John E. Tropman (USA), Lynn Wooten (USA)

Executive leadership: a 7C approach

Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of "executive leadership" and presents a framework for organizing thought and research on these combined concepts. It concludes with a discussion of the Destructive Executive Leader. Executiveship and leadership are concepts in their own right. Executiveship refers to the managerial elements in running an organization, while leadership refers to charting its strategic direction. CEOs and other top team members need to do both, yet there are obvious tensions between these two foci. The paper addresses issues involving different combinations of executiveship and leadership elements, from a situation of virtuosity (individuals who are high in both areas and can bring forth appropriate skills as needed) to individuals deficient in each. When the virtuoso runs an organization, it is well managed and well led; when the deficient executive leader runs an organization, it is poorly managed and poorly led. The destructive executive leader puts the organization and its staff in peril. Seven areas provide perspective on how we may understand individuals in executive leadership positions: characteristics (personal features such as personality, etc.); crucibles (signature events that shape and imprint the executive leader); collaborations (key allies and mentors); competencies (knowledge, skills, and ability to execute); conditions (organization culture and structure); context (elements outside the organization that it can affect or affect it) and change (how swiftly in the environment evolving.) Singly and severally, these elements allow us to understand both the executive leader and the literature about executive leadership.

Keywords: executiveship, leadership, executive leadership, the virtuoso executive leader, the destructive executive leader, and executive leadership perspectives: characteristics, crucibles, collaborations, competencies, conditions, contexts, and change.
JEL Classification: M10.

Introduction[1]

Executiveship, leadership, and executive leadership have such a broad range of foci that it is difficult to get one's head around it. Amazon.com lists just under 60, thousand titles under "leadership"[2]. Google registers 131 million entries. The books range from detailed empirical studies through blogs, journalistic and scholarly articles to many using Jesus as a model Executive. Some illustrative titles are as follows: Jesus CEO (Jones, 1995); The Management Methods of Jesus (Briner, 1996); (Briner and Prichard, 1997); Jesus on Leadership (Wilkes, 1998); The Leadership Lessons of Jesus. Lead Like Jesus (Blanchard and Hodges, 2008), The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus (Manz, 1998) and How can one make sense of this vast array of approaches, writings, and perspec-

tives? The 7C Approach is one way to manage this plethora of perspectives.

The focus of this paper is on the executive leader, and how to understand the functions of that position/role. The "executive" part of that phrase picks up the organizational position elements (top team membership), while the "leadership" part attends to the innovative and inventive elements. By conventional understanding, Executives are senior managers of the firm. The executive position is a position for which someone is paid and appointed. Executives organize and coordinate firm activity and create conditions that produce mission-driven products of high quality on a systematic and regular basis. Executives focus on efficiency (doing things right) and innovations (improving what they are doing now). The combination of efficiency and innovation we call Production/Quality focus − the ability to bring together both operational efficiencies of the enterprise with improvements in that enterprise.

Leaders, on the other hand, are individuals who can create and sustain positive change, through others, without crisis. The change that leaders create involves new, and hopefully better, directions through inventions (doing things they are not doing now) and effectiveness (doing the right thing). We call this combination of innovation and effectiveness Aspiration Focus. The following chart outlines some of the differences.

There is a tension between these two foci. These tensions are illustrated in Figure 1a.

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[2] The concept of leadership is an ambiguous phrase requiring conceptual clarification. One use of the term refers to individuals in "leadership" positions organization, essentially the executive leader.

A second approach refers to anyone "taking the lead" in the organization, from volunteers to executives to directors. This broad definition of leadership "frees" it from organizational position and looks at the visioning and initiating aspects of leadership, independent of organizational position.

A third use of the term refers to the organization itself and sees "leadership" as an end stage in organizational development. In this approach, the organization "takes the lead" in community service going beyond delivery of professionally competent services.

DIMENSIONS	MANAGEMENT	LEADERSHIP
Characteristics	Organized	Innovative/inventive
Competencies	Routine/reliability executes: produces outcomes	Reorganization/refocus imagines: envisions outcomes
Conditions	Bureaucracy on the dance floor	Adhocracy on the balcony
Context	Control of environment Looks in & down	Exploitation of environment Looks out, up, & away
Change	Evolution/transactional	Revolution/transformational
Collaborations	Technical/tactical people with the builders	Visionary/strategic people with the architects
Crucibles	Crises of operation expected to lead	Crises of direction expected to manage

Fig. 1a. Executiveship "v" leadership

In some sense it is easier to be either an executive or a leader.

Locating them in a grid, we can see that the premier cell in the upper left corner contains the Exceptional Executive Leader, one who can both introduce new things and orchestrate the firm to make them work. The lower right corner contains the Plodding Executive Leader, one who is generally status quo but might go so far as to resist change. She or he has a fair ability to orchestrate the elements of the firm. The Visionary Executive Leader has great ideas, but can't seem to make them happen. The Managerial Executive Leader is great at running a tight ship, but it is the same old ship, going in the same old direction.

Executiveship	Leadership	
	High aspiration focus (invention/effectiveness)	Low aspiration focus (invention/effectiveness)
High production /quality focus (innovation + efficiency)	The exceptional executive leader	The managerial executive leader
Low production /quality focus (innovation + efficiency)	The visionary executive leader	The average executive leader

Fig. 1b. The relationship between executiveship leadership, orchestration and invention/innovation

What makes the task of the Executive Leader so difficult is that executiveship characteristics and competencies are at odds, to some degree, with leadership characteristics. The Executive Leader is continually balancing the orderliness of executiveship with the disorderliness of leadership.

1. The 7C framework

The 7C framework seeks to integrate elements of both the person and the organization into one approach. It looks at leadership through a 7-prism kaleidoscope, each prism given a somewhat different view of the "leadership" elements commonly used, but now blended into a rope of 7

strands, which are: Characteristics, Competencies, Conditions, Contexts, Change, Collaborations and Crucibles. This "staircase" moves from the person to the external environment (Characteristics to Context. The 5th C considers the velocity of these parts (how fast they are changing), the meshing of speeds (structural lag, cultural lag) and the mode of change (transformational or transactional). Collaborations refer to the structure of the Executive leaders Network, and Crucibles addresses typical "crises" that will bedevil each type.

The first C, Characteristics, refers to the personal attributes of the executive or top team. In this view one attends to temperament, ethnicity, gender, age, generation, etc. and the fit between those characteristics and the product or service organization, and demands of the job.

The second C, the Competence, is defined as the knowledge and skills needed or possessed by the executive leader. Competence additional invites us to think about the ability apply knowledge and execute on skills, as opposed to just "possessing" them.

The third C, Conditions, refers to the firm itself, and looks at its structure, culture, process, and capacity. Obviously, the firm needs capacity in a range of areas – governance, program delivery, program support, etc.

The fourth C, Contexts, has two parts. One looks at superordinate (outside the firm) cultural and structural in terms of elements that affect or could affect the organization. These factors could be ones such as demographic shifts, governmental changes, economic conditions, competitor organizations, global shifts, etc. The second asks about ways in which the organization could influence that environment through lobbying, changing their product lines, etc.

The fifth C, Change, adds a dynamic element to each of the other C areas. Are changes in the environment, other organizations characteristics of staff, etc. moving and how nimble must the organization be to change at least slightly faster than the changes which are affecting it?

Collaborations addresses the network of connections the Executive Leader has in terms of scale, scope, diversity and other dimensions. It represents the social capital created that contributes as a resource for the Executive Leader's goal achievement.

Crucibles considers Executive Leader the ability to adapt to a crisis or challenge by making meaning of the situation through learning and resilience.

2. The 7C taxonomy

Let us follow this theme throughout the 7C taxonomy, beginning with CHARACTERISTICS. Characteristics can include personal elements of the CEO. These could be physical characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender; or temperamental characteristics, such as a Myers Briggs "type" or just a general disposition. For example, a firm that serves minority or women exclusively clients might be better served with a minority or female executive leader. A firm in a highly volatile sector might look at an Executive Leader with a high tolerance for ambiguity. Executiveship and Leadership have different associated temperaments; the Executive Leader needs to have a blend of both. The question here is one of "fit". Where there is high fit on both dimensions, one sees the harmonic leader, so named because there is a seamless quality about the leader's presence in the firm. On the opposite side, there is the discordant leader, whose characteristics are almost aggressively "unfit" for her or his position.

Another important and powerful set of characteristics for excellent Executive Leaders is the presence of fierce determination, and also the presence of humility. Collins called this "Level 5 Leadership", though we also see it as appropriate for Executiveship and Leadership (Collins, 2001).

These elements are outlined in Figure 2. Executive Leaders need to have a good fit with the required skill sets. For example, if a particular Executive Leadership position requires significant planning and attention to detail but that is not the "style" of the person in the job at the moment, then there is likely to be "low fit". Another element of fit is the type of work the organization does. An Executive Leader in a policy advocacy firm would probably be different from one in a policy analysis firm. Where there is a high fit among characteristics, competencies, conditions, contexts, change, collaborations and crucibles we may find the harmonic leader; one who blends personal, organizational and community elements into a pleasing, impactful whole. Where the executive is "high" on executiveship characteristics, but "low" on leadership characteristics, we generally find a "one-note executive leader". The one-note leader overemphasizes the importance of running the organization as it is versus changing it or, overemphasizes the importance of changing the organization versus running it. These are cases of partial fit. Where there is a poor fit, we find a discordant Executive Leader, regularly or even assertively out of tune with the Executive Leadership needs of the organization (Figure 2).

Executiveship characteristics	Leadership characteristics	
	High fit	Low fit
High fit	The harmonic Executive leader	The one-note (or 2 notes) Executive leader
Low fit	The one – note (or 2 notes) Executive leader	The discordant Executive leader

Fig. 2. The relationship between executive leadership and "fit"

3. Competencies

Similarly, COMPETENCIES refer to the package of skills that a Leader and an Executive need, and the level at which they perform those competencies. Competencies involve knowledge plus skills. This distinction is important. From our perspective competence involves knowing theories and ideas about what you are doing, as well as skills in actually doing it. Some classic competencies are listed in Figure 3. Some are more executive type competencies and others are morte leadership type competencies. The Executive Leader: 1) has elements of all these, and 2) can perform them at an expert, master level or maestro (Figure 3).

ILLUSTRATIVE EXECUTIVE SKILLS	ILLUSTRATIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS
Operational running things	Directional Where should we be going?
Technical competence uses appropriate tools	Design competence creates appropriate systems
Execution can bring projects to fruition	Conceptualization uses imagineering to create project ideas
Tactical thinking what are the small steps needed for execution	Strategic thinking What is the direction we need?
Doing things right produce quality products regularly	Doing the right thing produce the right products
Stresses the here and now looks in the stream	Stresses the then and there looks upstream and down stream
Time teller	Clock builder
Industry knowledge Interpersonal works and plays well with others	
Intrapersonal has an understanding of one's own self	

Fig. 3. Executive leadership competencies

The comprehensiveness of the skill levels of Executive Leaders in any of the dimensions above is important. Just "possessing" the competency is not sufficient; one needs to be able to apply it. In their important book "Mind over Machine" (1986), Dreyfus and Dreyfus identified five levels of skill acquisition and displayed that span from the novice to the master. As an individual learns any new skills, they are novices. They proceed to a beginner status, and then arrive at the journeyperson state, which is where most individuals are on most things. Expert Leaders are excellent at either executiveship or leadership, but do not have the full package. Master Leaders are good at both visioning

and execution. But Dreyfus and Dreyfus stopped one step too soon. The "Master" − what in music might be the virtuoso – emphasizes personal accomplishment and skill. The Maestro, as the name implies, possess not only preeminent personal mastery but also have exceptional ability to bring others together to work as a team. The orchestra conductor is an apt metaphor. Indeed, conductor Roger Nierenberg, in his book entitled Maestro, talks about executive leadership in just this way in the book and his program "The Music Paradigm"[1]. Average Leaders can be Journeypersons, Beginners or Novices. Everyone has to start somewhere, but one does not want to remain in these areas. Executive Leadership requires a higher standard.

NOVICE: Thumbnail
♦ performance slow & jerky
♦ attention to rules/facts
♦ works with the book in hand
♦ heavy learner
Problem: little reinforcement from the task

BEGINNER: Thumbnail
♦ performance faster & smoother
♦ begins rule fade (acting automatically)
♦ patterns not mentioned in rules
♦ uses book less frequently
♦ learner
Problem: embarrassment to self and others

JOURNEYPERSON: Thumbnail
♦ performance average in terms of speed & smoothness
♦ rule fade mostly complete
♦ selecting most important cues
♦ calculated, educated risk taking
♦ uses book only for exceptions
♦ learner/teacher
Problem: may think it's the end

EXPERT: Thumbnail
♦ performance becomes fluid
♦ rule fade complete
♦ calculation & rationality diminish

♦ no plan is permanent
♦ attention shifts with cues
♦ holistic, intuitive grasp
♦ can write the book
♦ teacher/learner
Problem: possible overuse of default skill because they are so good at it; may also not realize they are average in other areas (or below average)

MASTER: Thumbnail
♦ performance is seamless
♦ exactly the right speed; appears effortless
♦ understands the deep structure of the effort
♦ holistic recognition of cues
♦ performance is solid, confident & sure
♦ deeply understand
♦ trust self & the process; let process flow; enter as needed
♦ beyond the book
Problem: finding, arranging & managing access to the Master's knowledge & self

MAESTRO
♦ Performance shifts from self expression to producing collective excellence
♦ Able to integrate competencies that s/he does not personally possess
♦ Excels at blending, sequencing, integrating, coordinating multiple elements in a system to produce excellent outcomes
♦ Retains, but subordinates, her/his personal excellence for systemic excellence
Problem: maintaining a constant focus on the urgent/important cues (the vital few) while ignoring noise.

Fig. 4. Executive leadership skill levels

As we look at the blending, the Virtuoso Leader is one who is a master at many of the competencies. The Productive Leader is very strong in the executive Competencies, but has lower skill levels in the leadership Competencies; the reverse is true for the Creative Leader. The Bumbling (or incompetent) Executive Leader has Novice or Beginner skill levels in most of the areas. How could one become an Executive Leader if one was not in the possession of the needed level of skills? The answer is unfortunately easy – people get jobs for lots of reasons. Competence is not always, or even often, involved (Figure 5).

EXECUTIVESHIP COMPETENCIES	LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES			
	Exceptional competence maestro	High competence master	Satisfactory competence journeyperson/expert	Low competence novice/beginner
Exceptional competence maestro	The field marshal executive leader	X	X	X
High competence master	X	The virtuoso executive leader	The very productive executive leader	The productive executive leader
Satisfactory competence journeyperson/expert	X	The very creative executive leader	The average executive leader	The poor executive leader
Low competence novice/beginner	X	The imaginative executive leader	The poor executive leader	The bumbling executive leader

Fig. 5. Levels of executive and leadership competencies

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[1] The Music Paradigm. Roger has also developed a unique program in which participating executives sit with the musicians in an orchestra, experiencing the important role an individual plays within the larger setting of the organization. They experience the freedom to create within the framework set by the conductor as leader, learn about their individual roles and how individuals come together, working towards the same goal, to produce something magical.

4. Conditions

CONDITIONS refer to the properties of the firm itself – its strategy, its structure, its subculture, its staff and its systems. Each of these elements has to have integrity in and of itself, and be woven together so that structure and culture, staff and systems support strategy, and so on, so that all of the elements are integrated. The **articulated** executive understands and integrates each of these dimensions with the others so all parts of the organization work smoothly together. The **efficient** executive, like the productive executive, tends to be more aware of the managerial aspects of the firm – systems, structure and staff particularly. While this awareness can lead to a well run organization, the executive may not be as focused on subculture and strategy, leading to mission drift. The **effective** Executive Leader might be well aware of subculture and strategy, and thus, be very mission focused, but not run a very tight ship. The Executive Leader may understand each of the organizational elements but fail to understand the interconnection (Figure 6).

Executiveship and firm conditions	Leadership and firm conditions	
	HIGH UNDERSTANDING	LOW UNDERSTANDING
HIGH UNDERSTANDING	The articulated executive leader	The efficient executive leader
LOW UNDERSTANDING	The effective executive leader	The disjointed executive leader

Fig. 6. The executive leader and firm conditions

Agencies themselves, through the Executive Leader to be sure, but also through board and staff, have a reputation and status in their communities. These range from highly respected Executive Leaders where other firm leaders want to find out how they do what they do, to negative examples of agencies that everyone seeks to understand so that they do not repeat that firm's errors (Figure 7).

Executiveship and firm professional position	Leadership and firm community position		
	HIGHLY RESPECTED	RESPECTED	NOT RESPECTED
HIGHLY RESPECTED	An exemplar firm -	Respected for executiveship	Negative example
RESPECTED	Respected for leadership	Somewhat respected	Negative example
NOT RESPECTED	Negative example	Negative example	Not respected

Fig. 7. Executive leadership and firm position in the community

5. Context

Agencies need to relate to the context in which they exist, from which they draw resources and to which they provide product. Executive Leaders have two

general CONTEXTS to which they need to relate. One is the "technical" context. A human resources department might relate, for example, to the The Society for Human Resource Management or WorldatWork, as well as other elements of a "job related" context. Additionally, though, firms relate to governmental regulators (Auto companies to state and Federal Regulators/Regulations) as well as to international organizations in their field. If the Executive Leader relates to each of these contexts, that person is a Statesperson Executive Leader. Ones who relate primarily to the technical contexts are Specialist Executive Leaders; ones who relate primarily to the community context are Generalist Executive Leaders. Some executives do not relate to either context; these are Isolated Executive Leaders (Figure 8). The firm wants to work on two fronts. One is adjusting itself to "incoming" changes (nimbleness quotient) and the second is working to influence that context (advocacy quotient).

Executiveship and context	Leadership and context	
	HIGH CONNECT	LOW CONNECT
HIGH CONNECT	The statesperson	The specialist
LOW CONNECT	The generalist	The Loaner

Fig. 8. Executive leadership and context

6. Change

Both executive skills and leadership skills involve CHANGE. One element of change is the extent to which innovation and invention are common practice in the Firm. The Cutting Edge Leader uses innovation (doing what you already do only faster, better, and cheaper) as well as doing things you have not done before. The "Better Executive Leader" is good at innovation, but not strong on invention. The "Newer" Executive Leader has much invention going on, but little innovation (Figure 9).

Executiveship and change	Leadership and change	
	High invention	Low invention
High innovation	The cutting edge executive leader	The "let's be better" executive leader
Low innovation	The "let's be newer" executive leader	The SALY (same as last year) executive leader

Fig. 9. Executive leadership and innovative and inventive change

A second element addresses the norm of change within and between each level. Typically, Characteristics are slowest to change, followed by competencies, which is in turn followed by organizational conditions, with context being most rapidly changing. If this hypotheses is empirically correct, the environment changes constantly (sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, but more on that in a moment). Organizations mostly lag the environment though some (Google, for example) shape and lead it. Organizations mostly lag for several

reasons. One is that they do not notice the environment is changing. A second reason is that even if they do notice, the fact that environmental change would require them to realign and reprioritize means that some of the things they are doing they need to drop, and they need to aquire new skills/products. That is resisted.

Competencies – the Executive Leader's skill set − are usually based on historical success rather than contemporary relevance, so one can guess that most executives will be in some sense anachronistic and behind the curve[1]. This is the reason that the late Robert D. Vinter, Professor of Organization Studies at the University of Michigan, commented on that "Executives are always re-solving the crisis that brought them into the organization in the first place[2]. That early crisis is a crucible event for them. Characteristics are the slowest to change, both individually and within the organizational set, that is why, for example, we have few – still – women on corporate boards and in key executive slots. Similar points can be made for people of color. Given the proposition that context is a major generator of change in most organizations, there are two other aspects of change that impact the Executive Leader. From the point of view of the Executive Leader, both the velocity of change (how fast change is coming) and the degree of impact (how big is this change) are important. When big and fast change is an environmental feature, Transcendental Executive Leadership is needed. This involves stepping above the fray and instituting proactive, fundamental change in mission and processes. It involves consummate skill in managing problems at the right time and in the right sequence, setting and changing decision criteria, and increasing the sense of urgency[3]. If the change is either big or fast, but not both, transactional change may work (Figure 10).

Executiveship and change	Leadership and change	
	HIGH VELOCITY/ IMPACT OF CHANGE	LOW VELOCITY/ IMPACT OF CHANGE
HIGH VELOCITY/ IMPACT OF CHANGE	Transcendental executive leader	Transactional executive leader
LOW VELOCITY/ IMPACT OF CHANGE	Transformational executive leader	Reactive/ritualistic /encapsulated executive leader

Fig. 10. Executive leadership and velocity/impact of change

Unfortunately, as noted above, many Executive Leaders fall into the Reactive/Ritualistic box. Executives wind up there because of lagged skill sets and frozen organizational structures and cultures, as noted above.

But there are other reasons as well. Oligarchic management is one important cause. In oligarchic management, the distance between the workers and the Executive Leadership widens, with Executive Leadership mainly listening to itself. Voss & Sherman (2000), make a similar point. This dynamic, in turn, allows leaders' interests to prevail. Their goals become more conservative as they view the survival of the organization and increased profit (short term) as most important. But social distance between staff and Executive Leadership team is not the only element of isolation. There are often physical distances as well, with the Executives Team in a "penthouse" (or sometimes even in a different town). There is diminished interreaction among the organizations members. The space between the Executive Leadership Team and the larger context grow as well. Changes there are not seen as important until they are very high velocity and very high impact. By then, even transcendental leadership is probably not enough to change the dynamics. Tichy and Devanna (1986) call this the "Boiled Frog Syndrome". Metaphorically, they point out that if you put a frog in cold water and slowly heat it, it does not realize that the water is becoming hotter and it boils to death! This phenomenon has an organizational name as well – the "just noticeable difference syndrome". Small changes are a part of it; insulated/isolated Executive Team members are another. One needs to look no further than the American auto industry (Chrysler, Ford and GM) to see that principle at work. One can go back to the 1960 and the collapse of the American steel industry for a "prequel" to the Auto debacle. Additionally, it is useful to note that what they view as huge changes, with which they must cope and which they must make, are not the result of anything that happened overnight. Subsets of these kinds of cataclysms are called "black swan events". A black swan event is an occurrence of overwhelming impact that takes everyone by surprise, and, in retrospect, was completely inevitable one, a fresh look is taken as the situation. The US financial collapse in 2008/9 would be a perfect example.

7. Collaborations

Collaborations refer to the network that the executives have with which to work. As one ascends in the organizational podium (or moves to the center in the organizational "atom"), work is increasingly, and then entirely, done through others. Many of those "others" are within one's own organization. But increasingly, in today's web-year, global and open organizational climate, the "others" mare significantly from what would have been considered "outside" the organization. Executive Leaders need to know whom to call, and have a wide range of options – contacts – who are willing and interested in assisting them. Executive Leaders

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[1] The investor Peter Lynch of the Magellan Fund made this comment: "Go for a business that any idiot can run – because sooner or later, any idiot is probably going to run it". http://www.fool.com/investing/ general/2010/05/21/how-peter-lynch-destroyed-the-market.aspx.
[2] Personal communication.
[3] These criteria come from Sayles and Chandler, 1993[1971] Managing Large Systems.

"invest" significantly in relationships, and the goal here − for the excellent ones – is both mutual and future gain, never personal aggrandizement or embellishment. While gain and embellishment may come, it is always a byproduct. Large, thin, and diverse networks are the sinews of collaboration. Small, thick, and cloned ones are the reverse.

For Executive Leaders, effective collaborations are built upon high quality connections in which relationships are marked by mutual positive regard, trust and active engagement (Dutton, 2003). Executive Leaders benefit from their web of high quality connections not only from the social exchange of resources, but also because these collaborative relationships allow for the co-construction of identities by giving feedback, reinforcing one's value proposition and allowing for the expression of the authentic self (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Furthermore, collaborative Executive Leaders employ high quality connections as an aspect of their developmental journey because of the psychological growth that occurs through sharing thoughts and feelings. These high quality connections are efficient vessels for sharing knowledge, and this form of collaborative learning can result in the Executive Leader participating in communities of practice organized around the goal of enhancing competencies (Liedka, 1999).

8. Crucibles

Crucibles are the defining crises for the Executive Leader, either ones that she or he has had in the past, or one that has happened recently. Executive Leader's behavior, we think, is heavily driven by those crucibles, and the ways in which they were resolved, and the lessons they have "learned" from them. Vinter's comment, noted above, that Executive Leaders continually "re-solve" the crisis that occasioned their entry is telling in this regard. This assumes that the "entry" of an Executive Leader into an organization's top spot **always** has elements of a crisis. We agree that this is true, even in the more benign situations. Transfer of power always has winners and losers, realignments, new directions, destruction of the past, as vital elements, among others.

Moreover, the crucibles of the Executive Leader are the experimental crisis dimensions of his or her journey that result in intense transformational experiences (Thomas, 2008). When confronting the intensity of the crucible, the Executive Leader manages the competing tension to "flight or fight". If flight becomes the mindset, the Executive Leader may focus on running away from the crisis or maintaining the status quo, and because of this dissipate energy rather than generatively unleashing it into a new direction. In contrast to a flight mindset, a fight mentality propels the Executive Leader to move forward and embrace new conditions.

This begins with introspection by examining who they are, what matters to them, and how they can learn from these periods of intense heat produced by the crucible. Complementary to introspection is the ability to draw on interpersonal strengths and the collaborative networks that serve as confidants and sages (Flach, 2004).

Interweaving introspection and interpersonal strengths, the exceptional Executive Leader purposefully reframes the crucible experience into a healthier and productive outcome (Thomas, 2008). First, this requires containing and resolving the crisis. Second, the exceptional Executive Leader learns resilience. That is the ability to bounce back to an improved state of being. The learning of resilience during crucible moments entails the adaptive capacity to explore various possibilities of opportunities and creating a path for exploiting them (Coutu, 2002). Creating the path to resilience demands the meaning making power of communicating and enacting a vision with supporting values and goals. Furthermore, the exceptional Executive Leader acknowledges that the path to resilience is not a structured straight path, but one of muddling through different turns that involves improvising, and consequently reinvention.

9. The longer view

The 7C approach has several kinds of value. One is that it allows us to locate pieces of the the literature in a "place" in terms of its emphasis. For example, the well known "Level 5 Leadership" (Collins, 2005) emphasises two dimensions – humility and fierce resolve. In terms of the analysis presented here, this focus would be mostly in the "characteristics" box. Such placements do not make them right or wrong, but it does call our attention to what might be missing, or need to be included in terms of a fuller picture. Daniel Goleman's emphasis on emotional intelligence tends to focus on Competence (intrapersonal/interpersonal skill) (Goleman 2006 [1995]) as does Hochschild's discussion in The Managed Heart (Hoschild 2003 [1983]). In Quinn's work on Beyond Rational Management (Quinn, 1988X) the stress is on organizational/firm Conditions. His four types of organizational subculture – clan, bureaucracy, market and adhocracy − call attention to "default styles" that characterize organizational behavior and expectations.

Prahalad's work on "The Bottom of the Pyramid" (2010) stresses contexts and their pressures and opportunities. And finally, Tichy and Devanna's book on The Transformational Leader stresses change as a key element in organizational analysis (Tichy and Devanna, 1986).

In terms of Collaboratives, Wayne Bakers book on "Networking Smart" (1994) is a prime example. But Baker's emphasis is more on the use of networking

for personal position, rather than as an organizational resource. And the whole literature on "Crisis Management (When It Hits the Fan, 1987) fits into the Crucibles genre, as well as books that look at early life experiences of Executive Leaders (Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt)[1].

Let us look, then, at a complete table that reflects the components we have been talking about in Figure 11. Recall that Leadership refers to the ability to generate; executiveship refers to the ability to execute. The Executive Leader can do both. The Managerial Leader can really make things happen, but might not the vision to know what should happen. The Visionary Leader knows where to go, but is unsure how to get there. The Average Leader, ranging from "ok" to plodding, is not sure where to go and would not know how to get there anyway.

In terms of the staircase introduced above from the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), the Exceptional Executive Leader – the maestro – is the Field Marshal. The superior Executive Leader is a "Master." The Managerial Leader and the Visionary Leader are in the Expert Class, except that their expertise lies in different areas. The Average Leader can be in the initial three classes of the Dreyfus and Dreyfus staircase: Journeyperson (or Average), Beginner, or Novice. It is problematic enough when one of these three becomes an Executive Leader; we believe Executive Leadership, as we previously indicated, should set a higher standard. It is also our conclusion that there are too many average Executive Leaders running nonprofit organizations today.

How would the executive core of the nonprofit sector (or any sector, for that matter) stack up in terms of an overall distribution? Based upon our experience, we suggest that there are about 45% of the nonprofit Executive Leaders in the Master or Expert category, and 45% in the Average category. We estimate that 10% of nonprofit Executive Leaders are in the Destructive category. If our estimates turn out to be reliable, the sector is in huge trouble because the executive core of our sector is not, as a group, up to its task. We make no representations about the corporate and governmental sectors.

10. Implications

This paper invites several kinds of analyses. One is an exploration of Executive Leadership workforce issues. Overall, concern is offered by our hypothesis that there is a serious tension between leadership skills and management skills, both within the organization and within the Executive leader herself or himself. Very little activity seems to be going on

to address this tension and assisting organizations in addressing it and dealing with it.

A second issue is our suggestion most Executive Leaders have lagged competencies and exist in lagged organizations. This may be the day of the "Learning Organization" but perhaps what is more important is the "Unlearning Organization." It is astonishing to a senior author of this paper (as well as other commentators) that, after the demise of the steel industry in the early 1960's, the only lesson the auto industry appears to have learned was how to be equally wrong-headed and destructive of itself and the millions who depended upon it. The Banking industry seems close to trumping each of them.

This lack of organization reflection seems mirrored by a lack of personal reflection within the executive cadre of American organizations. One sees, instead, executives saying, essentially, "Mistakes were made, but not by me".

Another is the Destructive Executive. We pegged the proportion of Destructive Executives at 10%, but many executives with whom we talked pegged it higher – up to 20%. We feel that this issue is one that needs serious attention, in terms of securing empirical data on the distribution of executive competence, as well as at the level of the individual boards, but at the level of local associations, state organizations, and National Associations.

A second issue is the crisis of recruitment. For example, there is an important gap coming in the executive leadership corps as "boomer" executive leaders retire. Bridgespan, a nonprofit consulting organization completed a study in 2006 that estimates that the US nonprofit sector will need in the vicinity of 600,000 executives within the next several years. There are serious issues about the ability of the sector to recruit and retain qualified members of the executive cadre.

11. The destructive executive

The 7C taxonomy helps us organize executives from truly exceptional to poor. There are, however, executives who are worse than poor; these executives are actually destructive of themselves, their organizations, and those around them. Some leaders are deeply destructive; we estimate 10%, but that needs to be carefully researched. The problem here seems to be in the characteristic/condition mix. Their personality structure is, or has become, highly needy and insecure, requiring constant reinforcement and the constant exercise of power. The "job" of the destructive Executive Leader becomes the maintenance, use and expansion of their power. Because they are constantly "spending" power, they constantly need replenishment. This need, perversely, builds into a sense of entitlement. But personality structure alone is not the only element. There

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[1] Google lists just under 40 million hits on "executive crisis".

is a lack of organizational control (conditions) which in turn allows for the freer play of the executive's needs. Boards of directors seem oddly clueless and often "in the pocket" of the executive. The willingness of the destructive executive to inflict harm often plays into this dynamic. While frequently appearing outwardly smooth, sophisticated and competent, the clue here is the Executive Leader's trail, which even cursory examination reveals to be littered with the dead and disabled careers of those who have "gotten in the way" of the destructive executive.

An early scholar who looked at psychological destructiveness in organizations (in this case governmental ones) was Harold Lasswell. His book, "Psychopathology and Politics" (1986 [1930; 1960]), is a landmark in seeking to understand the nature of the destructive executive. Perhaps, the contemporary scholar most attuned to these matters is Manfred Kets de Vries, executive coach, organizational analyst and psychoanalyst. His books include "The Irrational Executive" (1984), "Unstable at the Top" (1987, with Danny Miller), "Organizations on the Couch" (1991) and "Struggling with the Demon: Perspectives on Individual and Organizational Irrationality" (2001). One actual case of a destructive executive is that of Sol Wachter, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Wachter, 1991; Caher, 1998). Others like Feinberg and Tarrant (1995) discuss the problems of talented executives and Sternberg (2002). Tropman and Shaefer looked particularly at nonprofit executives and found the following eight themes emerging in a sample of destructive executives:

1. From Self Confidence to Overconfidence (over belief in self).
2. From Challenge to Stroking (cannot tolerate disagreement).
3. From Side Kick to Sycophant (hires those who agree).
4. From We to Me (sees self as of first importance).
5. From Observing Ego to Feedback Deafness (cannot hear critical feedback).
6. From Substance to Substance Abuse (abuses substances like drugs and alcohol).
7. From Need to Greed (need for compensation and toys keeps growing).
8. From At the Top to Over the Top (acts in outrageous ways).

The sad thing is that these executives usually have a solid record of accomplishment which they destroy, along with their family, associates, firm, and sometimes their sector. There is "incalculable loss", and that is just the endgame. Usually, as noted, they leave a path of destroyed and broken people along the way. This list, based in nonprofit executives, would work as well for corporate and public executives (Figure 11).

	Hi executiveship/Hi leadership	Hi executiveship/Lo leadership	Lo executiveship/Hi leadership	Lo executiveship/Lo leadership	Negative executiveship/ leadership
	THE EXCEPTIONAL EXECUTIVE LEADER	THE MANAGERIAL EXECUTIVE LEADER	THE VISIONARY EXECUTIVE LEADER	THE AVERAGE EXECUTIVE LEADER	PROBLEMATIC/ DESTRUCTIVE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP
Characteristics	Harmonic	One-note or 2-notes	One-note or 2-notes	Discordant	Narcissistic; insecure; self absorbed; self-aggrandizing
Competencies	Virtuoso	Productive	Creative	Bumbling	From virtuoso to bumbling but usually very capable
Conditions	Articulated	Efficient	Effective	Disjointed	Plays parts against each other
Context	Statesperson	Specialist	Generalist	Isolated	Sows misinformation
Change	Transcendental	Transformational	Transactional	Reactive; Ritualistic; Encapsulated	Seeks change for personal enrichment
Collaborations	Rich	Visionary-based	Worker bee based	Neglected Relationships	Self focused
Crucibles	Reinvention	Trapped in managerial role	Promoted to leadership role	Leadership as a Soloist	Calamity
Invention/ innovation style	Cutting edge	The "Let's Be Better" EL	The "Let's Be Newer" EL	The SALY (Same As Last Year) EL	Fires or removes talented competitors
DREYFUS % DREYFUS LEVEL	MAESTRO MASTER	EXPERT	EXPERT	AVERAGE JOURNEY-PERSON/ BEGINNER/ NOVICE	BELOW THE STAIRCASE!
GRADE	A	B	B	C,D,	F
DISTRIBUTION	15%	15%	15%	45%	10%

Fig. 11. The 7Cs

Special issues are presented in their study for minority executives and female executives, whose presence in the cadre is likely to be affected in such a transition.

Conclusion

From a practical perspective, our observation is that much more work needs to be done to prepare and train members of the human service and non-profit workforce who are interested in executive roles so that they have a good chance of scoring an A or a B, increasing the likelihood of making an impact on the complex issues facing our society, in the final analysis "competence matters". The sector needs competent executives across the full spectrum of agencies. As Bob Herbert said in a recent OP Ed piece in the New York Times, "Just keep in mind, whatever your political beliefs, that incompetence in high places can have devastating consequences" (Herbert, 2006, p. A26) (Figure 12).

The five Cs	Problematic/destructive executive leadership
Characteristics	Narcissistic; insecure; self absorbed; self-aggrandizing; charming; interpersonally skilled when it suits
Competencies	Usually very capable
Conditions	Plays parts of the organization against each other; aligns with weaker staff; fires competent staff (they are a threat)
Context	Sows misinformation in the community; Is divisive; fails to keep own word; finds and exploits community cleavages
Change	Seeks change for personal enrichment; fires, removes, destroys talented competitors
Collaboration	Focused on what such arrangements can do for herself/himself
Crucibles	Calamity, flameout with significant sequaqlae for family, organization, community, industry
Dreyfus and Dreyfus Step	BELOW THE STAIRCASE!
Grade	F
Proportion	10%

Fig. 12. The seven Cs and problematic/descriptive executive leadership

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