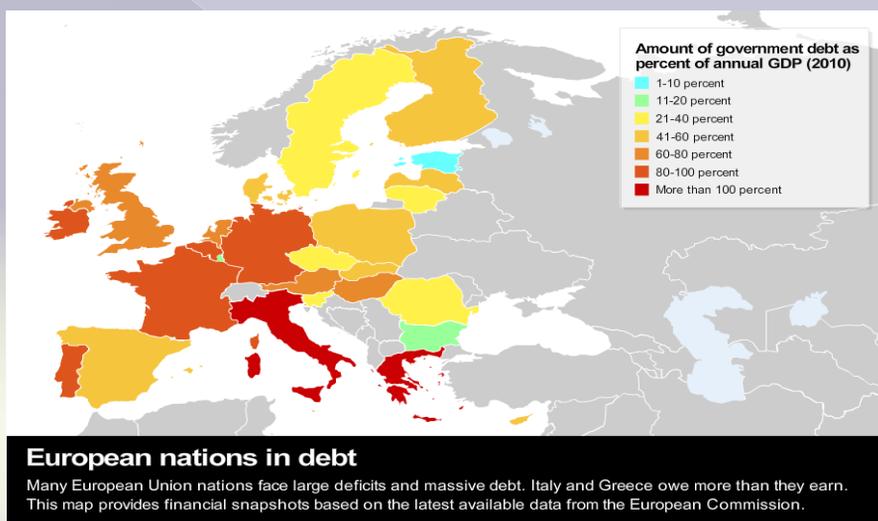


Leadership in a changing public administration

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Warsaw 10.10.2011

Public debt



Source: CNN

Volatility in the financial markets



The impact it has on sovereign countries



Photo: MSN News

The people who were supposed to get us out of this trouble



Photo:
Bloomberg



Photo: Reuters

Weren't they?

But:

- There is **no individual** who **can solve these issues for us**

Adaptive challenges:

- Problems where **no clear answers** is in reach
- Problems that will **require people to change their ways**

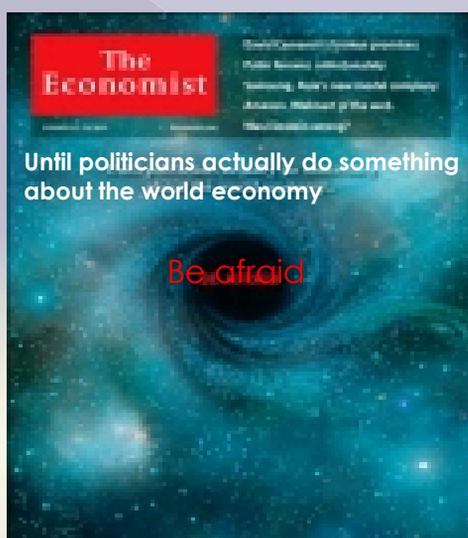
Things will not return to the old "normal"



The best we can do is to **adapt**,

in order to function and thrive in a changing environment

Frequent mistakes



- Misplacing the responsibility
- Finding a scapegoat
- Treating adaptive problems as if they were technical

Examples of adaptive challenges from organizational life

- ◉ A **procedure- or effectiveness** oriented bureaucracy should become innovative/**citizen-centered**
- ◉ An organization focused on paper and protecting **authenticity** of documents shall go **electronic**
- ◉ We were supposed to deliver **good experts**, now what is needed are interdisciplinary **team players**

Others: Mergers, major technology adjustments, adjusting to major changes in conditions

Expectations on Authority Figures

What do we expect from authorities?

- **Direction** (vision, strategy, next feeding site)
- **Protection** (preparing response to dangers)
- **Order** (orienting people to their roles, controlling conflict, establishing norms)

The Paradox of Trust

People will often trust you when you **fulfill their expectations for service**

So what happens when you:

- Raise questions or deliver information that conflicts with those expectations?
- When you tell them what they may need to hear, but not what they want to hear?

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What does it mean to lead when you face an adaptive challenge?

- ◎ **Mobilizing a group** to tackle the adaptive challenge (who needs to do what for us to make progress?)
- ◎ Build **adaptive capacity**

→ Oftentimes disruptive

Essential Questions of Adaptive Work

1. What cultural DNA do we **keep**?
2. What cultural DNA do we **discard**?
3. What **innovative DNA** will enable us to thrive in the new and challenging environment?

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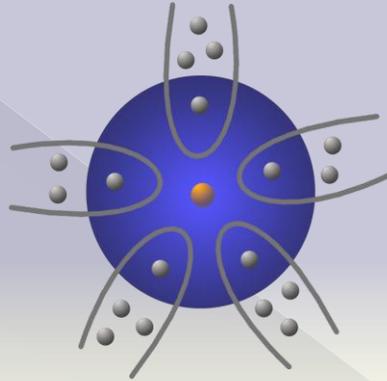
1. Diagnose the system

What is the status quo and what goals does it serve?

- ⦿ **Structure**
- ⦿ **Norms**
- ⦿ **Culture**

2. Identify the adaptive challenge

Adaptive
Challenge



Identify different factions and their perspectives

Who needs to change what in order to make progress on the adaptive challenge?

Copyright: Cambridge Leadership Associates

3. Act politically & orchestrate conflict

- Identify **allies**
- Work with the **opposition**
- Monitor **senior authorities** for signals

4. Regulate the heat

- ⦿ What **losses** are you asking people to accept?
- ⦿ How can you intervene in order to
 - **raise** or
 - **lower** the heat to the productive level?

5. Put the work where it belongs

- ⦿ **Who needs to change what** in order to make progress?
- ⦿ People who now are **part of the problem**
– are a necessary **part of the solution**

6. Infuse the work with meaning

- For what **higher purpose** should people be able to take on this hard work?

Summarizing: Ways of operating

Technical/ routine

- Define problems and **provide solutions**
- **Shield** the organization **from external threats**
- **Clarify** roles and responsibilities
- **Restore order**
- Maintain **norms**



People need the ability to deal with both types of situations!

Adaptive

- **Identify the adaptive challenge** and frame key issues
- **Let** the organization **feel** external pressures
- **Share the work** and responsibility
- Let **conflict** emerge
- **Challenge** unproductive norms

Thank you for your attention

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