to elite status amongst its competitors, in part, by redefining its competitive matrix, which meant revamping its infrastructure, student profile, academic standards, faculty, fundraising, and reputation. Mays spoke in opposition to the image he believed many people held of black colleges in America:

> So many of the people who have been interested in Black colleges have seen this as 'we can transform anybody.' Well, we can't do that! We have to set very high standards because the world outside the gates of this campus requires high standards. We want our degree to mean quality and high standards (2004).

Mays was committed to "turning things around," which meant redefining the institution's identity, in this case, in order to reshape its image.

Renewal

Mays felt that at BAU "there had to be energy; there had to be focus; there had to be a [renewed] belief in itself" (Mays 2004). He had an image of BAU that framed his impressions of the institution:

> This institution had been very intentionally created. Very thoughtful people had come together; people from Harlem and such had come here ... [to ensure] that this would be a creative environment, intellectually alive. A number of very talented scholars and artists [came] and they created a liberal arts vision (2004).

Others on Mays' staff offered a view of BAU prior to his presidency that is in contrast to the identity of reclamation about which he spoke. It was said that, prior to Mays:

- Things were really bad in terms of the university's self-understanding and operational conditions (Ran 2004).

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- The BAU I found when I got here was a plantation set up very much under the shadow of [the previous president] who ordered everything. He clearly wanted to be the only person thinking. "I'll do the thinking, you all just do what I tell you." I found letters [in the files] from him reprimanding my predecessor [as Chaplain] at the choice of a hymn in Chapel the day before. And I'm thinking, "You had time to do this?" (King 2004).

- BAU was a slightly dishonest campus. There was a whole subculture of getting around the rules (King 2004).

These perspectives point to an institution that, in the view of some respondents, lacked the leadership to recognize and take responsibility for the university's condition.

Responsibility

Responsibility is a recurrent thematic property in the data related to BAU's change. There is institutional responsibility to the black American community, professional responsibility amongst the academic staff to achieve and maintain high academic standards, and personal responsibilities of citizenship. Chaplin King indicated that Provost White felt responsible for preserving a sense of "the academy" (meaning an idea of "the university") at BAU.

> The Provost is very passionate about the academy. She is very protective of the academy in terms of preserving what it is supposed to be (King 2004).

Provost White insisted on broad recognition amongst BAU's academic staff that the university was part of an academic community with responsibility for achieving and maintaining educational standards. In so doing, the Provost appealed to the staff's sense of duty to their professions to change their thinking and, by extension, behaviours in relation to their work. Not everyone shared her point of view, however, as she related in a story about the reaction of a member of the academic staff to the university's imposition of professional standards:

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He said, "Well, we make more money now and things are better, but at least in the other administration we knew every year that we would have a job." So it's a little bit like slavery; I don't mean the situation but the response. That was a very sad statement, and if you think like that, your students might think like that. You might translate that thinking very easily, and without seeing it, through some kind of pedagogical hold (2004).

For Provost White, there is a moral obligation for the university to transmit knowledge that itself is responsible. Indeed, institutional and individual responsibility (for the university's self-understandings, image, and identity), which President Mays said BAU's staff had abrogated, became a cornerstone of the university's change effort.

Amongst President Mays' challenges in re-engineering BAU's identity was to transform the institution into what he thought it could be. In Mays' view, the key to challenging BAU's culture was to call for reclamation of BAU's past self-understanding:

Reclaiming that high academic standard, attracting bright students, regardless of their economic background and giving them an education which was along the Duboisian idea of an education that would teach people how to live a life, and not how to earn a living.... Now, obviously, we want people to be successful. But at the undergraduate level this is an opportunity for them to establish their values, their sense of themselves, their habits of inquiry, and the intellectual standards that they will set for their entire lives. All of that was inherent at BAU, and those are all things that resonated with me... (2004).

Notwithstanding Mays' refutation that he is the architect of BAU's shifting identity, the university's identity is linked to the President through his leadership of it. Rather than constructing a new vision for BAU, President Mays made his perception of the institution's founding mission into the university's vision of itself:

I'm not so sure it's my vision as much as it is clarifying what I thought was the institution's mission and vision that had been like a piece of silver tarnished over time (2004).

BAU's leaders offered images of top-tier schools in their efforts to enhance the school's identity. For instance, every respondent made some comparison of BAU to two colleges that they perceived to be elite and would wish to emulate, which suggests that these schools served as not only images but as knowledge frameworks of what they wanted for BAU.

Numerous accounts of active image-building at BAU are found in the discourses of standards, planning, and accountability, the intended aim of which was indicated by Vice President Silva:

> You know our goal isn't just to be one of the best [black American colleges] but it is to [be] one of the best liberal arts colleges (Silva 2004).

Here is a further progression in BAU's self-definition: from the best in its classification of institutions (black American institutions) to among the best colleges in America. This aspiration reveals how the comparative standard was being defined. No longer would the school set its peer institutions as a comparative benchmark. Rather, Mays sought to redefine BAU's competitive base in order to raise the school's aspirations and self-understandings. There is little evidence that Mays actually changed or wanted to change BAU's peer group externally. Rather, the evidence is that his strategy was to change the perceptions about the university of his staff as a way of influencing their identification with the university and approaches to their work. In so doing, Mays was shaping BAU's identity.

American Business School (ABS)

Hybrid Identity

American Business School (ABS) began as "a way to enhance the founder's

relationship with his clients" (Keller 2004).

> If you go back you see two things: the family orientation and the
> entrepreneurship, not just in the clientele; it was pretty entrepreneurial
> for [the founder to establish ABS] (Keller 2004).

According to Mr. Keller, ABS' vice president for fund-raising, the founder

established ABS:

> ... as a way to enhance his relationship with his clients and he thought,
> maybe I can make a business out of this. I read him to be a guy that
> identified opportunities and then went out and did something about it,
> the typical entrepreneur (2004).

The university became an accredited academic institution with a focus on

undergraduate and graduate training in the middle of the twentieth century. ABS

straddled the business and academic worlds and was able to "tolerate risk [and]

change [in ways] much different than you would find in most other institutions"

(Turner 2004). It had the freedom to "always [have been] a curriculum innovator"

(Keller 2004). ABS gained a reputation as the leading university in America for the

study of a particular discipline (ABS 2004). In the latter part of the twentieth century,

the university developed a curriculum that won praise from corporations and business

schools alike (Confidential 2000).

A Case for Change

Notwithstanding its successes and the business leaders on its Board and academic

staff, ABS was unprepared for the costs of its curriculum reforms, which resulted in a

financial crisis that forced the university to rethink its growth. Unable to meet its

payroll, ABS questioned whether it could afford to continue to be a curricular

innovator in multiple disciplines. The university was forced to rethink its identity because, as Vice President Miller indicated, "now we're better than we can afford to be" (Miller 2004).

"We Can't Continue to be Unique"
Said President Morris:

> My argument is we that can't continue to be unique ... but I want to leave ABS demonstrably a better place than it was when I came. On my watch, it will be clear that ABS is going to achieve the objectives that were set and launched and funded. I just want the place to be the best place that it can be. I can't tell you that 10 years from now our *Business Week* rankings are not going to be replaced by something else. But you are judged by the company you keep, and I would rather be judged as part of the top 25 than the second 25 (2004).

President Morris shares his hope to bring ABS into a new sense of self-reality while also bringing about progressive change. Prior to his presidency, ABS was said to have sought "Top 10" ranking in all of its major curricula areas, an expectation that Morris was keen to alter, believing that market forces and competition from other leading business schools made a Top 10 ranking unrealistic. He adopted a pragmatic approach to ABS' identity construction. However, by advancing still more curricula expansion, he contradicted his message of financial constraint. Vice President Miller shared:

> Faculty think we all are going to be investing in these initiatives—here is a curriculum initiative investment plan. We have no money, but we are refining, refining and refining—so if we were to spend money, how would we spend it? But we don't have money (2004).

ABS' provost shared Miller's view, indicating that while there was considerable planning for curricula expansion underway at ABS, the institution did not have the wherewithal to fund proposals:

> The challenges we face today are to have the faculty resources to deliver, to execute our plans, and to develop streams of revenue that will support the investments that we need to [make] (James 2004).

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Professor Turner, who was once ABS' chief academic officer, offered a different perspective:

> Vision is very tricky in the academic world...; if you get out in front too fast, you can't win, because people can't let you win. If you don't have any vision, you also can't win, because then they'll divide into 4,000 little kingdoms and battle over the boundary lines. So I think the first thing is finding a way to talk about what you are about ... that people can connect to (Turner 2004).

ABS' academic staff were said to have identified the institution with and come to expect curricula investment. If this was so, and if ABS' leaders were providing them with a false hope of financial support, then the leaders themselves may have been undermining their efforts to alter the institution's identity. Morris' view was:

> I am happy to say that in the '03 year and in the projections for '04 we will have a balanced budget. For '02, we ended up with about a $9 million deficit. We took about $11 ½ to $12 million out of the place and reinvested $2-3 million in things that needed to be done. So the net reduction in expenses was about $9 million. It's one of the things that I am most proud of that I was able to get the people here to buy into the notion that this had to be done (2004).

The evidence as to whether President Morris was effective in changing the knowledge frameworks at ABS to "be more like a business" is contradictory. Under his leadership, the university brought its budget into balance, which signals that Morris' business acumen was important to how the school operated. However, there is no evidence that the managerial ethos that Morris promoted was accepted institutionally. Rather, Morris' conflicting messages about financial austerity and programmatic expansion were confusing to some of the staff, and the university's identity came to lack a recognisable value basis (ABS Confidential 2004).

Discussion

Gioia and Thomas (1996) argue that it is unlikely that a change in institutional image will be sustainable without a concomitant change in institutional identity. In other words, although it is possible to change representations of a university (such as academic standing or commitment to social transformations), the viability of such change is reliant on altering the perspectives by which the staff come into relationship with their universities. The authors note that:

> Under conditions of strategic change, it is not existing identity or image but, rather, envisioned identity and image—those to be achieved—that imply the standards for interpreting important issues (Gioia and Thomas 1996, pg. 2).

This conceptualization supports an idea that a fault-line may exist between institutional representations and the private lenses through which staff view said representations. Gioia and Thomas' contention points to sensemaking as a possible mechanism by which to reframe an institution's identity. They offer three propositions:

1. Staff differently relate perceptions of institutional identity to issue interpretation.

2. Institutional image is developed and interpreted politically and through multiple other lenses. As such, institutional image hinges on the context and knowledge frameworks by which the image is interpreted.

3. Designing a future institutional image necessitates strategic interpretation of institutional identity.

While acknowledging that a multiplicity of interpretations is likely to be applied to an institution's self-understandings, the above propositions underscore that institutional identity and image are corresponding phenomena: image reflects an outward-facing view and identity an inward-facing view. Both views are factors in an institution's

self-understandings. Central to the propositions is interpretation. Gioia and Thomas posit that it is a role of leadership to orient the images staff have of their institutions as a means by which to facilitate a strategic interpretation of institutional issues and to define institutional identity. These ideas are in line with social-cognitive theory, which emphasizes a construction of perspectives. They present a Marxian view that knowing, interpreting, and imagining (whether the self, the other, or the world) may, in practice, be a revolutionary activity. Gioia and Thomas take a constructivist view that institutional identities are mutable and subject to human intervention.

Hatch and Schulz (1997) maintain:

> We view organizational identity as grounded in local meanings and organizational symbols and thus embedded in organizational culture, which we see as the internal symbolic context for the development of and maintenance of organizational identity (pg. 358).

Willmott (1993) raises doubts about the aforementioned perspective, noting:

> Those working in interpretative and critical traditions of organizational analysis ... have paid little attention to the negotiated and problematical status of allegedly shared meanings, values, beliefs, ideas and symbols as targets of, as well as productive elements within, normative organizational control (pg. 515).

Irrespective of the distinctions between their arguments, the above suggests that organisational identity is associated with organisational culture—that is, the normative beliefs, stories, and symbols by which groups function together—because it is within cultural frameworks that identities are formed, maintained, or changed. According to Mills and colleagues:

> Organizational culture sets the context for organizational identity, which, in turn says a lot about who organizational members are and how they like to think about themselves (2005, pg. 3).

Further, note Mills *et al.*, when organisational identities and cultures are united, identities take shape within predetermined cultural boundaries. Thus, to change an organisation's identity necessitates changing its culture.

The Cases

By encouraging a conceptualization of BRU as a "broad-spectrum university," Dr. Sexton attempted to shape the university's identity:

> [I'd like to see BRU be] something like Dartmouth College, which again sees itself as in a particular position within a region and does some medical activities – a fairly wide spectrum, though not as wide as we have, on professional activity. We'd like to see ourselves competing at the absolute highest level of academic commitments.... Something like Brown, a reasonably small institution at the lower end of [the Ivy League] (2004).

The distinctiveness of the new model merger was that two established schools would each jettison their long-held identities, consolidate and rework their academic agendas, reframe their missions, and seek to control higher education regionally through an intentional and joint effort. This meant advancing a market agenda for BRU while maintaining, or even enhancing, its reputation as a research university, which some considered conflicting and unachievable aims (Confidential 2004). "New" (post-1960) universities in Great Britain had successfully embraced a market-research paradigm. However, no long-established university in Great Britain had undertaken such a radical transformation as proposed by BRU (BRU 2002).

The main opposition to the merger came from staff at the vocational college, who believed that their university's identity would be lost in a merger with BRU. There were clashes over how the curriculum would be structured, including which disciplines would be reorganized and, perhaps, eliminated; over who would head the faculties; over what the new institution would be called and how it would be governed; and over the disposition of finances. Although these conflicts were irresolvable, BRU, under Sexton's leadership:

- Increased its international engagement;

- Won the support of the British Funding Council for Sexton's initiatives;

- Expanded the university's funding base.

So too, BAU's self-image as a top-tier black American institution with standing amongst all liberal arts colleges nationally reflects its identity construction. President Mays' call for reclamation, renewal, and responsibility enhanced the school's self-image, as suggested by Vice President Ran:

> Dr. Mays came on board, and said, "Okay folks, let's ratchet it up! We've got to get up to the next level!" And all of us worked, just like dogs really, to do it. And we keep going; we know we are poised for that next one. Now I don't know that I will be here for the next rung or not, but I think we're destined for great things, no doubt about that (2004).

Ran's portrayal of BAU's evolving self-concept is indicative of those of others on the campus who participated in the study. Provost White stated:

> Everybody feels valued. And I don't need to watch over their shoulders. If I had to do that, I'd leave them (White 2004).

Said President Mays:

> Now there is intolerance to independent, autonomous activity around here. People always work collectively in groups, and across boundaries, and that's just a part of the new culture here. And they hold themselves and others accountable (2004).

And, according to Chaplain King: "I am not even sure how to find a word for it - the spirit of the place [has changed for the better]" (2004). The evidence confirms that BAU underwent a transformation of identity.

ABS' identity construction was less apparent than in the other cases, partly because ABS was making sense of its identity retrospectively rather than prospectively. Unlike BRU and BAU, which fashioned their identities in concert with their change efforts,

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ABS grappled with its identity because of and in opposition to its transformation. ABS had already realized its desired identity and was questioning whether that identity could be sustained. Thus, ABS' identity was undergoing review. At the same time, the university continued to plan for a future based on growing its programmes internationally. The problem was that ABS' strategic planning and understanding of its identity were challenging for its staff, as suggested by Vice President Miller:

> I think that we are going to continue to talk about a strategy that places us growing at some enormous rate, and it will be double think. There is very little consensus of what is important or how we prioritize things (2004).

Miller's assessment reflects a concern of numerous respondents that ABS lacked a cohesive identity. It may be that ABS' identity was necessarily ambiguous given that it was in a period of self-reflection.

While the collapsed merger between BRU and the vocational college might call into question the effectiveness of Sexton's leadership, the data indicate otherwise. That BRU's staff and other members ultimately approved the merger (the vocational college's members disapproved it) supports the soundness of Sexton's reasoning. Further evidence of Sexton's effective identity construction is found in the fund-raising campaign, in the expansion of the university's international-student population, and in the development of linkages with other universities around the world.

At BAU, President Mays was effective in transforming the university by refocusing it on standards as a way to remake its identity. BAU went from "rarely mentioned" (Mays 2004) to being noted by *U.S. News and World Report* (2002) as one of the "Best Buys" for a university in the South and as one of the best black American

universities. Moreover, BAU's enrolment doubled and enrolment-management innovations were heralded nationally (BAU 2002). The university won a coveted, multi-million dollar award for its curricula and teaching innovations along with its first-ever $1 million gift from an individual donor. Mays said of this success:

> The evidence was always in front of us. And now the evidence comes in not just more students, it comes in the profile of the students. The evidence comes in the form of alumni giving [and] in the form of foundation giving (2004).

The data support that BAU advanced along all the indicators it set forward in its 2003 strategic plan.

Finally, in the case of ABS, President Morris did not seek to establish an institutional identity. Without a unified way for members to identify with the institution, ABS' change efforts and approaches were discordant. The cases indicate that Vice Chancellor Sexton saw BRU as bound to its past and disadvantaged by a political system; he encouraged the university to rethink its relationship to its region and the world as a means of redefining its identity. President Mays found in BAU an institution that lacked energy and self-confidence; he asked it to re-imagine itself in light of its heritage. President Morris thought that ABS had overextended its resources in its recent curricular transformation; he sought to lead the institution in revisiting this transformation. The data from the study suggest that:

- While Sexton was effective in influencing BRU's identity, a question remains as to whether his influence will endure.
- Under Mays' guidance, BAU experienced a shift in its identity that buttressed his changed efforts.

- In challenging ABS' identity, Morris did not offer an alternative, and the university's change agenda itself remained unclear.

Given these findings, it may be concluded that the effective construction of institutional identity is essential to the leadership of institutional change and, therefore, to changing universities.

Conclusion

The data suggest that institutional identity is changeable and its management is contingent on the leaderships' shaping of members' perceptions about a given university. This activity, and, by extension, the institutional identity that proceeds from it, is what the literature refers to as the management of meaning, sensemaking, and sense-giving (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991; Gioia, *et al.* 1994; Weick 1995). The data show that each of the three case institutions grappled with issues of identity as they changed. There is affirmation of the importance of institutional identity in respondents' efforts to have an impact on their institutions' reputations, positioning, growth, priorities, and missions.

Overall, however, the institutions' identities have remained largely the same. BRU is a university intended to serve its region in Britain; BAU is a college established to educate African Americans; and ABS is an institution rooted in business education. That the institutions' identities have remained generally consistent with their founding purposes suggests that 1) their identities were bounded at the time of their establishment, and 2) that their initial identities are enduring. However, while the institutions' core purposes have remained the same from the time of their founding until the study, their educational approaches, student demographics, and contexts

changed so dramatically as to shift internal thinking about and identification with them. Changes to institutional identity may result in:

1. Enhancements to or recovery of an institution's self-image;

2. Changes in the functions of a university such that the institution's identity is altered (from a polytechnic to a research university, for instance); and

3. Intentional re-structuring of the meanings that staff make of their institutions.

At issue is why BRU and BAU appear to have achieved their objectives even given the differing perspectives of their chief executives, whereas ABS' success was less tangible.

7: Social Exchange

Introduction

The third theoretical category deriving from the data is social exchange: an idea that leadership and followership are mutually supporting phenomena. In leadership theory, social exchange is best known as transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Bass 1997), as discussed earlier. Examined in this chapter are respondents' leadership approaches, along with the implications of those approaches for their change agendas. The chapter is divided into three parts: 1) contextualization of social exchange theory in the literature, 2) examination of respondents' leadership approaches, and 3) discussion.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership reflects a system of contingent rewards in which leaders encourage their followers through an issuance of incentives and punishments (Bass 1997). Middlehurst (1993) maintains that transactional leadership is a form of social exchange in which "follower [staff] compliance is 'bought' by the leader through a provision of benefits such as wages or prestige" (pg. 33). Implicit in a transactional form of leadership is a contractual agreement between leaders and staff. Of primary importance is that self-interests supersede shared interests. Hence, transactional leadership is not concerned with advancing the unknown but, rather, with the achievement of specific outcomes.

What Burns (1978) called transactional leadership is akin to what contemporary scholars refer to as "management" (Kotter 1990). Kotter maintains that leadership is

concerned with effecting change through inspiration, vision, and motivation, while management is about the facilitation of complexity through planning, coordinating/directing, and financial administration (Kotter 1990). The view offered by Kotter suggests that leaders do not manage and managers do not lead, but this perspective implies that leadership and management are mutually exclusive; that the leader-staff exchange associated with transactional leadership does not necessitate motivation beyond self-interest or call for inspiration or vision. However, absence of obligation towards a higher purpose does not mean that such purpose cannot exist under transactional leadership. To the contrary, if institutional change is a matter of progressive movements towards a desired state, as suggested in the introductory chapters of the study, then it follows that a desired state needs to be anchored in a mental picture of what can be—that is, vision. According to some scholars, vision, coupled with rewards and punishments, inspires others to act beyond their self-interest (Bass 1997). In such an instance, change is transacted (staff are compelled to action), as staff's personal desires to contribute to an imagined future are also appealed to, evidencing a higher purpose. Still, Bass argues:

> People jockey for positions in a transactional group, whereas they share common goals in a transformational group (Bass 1997, pg. 131).

Conversely, Hacker and Roberts (2004) suggest that organisational transformation is a transactional process, noting:

> Organizational transformation becomes the marked change in the nature and function of organizational systems creating discontinuous, step-function improvement in sought-after result areas (pg. 1).

Creation of "step-function improvement" is what the literature and President Mays of BAU call "incremental change" (Ohmae 1982), which is suggestive of, but not limited to, transactional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

According to Bass (1997), transformational leadership inspires staff to transcend their individual interests to achieve higher-order, organisational aims. Echoing Burns (1985), Middlehurst notes that transformational leadership entails

> (a) charisma (which generates emotional arousal, a sense of excitement, instills pride, gains respect and trust); (b) inspiration (which is sometimes seen as part of charisma and sometimes as separate, involving the setting of an example or model of behavior, the communication of high expectations, the expression of important purposes in simple ways, the articulation of a vision); (c) individualized consideration (where each individual is given personal attention according to their needs, is treated with respect and trust, is encouraged and stimulated to grow and develop through the creation of appropriate learning experiences; and (d) intellectual stimulation (where the leader challenges old ways, encourages new ideas and enables problems to be refocused and resolved (1993, pg. 35).

Given the complexities of universities, the description of transformational leadership offered above may be difficult to achieve in academic institutions (Birnbaum 1988). Is it possible that a leader will be able to inspire and instill pride in others through his or her charisma and accessible use of language, and, at the same time, provide individual consideration to all members of a university? Whereas the size, scope, and diversity of perspectives of universities argue against such a possibility, the case data locate the issue in the examination below.

Change at BRU

At the time when data for the study were being collected, British Research University (BRU) was in the midst of a change in its culture, self-understanding, and activities. Whereas the university's focus was, historically, service to its region, the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Sexton, began his tenure at BRU with a message of international competitiveness. Sexton felt that it was his responsibility to "persuade colleagues that while they were in a particular region of a particularly small country, they were part

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of an international scholarly establishment." In so doing, Sexton was leading the contemporising of BRU. He wanted BRU to adopt a greater emphasis on internationalisation and competition while also pressing to gain greater financial autonomy from the state. Concerned that these changes to the university's ways of being might, inadvertently or otherwise, be perceived as harmful to its culture, Sexton wanted institutional change to happen within a context of humanity and civility:

> It's important that as we go through huge change ... [we] keep a community together by insisting that it be to some degree humane (Sexton 2004).

Sexton's insistence on humanity and civility was important both to how he approached his leadership and to how he conceived of institutional change.

Collegiality

Sexton's position was that academic institutions work best when they are collegial. As a practical matter, he did not believe that BRU would accept an adversarial change strategy. He believed that, by virtue of its culture, the institution itself insisted on a collegial approach, noting:

> The tradition [of BRU] has been one of more than collegiality, where people have tended to know one another well and to work reasonably well together. [BRU's tradition has been to] accept uncritically the assumptions about what we are and where we're going (Sexton 2004).

Bowen and Schuster (1986) argue that collegiality has three components. First is the right to participate in institutional affairs. Second is membership in "a congenial and sympathetic company of scholars in which friendships, good conversation, and mutual aid can flourish" (Bowen 1986, pg. 55). And third is equal treatment of faculty in different disciplines. Sexton's emphasis on collegiality is consistent with Bowen and Schuster if, as he asserts, his promotion of academic staff engagement in institutional affairs resulted in a culture of mutuality that was based on a sense of fairness.

Although BRU had a tradition of participatory governance, its faculties nonetheless vied with each other for resources within a hierarchical construct (Sexton 2004). For Sexton, an environment of collegiality was necessary to equalise the disciplines at BRU and promote interdisciplinarity.

Space

Sexton used space as a metaphor—and it becomes a property of the built theory—to represent physicality (regionalism versus internationalism), intellectual connectedness (insularity versus globalism), and a way of thinking that permits a compartmentalization of the university's activities while also permitting them to be coalesced in a single agenda. Sexton uses "space" to represent the institutional domain as he conveys his understanding of leadership.

> It means simply the psychological enabling that people get by feeling
> that they belong in it (2004).

For Sexton, space represents belonging and collectivity. His perspective is that through civil discourse, people may come into meaningful relationship with each other.

In his experience, BRU's insularity and dependence on the British political structure undermined its sense of belonging to the international scholarly community. Again, it is his American experiences that most informed his thinking.

> [I]n talking about leadership and one's wish to influence by creating
> spaces, I find myself drawing some interesting parallels between
> leadership in this country and leadership in comparable American
> institutions, because it is very, very different in all sorts of areas
> (2004).

The above consideration by Sexton is that the knowledge frameworks he used to lead American universities, while important, are often not in keeping with the realities of

British higher education, and that there were few British models for him or those whom he wished to influence to understand what he was trying to do with BRU. Thus, according to members of his senior management team and internal communications, Sexton aimed to craft an understanding of space and belonging to advance change within BRU (BRU 2002).

Influence and Persuasion

Sexton also emphasized "influence and persuasion," which revealed his view of leadership, particularly of BRU, as transactional. Indeed, persuasion suggests Sexton's view that institutional change, as the intended outcome of his leadership, was dependent on enjoining others in the change effort. He needed the consent of BRU's members, including staff, and, by his own account, the Funding Council. For staff and other members, status quo was the security offered by a sense of knowability, and, for the Council, it was control over British institutions, even as it pressed for an agenda of change (streamlining British higher education, for instance). Sexton sought to persuade BRU and the Council that the higher education environment was increasingly borderless and required a new outlook of the university that extended beyond its traditional disciplines and concerns.

It was Sexton's view that because BRU had developed over many years, it needed leadership in order to change:

> Precisely because the place [has its characteristics], it needs leadership.
> Any institution [like it] has an accretion of habits, customs, and
> assumptions, which have been inherited over the [years] (2004).

Sexton believed that his job was to "constantly spread the message that we must become more and more competitive" (Sexton 2004). Importantly, Sexton did not

believe that he could impose change on BRU, which was evident in his transactional leadership approach, in part, because he favoured civility, as reflected in collegiality, and disliked conflict. Sexton also felt constrained by the agenda of the British Funding Council to increase the financial efficiency of British higher education. The Council, representing the state, wanted British universities to change in mission and scope to make for a more efficient system of higher education. It charged British university CEOs to carry out mandated changes, placing them in an influential yet subordinate role (Confidential 2004). The Council, rather than the institutions, often set institutional change agendas. Sexton indicated:

> The difficulty is that since the job of university vice chancellors is to argue for money from the state, their rhetoric in terms of discourse tends to be drawn from that part of the agenda which is of immediate political importance, because they obviously want to persuade politicians that we're doing a good job meeting their agenda [for change]. So you get a good deal of talk about what is of particular interest to the government. But don't forget that the rhetoric has to be compatible both with what the inside constituency want and the outside constituency want (2004).

The above is evidence that Sexton could not impose change on the members of BRU. Thus, he employed a transactional leadership approach that permitted him to fulfil the Council's objectives while also advancing his own.

Negotiation

BRU's change was predicated on negotiation. Evidence of negotiation is found in BRU's proposed merger with the vocational college. Both institutions negotiated with their members, the British Funding Council, and each other over a period of two years. The process was transactional, as detailed in the university's strategic planning documents.

BRU's federation-like structure of schools and colleges necessitated collaboration and

negotiation amongst them to coalesce around a single change agenda. Sexton noted,

and the data support:

> Much of the leadership has nothing to do with the vice chancellor
> whatsoever. I'm under no illusions about there being someone who's
> the leader; because, you know, so much of this is diffused (Sexton
> 2004).

If so, then, effective change at BRU may have had less to do with superior leadership

than with a transactional approach to change that was well-suited to the institution.

Realizing Change at BAU

Under the leadership of President Mays, Black American University (BAU)

underwent an intentional change in its culture as it sought to redefine itself as a

premiere black American university. President Mays noted of his thinking about the

leadership of change at BAU:

> I felt that to drive the transformation, improving the quality and
> quantity of the students was probably the easier way to push all of the
> boundaries (Mays 2004).

The aforementioned statement shows that Mays:

- looked to achieve an alteration of BAU's culture;

- believed that such a change would result in a transformation of the

  institution;

- had a strategy to effect change.

Mays saw BAU's change as a "turnaround" of the institution. His view was shared by

BAU's Provost White:

> For the most part, [change at BAU has been] transformational. I know
> it is at the top level. I know it is with [President Mays]. And I know it
> is in [the Office of] Academic Affairs, all the way down to the deans
> and directors (2004).

Mays' approaches to institutional change were akin to those of Vice Chancellor Sexton at BRU. Like Sexton, Mays and the senior management team of BAU approached change at BAU within a transactional framework (Bass 1997).

> We just began in all of the areas that are logical for a college to work on improving the quality—improving the quality of the administrative team, improving the quality of the faculty—just step by step. It's a very incremental process. That is what we have been doing for seven years (Mays 2004).

The major difference between the two institutions was size and scope, which influenced the leaders' approaches to change. Whereas BRU is a research university with nearly 20,000 members (students, faculty, and other employees) and eight faculties, BAU is an institution of just over 3,000 members and one faculty. The complexity of BRU made it impossible for Vice Chancellor Sexton to have direct contact with and influence on most institutional members. Comparatively, President Mays could more directly influence institutional change by directing the efforts of the whole institution, through his senior management team. However, it was necessary for Mays, like Sexton, to negotiate change at BAU. Change did not come easily, as President Mays noted:

> There were a lot of very unattractive scenes, you know, anything that [resisters] could do to undermine [our change efforts] (2004).

Mays pressed forward with his agenda, and was supported by Provost White, who spoke of transformation as a leadership paradigm (to be a transformer) and as the outcome of their change efforts:

> I don't want anybody working for me who is not a transformer, not interested in transformational leadership, because they are going to be out of step [with the rest of the team] (2004).

Mays' leadership approaches, like those of Sexton, were transactional in that they promoted a model of shared governance, collaboration, and consensus in the advancement of institutional change.

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Engagement and Empowerment

Mays adopted a collaborative approach to decision-making at BAU that did not exist prior to his arrival. The literature notes that collaboration, although not clearly defined and inconsistent across institutions, may affect the effectiveness of institutional change efforts because it provides:

> institutions opportunities for key participants to create new senses of the direction and priorities of the institution, of their roles in the transforming of the institution, and of the ways that common notions— such as teaching, service, participation—are evolving and what they now mean (Kezar 2002, pg. 304).

By creating a new sense of direction for BAU, Mays and his senior management team used a form of transactional leadership to nurture an institutional transformation.

Collaboration

Mays understood that, at BAU, he was surrounded by "strong individuals" with impressive individual operations. Despite this, he insisted that, "what really keeps this place going is the collective effort of the senior management team." Vice President Ran reinforced this view, noting:

> He is more of a collegial type of leader. He [promotes our being] sort of a community of leaders where we all exchange ideas, and thoughts, and we all take responsibility for getting the work done (2004).

Mays was part of the team while remaining at the helm—adopting a "first-among-equals" strategy. Vice President for Development, Mr. Silva, elaborated on Mays' technique of empowering individual units, such as academic affairs or enrolment management, in order to enact broad-scale change, and further reinforce the first-among-equals concept: "He is clearly the leader, but he expects each of us to be equal leaders within our own organizations" (Silva 2004).

According to White, such a collaborative approach is not simply a good strategy, but a must for transformational change to occur:

> If you don't, you end up with what is happening at some of these institutions, some kind of dictatorship model where everything is directly from the top, and people are told what to do. Human beings don't react positively to that (2004).

Finally, Mays thought of himself and his leadership role from the perspective of collaboration:

> I think of myself more often as a [musical] conductor, because the music is all made by the instruments, and whether it's a big orchestra which would be the institution, or some smaller ensemble, my job is to read the music and to interpret it, and to get everybody to play the same tune. And I am helping to make the music, but I am not one of the instruments (2004).

Mays' metaphor of an orchestra and his role as a conductor reflects a transactional view of leadership.

Hence, engagement, empowerment, and collaboration were three pillars of transactional leadership that supported President Mays' strategy to lead BAU. Said Mays: "You know, at some point you recognize that those incremental steps aggregate into significant transformation" (Mays 2004). Like Sexton at BRU, Mays used a form of transactional leadership to frame BAU's change efforts.

Revisiting the Transformation of ABS

Change Once Achieved
ABS experienced large-scale change under the leadership of "President I" in the early to mid 1990s. The university then experienced a period of stasis—some argue, decline—(ABS 2004) under "President II" in the late '90s. Then, in 2001, came President III, Mr. Morris, ABS' chief executive at the time of the study

Reflecting on Transformation

The transformation of ABS came at a cost:

> [President II] was very involved, and we started spending ridiculously on all kinds of things, including faculty support. As a faculty member it was kind of nice, but suddenly when he left we discovered a $10 million deficit that we didn't know we had. Not good. I mean $10 million.... To this day I don't know what happened..., why it all went so bad (Turner 2004).

President Morris' charge was to correct the growing deficit and put the institution on solid financial footing. This explains, partly, the selection of Morris, a financial-services executive, to head ABS. Upon taking office, Morris discovered that "our funding sources [had] dried up and yet we had these really key initiatives that had never been put into the base budget." He reasoned that:

> When choices had to be made and [we] began to really reflect on why we decided [to take on a particular initiative], it was obvious that it was [a] nice [initiative], but it wasn't really key to a strategy because we didn't have one (2004).

The Board charged Morris to examine ABS' activities and to determine which were core to its long-term vision as a global leader in the study of entrepreneurship. Morris challenged ABS' image of its transformation in calling upon the institution to justify its activities in light of its financial troubles. In this way, Morris attempted to negotiate change.

Navigating Change

Neither transformational nor fully transactional, Morris' leadership of ABS was reactive.

> You can make changes over a period of time. You may shift the emphasis of your team from an offensive-oriented team to a pitching and defense team, but that takes time and it is a team effort with the front office and the like (2004).

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Moreover, said Morris, communication is critical:

> That is what good leaders do, they communicate in a lot of ways—how they speak, how they dress, how they present themselves, what they write, what they say. Communication is the manner in which leadership is projected, and it takes many forms. So communication is the most important thing. How is anyone going to know you are a leader if you don't let them know it by the manner in which you manage yourself? (2004).

Morris' view of his own leadership as team-orientated and communicative contradicts the reports of Miller and Turner, who saw him as uncommunicative and not self-reflective. For Morris, the exercise of leadership meant walking around to gain visibility and be a symbol of institutional change and progress:

> I try to manage by walking around. I try to get out of this office and wander around to the student center, the dining hall, the grad school, the business office; or, I used to have everybody come here—now I go there—to say that I am visiting. A lot of it is just thanking people, and just being around (2004).

Morris provided a sense that his communication strategy was not intended to engage staff but to manage staff's perceptions of him as a leader. This disassociation from institutional staff, including his own senior management team, marked his leadership.

> I don't have one person who could walk in and say, "That was the dumbest thing that you could have possibly done or said."... It would be better if someone would do that, but I can't make people do it, so I have two choices. I have either to be cognizant of the fact that I don't get enough feedback, or I have to change the players, and I am not naïve enough to think that I am always right and that is why I don't get a lot of that feedback (Morris 2004).

The data show that Morris' blurring of the lines between corporate and academic cultures bred mistrust of him, and that his attempts to counter this suspicion were unfavourably received. Vice President Miller posited: "[President Morris is] not somebody that people trust. He says things to stir people up and that, in academia, breeds distrust" (2004).

President Morris observed that leading a university was different from leading a corporation, and that he needed to build trust.

> In business, it's one thing to walk in and say, "What if we were to eliminate the graduate program, what would that mean to us?" And you leave a buzz in the room and then come back and say, "That wasn't a serious question." It forces some serious questions on some tough issues. [However], in this environment, when you do that, when the president speaks, you are sending messages and people say, "Well, can we trust him? What is he doing? Is he playing with us?" (Morris 2004).

The above statement suggests that Morris' perspective on university leadership was evolving into one that was more attentive to academic cultures, in which trust matters in bringing people to a collective understanding. Nevertheless, he was most comfortable with the business aspect of ABS, although he recognized that in order for his leadership of the institution to be successful, he had to lead (or be thought to lead) the academic enterprise.

Discussion

Social exchange is evident in the efforts of leaders to engage staff in their agendas for institutional change. Vice Chancellor Sexton sought to "enable" the staff of BRU to think differently about the university through a process of consistent emphasis on the subjects that he wanted to promote: institutional competitiveness and international engagement. However, his effort to increase BRU's autonomy from the state was a strategic ambition that was not widely known amongst his staff and others in the BRU community. Sexton indicated that he held this unstated ambition for his institution secretly, because to do otherwise would weaken his leadership in the public domain. Thus, Sexton had a dual change agenda, one public and the other private, one known and the other unknown. His emphasis on greater competitiveness and international engagement was both transactional and transformational. Indeed, Sexton attempted to

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influence and persuade his colleagues, both within and beyond BRU, of the importance of being part of an international scholarly community. He was mindful of the "long" history of BRU as an institution that had thought of itself almost solely in a British context and of the "short" history in which the institution went through a period of funding and operational uncertainty that proved destabilising. Because of these two realities, and his own penchant for consensus-seeking, Sexton approached his leadership of BRU as a negotiation with institutional members. Indeed, his language ("influence", "persuade", "remind") was intended to prompt rather than direct new thinking, which is common to transformational leadership (Bass 1997).

In the case of BAU, President Mays sought to affect a "turnaround" of an institution that "just was not at the top of its game" (Mays 2004). He saw as the way to realise change to "push all the boundaries." His intention was to transform BAU from an institution with minimal entrance and operational standards to one of the best liberal-arts colleges in America. To do so, he revamped the faculty and set scholarly standards for them, increased the size and raised the entrance standards of the student body, and held his leadership team accountable for the achievement of results. Whereas these actions are indicative of transformational leadership, Mays noted that "there were no silver bullets," and change occurred "very incrementally."

The above suggests that BAU's turnaround was transactional. However, the data indicate that the ensuing changes in institutional thinking, behaviour, and identity were responsible for transforming BAU. Under Mays' leadership, BAU's student body doubled; its faculty turnover was unprecedented, growing by twenty percent; aspects of the campus infrastructure were overhauled; the office of the general council

was established; the administrative staff was professionalised; and some of the institution's rankings increased, along with its endowment. Thus, change was fundamental to the institution, altering its culture and self-understandings—two primary elements of transformational leadership. However, as Provost White indicated in the preceding chapter, the leadership of BAU was intentional about its change and initially relied on punishments (termination) and rewards (the ability to maintain employment) as vehicles by which to realise change. As such, BAU experienced a transformation through a transactional process, which, implies that the two may be parts of the same phenomenon; that is, of a process of institutional change.

Finally, ABS was an institution that was at the end stage of a transformation and needed to reflect on the success, failures, and sustainability of its changes. President Morris' intention was to steer the institution into financial solvency by eliminating its operating deficit. The evidence as to whether the deficit was eliminated is conflicting, since members of the ABS senior management team claimed the budget did not reflect all anticipated expenses in future years and that the deficit would likely recur (ABS 2004). Moreover, President Morris sent a conflicting message about financial retrenchment and growth in stating his aim to "take what we've done and build on it and really export it, become a global brand, recognized as the leader in [it]." In this sense, Morris' leadership approach was neither transformational nor transactional in that he did not promote an elemental shift in ABS' culture or self-understanding, nor did he present a coherent strategy to move the institution in a given direction.

ABS' reflective mode cannot be cast as transactional or transformational leadership because (a) there is little evidence of an overarching vision for the institution that is suggestive of social exchange; and b) since the leadership intent is undecided, so too is its outcome. Morris' leadership of ABS is not easily situated in the literature on social exchange. Succeeding neither in changing the institution's culture nor in persuading staff to achieve a desired outcome, Morris caused some at the institution to feel that:

> He's a deal maker. We saw cheap money so he went out and borrowed $30 million. Why? Because it's cheap—get it while you can. Now we have very little degrees of freedom because we're borrowed to the hilt; the stock market has tanked; enrolments are down; and we are running a structural deficient. [Yet Morris] continues to spend. He has picked projects—whether it is undergraduate athletics or student affairs or a variety of other things, and he continues to spend, seemingly without regard to our budget issues. He gives [management problems] a lot of lip service, but at the end of the day he doesn't have the guts to fix it (Miller 2004).

Thus, Morris' team was of different minds, and the effectiveness of his leadership of ABS is uncertain.

Conclusion

In each case, the CEOs approached institutional change as a negotiation with institutional members, including staff. Sexton, in attempting to move BRU forward, believed that transactional leadership was best suited to the institution's long-established culture. Mays was clear that BAU's transformation could only be achieved "step-by-step" (Mays 2004). Morris saw it as his charge to lead ABS in reassessing its recent transformation by streamlining its programmes, reducing institutional spending, and achieving an ongoing balanced budget. Sexton and Mays were effective in the eyes of their senior management teams, whereas Morris was less

so. A major factor in the effectiveness of the leaders seems to have been their approach to social exchange. Sexton sought collegiality, which corresponds to Mays' use of collaboration as an operating property. Both were consistent in their messages and behaviours. Morris, on the other hand, may have sent conflicting messages about his intentions, which caused some people to mistrust him, and rendered the effectiveness of his leadership less apparent than that of Sexton and Mays. The key findings of this chapter are that:

1. The leadership of the case-study institutions was conducted transactionally.

2. Change occurred (and did not occur), in part, based on the quality of the social exchange between leaders and staff.

3. Effective social exchange was dependent on staff's trust of leaders.

4. Transactional leadership may support institutional transformations.

These findings inform the following chapters in which a framework for the leadership of changing universities is conceptualised.

PART III: RETHINKING THE LEADERSHIP OF CHANGING UNIVERSITIES

8: Criticality for University Leadership

Introduction

The data indicate that the CEOs in the study grappled with guiding their institutions through the unknown. For instance, it was unclear at the onset whether the CEO of Black American University (BAU) would be able to turn around an institution that he felt had become intellectually and operationally moribund. He was unsure whether he would succeed in developing the faculty anew, in garnering the resources necessary to fund the turnaround, or in uniting his various constituencies behind his change agenda. Neither was the CEO of British Research University (BRU) sure of the outcome of his American-style fund-raising scheme for an institution and within a culture where fund-raising was an emergent concept: whether he could change his institution's culture. Finally, the CEO of American Business School (ABS) could not be sure that his ideas for the university's reconsideration of its priorities would yield positive results. While each of the leaders dealt with issues of the unknown distinctly, their leadership strategies all hinged on reshaping their institution's dominant self-understandings. The categories and properties for the shifting of case study institutions' dominant self-understandings have been developed into a set of theoretical propositions called *criticality for university leadership*.

Criticality for University Leadership

Criticality for university leadership is premised on an idea that university environments may present as unknowable and, by extension, their leadership as

ineffectual. Consequently, concepts of contemporary university leadership are challenged to adopt frameworks by which to understand and influence a multiplicity of perspectives and claims that members make on their institutions, while also attending to unpredictable and uncontrollable externalities. *Criticality for university leadership* necessitates a critical stance.

Critical Stance

A critical stance indicates the existence of principled positions that are open to reflection and contrary viewpoints. This definition suggests that leaders are both rooted in their own belief systems and able take on those of others: two competing ideas. In the opening of Higher Education: A Critical Business (1997), Barnett includes a photograph of a student in Tiananmen Square standing in front of a series of armoured tanks in an act of defiance against the Chinese government's actions. This, Barnett asserts, was a critical stance; the tanks were prepared to crush the young man, but he stood his ground. In proclaiming his beliefs and resolve to die for them, the student showed unusual courage and commitment to his values. It may be that university leaders will not be called upon to exhibit the sort of critical stance that the student had on that day in 1989. However, university leaders are likely to encounter significant challenge to their values that will necessitate a critical stance. We witnessed a critical stance in the case of Black American University when Provost White noted that she would rather meet under-performing faculty members "in court than in a classroom" (White 2004).

Like the student's stance in Tiananmen Square, Provost White's stance was mounted on an ideological framework that accorded ultimate value to truth, fairness, and duty.

The leadership of changing universities is often a matter of balancing competing agendas in which mediation of conflicting ideas may be necessary. In opposition to Provost White's assertiveness, Clark Kerr (1982) indicates that the role of the university CEO in this regard is:

> Leader, educator, creator, initiator, wielder of power, pump.... But he is mostly a mediator. The first task of the mediator is peace... [with] and among [institutional members] (pg. 36).

The mediation about which Kerr speaks is of institutional knowing, and hinges on the depth of leaders' understanding of their institutions and abilities to appeal to staff's senses of fairness in pursuit of shared interests. This is not an easy proposition for leaders:

> This agenda may seem impossible: living purposively with uncertainty; intervening with positive effect while retaining one's critical stance; having some sense of self amid a fragmented and contested social and personal identity; and being able to leap the ontological gap that appears to divide action from understanding. Yet all of this is required in the modern age if higher education is to do justice to its own rhetoric of being a critical enterprise (Barnett 1997, pg. 177).

The critical stance requires resonance between leaders and staff as well as between an institution's leaders and a receptive institutional context. The critical stance also requires a critical consciousness.

A critical consciousness is a form of awareness in which knowing is shaped through an examined awareness of reasoning. From an institutional perspective, critique of consciousness is a questioning of accepted institutional awarenesses in light of alternative points of view. It is a sociological phenomenon that is informed by the particularity of the cultures in which it is developed. A critical consciousness is underpinned by a cultural awareness, since the latter provides contexts and boundaries

within which the former is constructed and against which alternative perspectives are considered.

Hence, *criticality for university leadership* approaches the problem of institutional knowability through a practice of reflexive critique in which leaders and staff mutually shape institutional understandings by examining the knowledge frameworks by which they make institutional meaning. *Criticality for university leadership* is a way of being that challenges conventional wisdom in order to create new, shared understandings within universities that permit institutions to advance themselves in spite of the uncertainty surrounding them. The need for such a paradigm is implicit in Barnett's statement about the world of work:

> We are in the midst of an unremarked transformation in which … the world of work is continually reshaping itself into new configurations…. (1997, pgs. 120, 121)

Inherent in *criticality for university leadership* is a recognition that universities operate within milieus of change, are themselves changing, and actively advance cultures of change. The paradigm also recognizes that an outcome of change often is increased uncertainty that calls forth reflexive leadership.

Critical Institutional Knowing

Critical institutional knowing comprises a circle of knowing that includes critical consciousness, critical thought, and critical reason.

Critical Institutional Knowing (Diagram 8.1)
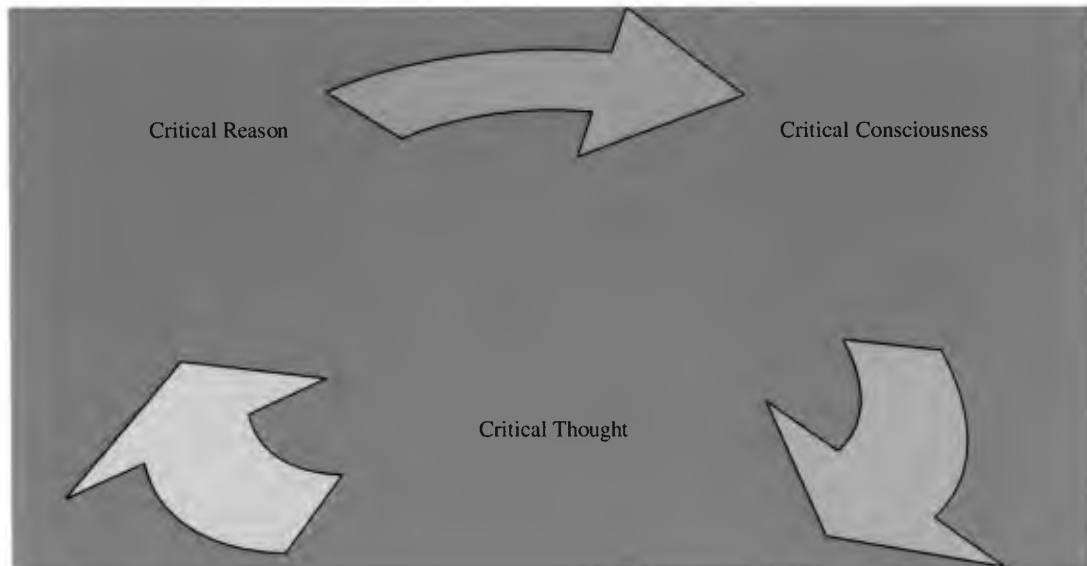
- Critical consciousness may be understood as an awareness of the institutional self in relation to the broader environment in which this awareness is continuously scrutinized and adjusted in light of new information or reasoning.

- Derivative of critical consciousness, critical thought is a practice of reflexive reasoning that permits institutions to fashion understandings from a myriad of possibilities.

- Critical reason refers to the construction of institutional meaning through a use of reflexive logic in which reason is self-referential.

Critical Institutional Thought/Reason

The investigator agrees with Barnett's claim that the instrumental nature of critical thought, as embraced in Western cultures, is not that which structures criticality.

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Rather, critical thought is "yet a higher level of criticality. Whereas critical thinking is a capacity..., critical thought is an attribute of a body of thought" (Barnett 1997, pg. 71). Implicit in critical thought is a way of being that includes actively examining institutional suppositions. It is a truth-seeking ontology that has a basis in the accumulation of thinking that underpins organisational realities.

Critical reason permits discernment between the competing but, perhaps, equally plausible perspectives that critical thought generates. It is a form of critique in which awareness is not only deconstructed and constructed, but interpreted and applied. Critical reason, thus, includes an exercise of judgment. The literature demonstrates (Weick 1995) that any exercise of judgment is value-laden, since judgment may be subjective, in that it is informed by knowledge frameworks, or may be politically or unjustly applied. It follows that any application of critical reason to university environments is likely to be challenged and require a negotiated position from which leaders and staff reason together.

Collectively, critical consciousness, critical thought, and critical reason open up the possibility to realise a critical form of knowing.

Critical Action

Critical action, defined herein as an intentional and transformative movement from one state of being to another, is central to criticality's emancipatory agenda. Action means to do something, to take a position regarding something, or to proceed in relation to something. It is, therefore, operational, intentional, and able to be evaluated. The "something" to which action relates may include the formation of

internal institutional competencies, practices, and realisations that bring universities into a relationship with their environments. The act of being critical suggests discernment, or an ability to adopt a point of view from a plethora of possibilities through an exercise of reason. Hence, critical action is an application of critical reason.

Critical action is a reflective and sometimes radical undertaking that underpins institutional change. That critical action is reflective is inherent in its critical nature, but its radicalism is more subtle. Critical action is radical in that it challenges institutional knowing by pressing the boundaries of knowing so that knowledge is perpetually created, akin to Stacey's (1992) "bounded instability". This view has implications for university leadership and for the efficacy of criticality, because to be fully realised, critical action requires transparency, intentionality, and an overall framework of organizational critique—all of which would seem to require the consent of staff. Moreover, critical action broadens knowledge frameworks and promotes a critical institutional consciousness as a lever by which to direct change. The leadership role in this regard is to create an institutional ethos of resonance and collaboration in the context of which meaning can be made of shared experiences.

Resonance
Resonance is based on leaders being seen to be authentic about their interpretations of institutional values, directions, and priorities in ways that are acknowledged by staff. According to Clawson (2008):

> Anyone who has spent any time in academia knows you don't manage faculty, students, or even staff. At best, you can influence people, but only if they know you, trust you, and believe you have their interests at heart (pg. 1).

Resonance refers to a union of aspirations and interests between leaders and staff that is foundational to their becoming a community (Clawson 2008). In order to achieve a state of resonance, argues Clawson, leaders need to examine critically and routinely all aspects of their leadership to determine what works. Leaders, he asserts, need to be accessible, get feedback from others, and be willing to adjust their own perspectives and approaches when reason warrants.

> Resonant leaders are willing to adapt customary (and comfortable) ways of leading. These leaders are open-minded, non-defensive, and deeply committed to learning about themselves and adjusting their behaviors. Equally important is empathy—understanding others' perspectives and then acting on the information (Clawson 2008, pg. 3).

Still, resonant leadership is not a matter of altruism. To the contrary:

> Resonant leaders know that emotions are contagious. They move people's emotions in a positive direction ... to tackle the tough people issues at the heart of most institutional dilemmas (Clawson 2008, pg. 3)

As such, those who seek, through conscious effort, to capitalise on staff's passions construct resonant leadership. Of the case-study leaders, President Mays of Black American University (BAU) is an example of resonant leadership. Dr. Mays was said to have listened earnestly, and focused on results (Ran 2004). According to Vice President Ran, President Mays placed his trust in him, provided his office with the resources to succeed, and sought measurable success, which resonated with Ran's desire to increase the professionalism of his staff.

Writing about resonant leadership in higher education, McKee (2006) provides insight into Mays as a resonant leader:

> Resonant leaders are emotionally intelligent; they can manage themselves and guide others adeptly in ambiguous and trying circumstances. Resonant leaders engage people's hearts and minds to build a shared sense of purpose. They inspire people to give their best,

to willingly work in collaboration with others. Resonant leadership produces results (pg. 2).

McKee goes on to note that resonant leadership is "mindful," meaning ever-aware, and does not imply an absence of conflict. Rather, resonant leadership entails a leader transcending his or her own subjectivities in order to find common ground with staff. Resonance between leaders and staff may not be immediately evident in critical spaces, such as universities, where competing values and understandings are always at work. In critical spaces, resonance will likely evolve over time, as leaders remain attuned to staff's feelings and appeal to their positive emotions. Once achieved, resonance between leaders and staff permits a cognitive union that, in turn, makes the creation of shared understandings possible.

Collaboration

Here, collaboration is a form of mutual reliance in which people work together to achieve shared goals. Each of the case-study institutions evidences this focus on collaboration.

Given BRU's diffused leadership model, collaboration amongst the university's heads of colleges and schools may have been the only productive approach to decision-making at the institution. At BAU, Vice President Ran mentions that the team needed to learn to demonstrate a "spirit of cooperation and collegiality" within itself. According to President Mays:

I think that this is something that they understand [now] that they didn't understand when they got here—that it is all about the team. It is all about the team! Because I have a lot of strong individuals, and they were individual players before they got here. They created their own fiefdoms, and I think they know today that what is impressive is, yes, their operations, their silos are impressive, but what really keeps this place going is the collective effort of the team (2004).

According to one respondent at American Business School (ABS): "The team has a shared sense of mission. We, by and large, have all bought into the College's mission

and work [together to achieve it]" (Keller 2004). Collaboration is an act of cooperative relating between people where the aim is to fashion collective understandings. It may be argued that a collaboration that is rooted in empathy diminishes the critical nature of action. But critical action as it relates to institutionality is socially constructed to enable the coming together of rationalities. Moreover, the literature on group action indicates that people relate to each other through their abilities to identify with challenges faced by others (Argyris 1982).

Critical action, as represented in resonance and collaboration, is a form of institutional transformation in which leaders and staff mutually shape institutional meaning and learning.

Critical Learning
The literature on organisational learning is broad, with some attention paid to how universities learn (Duke 2002). However, there is little in the way of practical guidance for leaders to enact institutional learning. Although it is not a goal of this thesis to develop a guide to organisational learning, the data point to an idea of learning within a framework of criticality. Here, "learning" signifies cognitive development that occurs through intentional practices of enlarging institutional awareness. As such, institutions learn when the people who inhabit them collectively and purposefully examine their core assumptions as they make judgments about current or anticipated circumstances, such as occurred when BAU learned and applied the science of enrolment management (Ran 2004). Institutional learning is self-referential and complicated in that its aim is not to establish knowing, but rather to challenge knowing and, thereby, create space for new awarenesses to develop. In this sense, institutional learning is dependent on leaders' ability to influence changes to

institutional cultures, since culture acts as the main stabilizing force around which universities hold themselves together (Chaffee, 1997). In opposition to an idea of culture as unmovable, institutional learning necessitates expanding the boundaries of knowing in order to emancipate universities from the unknowability of their environments. Institutional learning promotes self-reflection that, when applied in critical spaces, renders the world knowable through the creation of shared meaning on which universities then operate.

With regard to the case-study institutions, however, institutional learning takes the form of leaders' analyses of institutional issues in light of experience and their own reasoning. The leaders rely on elements of plausibility to enact institutional learning through the visions they espouse. Vice Chancellor Sexton approached institutional learning from the perspective of his aspirations for the institution: "I would not like to leave behind an institution that thought of itself in a purely [regional] context." He created the dialogues that challenged BRU's self-concepts and pressed the boundaries of its knowing. At BAU, President Mays fostered institutional learning by helping staff to accept (and even embrace) new standards during the re-casting of BAU's identity. Finally, President Morris promoted institutional learning in asking that ABS be critically self-reflective of its recent transitions. In each instance, the leaders infused their institutions with new cognitive complexities, the management of which necessitated institutional learning. As such, and in light of the literature, institutional learning emerges as a necessary process and practice for being in a world of uncertainty.

Learning occurs through examination of an institution's knowledge frameworks to form new thinking (Senge 1995). Middlehurst (1993) notes:

> Like learning, where new understandings are achieved by making links with existing knowledge, leadership requires an understanding of the present position as well as future goals so that connections can be made with existing conceptual maps (pg. 84).

From Middlehurst, it may be discerned that institutional learning is akin to institutional leadership and is built on prior understandings. Dever (2001) argues:

> The greater the degree to which a [university] president is committed to fostering the application of the disciplines characteristic of learning organizations, the more likely the institution can chart its own destiny because it will have fully made use of its considerable human capital ... and will have rigorously tested its operating assumptions against challenging scenarios (pg. 200).

For Senge, learning is developmental and fixed in the idea of awareness (whether of the self, others, or the world), which is derived over time and through experience with others. The notion that learning happens at the level of the individual and that entire organisations can learn together has gained broad acceptance (Latchem 2001; Senge, 2004). However, if organisations are to learn *en masse*, they need ways by which to become critical.

Critical Self-Reflection

We witnessed critical self-reflection in the case of BAU, when President Mays spoke of his engagement with the Board of Trustees:

> Well ... I think if I were reworking my engagement with the Board, I would have been much more direct and much less politic about that than I was. I tend not to be confrontational.... I just don't like confrontations and, like many black people, I tend to be indirect rather than direct. So, I think that over time my approach with them was, they'll *get* this because of the way I do my work and the way my team does its work. We are very analytical; we are very introspective; we set high standards for ourselves. We hold ourselves accountable, and we

tell people that is what we are doing. And you look at the Board and
you say "you have got to do the same" (2004).

Critical self-reflection is to examine and develop the self, both on a personal and on
an institutional level. Examination refers to analysis of the knowledge frameworks by
which institutions make meaning. Critical self-reflection deepens institutional
awarenesses through a process of institutional self-assessment. The self-examined
individual and institution asks, "Are my knowing and being consistent with my most
reflective reasoning?" In this way, the framework is dependent on systematic and
accurate self-scrutiny. Barnett notes:

> With this sense of self-reflection, higher education becomes a process
> of stimulating a self-learning, leading to a new way of perceiving
> oneself (Barnett 1997).

Indeed, critical self-reflection is underpinned by a belief that self-understandings
develop through critical reason and critical action in such a way that a new, more
complex awareness emerges. Thus, critical self-reflection—which is associated with
terms such as emancipation, transformation, and liberation—is a form of cognitive
self-monitoring that moves the self forward (Barnett 1997). Barnett notes that critical
self-reflection is challenging to both educators and students.

> [Critical self-reflection] is challenging ... since ideology—against
> which this aim contends—generates resistance. [Some people] are
> unlikely to buy into this form of self-reflection. It will be too painful,
> bringing with it the challenge to divest old conceptions of the self, of
> the world, of the self in relation to the world (Barnett 1997, pg. 97).

Given the thousands of possible members of an institution, untold knowledge
frameworks will be in play at any time. Moreover, critical individuals and institutions
develop continuously, an occurrence that renders their knowledge frameworks fluid. It
follows that self-concepts may be comprehensible, and, therefore, changeable, only
through critique of the knowledge frameworks on which they are developed. If this is
so, then university CEOs will be unable to help staff develop their self-concepts

directly. Rather, their task will be to create within their universities the environments where self-concepts are challengeable and challenged and where staff development and organisational development are valued co-equally.

These ideas and analyses shape *criticality for university leadership* as a knowledge framework by which to lead changing universities.

A Model of Criticality for University Leadership
Based on this study's findings, *criticality for university leadership* becomes operational through: 1) institutional engagement, 2) institutional learning, 3) institutional dialogue, and 4) institutional reflexivity.

An Operational Model of Criticality for University Leadership (C.U.L.)

(Diagram 8.2)
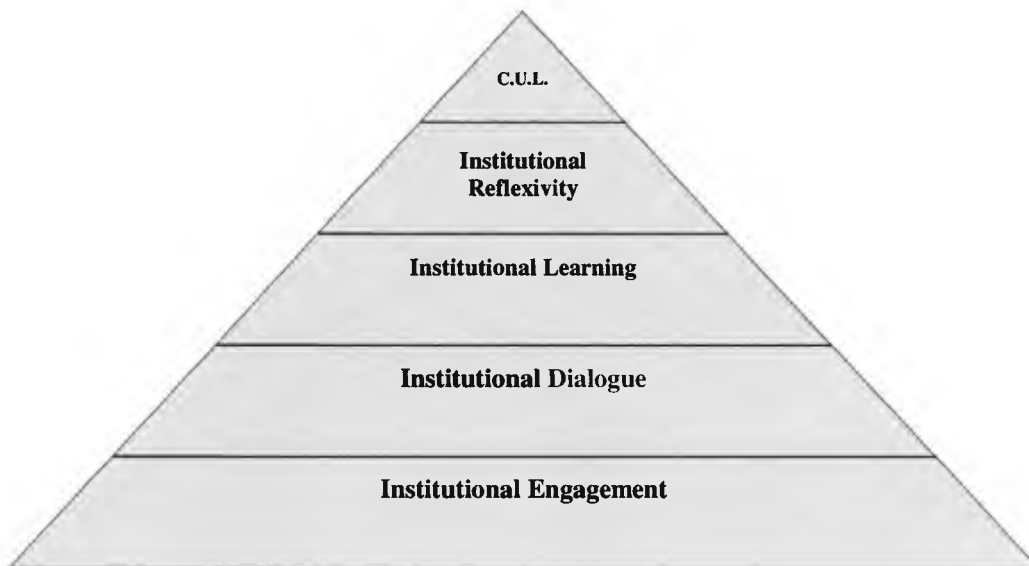
Mossberg (2001) writes:

> The lack of coherence in the way the institution is often experienced by
> its members, even as it is a result of built-in structures, is not only the

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leader's terrain, but the leader's issue, which must be addressed. Unresolved, such a conflict leads to a sense that the institution and its members are not congruent, focused, or functional—or even belong (pg. 230).

Engagement

Engagement refers to a critical consciousness amongst members about institutional realities and aspirations. Such a view of engagement recognises that although universities may connect with the world through cognitive silos, engagement is a fundamentally social process requiring collaboration with others in the formation of shared meaning. This perspective is supported by the literature, which makes clear that the development of shared understandings is essential to the effective leadership of organisational change (Chaffee 1997). However, collectivity does not mean that universities will be devoid of friction. To the contrary, as a form of critique, critical action challenges institutional knowledge frameworks and cultures and, thereby, makes it possible to lead universities in a context of change and uncertainty. This view of critical action is akin to Stacey's (1995) idea of stable disequilibrium. According to Stacey, the role of leaders is to infuse degrees of ambiguity into their organisations as a way of encouraging members to think afresh about and fashion new approaches to their organisational circumstances. As with criticality, Stacey's framework is built on an idea of continuous learning.

Openness

Action science is a theory and method for reflective enquiry which may support criticality. It emphasises openness and merit as decision-making levers. Openness suggests that decision-making can be transformed if people are able to view the world differently, take on alternative mental models, and learn. This is important to

universities, for openness is a core value in academic disciplines as well as in leadership. People and organisations are understood to need the sort of transparency brought about by openness, which, in turn, fosters trust (Hill 2005). If change is predicated on trust and trust on transparency, then it follows that openness is a condition of institutional learning. Institutional learning also requires a means by which ideas and decisions are distilled and legitimated if they are to have collective significance. To distill is to stress core elements of discourses to evince understandings. Distillation would indicate how the majority of people within a group understand their circumstances and surroundings. This sort of query is ontological, requiring awareness and a way of being that helps people make sense of things. In critical institutions, openness is paramount and merit is determined by group values.

Reflexivity

Critical self-reflection means reflexivity, an act of rethinking commonly held truths. Referring to Bouridieu's work (1992), Lash (1995) notes that reflexivity is "the systematic uncovering of the unthought categories which themselves are preconditions of our more self-conscious practice" (Beck, *et al.* 1995 pg. 154). To systematically uncover that which has not been perceived is an act of critical self-reflection. And to unearth unknown categories of self-conscious practice suggests the mind's ability to detect and navigate the unfamiliar. Together, these concepts imply that individuals have the wherewithal to fathom the unknown.

> Reflexivity arises as a constituent of our age through two frames. First, in a world of change, uncertainty is generated. Reflexivity becomes a strategy by which individuals might cope with uncertainty. That is a psychological response. But a second, more sociological explanation can be suggested. Reflexivity supplies a general resource for responding effectively to change (Barnett 2003, pg. 43).

Reflexivity is a conscious state of awareness that constantly nurtures learning. It is elemental to change and a framework whereby ongoing self-revelation occurs. To constantly review awareness in an effort to learn is potentially emancipating and transforming, as it necessitates re-visiting assumptions and retesting accepted truths. It liberates universities from psychological baggage. To emancipate means to free; to transform is to change. Critical self-reflection is a way by which people may change their perspectives in response to new awareness. That individuals are able to learn in such a way suggests that organisations may also do so. From an organisational perspective, critical self-reflection is a complex form of collective learning.

The above discussion underscores that critical self-reflection is a reflexive process. Reflexivity is a form of self-referential analysis in which the self refers back to the self for meaning. As a construct, reflexivity is central to each element of criticality: knowing, action, and self-reflection.

> This reflexivity is not purely reactive, however. It has a major formative function, since it provides the potential for new orderings, new insights and new sources of action and knowledge. In critiquing one's present understandings, new understandings can emerge (Barnett 1997, pg. 91).

In concert with Barnett's view, reflexivity may be considered to be a higher-order formative retrospection that calls into question one's knowing and actions. In this way, reflexivity is characterized by a critique of the institutional self by means of enlarging the understandings of members about their institutions, thereby creating a new sense of institutional knowing. When this happens as a matter of reflexive action, a condition of institutional reflexivity is created.

A goal of *criticality for university leadership* is to establish an enduring state of institutional reflexivity, whereby universities develop capacities and mechanisms for self-evaluation and renewal. From a leadership perspective, reflexivity implies a higher state of consciousness that constantly searches for meaning in organisational events and requires a willingness to adjust organisational actions when meaning is not in keeping with leaders' values and goals. As such, reflexivity is dependent on a thought process that is established in critique and informs action that is both progressive and understood by those it is meant to influence. The attainment of this higher state of awareness requires a pattern of communication that is accessible, value-driven, and assimilated throughout the institution. The role of leadership, then, is to practice framing by actively explicating discourses rather than allowing them to reside in the universe of the unknown.

Conclusion

Criticality uses the collective sense that members make of institutional realities to construct understandings and make the world knowable. As such, knowledge is what its possessor understands it to be. So too seems to be the case with institutions. As social organisms, institutions appear to need knowledge about themselves and their environments to manage the unknowable and, therefore, survive. But knowledge proliferates and requires that one make choices about the nature of things. If this is so, then knowledge needs to be vetted—to be weighed against other knowledge and have its own suppositions tested. Moreover, criticality has to do with a search for collective understandings. However, the rationality that arises through dialectic analysis is counterintuitive to criticality, as shown above, because such rationality need not be attended by ongoing critique. Within a critical realm, thought exhibits "radical

moments" that are unable to be predicted in advance and remain unpredictable once realised (Barnett 1997). Whereas critical thought may be circumstantial, it is not circumscribed. This is so for two reasons.

- First, the dialectic nature of critical reason necessitates at least two opposing viewpoints for any sense of cognitive balance to be present; no one idea or truth-claim has validity without examination against others.

- Second, reason, and the thinking that underpins it, is fluid and ever-changing.

At issue is:

> to make collective choices over the frameworks with which [to] be primarily identified, even if other contesting frames are still to be found in [one's] practices and self-understandings (Barnett 2001, pgs. 30-31).

Criticality is a way by which to make collective choices over knowledge frameworks in an institutional setting. However, doing so may necessitate destabilizing one's own knowledge frameworks in order to take on other perspectives, and, thereby, deepen meaning, possibly leading to emancipatory knowing.

9: Practicing Critical Leadership

Writing in Leadership on the Line (2002), Heifetz and Linsky argue:

> The dangers of exercising leadership derive from the nature of the problems for which leadership is necessary. Adaptive change stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values. It asks them to take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures. Because adaptive change forces people to question and perhaps redefine aspects of their identity, it also challenges their sense of competence. Loss, disloyalty, and feeling incompetent: That's a lot to ask. No wonder people resist (pg. 30).

Given the nature of institutional efforts to adapt to and thrive in change, the words of Heifetz and Linsky ring true and invoke a model of university leadership that helps us understand and cope with a new world order.

Whereas the study data leave open a question about whether the construction of shared meaning is enduring, they make clear the relationship between institutional knowledge frameworks and institutional change. The example of Vice Chancellor Sexton at BRU indicates that to function effectively amidst change and uncertainty necessitates adaptable knowledge frameworks. The example of Mays at BAU indicates that altering institutional knowledge frameworks can mean changing an institution's culture. Morris' experience at ABS underscored that inconsistency between leaders' messages and their behaviours may limit their efforts to reshape a university's self-understandings and to advance change. Central to each case were attempts by its leaders to create from uncertainty institutional knowing and ways of being to support their change agendas. Mossberg (2001) raises questions about university leadership in a milieu of rapid change and relentless uncertainty:

> In this high stress, high stakes, uncertain and volatile ethos, higher education leadership can be considered an extreme profession

equivalent to extreme sports. ...What knowledge, skills, attributes, and attitudes can enable and sustain leadership in cultures undergoing rapid change and challenge? What ideas are genuinely helpful to changing [universities]?...(pg. 206)

Mossberg outlines the critical challenges facing the leaders of changing universities from a perspective of enabling effective institutional leadership.

A Critical Model

From the perspective of Heifetz and Linsky (2002), the dangers of leading organisations in environments of radical uncertainty necessitate models by which to approach the leadership function itself. The set of propositions called *criticality for university leadership* presented herein offers a way to conceptualise and practice university leadership under conditions of uncertainty. The theory relies on a willingness among those who seek to realise criticality to jettison their own biases and subjectivities in order to grasp alternative understandings, thereby allowing for the development of spaces in which criticality has presence. Based on findings from the study and the literature on change in higher education, *criticality for university leadership* comprises four elements of institutionality:

1. **Engagement**: Internalization of the institutional environment.

2. **Dialogue**: Free-flowing discourses across disciplinary and operational boundaries that reveal a range of perspectives.

3. **Learning**: A process of developing new awarenesses through critique of experience.

4. **Reflexivity**: Persistent institutional self-critique that buttresses institutional learning and renewal.

Assert Heifetz and Linsky (2002):

> When exercising leadership, you risk getting marginalized, diverted, attacked, or seduced. When people resist adaptive work, their goal is to shut down those who exercise leadership in order to preserve what they have (pg. 31).

Thus, it is necessary to consider how to enlist people in fundamental change while also surviving the adversarial forces that are likely to result from such efforts. One paradigm by which to approach this problem is through engagement, dialogue, learning, and reflexivity, as shown below.

A Model for the Practice of Criticality for University Leadership (Diagram 9.1)
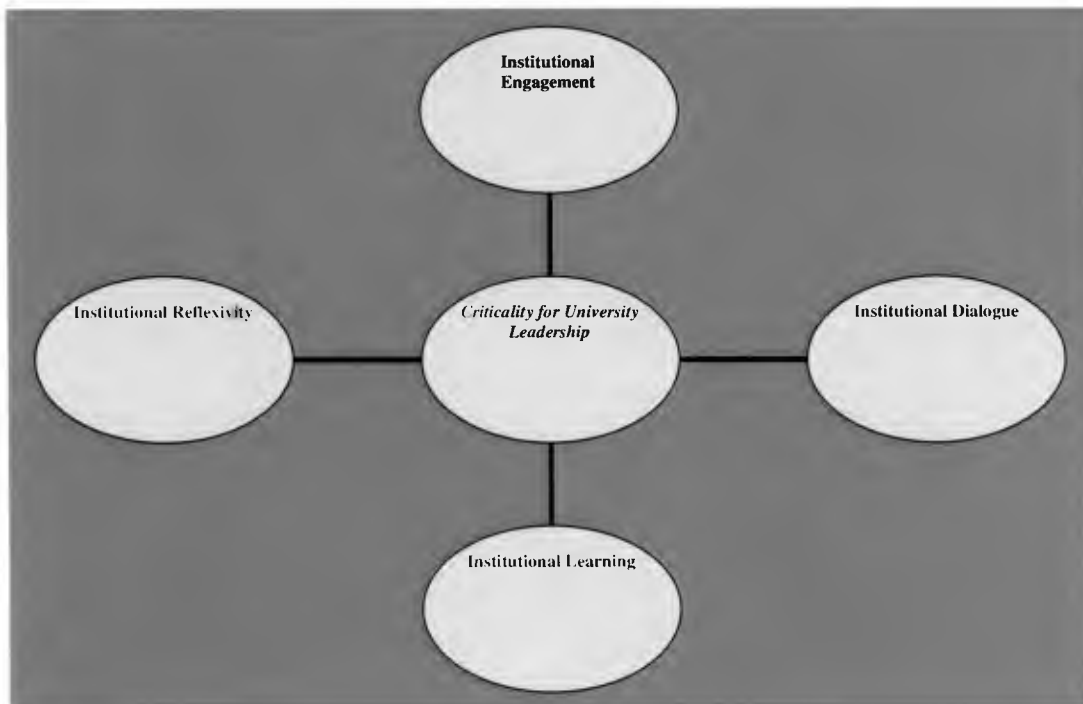
The above model signifies that within an institutional framework, learning requires engagement, reflexivity is dependent on dialogue, and the role of critical leaders is to ensure institutional criticality. Institutionality mandates that concern for the university supersede concern for the individual (leaders or staff), and acceptance that some issues will cross disciplinary and operational boundaries in ways that affect the whole

university (Kezar 2002). In its requirement for a broad view of and concern with institutional issues, institutionality is antithetical to cognitive and operational isolation as well as to independent action by leaders and staff. It may be that arriving at a state of institutionality is problematic given individuals' basic disposition to advance their self-interests as a means of surviving in an uncertain world. However, the literature indicates that when self-interests are embedded in group interests, people tend to act in concert with the group (Streufert 1978). In a state of institutionality:

- Executive leaders and staff are attentive to issues that concern the whole institution, and leaders communicate and explicate these issues;

- Executive leaders and staff transcend their own self-interests and subjectivities to take on understandings that lead to more complete awarenesses;

- Executive leaders foster cultures of openness and collaboration through which staff arrive at shared understandings that support institutionality.

Mossberg (2001) offers an important consideration, noting:

> Academic institutions are unnaturally "organized" into separate divisions, in terms of operations and academic ways of knowing. Internal divisiveness can occupy an institution's and leader's and manager's time ... more than any other thing (pg. 228).

At issue is how to come to a point of institutionality in environments of intellectual and ideological partitioning and discord.

Thematic Analyses

In considering the demands on executive leaders of modern organisations, Hacker and Roberts (2004) argue for the need to create "organizations of meaning":

> By this phrase [organizations of meaning], we connote a place where purpose rules, where people and teams operate from a strong sense of intent and common will. A high degree of consciousness prevails in such places... (pg. 31).

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Criticality for university leadership is intended to provide for the sort of meaning about which Hacker and Roberts speak, but also to encourage a sense of shared purpose and a common will through institutionality as shown below.

A Model of Institutional Engagement

(Diagram 9.2)
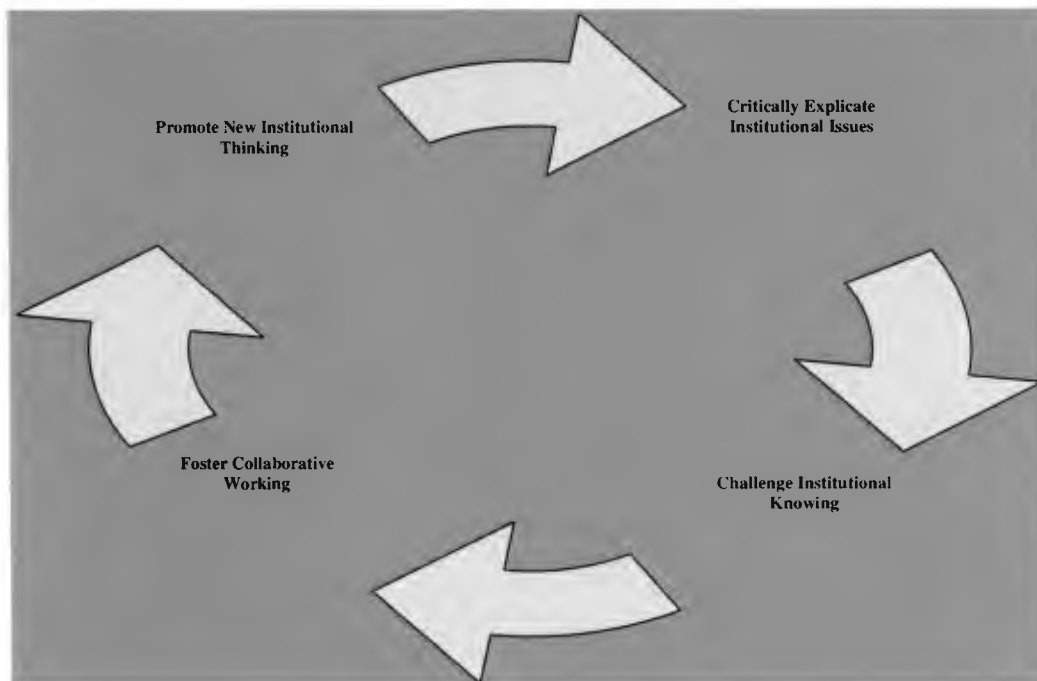
Based on the research data, respondents relied on advancing institutional engagement as a way of being that supported institutional change. This model of institutional engagement has four elements—issue explication, challenge to institutional knowing, fostering of collaborative working, and promotion of new institutional thinking—that are here examined in light of the cases.

Issue Explication

The CEOs in the study each explained what they believed to be the salient issues facing their institutions. Vice Chancellor Sexton of British Research University (BRU) was concerned with advancing the university's participation in the international community of scholars and in decreasing its reliance on state funding. He consistently provided evidence of this commitment in his communications and actions, and his positions on issues were generally known at BRU, based on the investigator's observations and discussions with members of Sexton's leadership team. President Mays of Black American University (BAU) believed that BAU needed to change in almost every way: academic standards, quality and size of the student body, campus infrastructure, and image. He felt that BAU's problems were related to an internal culture of malaise that had to be changed, and he systematically went about challenging the school's self-understandings. Mays' explications of BAU's issues were "a real eye-opener" to constituents interviewed in the study (BAU Trustee 2004). Finally, President Morris of American Business School (ABS) wanted to resolve the institution's financial deficit. His plan was to lead ABS in reflecting on the programmatic investments that had begun its transformation to determine which should be eliminated in order to make the institution solvent. Importantly, although Morris constrained institutional spending by others, he did not constrain spending on what some considered his "pet projects," and, thus, sent a conflicting message about the financial issues facing ABS. His actions belied his espousals, which influenced the trust that his subordinates had in him and was determinative of his leadership to some. Mossberg maintains that:

> Neither leaders nor the organizations they serve can flourish with a sense of fear or defensiveness of, and without a full sense of trust in, the capacity of the environment to act in productive and meaningful and ultimately organized ways for long-term sustainability (2001, pg. 206).

Mossberg is correct that there needs to be a baseline of trust between leaders and staff. It can be reasoned that in a critical universe, effective issue explication requires resonance between leaders' communication of issues and the behaviours they model.

Challenge to Institutional Knowing

Challenges to institutional knowing were manifest in the cases. At BRU, Vice Chancellor Sexton challenged his constituents' knowledge frameworks in order to move forward his agenda to enhance BRU by facilitating greater participation in the international community of scholars, redefining service to Britain, and developing the university's "competitive matrix." The Vice Chancellor succeeded in making his fund-raising campaign among Britain's most effective fund-raising efforts for a single university. (BRU 2002). He succeeded in increasing the number of international scholars attracted to BRU as well as swelling the ranks of BRU faculty members teaching and doing research abroad. However, the extent to which he was able to change his staff's thinking to embrace the perspectives he proffered is unclear. It may be that the depth of BRU's culture and self-understandings increased the difficulty of effectively challenging its knowing. At BAU, President Mays called for reclamation of the university's past lustre. He challenged knowing at BAU by comparing the university's present condition to the energy and promise of its Harlem Renaissance days. In doing so, Mays changed BAU's culture to accommodate his sense of institutional knowing. So, too, President Morris of ABS challenged institutional knowing by contesting the school's self-understandings in light of his interpretation of its realities.

Collaborative Working

The CEOs interviewed for the study all spoke about the importance of having a culture of collaboration as a tool by which to engage staff in institutional issues. At BRU, the Vice Chancellor spoke not only about collaboration but also about consensus. His leadership method was reliant on his gaining the support of staff by advancing interdisciplinarity as a way of work. BRU's executive leaders believed that because of the Vice Chancellor's leadership approach, the staff felt engaged with the institution, although there is no independent evidence to verify the accuracy of this claim. At BAU, where people had customarily worked in settings of intellectual and operational dissimilation and had not been held accountable for the outcomes of their efforts, President Mays introduced collaboration into the culture of the school. He did so by urging people to work through institutional problems together and apply differing perspectives to institutional issues before coming to him for resolution. Lastly, at ABS, President Morris established teams amongst his direct reports to promote collaborative work. However, distrust of his intentions on the part of his subordinates curtailed the effectiveness of his efforts. Rather than increasing collaboration at ABS, Morris lessened it by not adapting his knowledge frameworks to the environment at ABS. His rhetoric about collegiality was at variance with his leadership style and behaviours, causing some at the school to doubt him as a leader and perhaps be reticent about his change efforts.

Promotion of New Thinking

Each of the leaders interviewed promoted new institutional thinking. In the case of BRU, Sexton wanted the institution to expand its self-concept. Mays of BAU promoted a rethinking of the school's curriculum, profile, mission, and goals, whereas Morris of ABS challenged the university to reconcile its recent transformation with its

fiscal realities. Moreover, through their promotion of new institutional thinking, the leaders sought to influence the knowledge frameworks by which staff engaged with their institutions. Whereas the leaders' intended affect was to buttress institutional change, there was a more subtle, perhaps unintended, effect as well. Several respondents mentioned that the leaders' challenges to staff to think afresh about their institutions caused some leaders to adjust their own perspectives. For instance, at BAU, Vice President Ran commented on a change in his perspective about the institution and himself, in recalling an early encounter with President Mays:

> President Mays said, "Well you know what I am going to do, I am going to untie your hands." And he gave me the resources, and I remember it very clearly, I'll never forget it, as I walked out of his office, he said, "And I am giving you these things, but I am expecting results!" I remember feeling really cold when he said that, but I was challenged by it and excited by it...he put a challenge out there for me (Ran 2004).

Mays' actions both inspired and empowered Mr. Ran, and were a means by which he instilled an element of dual administrative control. At once, he both set institutional direction and standards and motivated Ran to follow. As such, new institutional thinking was able to develop to help both of the leaders and Ran's staff to reflect on and refashion their understandings of, and their relationships to, the institutions they serve.

Collectively, the case-study institutions demonstrate that the CEOs were concerned with explicating institutional issues, challenging institutional knowing, and encouraging institutional collaboration in the promotion of new institutional thinking. They did so by advancing institutional dialogue, learning, and reflexivity.

Institutional Dialogue

Institutional dialogue is concerned with explicating institution-wide issues and ideas. The literature on institutional change indicates that communication through dialogue is necessary in order for people to reach mutual understandings (Chaffee 1997). Institutional dialogue, however, is more than communication; it is a means by which leaders and staff negotiate meaning (Hacker and Roberts 2004). Institutional dialogue requires a capacity for universities to be forever self-critical in order to induce new thinking. Thus, critical dialogue challenges accepted wisdom and the status quo. Institutionally, a critical dialogue is at first constructed within the cultural boundaries of the institution. Thus, a critical institutional dialogue begins as a bounded discussion that then permits a broadening of thinking and awareness. Once begun, a critical institutional dialogue needs to press the boundaries of institutional understandings, rejecting cognitive restriction or presupposition. A leadership task in implementing a critical institutional dialogue, then, is to direct the open-endedness of the dialogue that criticality promotes towards resolving institutional problems.

Institutional dialogue stemming from genuine institutional self-critique, both retrospective and prospective, is a corollary of *criticality for university leadership*. The goal of this critique is to develop resonance between leaders and staff through an articulated examination of institutional realities and aspirations. In the case-study institutions, institutional dialogue took various forms. In his written communications and speeches, Vice Chancellor Sexton shaped institutional dialogue at BRU, but left its implementation to the deans and heads of schools. His approach was in accordance with his diffuse leadership style and view about his role in advancing institutional dialogue.

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We use all the traditional communications mechanisms: the email bulletins, the newsletters, things of that sort, the visits to departments, colleges, schools—of which I have a kind of rotation. Where I go [is important to creating institutional dialogues]. I have run large numbers of working dinners in my house where people of all ranks will come and just basically be able to talk about what's on their mind. The senior people who work for me, the three college heads, the twelve school heads—are doing the same kind of thing (2004).

Given the above statement, it is reasonable to question to what extent an institutional dialogue is evident at BRU. However, BRU engaged in a critical institutional dialogue during its contemplation of its merger, which was clear in the extensive media coverage and "congress" that the talks prompted. Additionally, the fund-raising campaign represented an institutional dialogue about aspirations, challenges, priorities, and determination to be a trailblazer amongst contemporary universities regionally in raising substantial monies from private donations. This said, the size and complexity of the university caused most of its institutional dialogues to be localised at the college or school level. The heads of colleges and schools spread the central messages of the institution through their own perspectives and self-interests, which resulted in the "institutional" dialogues being school and college-based dialogues that would appear to undercut criticality at an institutional level. Hence, in a large, multifaceted, and organisationally diffuse university, implementing *criticality for university leadership* will likely require that the CEO speak to and through his or her subordinates to engage with staff in more localised ways.

BAU and ABS offer a different perspective on institutional dialogue. Institutional dialogue at both institutions occurred under the CEOs' direction. Unlike Vice Chancellor Sexton, Mays and Morris were *the* decision-makers at their institutions and were able to be more directive than the Vice Chancellor. Further, the relative smallness of BAU and ABS allowed Mays and Morris to hold town hall-style

meetings that permitted the majority of staff to engage in understanding and shaping their universities' agendas. Provost White made the point that at BAU:

> Everybody's opinion is valued. Everybody operates from a script with the understanding that the script can be altered to fit whatever you are doing. We all hope [we're] building an institution that is not dependent on any one person (White 2004).

It may be that a genuine institutional dialogue cannot be led in any direct way, especially because *criticality for university leadership* hinges on there being a social exchange, and, thereby, agreement between leaders and a majority of staff. This social exchange requires modes of communication between leaders and staff that permit negotiation of institutional meaning from an array of possibilities.

Moreover, criticality renders dialogue resistant to control by a single person. Rather, it necessitates a fluid exchange of ideas between and amongst people. The role of leadership is to "frame" issues and permit dialogues to unfold with as little intervention as possible. According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), this sort of framing is:

> ... a skill with profound consequences for behavior that influences how we and others respond to the world in which we live (pg. 135).

Framing for criticality does not advance one meaning over others. Instead, it provides for explication of a variety of perspectives in order to reveal and shape institutional meaning from a composite of examined possibilities. The result is institutional learning.

Institutional Reflexivity
A primary goal of *criticality for university leadership* is to help universities develop a capacity to be systematically reflective; that is, to exhibit institutional reflexivity.

Institutional reflexivity is an activity and a posture of institutional self-assessment in which new awarenesses are able to develop that help institutions to learn their way through uncertainty. In this sense, institutions may anchor themselves in a flow of knowing gained from experience. This sort of systematic reflection necessitates a sustained institutional way of thinking that is both intuitive and habitual. Accordingly, the effectiveness of reflexivity rests on the degree to which it can become part of institutional cultures and knowledge frameworks. One way to think about institutional reflexivity is as the target of knowing, as depicted below.

Institutional Reflexivity (Diagram 9.3)
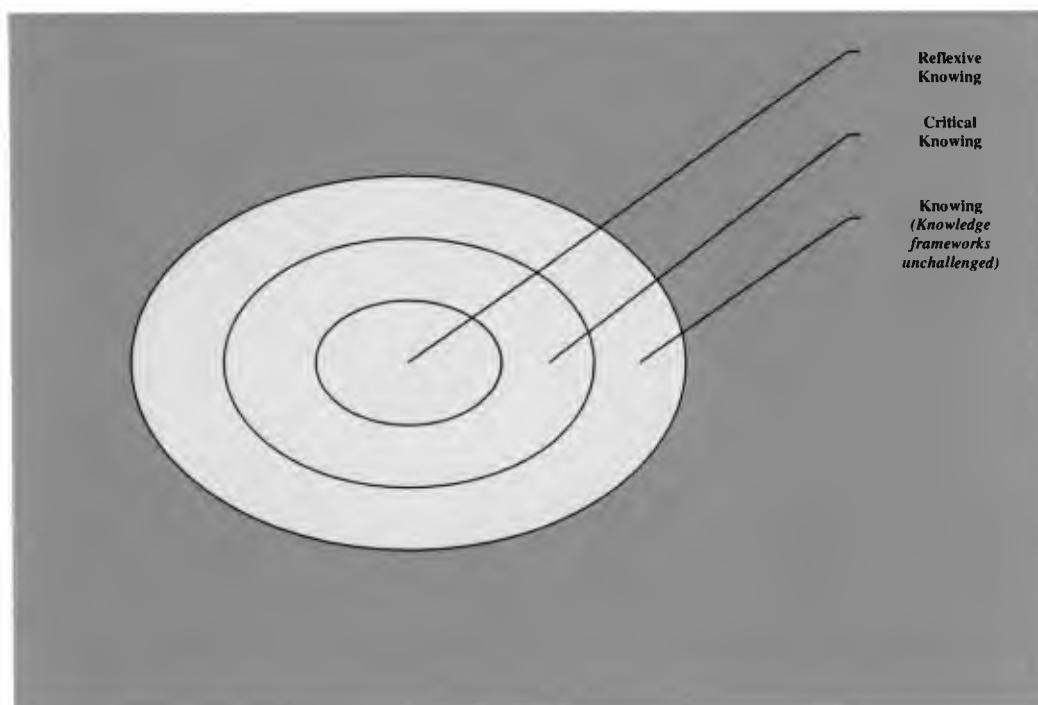
The above diagram suggests that institutional reflexivity results in a higher-order knowing compared with critical knowing. This depiction indicates that criticality's emancipatory possibilities, as described throughout the study, are realisable only when institutions become reflexive.

The extent to which reflexivity is evident in the case studies varies. Each institution demonstrated degrees of reflexivity in the construction of its strategic plans, which, by design, spurred rethinking. Beyond the plans, BRU was reflexive when deliberating its proposed merger with the vocational school. In that instance, the university undertook a review of its character in light of the changes to its identity predicted to result from the merger. BAU was reflexive in pondering and planning its future in light of its past. ABS' critique of its recent transformation also demonstrated reflexivity. However, there is no evidence that reflexivity was institutionalised as a way of being at any of the schools, which, as President Mays indicated, allows for "backsliding" from change initiatives. At issue is how to sustain an institutional posture of criticality.

Discussion

Institutional Identity
Amongst the major issues facing leaders of changing universities is that of managing institutional identity. Institutional identity refers to the perceptions that members (leaders and staff) hold about their institutions which, in turn, shape the knowledge frameworks by which they engage with those institutions. Staff perceptions of their institutions influence how these institutions work, for perception guides behaviour (Birnbaum, 1988). Thus, staff perceptions of their institutions need to be aligned with the institutional identities that leaders promote.

Clarity of institutional identity is not available in critical spaces, as criticality calls for flexibility in the construction of identity, given the uncertainty that abounds. Still, the

management of institutional identities must be a key concern of leaders, as these identities inform how staff relate to their universities. Because institutional identity is in the domain of individual knowing, it behooves leaders to engage with staff to reveal and express shared understandings from which collective perceptions that support institutional identities are formed. That is, when leaders and staff transcend self-interests and self-understandings, they open up pathways to communal knowing that permit enlargement of institutional identity to withstand radical uncertainty.

Managing institutional identities in the midst of radical uncertainty requires that leaders have a capacity to interpret institutional problems through multiple prisms. This capacity is structured around engagement, dialogue, learning, and reflexivity, as shown previously. The management of institutional identities also requires a willingness and ability on the part of staff to interpret their institutions anew. As a matter of leadership, the management and creation of institutional identity occurs through framing, which permits leaders to structure institutional discourses towards a state of collective knowing.

Accordingly, members are likely to have differing views of their institutions' identities. In this milieu, it is incumbent upon institutional leaders to:

-   Make sense of staff's perceptions about the identities of their institutions;
-   Articulate their own visions for their universities, such that institutional knowing is challenged;
-   Balance visions of leaders and perspectives of staff to create collective understandings that support a shared view of institutional change;

. Foster institutional cultures that support institutional identities, even as they challenge these identities towards greater knowing.

Social Exchange

Critical leadership calls for critical spaces in which leadership and staff are co-dependent and mutually shaped. Two forms of social exchange as a phenomenon of leadership are outlined in the study: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is associated with an incremental approach to institutional change, which transpires over a long period and within the established cultural boundaries of the institution. Transformational leadership is associated with what I have called "frame-breaking" leadership that seeks to expedite fundamental change by challenging institutional knowing.

Criticality for university leadership necessitates both transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is needed to provide boundaries within which changing universities may find a semblance of stability. Transformational leadership is required to press these boundaries so that institutional change beyond that which is transacted occurs. In a period of uncertainty, both transactional and transformational leadership are essential, depending on the institutional circumstances to which they are applied. Criticality, then, needs to facilitate transactional and transformational leadership equally, and to imbue leaders with the wisdom to know when to apply them. What Bensimon (1989) calls "trans-vigorational" leadership supports this idea.

Trans-vigoration means "across vigor or mental strength and energy" (Bensimon 1989). It is concerned with stimulating the cognitive power within institutions to enable them to withstand uncertainty. Trans-vigoration is a different form of social exchange in which leaders and staff exchange not status or money, but rather perspectives, so as to take on more complex awarenesses. Effective institutional change is understood in the literature and the case-study institutions alike to depend upon the motivations of leaders and staff to advance institutional concerns over their own interests.

Conclusion
This chapter has explored how *criticality for university leadership* may come into practice. The theory is intended as a structure to enable institutions to make their way amidst change and uncertainty through a practice of institution-wide critique. Based on an idea of institutionality, *criticality for university leadership* has been shown to include engagement, dialogue, learning, and reflexivity. In combination, the elements of the theory facilitate revelation and management of the discursiveness that underlies changing universities. The theory thus:

- Helps leaders make sense of their institutions by understanding what members think;
- Develops a process of reflexivity as a way of being to manage uncertainty and change;
- Provides a framework by which institutional identities may be realised and altered.

These reflections indicate that the set of propositions called *criticality for university leadership* has possible efficacy as a paradigm by which to lead changing universities.

Yet, it remains unclear how leaders might themselves embody criticality. In the next

and final chapter of the thesis, I outline a proposal for becoming a critical leader.

10: Concluding Reflections

This study is premised on an idea, as indicated in the literature, that contemporary universities (also termed "changing universities") are beset by a condition of epistemic, ontological and environmental uncertainty that requires new approaches to their leadership (Duke 2002; Barnett 2000; Varela et al 1991). Some scholars argue that uncertainty results, in part, from the attempts of universities to grapple with uncontrollable alterations in their external environments (Wheatley 2005). Others believe that in order for universities to succeed amidst the changes occurring in their environments, there needs to be an alteration of their self-understandings and ways of being in the world (Varela et al 1991). Some scholars argue that the way forward is for universities to "know themselves" and to hold to their values as they adjust to the changes occurring around them (Duke 2002). There also exists a school of thought that, as social systems, universities adapt naturally to their environments over time and that human intervention is, therefore, unnecessary (Homans 1950). The aim of this study has been to fashion a set of theoretical propositions to explain how contemporary university leadership might be constructed to be effective against a backdrop of uncertainty, based on knowledge generated from an empirical study of how the actual CEOs of three universities sought to lead their institutions to be self-directive under such circumstances.

The Study
The study began by situating in the literature the research question: *How might university CEOs enable their institutions to be self-directive against a backdrop of uncertainty?*. Examination of the literature was focused in the disciplines of university leadership, change, and cognition. Three leadership models emerged from the review

of the literature and were examined in relationship to the research question. The first model was evolution, the second planning, and the third learning.

Included within the domain of evolution are the concepts of biological evolution and social evolution. Biological evolution was disregarded in the study as an ineffective model for the leadership of changing universities because it does not recognise a need for human agency in an act of leading complex social systems, such as universities. Further, "biological evolution" is contrary to much of the literature on organisational leadership and change (Kezar 2006), and is inconsistent with my own awarenesses as a researcher and practioner of executive leadership in universities. Likewise, although social evolution recognises a need for groups to evolve together, its dependence on a "natural order" to advance institutional knowing discounts leadership, and is unable to address the research problem.

Planning was determined in the study to be an essential means by which case universities sought to be self-directive, but to be deficient as a leadership paradigm in its presumption of institutional stability. The basis of planning is forecasting the future. However, the literature establishes that university environments are unstable, unpredictable, and, therefore, unable to be fully planned or controlled (Kezar 2006). Even still, planning permits leaders and institutional members to think anew about the futures of their institutions, and to adjust institutional aspirations, resource allocations, processes and timelines in accordance with a strategy (Keller 1983). Planning presented in the cases as a management tool rather than as an effective leadership model, although the outcomes of planning were key barometers of institutional effectiveness in the minds of some respondents.

Finally, through an exploration of Senge's (1990) idea of institutional learning, it was shown that

- Even as self-perpetuating social systems, universities cannot actually learn. Rather, when new, sometimes countervailing, perspectives amongst institutional members are birthed and applied to institutional circumstances, universities may come to operate with different cognitive baselines that signify learning.

- While present in institutional learning, sensemaking is not a sufficient means by which to eradicate institutional uncertainty and foster knowing because its orientation is to account for past rather than future experiences.

- Learning requires ways by which to examine and alter knowing.

Based on the above, Barnett's model of criticality (1997) was explored as a possible means by which to advance institutional knowing and lessen institutional uncertainty. Barnett's construct of criticality is developmental, consisting of critical knowing, critical action, and critical being. According to Barnett, critical knowing is achievable by permitting alternative awarenesses to materialise through examination of available information. Critical action entails an application of critical knowing to real-life problems and circumstances. Critical being signifies a reflexive state of being in which forward movement is predicated on a continual quest for self-enlightenment.

Initial Conceptualisation

Whereas the above accounts for the initial theoretical underpinnings of the study, it does not account for the realities of university leadership as practiced in the case studies. The initial conceptualisation of the problem was around the leadership of

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change in universities. However, an informed understanding of the practice of executive leadership in universities necessitated an empirical study. I determined that in order to amass ample yet manageable comparative data, three differing institutions seeking to manage institutional change were needed for the study. A sample study, framed around Barnett's (2000) concept of supercomplexity as a key leadership challenge, was undertaken, as outlined in Chapter 4. The conceptual basis for supercomplexity is that knowledge is so abundant, proliferative, and unmanageable that the world is, in effect, unknowable. The data from the sample study did not evidence what one might presume to be the markers of supercomplexity (profound ignorance of knowing and being on a broad scale, for instance); instead, through planning exercises and visioning, the CEO presumed a degree of knowledge about and control over his institution. With this failure to affirm a key feature of the conceptual basis of the study, a rethinking of the problem became essential. The problem appeared not to be one of unknowability, but rather of uncertainty of knowing. The former suggests a condition of permanent helplessness, and the latter a temporary ambiguity of knowing and being prior to a point in which knowing and being are solidified through one's actions. This clarification of the problem, albeit nuanced, was determinative in shifting the focus of the formal study from a concern with leading change in universities to leading changing universities, a hallmark of which is uncertainty (Duke 2002).

The formal study included three universities, one in Great Britain and two in the United States. Uncertainty of knowing, whilst not overtly stated by respondents in their interviews, was implicit in the circumstances with which they were grappling, as

well as in their attempts to countermand it. The respondents each sought to plan their institution's way forward:

- British Research University's (BRU) agenda was rooted in pressing an international plan for its future, and by seeking to subsume other institutions through mergers.

- Black American University's (BAU) agenda was based on examining and altering its academic standards and developing a more robust enrolment to support its programs and aspirations.

- American Business School (ABS) looked at its future through a planning model as it reconsidered the sustainability of its earlier curricular transformation.

Hence, planning was shown to be a key means by which case institutions sought to direct their futures.

Challenge to Knowing: The Data
Common to all of the case studies were the challenges to the knowings of the institutions posed by their CEOs. The literature indicates, and the data confirmed, that challenging institutional knowing spurs uncertainty (Duke 2002). Case study respondents were shown to wittingly or otherwise engage in a process of creating what Stacey (1992) calls "bounded instability." That is, each of the university CEOs studied infused a degree of uncertainty into his institution's thinking through the visions he proffered, questions he raised, and in resource allocations. The CEO of the British university (BRU) developed within the institution a sense of cognitive uncertainty in questioning the degree to which his institution was engaged in the broader world, while the institution's members felt that they already had an

international reputation. He destabilised their self-understandings. The CEO of the black American institution (BAU) destabilised his institution's knowing by asking that its members compare the university's present reputation and outputs to those of its founding. He asked that institutional members alter their engagement with the institution based on the new understandings that he had put forth. He established and implemented new standards that caused a qualitative difference in institutional outputs (higher entering credentials and graduation rates amongst its students, significant increases in fund-raising, and an enhanced national reputation). Finally, in the case of the American business school (ABS), the CEO challenged the institution's knowing around the sustainability of its curricular innovations, but offered no clear alternative knowing, which resulted in institutional confusion and disquiet.

The extent to which respondents were able to manage uncertainty varied. The case of the British university suggests that the CEO was successful in imparting his message of greater internationalisation of the institution, as evidenced in the institution's increased student and faculty exchanges and support for research projects with an international dimension. However, the CEO's other seminal but "private" ambition, to provide his institution with greater autonomy from the state, did not result in a material challenge to the institution's knowing. His attempts to press forward his private agenda did not gain support because his constituents were not privy to his thinking and strategy. That the CEO's private thinking was unable to affect institutional knowing but that his public visions did, suggests that the effectiveness of institutional leadership is partially dependent on how well leaders communicate their visions to institutional members.

In the case of the black American university, the CEO was explicit about his ambitions for the institution to become a leading liberal arts college within its peer group. He began by calling for an institutional renaissance in which the university would regain the luster of its past. In asking members to reclaim the university's former identity, the CEO re-introduced a knowledge framework around BAU's excellence and trajectory without fundamentally disrupting the institution's self-understandings. His was a view that had been codified in the history of the institution but needed, he felt, reawakening in its present culture. Importantly, the CEO was mobilising a knowledge framework that had existed in BAU's institutional memory, rather than developing a new one. Conversely, the CEO of the American business school's strategy was rooted in challenging institutional knowing in the absence of advancing an institutional vision. The lack of a vision for ABS evidenced a disconnect in the CEO's knowledge frameworks-in-use and those of other institutional members. The result was a sense of distrust among the senior management team of the CEO that undermined the effectiveness of his leadership.

Generally, when the CEOs of case study universities articulated compelling visions for their universities that differed from the understandings that members held of their institutions, the CEOs were able to engage members in thinking differently about their institutions. The study shows that where there was awareness of the CEOs' visions, there was support for the intended change, but in the absence of awareness, there was no evidence of support. Members' support for a significant change in institutional direction was the linchpin of their willingness to alter their understandings of their institutions, in line with the anticipated change. Consequently, with the linkage

between leadership and visioning made, we see how leadership, as expressed through institutional vision, influenced institutional knowing.

(Re)construction of Institutional Identity

Evident in the cases were the CEOs' attempts to influence, and in some instances, reconstruct, their institutions' identities. The CEO of British Research University (BRU) identified his institution as a "broad spectrum university." By this, he meant to help institutional members, particularly academic staff, accept that the work of contemporary universities, in his view, includes professional, vocational, and technical training, and that the disciplines therein should be accorded the same respect given to the arts and sciences. In doing so, the CEO challenged BRU's members' concepts of what a university "is and is for" (Watson 2001), and, more specifically, what the aims of BRU should be in a changing world. The CEO of Black American University (BAU) challenged his institution's knowing and identity in arguing that the institution had fallen from its prominence of seventy years prior, that it operated in a realm of mediocrity, and that it needed to reclaim its prior self. He called for institutional members to adopt a reflective posture towards BAU in their imagining of what it could be. The CEO's challenge to BAU's current identity vis-à-vis that of its past created for institutional members a recognizable framework by which to comprehend the university's shifting identity. In the case of American Business School (ABS), the CEO challenged the institution's knowing and identity in calling for a review of its programmes in light of its $10 million structural deficit. However, at the time of the study, the CEO had not eliminated any major programmes. Instead, to meet the institution's financial needs, he borrowed against its assets. The result was that institutional members, particularly academic staff, were skeptical that the

institution was fiscally unsound. By not moving forward with downsizing the school's academic programmess in line with its financial resources, and by increasing strategic planning activities, the CEO contradicted his message of fiscal exigency and undermined his efforts to reshape the institution's self-understandings.

<u>Findings</u>:

- Although the case universities' identities were established at the time of their founding, they all proved to be malleable.

- Altering institutional identity was a negotiated task between the CEOs and their institutional members.

- Failure to alter institutional knowing, resulted in a failure to alter institutional identity.

Knowledge Frameworks

In their efforts to influence their institutions' self-understandings, each of the three respondent CEOs sought to develop knowledge frameworks by which institutional members would come into relationship with their universities anew. The knowledge frameworks guiding BRU's CEO were institutional autonomy, international scholarly competitiveness, and alternative funding streams. Those guiding the CEO of BAU were engagement, standards, and planning. ABS' CEO employed "strategy" as an overarching knowledge framework.

Viewing BRU through an international lens, the CEO asked his constituents to envisage how the university could benefit its region by exporting to other parts of the world its intellectual knowledge on areas of specific importance to the region. He

asked them to make a linkage between how their concerns regionally were pertinent elsewhere and to accept that BRU, above other institutions, had the expertise to bring about that linkage. While some of the CEO's senior staff members interviewed for the study argued that theirs had been an international focus all along, the CEO's purpose was to press the university towards greater international competitiveness. He felt that, whereas the university had been effective in some areas of research and international engagement, it lacked the competitiveness of scholarship that he felt the larger world demanded; that whereas BRU's academic engagement was noted regionally, to raise the level of its reputation meant having its scholarship judged on an international stage. The CEO based his understandings about BRU's scholarly competitiveness on those of elite American universities, and sought to model BRU after them.

He argued further that the university needed to intensify its fund-raising efforts from private and corporate donors. The data suggest that the CEO's efforts were effective in this regard, as the university set about an intentional scheme of fund-raising that yielded millions of pounds, new constituents, and increased recognition regionally. However, as noted earlier, the CEO's private ambition, and working knowledge framework of greater institutional autonomy, did not yield results because it was not explicated to institutional members, who, then, had no way of developing an understanding around it.

BAU's CEO's knowledge frameworks of engagement, standards and planning were intended to reshape the institution's culture. The CEO believed that BAU had atrophied in terms of its academic standards, reputation, physical plant, and quality of entering students. His knowledge framework of engagement was intended to elicit

from the staff a commitment to academic rigor. He set in place standards by which to measure the institution's effectiveness, along matrices that he and his staff established to do so, in cooperation with the Board of Directors. Finally, he felt that black American institutions generally lacked a planning ethos, and he sought to establish one at BAU. Based on the CEO's stated goals and vision for BAU, he succeeded in adjusting the institution's self-understandings, which was a transformational accomplishment (Bass 2002). Evidence was offered in the statements of the members of the senior management team, most of whom were new to their posts. In fact, that the CEO brought in a new senior management team had much to do with his ability to press forward his agenda, as he noted that his first few months in office were isolating and lonely, in the absence of a team that he felt was committed to his vision. Together, they pushed all the levers of change at BAU nearly simultaneously, deracinating long-held internal understandings, and developing new ones such that, by the end of the study, there appeared to be broad acceptance within BAU that the institution was qualitatively different as a result of the CEO's leadership.

The case of ABS proved to be markedly dissimilar from the previous two, as the single knowledge framework in use by the CEO was strategy. The CEO's intent was to engage institutional members in reducing the financial obligations associated with ABS' curricular reforms. In depending on strategy as his single operating knowledge framework, the CEO sought a rational approach to institutional knowing. He put in place teams to explore the various areas of institutional engagement and make recommendations on their future dispositions. Concurrently, he was establishing, with some but not unanimous support from his senior management team, strategic plans that suggested growth in the school's academic programs.

The academic staff worked for two years to develop the plans, and they were anticipating an infusion of resources to support their intellectual ambitions for the school. However, new resources did not accompany their planning. Moreover, there arose a rift in the senior management team regarding the duality of the CEO's messaging, as, on the one hand, he espoused a financial crisis that called for a reduction of academic programmes, and, on the other hand, he promoted an expansion of selected programmess. The conflicting messages and appearances of favouritism spurred distrust of the CEO amongst his staff. In the end, the CEO's knowledge framework did not take hold institutionally, chiefly because his conflicting messages left staff with a dueling set of institutional identifications. Thus, the CEO's conflicting messaging undermined his knowledge framework and caused his leadership effectiveness to be diminished.

Findings:
- The respondents viewed their institutions through lenses that were familiar to them, irrespective of whether the lenses were familiar to their staffs. Hence, in this, the first instance in which knowledge frameworks come into active use, respondents sought to make sense of their institutions' circumstances for themselves using knowledge frameworks that were familiar to them.

- In their employment of knowledge frameworks as tools by which to lead their institutions, however, the leaders adopted knowledge frameworks that were familiar to their members. In this, the second instance of employing knowledge frameworks, respondents were concerned with sense-giving; that is, with imparting rather than making meaning.

Social Exchange

Just as the idea of social exchange, in the sense that leadership is transactional or transformational, figures prominently in the literature, so too it is in evidence in the cases. An assumption early on in the study was that leaders practice either transactional leadership or transformational leadership, with the latter being a superior form when thinking about institutional leadership because of its focus on reshaping understandings and behaviours. However, the cases revealed that while two (BRU and BAU) of the three CEOs offered visions for their institutions that might be considered transformational, their day-to-day practice of leading their universities was transactional. They negotiated new understandings with their staffs.

At BRU, the CEO provided grants and special recognition to engender greater outputs in areas of global engagement. The CEO of BAU afforded staff with job security provided they took on the mantle of change that he proffered. Importantly, at BAU, one of the areas of change that the CEO wanted to see was in the leadership style of the CEO, as his predecessor had been thought to be autocratic. The CEO emphasised collegiality, and his decision-making processes were informed by the considerations of others. Ultimately, however, he proceeded with his best knowledge and under his own counsel. Hence, he was not autocratic, but neither was he completely democratic. In order to move the institution forward, the CEO found it necessary to be, at times, directive and authoritative. In the third case (ABS), the CEO did not negotiate the institution's future with staff in ways that felt to staff consistent with their understandings, and failed to garner their support for the change he hoped to bring about.

The CEO of BRU determined early on in his tenure that the university would not accept disruptive change. His approach was to create a "collegial" environment and to gain a degree of support for his efforts: hallmarks of transactional leadership. He was aware of the political climate in which he was operating, both as a symbol of his university and as an agent within it. As a symbol of the university, he wanted to convey a sense of pride in the institution's long history and a turning point in its future by opening the institution up to non-traditional disciplines and greater global engagement. As an agent within the institution, and wanting to be effective in his role, he learned that he needed to grant incentives beyond a new vision in order to move forward his agenda. His allocation of resources towards key activities spurred interest amongst the staff in his initiatives and advanced them. Further, the CEO's negotiation of the merger of BRU with a vocational school supports this view, despite the fact that the merger was not successful. The CEO's actions were strategic in that they were intended to move the institution towards a new self-awareness.

The case of BAU is more profound in the use of transactional leadership to achieve a transformational outcome. As indicated earlier, the CEO wanted to reshape fundamentally BAU's self-understandings, and he employed a set of knowledge frameworks developed around implementing his vision for the institution. While the vision was transformational, the mode of implementation was based on an exchange of valued things, in particular work outcomes for continued employment. Beyond negotiating change, however, the CEO demanded it, and rendered redundant a number of academic and executive staff members that he felt were not meeting the new demands of the institution. His actions generated lawsuits and "unpleasantness." However, his determination to transform the school by "pressing all the levers" (Mays

2004) of change at once, resulted in the school becoming ranked by *US News and World Report* in the top third of black American institutions; increasing its enrolment by a third; undertaking a $20 million physical plant renovation; and erecting two new buildings.

At ABS, the CEO's mode of leadership was unclear. While it was not transformational, it is questionable whether it can be termed transactional leadership since exchange of services or other considerations (save some adjustments to the senior management team) for rewards was not evident as a process. Rather, the CEO requested a rethinking of the expense-to-income ratio of ABS' academic offerings. He left unresolved his disposition towards the findings by, at the time of the study, not restructuring the academic programmes, which diluted his initial message of financial urgency.

<u>Findings</u>:
- According to the literature as discussed in Chapter 3, the CEOs of BRU and BAU utilised a transactional form of leadership, the intent of which was to achieve degrees of institutional transformation.
- Although the nature of said change was more fundamental at BAU than at BRU, both institutions experienced changes in their self-understandings that became bases by which they sought to contend with uncertainty.
- In the case of ABS, neither transformational nor transactional leadership were present. Rather, the CEO directed the institution through a process of management.

Theorising the Data

Based on the above, a picture of the leadership of changing universities begins to emerge as a process of navigating complex relationships between institutions and their self-understandings within an ever-changing external environment. This was so in instances in which the CEO of BRU sought to alter his institution's identity by challenging it to become more internationally competitive. So too it was with his promotion of external fund-raising and his private ambition for the university to become more autonomous from the state. He was attempting to bring the university into alignment with what he saw as its changing environment. He used metaphors like "broad spectrum university" to convey his intent, and was determined to maintain collegiality as a principle by which to undertake institutional change. He was attempting to bring about an institutional ethos of criticality.

In the case of BAU, the CEO's challenge to the institution's knowledge of itself was a pivotal component of his leadership of institutional change in a milieu of uncertainty. His was a strategy of looking back to BAU's past to create a vision for the university's future. In this way, he altered members' knowing about their institution in ways that supported his vision. For example, the CEO's references to the BAU of the Harlem Renaissance days spoke to his ambition to create within BAU an emphasis on an intellectual culture, and his arguments for planning gave the university a sense of direction and staged change, while standards provided the proof needed that the university was self-directing its change. The CEO laid out his thinking that the BAU of that time was inferior in quality to the BAU of seventy years ago, and that it was incumbent upon those who cared about the institution to reclaim its place in higher education. He began by challenging the institution's knowing, and then by

challenging its actions, and finally by challenging its being, as indicated in the following statement first noted in Chapter 6 on institutional identity. He said:

> So many of the people who have been interested in black colleges have seen this as, '*we can transform anybody*'. Well, we can't do that! We have to set very high standards because the world outside the gates of this campus requires high standards. We want our degree to mean quality and high standards (Mays 2002).

In the case of ABS, elements of the CEO's management strategy are suggestive of criticality. His desire for the institution to be reflexive in the sense of being self-correcting and self-regulating was a fundamental quality that he sought to impart. In calling for institutional reflexivity, he was challenging ABS' knowing. However, as was consistent throughout the case, the CEO's efforts were undermined by his own lack of awareness of the nature of contemporary universities as opposed to the corporate world in which he had spent his career.

As each respondent sought to bring his institution into alignment with its evolving realities, he took on an element of criticality, which has given rise in the thesis to a set of theoretical propositions termed *criticality for university leadership*. *Criticality for university leadership* is premised on a design of critical knowing, critical action, and critical being (Barnett 1997). Critical knowing is constitutive of a circle of knowing: critical consciousness, critical thought, and critical reason. Critical action is an application of critical knowing to institutional problems. This action permits management of institutional circumstances, including uncertainty, by causing universities actively to make sense of themselves. In the process, opposing viewpoints are considered and collective meaning negotiated, thereby creating a nucleus of understanding from which institutional learning may occur. Finally, *criticality for university leadership* is underpinned by critical institution-wide self-reflection, a state

of being in which institutional knowing is constantly challenged and adjusted. Underlying these meta-themes are three sub-themes: knowledge frameworks, institutional identity, and social exchange.

Knowledge frameworks represent the cognitive structures for understanding by which people and institutions make sense of their circumstances of being in the world. These structures consist of the dominant perspectives that people and institutions hold that permit their functioning in the world. Changing universities were shown in the study to require flexible knowledge frameworks to cope with uncertainty. The main challenge for study respondents was to find a means by which to understand, engage, and alter institutional knowledge frameworks. This realization was important in moving the theory from a concern with the perceptions of leaders about their institutions to a concern with institutionality itself. Institutionality was seen as balancing the perceptions of leaders with those of members to form institutional knowledge frameworks. Given uncertainty, however, managing institutional identities also required a critical method by which institutional members developed new cognitive pathways so as collectively to shape institutional identities, thereby establishing a pattern of social exchange.

Although social-exchange theory highlights a use of either transactional or transformational leadership, the study indicated that two of the three case-study respondents used transactional leadership methods to underpin their designs of institutional transformation. Bensimon (1989) calls this combination of transactional leadership and transformational leadership "trans-vigorational". According to Bensimon, effective institutional leadership necessitates both an issuing of rewards in

exchange for staff's cooperation (transactional) and an appeal to staff's values and aspirations to make fundamental contributions to their institutions (transformational). A trans-vigorational leadership method is in keeping with a model of criticality for university leadership in that leaders seek constantly to renew their institutions by infusing them with new forms of vitality. This view is echoed in the literature.

> Transformational leadership adds to the effectiveness of transactional leadership; transformational leadership does not substitute for transactional leadership. Empirical studies of the *augmentation* [original emphasis] effect ... support the original theoretical assumption. The best leaders are both transformational and transactional (Bass 1999).

Accordingly, *criticality for university leadership* challenges critical leaders to develop knowledge frameworks that are continuously expanding, and perspectives that are self-reflective and changeable. Critical leadership is built on a need to maintain a self-critical posture. *Criticality for university leadership* challenges institutional leaders to:

- Adopt a self-critical approach to being in the world;
- Embrace the ambiguity that criticality spawns;
- Promote universities as self-critical spaces in which institutional knowings are generated to cope with uncertainty.

Findings:

This study of the leadership of changing universities demonstrated that:

1. All respondents challenged their institutions' knowing in order to generate criticality, or ways of being that were analytical and intended to enable the institutions to be self-directive in the face of external uncertainty.

2. When effective, challenges to institutional knowing resulted in alterations to institutional meaning and ways of being that reflected criticality

3. It is possible for leaders to introduce reflexivity into institutional being. As

such, it is possible for leaders to create criticality as a leadership model and as an institutional ethos.

4. Institutional knowing is a matter of negotiated understandings between leaders and institutional members that result from and may amend institutional knowledge frameworks;

5. Development of knowledge frameworks (both institutional and individual) allows for an expansion of awarenesses that, in turn, makes it possible for universities to cope with change and uncertainty.

Criticality for university leadership is a proposal for how to lead changing universities, but it is also a challenge to those who do so.

Implications

The study indicates that a form of institutional leadership that is rooted in critique has the potential to help universities to manage their way through uncertainty. As such, the challenges that universities face in the contemporary world need to be met through a questioning of institutional knowledge frameworks. The implications of *criticality for university leadership* are that, as a set of theoretical propositions, it:

1. Diminishes a need to rely on often-confusing theories and frameworks, whether social cognition or institutional learning, to lead changing universities, providing instead an ontological stance in which criticality is omnipresent and being is self-adjusting;

2. Permits a fashioning of cognitive pathways by which to alter institutional self-understandings.

3. Provides a structure by which to study diverse aspects of organizational leadership.

A Reflexive Look at the Study

In looking back at the study, it is apparent that university leadership is a complex phenomenon that requires ongoing examination. The study was an attempt to advance the literature on university leadership and provide a meaningful theory for the practice of contemporary university leadership. In a sense, both aims were achieved, but neither could be examined exhaustively within the limitations of a PhD thesis. Nonetheless, it would have been worthwhile to include in the study CEOs who were veteran leaders of complex universities; such persons might have offered different insights on the effective leadership of changing universities. So too the question of how to be self-directive could have been undertaken through multiple lenses other than cognitive resources theory, and might still be worth exploring. While the literature review was thorough, it could not account for all aspects of leadership theory. No doubt other theories could be offered which might be important to consider. Limited attention was paid to interviewing academic staff and accounting for the nature of academic life, given that the focus on the study was on executive leadership. An account of institutional change and uncertainty from a perspective of knowledge workers might yield different results than this study of executive leaders since the concerns of the two differ materially. If one agrees with Barrow (1990) that it is the academic staff who "own the university," then such a perspective would be vital to have.

I have undertaken this study from the perspective of an American, with knowledge of living and working in America that exceeds my limited time living and working in Great Britain. Hence, the study may be skewed towards knowledge on the area of the

subject with which I am most confident, i.e., American universities. Although the data suggest that the set of propositions offered are transferable to a wide range of settings and sets of understandings, it would be useful to test the study and/or place criticality for university leadership in other cultural settings to determine whether its efficacy is affected.

Although the data from American Business School were important in their confirmations and disconfirmations, they did not yield material insights into the effective leadership of changing universities. A different case might have offered more knowledge.

Finally, I did not appreciate fully at the onset of the study how delicate some of the data or how great the need for anonymity of respondents would be. As a result, the rendering of this document has included numerous revisions to eliminate as far as possible any statements or other markers that might reveal the identities of either the institutions or the respondents. As such, no statements published in any form other than the thesis were used in the final document so that none could be attributed, and consequently reveal, the identities of persons or institutions. While this tactic was necessary to meet my professional obligations as a researcher, it is notable that some of the texture of the study had to be constrained.

A Final Word
For changing universities, where flux is commonplace and institutional knowing is disputable, the role of leadership is to help institutional members make sense of and fashion ways for their universities to live with uncertainty. The central thesis of the

study is, therefore, that the effective leadership of changing universities requires a critical method by which to transform information into knowledge, knowledge into knowing, knowing into being. The effective leadership of changing universities is not prescriptive, as no one set of propositions is likely to suit all circumstances. The proposal of criticality for university leadership has come after examination of the literature on organisational leadership, change, and learning in the fields of psychology and sociology, and only after reflective engagement with the data from the case-study institutions. Between the time of data collection and conclusion of the study, the central issue shifted from how to lead change in universities to how to lead universities that were changing in the midst of uncertainty. Given the context of uncertainty in which these universities function, the answer that emerged was "criticality." It is my hope that the paradigm of criticality for university leadership will benefit the work and understandings of researchers and practitioners alike.

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APPENDIX I

American Business School (ABS) – Criticality, Sensemaking

--**Successful leadership of the faculty is a key issue in the case of** ████. "In an academic setting, vision is problematic, in part because of the collective ownership by the faculty of curriculum matters. No leader can impose a vision on the faculty, and anyone perceived as trying to impose fundamental changes raises intense opposition." Yet administrators perceived as having no vision are similarly poorly received. These factors suggest, to ████, that faculty want to be "led (lightly) but not managed." (████████

Upon ████ arrival as president of ████████, he created a "strategic planning process" defined by eight teams, each of which was co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator. The teams also included alumni, current students, and trustees. A ninth team, on which ████ personally participated, was later formed specifically to make recommendations about governance. From the discussions of this team came the initiative to form small elected decision making bodies (DMBs) to represent each academic program. The DMB of the ████ MBA program was successful in creating an "extremely innovative, integrated curriculum."

Drawbacks of the academic mentality include an absence of critical thinking on the question of change. ████ also cites 1) a certain pessimism, and 2) a somewhat ironic lack of ingenuity: "The unbelievable willingness to assume the worst about absolutely anything...it's like professional paranoia. ...and to my utter amazement, faculty, for all that we're taught to be scholars, inquirers, never, ever, ask a question, they never say, 'What were you thinking about?' 'Why would we do that?' 'What was the reasoning behind it?' NEVER" (████ interview, 2-3)

"Large bodies aren't meant for making BIG changes for exploratory things. ...it ends up having to be sent off [to] the Committee, then Committees kill things, and the large body kills it, and so on" (████ interview, 2)
-what does this say about university change? The factors working against it, the outlook for its success.

"...I was a chairman and so I saw what chairmen and faculty did to the Academic Vice President, how they talked about him, the difference between what they said, vs. what they thought" (████ interview, 2)
-This is an interesting theme in many of the interviews, across the case study institutions: the difference between thought and action with regard to the leader

-Influence faculty by successfully conveying what you will do for the students, because students are the way to the faculty's heart—this is ultimately self-serving for the faculty:
"...most people who are faculty members, even the ones who pay no attention to teaching, don't want students not to learn, and don't want students to be angry with them. ... So I think you need to figure out ways to talk about how you are going to

make a difference to students, and in what particular ways you will. And what it takes to do that." (█████, 3)
"I also…came to believe that most faculty are pretty reasonable if they understand the game, it's just that there's nothing in their daily life that makes them understand the game." (█████, 5)
-faculty and "the game": what does █████ mean by "the game"? business vs. academia? "real life" vs. academia?

Organization of the Teams: █████'s Teams were co-chaired by a faculty member and by an administrator or trustee. This combination was "very cleverly done," (7), according to █████. An effective combination.

█████ was a good judge of people and built a good team; he brought his business sensibilities into the academic world: "he'd learned in business, you always try to hire people smarter than you and give them a lot of rope—he was good at that."
-He brought in bigger thinkers than himself (this is also an aspect of vision): "His aspirations were much higher than had been the case before. He brought in some larger people onto the Trustees… So █████ brought some bigger thinkers in." (█████, 8)

Sometimes a leader has to change the way decisions are made: each of █████'s seven teams that were involved in the Strategic Planning process "came back and said, 'There's no point in really proposing anything if we don't change the way we make decisions, because it will just die in endless discussion.' … And that team came up with the model of decision-making bodies for undergraduate curriculum and graduate curriculum, separate ones. Five elected members, at large, in fact deliberately not enough to represent every Faculty division." –this is an interesting strategy, for limiting squabbling and streamlining the decision making process; was it effective?
–"it wasn't that a small group made the decision which let us go ahead, it was that the new mechanism let people believe it was worth doing something interesting" (█████, 15)
-new mechanism can be an end unto itself, rejuvenating

Leadership review mechanism: █████: "I instituted upward feedback" "…how the chairmen are doing, how the deans are doing, how the Vice President's doing." (17)
-is this ABS' leadership review mechanism? Do the other case study institutions have something similar?

█████ interview: *-consistency* as a leadership strategy: "I think people feel in general that I am—I don't know if fear is the right way, but at least they will be treated consistently and there won't be a lot of deal making around that." (█████, 3)

The hybrid (business/academia) nature of the ABS faculty makes it more open to and effective at change: a "predominantly business faculty, that are academics and know they are academics, but also have knowledge of business and what is effective in business, and what works in business and the need to change and move, and try new things, and to innovate—so combine those two characteristics of the █████ faculty, and I think we have a faculty that does move and change better than most faculty I am aware of." (4)
-institutional environment, corporate/academic identity

"there are business faculty here, they also know the value of leadership and the value of setting direction and the value of changing, and the value of being responsive to the market, so they ultimately know that we have to move and we have to change." (█████, 5)

TEAMS: environment of open communication is critical to the team, "the process is that you have to create an environment of reasonably open communication where you can give and receive feedback that is good and not so good effectively as well."
-Team building occurs through experience (together): "we became an effective team because we have tough choices to make and we will have to give and take throughout those." (8) –a concrete example of this is █████'s relationship with █████████. detailed on page 10 of the interview

Reward *trying*; change around a *theme*: "Reward the people that tried [and] things didn't work out well, and keep change going that way within a boundary of, we want to do change around innovative teaching, or we want to do change around entrepreneurship"
-"create an environment which gives people to say, we can extend it this way, let me try this or let me try that" (█████, 11)

-Everyone's opinion is considered (ideally)—this is like BRU: we are trying to "make sure everybody gets a valid say and everybody understands that their opinions have been part of the process" (█████, 12)

-task forces, including faculty, were formed from the core team; these task forces looked at student, alumni, and faculty experiences to determine *stakeholders*: "assessing where our major stakeholders groups are and what they are feeling, and what they are doing. And then what should be █████'s strategy from their perspective and sort of building that consensus around the major strategic objectives." (█████, 13)

-Problem of how to be both *efficient* AND *inclusive*: "how do you communicate what is going on to keep the process reasonably efficient but be inclusive—that's really hard." (█████, 16)

Leadership, cohesiveness: "I don't think in a vibrant organization you have everybody completely aligned, but you have everybody moving in the same general quadrant and you create an enthusiasm, excitement, and an opportunity for people to excel." (█████, 3)

The "other side" of final-say decision-making (e.g. █████): "I think many of us are frustrated with █████ model [wherein] everything is advisory. [He] makes all final decisions… This is not a decision-making group, it is an advisory group. I don't think that any of us feel that any decision we make can't be changed by the President on a whim." (█████, 4)
-does this undermine or help Presidential leadership?

-"the prevailing attitude among the senior leadership is that we'll just do our own thing; we'll be friendly and congenial but not very collaborative." (█████, 4)

Not a collaborative environment. Is this because input doesn't seem to matter? (advisory decision-making, above)

██████ provided an example of how top-down decision making can work: "he became clear that 'there are some things I am going to decide and I am not going to ask your opinion and I will be clear about hat those things are. And there are other things that we are going to decide as a team, and I will be clear about what those things are.' … Everybody was fine with that. It was when you sat around and spent endless hours talking about things, thinking you were making a decision only to find out you were giving advice as the President will often do something unilaterally—it's frustrating." (██████, 10)
-frankness seems to be key here

Fixing the leadership and ABS itself: "It would be better if we had somebody who got the team together [and held the executive leadership] accountable as a team to make some structural changes to get our health back. We have to be smaller; we have to be more flexible and more agile. We have to be leaner. We have to have a few centers of excellence…be good at a few things." (██████, 13)
-This reasserts the necessity of a review mechanism for higher leadership.
-Also, small as a virtue.

██████ interview: *Who "is" the school? Who is the greatest stakeholder? There is no such confusion in the business world:* "The fundamental belief is that the faculty is the school…though the students believe they are the school, and the administration who work over long periods of time to try and drive and direct and keep the school flying feel in many ways that they are the school. The alumni community believes that they are the school… And in many ways, each of them is correct to a greater or lesser degree than their self-perception. In companies out there it just is a little more straightforward, customers, products, services, employees, shareholders, and the public at large." (██████, 2)

The Executive Council: "The is a team who I think has a shared sense of mission, I think we, by and large to a greater or lesser degree, have all bought into the College's mission…" (██████, 5) --team buy-in to the mission—how important is this? Idea that when ██████ came in, ABS had "lost its way"; does this refer to identity, or to management? "██████, overall is doing a pretty fine job in taking the school from a regime where there is a general perception that the school kind of lost its way and getting it back on an even keel" (██████, 8)
How did he do this? "He has gotten a better grip on the financial situation of the College, upgraded some talent in some key positions, expended resources, cut resources, re-engaged the alumni community." (██████, 8)

██████ interview: ██████ seeks to "raise people's aspirations." (5) Capital Campaigns are a way to do this.

██████ interview: Part of ██████ strategy is incremental goal setting, and enunciation of goals: "when I come in every year, ██████ and I agree on certain specific objectives that he wants to achieve during that period of time." (7)

-"we do annual objectives with the President, then in May, the President gives a report to the Trustees on what he feels…they accomplished during the year in regards to those objectives." (7)

-"Then they [the Trustees] are excused and the Committee goes, or the Board goes into Executive Session. Then we have an open discussion on the performance of the President, so every Trustee has an opportunity to speak whatever they think, good, bad, or indifferent, whatever that might be, and I have a responsibility to go back and summarize those findings and report back to the President." (7)

--*ABS has a mechanism by which Trustees can review the President. The question of review mechanisms of the President's performance in the various case study institutions is an interesting question. ABS seems to have the most concrete mechanisms in place—it seems from the outside to be the most organized in this way of the case study institutions.*

APPENDIX II

Letter of Request to the President of Black American University (BAU)

February 2, 2002

Dr. ██████████
President
██████ University

Re: Request to Study ██████ for PhD Thesis
_____

I trust this note finds you well. Thank you for taking my call last week and agreeing to take part in my study of university leadership as part of my PhD at the Institute of Education, University of London.

The study will be about how university presidents lead their universities to change. My goal is to understand how you are leading ██████ to new understandings about itself such that institutional members are able to adopt the changes that you, as president, put forward. To this end, it will be important for me to spend a week or so on-campus interviewing and shadowing you, as well as interviewing the members of your senior management team. Ideally, I would visit at a time when you are preparing for a Board meeting in which you present your strategic plan. I will make myself available whenever that is.

In the meantime, I will look for to receiving the materials we discussed from your chief of staff. I understand these to include:
- An organizational chart
- Most recent audited financials
- Mission statement
- Presidential speeches relevant to the research topic
- All strategic plans
- A grouping of college publications and informational materials

Again, Dr. ██████, I am deeply grateful for your willingness to assist in this important research project. My hope is that you will find it a rewarding experience.

All the best,

John Fitzgerald Gates

APPENDIX III

Correlations between Respondents Backgrounds/Thinking to their Institutions' Identities

Leader/Institution	Experience	Knowledge Frameworks	Change Agenda
Sexton – SRU	-Academic/Scholar -Leader in American Universities	-International Scholarly Competition -Institutional Autonomy -Alternative Funding Streams	-To bring SRU into the contemporary world of global scholarly competition. -To increase the university's autonomy from the state through development of alternative funding streams.
Mays – BAU	-Distinguished Politician -Professor at Elite Black Colleges	-Engagement -Standards -Planning	-To lead BAU's total renaissance: academic, structural, physical, and spiritual.
Morris – ABS	-Businessman -Board Chair	-Strategy -Mission Specificity --Business models -Financial Solvency	-To correct ABS' structural deficit by reducing programmes. -To develop a long-term plan for the university.

APPENDIX IV

Coding Template for Theory Building

CRITICALITY
Leaders' thinking, understandings, knowings
Visions and Values
Change Leadership   Pivot Point $(\downarrow)\rightarrow$
Leaders' Awareness of Self in Relation to Institution $\downarrow(\uparrow)\rightarrow$
Outcomes

Appendix V

Guide for Initial Interview

- Please tell me about yourself, particularly your educational and work background in relation to your being here now.
- Please tell me about your job, in terms of what you do, how you spend your time, and the impact you think it has on the institution.
- What are the most challenging parts of your work?
- What didn't you know upon accepting the job that you wish you had known back then?
- How do you grapple with change as a person and leader, and with leading institutional change?
- How do you usually resolve issues of conflict?
- How do you make sense of uncertainty?