
Cultivating a Global Mindset Through “Being-Centered” Leadership

Eleftheria Egel and Louis W. Fry

Abstract

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing today’s global leaders is the need to address the demand for a new strategic business orientation that effectively perceives the nature of complex markets and maximizes global business opportunities. This has given rise to the call for cultivating a global mindset (GM) as a foundation for global leadership. In this chapter we introduce a process for cultivating a GM based on a theory of Being-centered leadership that proposes multiple levels of being as a context for effective global leadership. First, we explore the concept of global mindset and focus on a classification of its core properties. Second, we review the theory of Being-centered leadership, which incorporates five levels of knowing and being, and argue that it is only when a leader commits to the spiritual journey inherent in these levels that self-awareness and other-awareness become manifest, which we propose is essential for GM cultivation. Next, we illustrate how a model of spiritual leadership can facilitate cultivation of a GM and global leadership. Finally, we discuss the implications for global mindset and leadership research and practice.

Keywords

Global leadership • Global mindset • Being-centered leadership • Spiritual leadership

E. Egel (✉)
International University of Monaco, Monaco, Monaco
e-mail: ee@amfortas.eu

L.W. Fry
Department of Management, Texas A&M University Central Texas, Killeen, TX, USA
e-mail: lwfry@tamuct.edu

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Introduction

“The only true voyage of discovery... would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another...” Proust M.

Heterogeneity and chaos across cultures and markets is endemic in today's globalized business environment. Firms interact with a wide range of stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, government and industry regulators or employees from diverse multicultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds (Arora et al. 2004; Thomas and Inkson 2004). This is a monumental challenge as performance excellence depends on the corporation's ability to direct employee behavior toward collective goals (Wilson 2013). Often, a company's competitive advantage depends on how intelligent the firm is at observing and interpreting the dynamic world context in which it operates, how it makes meaning of it, and how it finds ways to incorporate its understanding of the world community in which it operates (Kegan 1994; Markus and Kitayama 2003; Rhinesmith 1993; Thomas and Inkson 2004; Triandis 1980).

These challenges have forced multinational corporations (MNC) to seek global leaders who have the ability to influence people different from themselves in numerous, compound ways (Bechler and Javidan 2007; Javidan and Walker 2012; Mendenhall et al. 2012). Instead of influencing a strategy for a single market, strategy formulation must now balance global efficiencies of the firm with local demands, which may require different strategies given different politico-economic and social contexts. They also must implement these strategies through employees from diverse cultural backgrounds who may not share the organization's vision and cultural values (Clapp-Smith 2009).

Global leadership requires leaders to integrate the needs of diverse stakeholders with a balanced focus on economic profits, social impact (including employees),

and environmental sustainability, sometimes called the triple bottom line or the three P’s: people, planet, and profit (Crews 2010; Elkington 1998, Fry and Nisiewicz 2013). It reflects an emerging consensus for global leaders to live their lives and lead their organizations in ways that account for their impact on the earth, society, and the health of local and global economies. Thus, the very definition of global leadership is extended to those who seek sustainable change, regardless of role or position; to build the kind of world that we want to live in and that we want our children and grandchildren to inherit (Ferdig 2007). Unfortunately, the literature on global leadership has not emphasized issues surrounding sustainability and the triple bottom line but instead concentrates on a set of business skills that leaders generally rely on when creating strategy (Beechler and Javidan 2007; Bird et al. 2010; Jokinen 2005; Osland 2008).

The concept of global mindset (GM) has emerged in recent years as an essential attribute necessary for meeting the challenges for global leadership (Story et al. 2014). However, to date there is little consensus on the definition of GM, much less on how to cultivate it. Definitions of GM have ranged from skills, attitudes, and competencies to behaviors, practices, and strategies (Story et al. 2014), and have been approached from both the individual and organizational levels (Beechler and Javidan 2007, Perlmutter 1969; Rhinesmith 1992). For example, Rhinesmith (1992, p. 63) defined GM as “predisposition to see the world in a particular way, to set boundaries, question the rationale behind things that are happening around us, and establish guidelines to show how we should behave.” Boyacigiller et al. (2004) defined GM as a cognitively complex knowledge structure characterized by a duality, high levels of both differentiation and integration.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore GM cultivation, which we propose is necessary for global leadership, through the theory of “Being-centered” leadership that incorporates multiple levels of knowing and being. First, we explore the concept of GM and focus on its three core properties: existentialist, cognitive, and behavioral (Levy et al. 2007). Second, we argue that the existentialist property which has at its core the qualities of self-transcendence is the foundational source of the other two properties. Next we explicate the theory of “Being-centered” leadership with its five levels of knowing and being (Fry and Kriger 2009). Finally, we propose that the cultivation of GM and effective global leadership can only occur when leaders are at Levels III and II of “Being-centered” leadership as it is only at these levels that self-awareness and self-transcendence are attained.

Global Mindset

Perlmutter (1969), one of the first to work in this area, defined three orientations that managers have in managing a multinational corporation: ethnocentric (home country organization), polycentric (host country organization), and geocentric (world orientation). His work on geocentrism became the foundation for a theory of GM that focuses on the challenge of overcoming ingrained ethnocentrism and transcending nationally entrenched perceptions (Gupta and Govindarajan 2002; Levy et al. 2007;

Maznevski and Lane 2004). According to Perlmutter (1969), global organizations or geocentric organizations are increasingly complex and interdependent, aim for a collaborative approach between headquarters and subsidiaries, have standards which are universal and local, have executives who are rewarded for reaching local and global objectives, and develop the best individuals in the world for key positions around the globe.

Levy et al. (2007, p. 5) in a thorough review of the GM literature found that GM primarily is based on two perspectives of the global environment: (1) the cultural and national diversity perspective and (2) the strategic perspective (see Fig. 1 and Table 1). The cultural and national diversity perspective focuses on managing across cultural boundaries, emphasizing challenges such as engaging with employees from diverse countries and managing diverse interorganizational relationships. According to this perspective, leaders should adopt cosmopolitanism as it allows global leaders to be self-aware of cultural differences, have an openness and understanding of other cultures, and selectively incorporate foreign values and practices.

The strategic perspective focuses on the complexity that stems from globalization of operations and markets, emphasizing the additional demands on MNCs, specifically the need to integrate geographically distant and strategically diverse operations and markets (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1989; Harveston et al. 2000; Prahalad and Doz 1987). This perspective is based on international strategy, which asserts that complexity, heterogeneity, and indeterminacy of multinational corporations create the need for managers to change their styles of thinking and adopt a GM, with GM being defined as a cognitively complex knowledge structure characterized by high levels of both differentiation and integration (Boyacigiller et al. 2004; Murtha et al. 1998; Paul 2000). GM is also defined in terms of cognitive abilities and information processing capabilities that help managers perceive and effectively respond to complex global dynamics (e.g., Jeannet 2000), balance between competing concerns and demands (e.g., Murtha et al. 1998), mediate the tension between the global and the local (e.g., Kefalas 1998), distinguish between and integrate across cultures and markets (e.g., Govindarajan and Gupta 2001), and scan and pay attention to global issues (e.g., Rhinesmith 1993).

Another approach – the multidimensional perspective – integrates these two perspectives. The foundation of this perspective lies with the work of Rhinesmith (1992, 1993, 1996). In his view, the GM of key decision-makers contributes to strategic sense-making capabilities of global firms by enabling the decision-maker to not only understand the nuances of culture (*cultural perspective*) but to also have a broader understanding of the impact of global trends on local strategies (*strategic perspective*) (Caproni et al. 1992). What has emerged from this work are a set of GM core properties: existentialist (being or ontological), cognitive (knowing or epistemological), and behavioral (Levy et al. 2007). The existentialist approach emphasizes the ontology of GM in terms of “state of mind,” “way of being,” “orientation,” “awareness,” and “openness.” The cognitive approach emphasizes the epistemology of GM in terms of information processing,” “knowledge structure,” “cognitive structure,” “ability to develop and interpret,” “attention,” “sense making,” and “conceptualization and contextualization abilities.” The

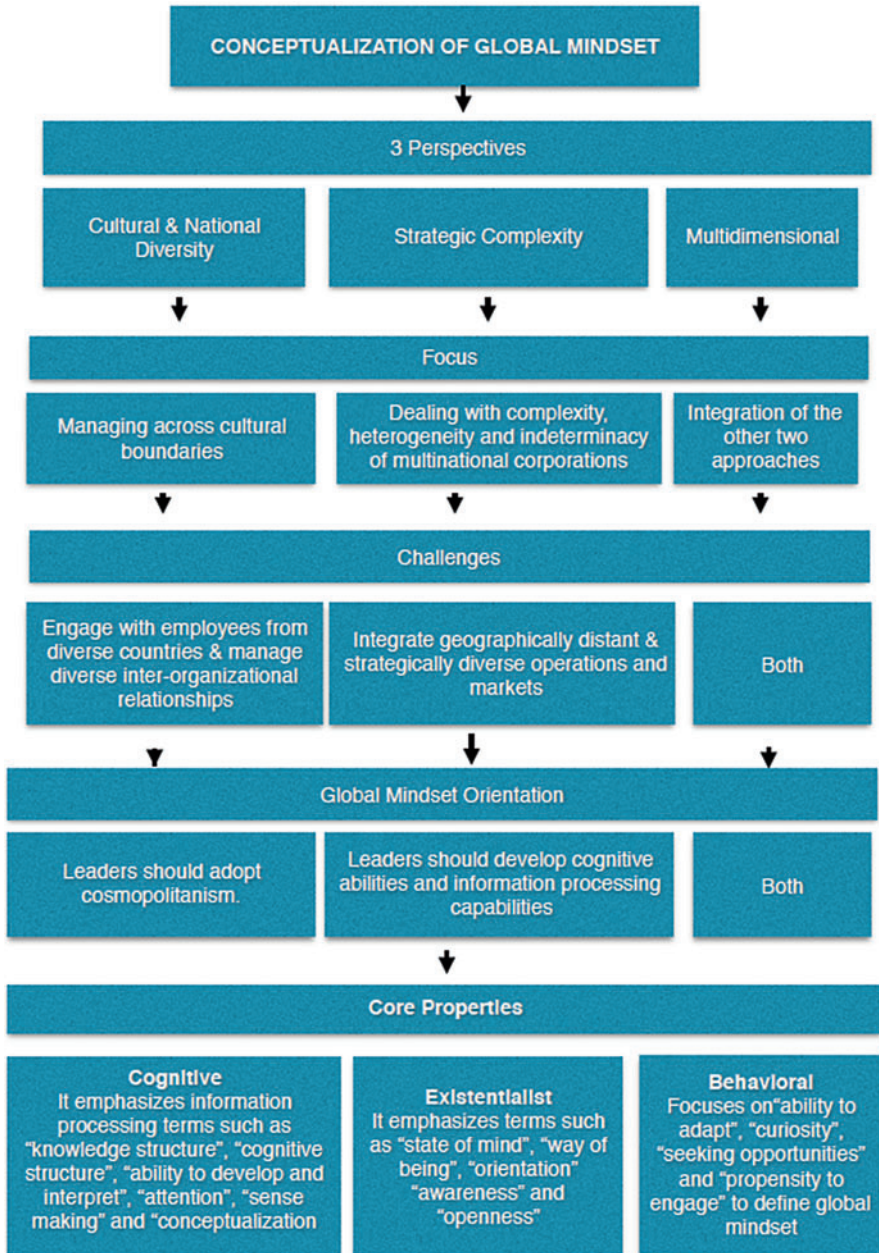


Fig. 1 Conceptualization of global mindset

Table 1 Definitions of global mindset

Scholar	Definition
Perlmutter (1969)	Global mindset as a geocentric orientation that multinational organizations have while doing business
Rhinesmith (1992, p. 63)	A global mindset is a predisposition to see the world in a particular way, to set boundaries, question the rationale behind things that are happening around us, and establish guidelines to show how we should behave
Kefalas (1998)	Global mindset is having a global view of the world and the capacity to adapt to local environments
Murtha et al. (1998)	GM is the cognitive processes that balance competing country, business, and functional concerns
Gupta and Govindarajan (2002)	They described a conceptual framework of global mindset in terms of market and cultural awareness and openness, and the ability to integrate differing perspectives. Integration is described as the ability to integrate diversity across cultures and markets. Differentiation is described as openness to diversity across cultures and markets
Begley and Boyd (2003)	A global mindset is the ability to develop and interpret criteria for business performance that are not dependent on the assumptions of a single country, culture, or context and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cultures, and contexts
Boyacigiller et al. (2004)	Global mindset is a cognitively complex knowledge structure characterized by a duality, high levels of both differentiation and integration
Maznevski and Lane (2004, p. 172)	GM is the ability to develop and interpret criteria for personal and business performance that are independent from the assumptions of a single country, culture, or context, and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cultures, and contexts
Levy et al. (2007, p. 21)	GM is a highly complex cognitive structure characterized by an openness to and articulation of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both local and global levels, and the cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across this multiplicity
Beecher and Javidan (2007)	GM is leaders' knowledge, cognitive ability, and psychological attributes that allow them to lead in diverse cultural environments
Javidan and Teagarden (2011, p. 14)	Global mindset is "an individual's ability to influence individuals, groups, organizations, and systems that are unlike him or her or his or her own"

behavioral approach focuses on "ability to adapt," "curiosity," "seeking opportunities," and "propensity to engage."

We propose that the existentialist core property forms the foundation for, or underlies, the cognitive and behavioral properties. For example, "state of mind" (existentialist) influences "sense making" (cognitive) or the categories within which one makes sense of the experience which then affects one's "propensity to engage" and ultimately the behaviors resulting from this propensity. Specifically, a "state of mind" or "mindset" forms the (existential) filter through which we make meaning of the world in a particular way that provides for why things are the way they are

(cognitive interpretation or “sense making”) which then provides the disposition for ways we should act or behave (Barker 1989; Fischer 1988). Thus, GM encompasses the leader’s fundamental ontological experience of reality and the core beliefs and values they hold about themselves, others, and life in general and, through this filter, the epistemological context for how leaders cognitively interpret their reality and behave accordingly (Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson 2010).

Accordingly, if global leaders want to cultivate a GM from a multidimensional perspective in order to manage across cultural boundaries and deal with the complexity, heterogeneity, and indeterminacy of global organizational environments (Caproni et al. 1992), they must perceive reality in a more expansive and inclusive way. We propose that to do so global leaders aspiring to cultivate a GM must be conscious, self-aware, and self-transcendent. How else will they be able to truly understand, appreciate, and create vision and organizational value congruence among employees from diverse countries, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds while simultaneously managing and integrating diverse interorganizational relationships, and geographically distant and strategically diverse operations and markets?

Conversely, an unconscious, self-centered mindset may result in biased interpretations of current experiences and cognitive filters that lead to stereotypical behavior toward certain cultures, nationalities, and ethnic groups. The more this existential, cognitive, and behavioral pattern is ingrained in a leader’s GM, the greater the likelihood of behavioral rigidity and lower leadership effectiveness (Fransella 1982; Gupta and Govindarajan 2002; Issa and Pick 2010).

Being-Centered Leadership: Levels of Knowing and Being

A proposed model for cultivating a self-aware and self-transcendent GM as a source of global leadership is given in Fig. 2, which is adapted from Fry and Kriger (2009). Based on a theory of being-centered leadership, it depicts five levels of knowing and being with different views of reality that produce different approaches to leadership. In addition, each of the five levels of being has a corresponding mode of consciousness in terms of notions such as truth, belief, justification for one’s actions, and what constitutes happiness. At each level leaders find themselves concerned with questions such as: “What is knowledge?” “What are the processes by which knowledge is acquired?” “What do people seek to know?” “How do we become more aware of both ourselves and the world around us?”

We propose that these levels of being provide a process for cultivating a GM, since the levels of being are different states of consciousness, marked by the lower-order systems of knowledge and moving to progressively higher-order systems. When at a particular level of being, a person tends to experience psychological states and state of self-awareness that are appropriate to that level. In addition, an individual’s feelings, motivations, ethics, values, learning system, and personal theories of what constitutes happiness are consistent with and appropriate to that level of being.

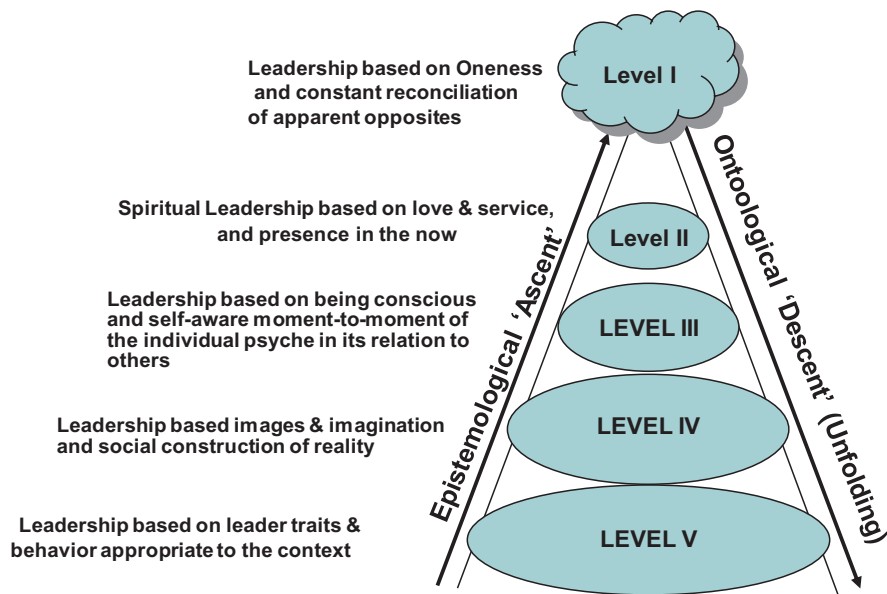


Fig. 2 Levels of knowing and being

Each higher level is holonic in that it transcends and includes each of the lower levels. Moreover, each lower level can be activated or reactivated as individuals' progress and then fall back to a lower level, even in a single day. Thus each level can manifest in any particular activity depending on the level of self-awareness and spiritual development of the individual at that time. More important still, every individual has all of these levels potentially available, independent of their current stage of development.

Level V Way of Knowing and Being

The fifth level of being is comprised of the physical, observable world which is based in the five senses, wherein a leader creates and transfers knowledge through an active engagement in worldly affairs. As a state of being, it is comprised of individuals that are born into and still live within a social world where the major view of reality is based on the sensible/physical world. Effective leadership in the sensible/physical world requires developing appropriate diagnostic skills to discern the characteristics of tasks, subordinates, and the organization and then being flexible enough in one's leadership behavior to increase the likelihood of desired effectiveness outcomes. Leadership theories at this level include trait, behavior, and contingency theories of leadership (Bass 1990; Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; House 1996).

Level IV Way of Knowing and Being

The fourth level of being is where reality is socially constructed through the creation and maintenance of vision, cultural values, and images. At this level leadership involves the use of images and imagination; the process of creating a compelling vision and establishing strong cultural values. The main goal of leadership at this level is to create agreement on a socially constructed reality which motivates followers to high levels of organizational commitment and performance. The primary focus at this level is on the subjective experience of individuals and groups as they relate to the development of awareness and knowledge. Out of this level arises the legitimacy and appropriateness of a leader's vision, as well as the ethical and cultural values which individuals and groups should embrace or reject. Here the vision and values of the leader may be either self- or other-centered (e.g., Hitler vs. Mahatma Gandhi). Charismatic and transformational leadership theories characterize this level (Degroot et al. 2000; Judge and Piccolo 2004).

Level III Way of Knowing and Being

The third level of knowing and being is where self-awareness and self-transcendence begin to emerge and become more dominant. To awaken or become conscious at Level III involves the capacity to be aware from moment-to-moment of all of our experiences, thoughts, feelings, and body sensations. Without this felt experience in the current moment, a leader's thinking will tend to become focused on the past or the future. They are then trapped in an ego-centered experience where there is the duality of an "experiencer" separated from what is "experienced." Each of the major spiritual and religious traditions of the world proclaims that without this level of conscious awareness, an individual will perceive themselves simply as the sum of their individual thoughts, feelings, emotions, and body sensations (Kriger and Seng 2005). It is thus important for leaders seeking Level III to develop and refine the ability to be aware of the present moment by withdrawing attention from past memories based in anger and resentment as well as future imaginings that produce worry and fear. In doing so, leaders are more able to be in touch with subtle feelings and intuitions that can result in a better understanding of the organizational context as well as the needs of followers. Conscious awareness is thus a process of waking up and being present moment-to-moment and then forgetting, to discover new insights and possibilities and awaken one's capacity to live more wisely, more lovingly, and more fully.

By committing to an inner life practice (e.g., meditation, prayer, yoga, journaling, walking in nature) to foster conscious awareness, leaders begin to cultivate a GM that facilitates ever more refined programs of change and transformation. These practices serve to redefine the leader's individual and social identity through a discipline of constantly observing one's thought patterns and what one pays attention to in order to get the self-centered ego out of the way. It allows one to explore the often crippling emotional programs for happiness that are developed in early

childhood based on needs for survival, security, affection, esteem, power, and control (Keating 1999). It also requires exploring the over attachment or over identification with any particular group or culture to which one belongs. In doing so questions or issues are addressed, such as what is my agenda? What is my predisposition? What are my prejudices? What are my fears? What are my angers? Answering these questions requires one to develop the ability to stand away from themselves, listen, and look with a calm, nonjudgmental objectivity. This inner process can be brutal, but it is absolutely necessary for cultivating a GM based in self-awareness. Otherwise, one cannot separate from the mind's identification with thoughts and feelings.

By dedicating themselves to an inner life practice, leaders with a GM will have a more transparent lens through which to make better sense of the global world within which they operate (Fischer 1988; Gupta and Govindarajan 2002; Rhinesmith 1996). They will accept the possibility that their view of the world is just one of many alternative interpretations of reality. Accepting this possibility significantly enhances the likelihood of global leadership effectiveness (Gupta and Govindarajan 2002). Leaders with a GM will not function on autopilot and consistently slip into the delusion that reality and their interpretation of it are one and the same. And they will more often be consciously aware of the difference between “out there” and “in here,” between external reality and internal meaning making. Eckhart Tolle's work (1999), *The Power of Now*, gives a good characterization of this level of being.

Level II Way of Knowing and Being

Level II builds upon the commitment to Level I to more consistently be able to love and serve others through self-transcendence and deepening connectedness with all things in the universe. Once one accepts the possibility that their view of the world is just one of many alternative interpretations of reality and can more consistently remain present in the now, which is devoid of feelings, thoughts, and emotions, one realizes that in their inner reality we are one with all existence including nature and our fellow humans. In other words, our ways of experiencing (existential being), knowing (cognitive), and behaving change.

At Level II global leaders more readily and consistently seek to understand and empathize stakeholders' perspectives and respect their opinions and dignity as human beings. Cultivation of a GM through self-transcendence does not simply focus on learning about how to deal with other cultures. It goes much deeper and creates communication based on universal values that are common to the world's spiritual and religious traditions. A leader with a GM will not feel threatened by other cultural standards or different religions. They will experience diversity as just another way of expressing our similarities, our unity as human beings.

At this level the focus is on leadership based on loving and serving others. Recognized examples of leadership at Level II include Mother Theresa,

Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. Very few organizational leaders are consistently at Level II, though they can often lead from this level temporarily. A leadership theory that incorporates Level II is spiritual leadership (Fry 2003, 2008; Fry et al. [in press](#)).

Level I Way of Knowing and Being

Level I is the most inclusive level of being, in which there is only a transcendent unity. Underlying this level is a central theme: the goal of this world is the transcendence of all opposites and the realization of self-actualization. All of the world’s wisdom traditions refer in one way or another to this level of being that is so inclusive that it contains both pure emptiness and pure fullness or completeness. Level I thus incorporates all of the previous levels of being and is beyond all distinctions, including the distinction between leader and follower. At this level, the leader responds to each situation as it arises moment-to-moment within a unique context and configuration of forces. Leaders reside in and respond to an ever-evolving open system of levels of knowing and being. At Level I the experience of duality (i.e., of separation) will dissolve and would not see a distinction between the “leader” and the “led.” In the ideal, all have the potential to enter roles as needed to enact leadership in specific situations moment-by-moment. Thus, Level I leadership is an ideal stage of being that is more aspirational, rather than a current reality within organizational settings.

Cultivating a Global Mindset

So how does a leader cultivate a GM that activates these levels of knowing and being? The answer lies in developing the ability to shift from the “having and doing” to “being.” “Having and doing” are constructs which are central to the ego-based self in Levels V and IV. Leadership from a GM requires that leaders reside as much as possible at the higher levels of knowing and being, especially Levels III and II. These levels provide differing ontological and epistemological contexts and indications for the discovery and creation of meaning. This ongoing challenge is undertaken within a larger set of organizational values that often is in tension with the other-centered values and beliefs inherent in a GM. Thus, one of the major challenges in leading from a GM is the enactment of leadership with deep inner meaning for both leaders themselves and their followers.

This is illustrated by the upward arrow on the left side of Fig. 2 labeled as “Epistemological Ascent.” This knowing begins with an awareness of leadership in the Level V physical world and the role of vision and values in Level IV. Then comes the awareness of the necessity for the honesty, open mindedness, and willingness to nurture one’s consciousness and self-awareness for moral transformation through self-transcendence in Level III, which provides the source of spiritual leadership based on love and service of others in Level II. At this level there

also emerges the desire to, if however briefly, reside in Level I: a state of nondual awareness of knowing and being in a transcendent unity where, moment-to-moment, all is one (Fry and Kriger 2009).

Global leadership from a GM then manifests through progressively more coarse levels of being (e.g., Level I, II, III, IV, and ultimately Level V). This is illustrated by the downward arrow on the right side of Fig. 2 labeled as “Ontological Descent.” Level I is the source of Level II leadership through love and service, Level II is the source of consciousness and self-awareness at Level III. Self-awareness influences the formation of leader values based in altruistic love, which in turn directly influence the development of the leader’s vision and values (Level IV) that, ultimately, influences leader behavior (Level V).

Regardless of their level of inner development, leaders will always have some aspects of spiritual perception and moral sensitivity which requires further inner work. A GM encourages both leaders and followers to understand that their inspiration and creativity, as well as moral standards, are the product of other levels of knowing and being, often only partially perceived or understood. These levels are not like stair steps. Rather they are destinations that are resting places on the pilgrimage that is the spiritual journey (Fry and Nisiewicz 2013). Level I is usually the desired destination. However, few ever reach it and stay there for sustained periods. Rather, leaders may find that they reside at all the levels periodically. Regardless, by committing to cultivation of a GM global leaders will find themselves leading from Levels III and II more consistently, as it is at these levels that leaders operate through self-transcendence to love and serve.

Global Mindset at Each Level of Being

GM cultivation is the equivalent of a spiritual journey that unfolds through levels of knowing and being that ultimately manifest through the multidimensional perspective comprised of the cultural and national diversity and strategic complexity perspectives (Fig. 1). Level I is not discussed in this section since it is rarely, if ever, attained by individuals, much less organizations.

Level V Global Mindset

Level V leadership focuses on “having” and “doing”; on the traits, competencies and styles leaders possess that determine the way he/she should lead and respond to organizational challenges. Global leaders with a Level V GM are prominently ethnocentric, with an attitude that one’s own group (organization) is superior in terms of intellect and experience in knowing the “one best way” (Adler and Gundersen 2007). As a result, the cultivation of a GM remains at a parochial level. From the “Cultural & National Identity” Perspective the organization trains employees using methods that apply in the home organization without taking into consideration cultural boundaries. From the Strategic Perspective, vision,

mission, and objectives are formulated at headquarters and are expected to be followed by the subsidiaries irrespective of the cultural diversity and of distinctive managerial decision-making process (e.g., individual vs. collective). Level V GM leaders emphasize profit maximization at the expense of other stakeholders. It manifests when a globally focused firm uses its worldwide system of resources to compete in national markets without being interested in the economic, social, and ecological consequences in the markets where it operates.

The most notorious recent example of the perils of leading through a Level V mindset was the Deepwater Horizon – BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill (Environmental Protection Agency 2017). On April 20, 2010, the oil drilling rig *Deepwater Horizon*, operating in the Macondo Prospect in the Gulf of Mexico, exploded and sank resulting in the death of 11 workers on the Deepwater Horizon and the largest spill of oil in the history of marine oil drilling operations. Four million barrels of oil flowed from the damaged Macondo well over an 87-day period, before it was finally capped on July 15, 2010. On December 15, 2010, the United States filed a complaint in District Court against BP Exploration & Production and several other defendants alleged to be responsible for the spill. Investigations revealed a corporate culture of cost-cutting initiatives that put profits ahead of workers’ lives and the environment, with repeated safety violations and an abysmal accident history, and that the disaster was just part of a pattern of poor decision making in the relentless pursuit by BP to become the largest and most profitable oil company in the world (Steffy 2010). A federal judge in New Orleans granted final approval April 4, 2016, to an estimated \$20 billion settlement, resolving years of litigation. In addition, BP agreed to pay a record \$4 billion in criminal fines and penalties. Plus two highest-ranking BP supervisors on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig were charged with manslaughter and a former senior BP executive was charged with obstruction of congress (EPA 2017).

Level IV Global Mindset

At this level the focus is on socially constructing a common organizational reality through the use of images and imagination to create a compelling vision and establish a strong and distinct organizational culture. From the Cultural and National Identity Perspective, a leader with a Level IV GM is concerned with creating shared experiences that serve to unify diverse individual personalities and cultural differences into a common organizational identity. The vision at Level IV usually carries a higher purpose message that inspires and unites. For example, PepsiCo’s vision statement is “to deliver top-tier financial performance over the long term by integrating sustainability into our business strategy, leaving a positive imprint on society and the environment.” From the Strategic Perspective, Level IV GM strategy formulation and implementation is based on a common purpose and morale principles that balance global efficiencies with local demands in different politico-economic and social contexts. This is the level where multinationals and global companies *symbolically* embrace the triple bottom line (TBL) to satisfy

employee, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability stakeholders as their brand image, reputation and ultimate financial performance depend on their meeting or exceeding these stakeholders' expectations. Level IV is also where we observe most of the ethical scandals, as compliance is not authentic but it is due to a self-serving rationale, a practice known as "greenwashing," whereby disinformation is disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.

A striking example in this regard is Apple whose vision statement emphasizes innovation and highlights employees' collaboration and excellence. Apple even has a specific vision for sustainability.

We take the same innovative approach to the environment that we do with our products. We're creating new solar energy projects to reduce our carbon footprint. We're switching to greener materials to create safer products and manufacturing processes. We're protecting working forests and making sure they are managed sustainably. We're even creating a more mindful way to recycle devices using robots.

However, if we look into their operations more deeply, it becomes obvious that the verbal exuberance implicit in their environmental vision does not match the lived organizational reality. For example, Apple makes iPhones and iPads in China where its Foxconn manufacturer became notorious for its sweatshop operations, militaristic surveillance and discipline, and a wave of worker suicides (Balfour and Culpán 2010). Other Apple factories were charged with other onerous – sometimes deadly and fatal – safety problems (Guhigg and Barboza 2012). And, despite some successes, labor violations still haunt Apple (Vincent 2015). With over \$246 billion dollars of cash and investments as of February 1, 2017, it seems obvious that if Apple were truly committed to its sustainability vision it has the resources available to address them expeditiously (Monica 2017).

Level III Global Mindset

A Level III GM focuses on "being." This is the level where GM transformation through the expansion of consciousness, self-awareness, and a commitment to self-transcendence begins to manifest. The focal point of the Cultural and National Identity GM perspective at this level is recognizing the cosmopolitan nature of the global business environment and committing to engage all stakeholders from an authentic triple bottom line standpoint. Inherent in a Level III GM is the recognition of the innate dignity of all human beings, cultural self-awareness, openness to and understanding of other cultures, and selective incorporation of foreign values and practices. Leaders recognize the influence and importance of national and ethnic cultures and embrace the contribution of the social reality of the subsidiaries.

From the Strategic Perspective, a Level III GM becomes a critical determinant of strategic capability and effectiveness, since global leadership calls for successfully managing environmental demands and strategic complexity as well as integrating

geographically distinct operations and markets, while simultaneously responding to local demands. To do so requires a leader with a conscious, self-aware, and self-transcendent GM who is engaged in caring for, respecting, and serving all stakeholders, especially those in need; a leader who is determined to bring this awareness to their organization through an obsessive and authentic focus grounded in a triple bottom line philosophy.

An example of a Level III leader is Paul Poleman, CEO of Unilever, an Anglo-Dutch company with 176,000 employees, 76,000 suppliers in 190 countries, and 300 factories worldwide that churn out more than 400 brands – Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Dove soap, Lipton tea, and Hellmann's mayonnaise – for over 2.5 billion customers. At Unilever, environmental risks and poverty are major problems for almost every part of business operations from manufacturing laundry detergent to growing tea. Fundamental to Poleman's leadership philosophy is his view that the real purpose of business is to come up with solutions that are relevant to society and help make society better. He also believes that customers will abandon companies that fail to grasp that, while businesses that embrace the triple bottom line will inevitably become more profitable (Walt 2017).

Poleman's embrace of sustainability is not without his detractors however and reflects the balancing acts all leaders face who commit their organization to the triple bottom line. Like Apple, outside investigative agencies discovered some Unilever supplier factories were not treating their workforce fairly. However, unlike Apple, union officials and NGOs say that Unilever appears serious about addressing these problems. There is also the challenge with shareholders, for whom Unilever's good intentions count for little weight compared to their voracious desire for profits. In response Poleman remained steadfast to his philosophy. Knowing that it will take years for the company's sustainability plan to show concrete results he scrapped quarterly earning guidance for investors (Walt 2017). In doing so he sided with those who argue that the intense pressure to meet quarterly targets traps companies in a vicious cycle of pressure to maximize share price for investors to the detriment of long-term growth and execution of complicated strategies, like improving working conditions, improving the environment, and sustainability ambitions.

Poleman believes that success is not defined by a title or position but rather by having a purpose in life and setting out to achieve it. He also takes the time to interview entry-level candidates as well as have small focus groups, dinners, or lunches with people in the company at all levels (there are only five levels at Unilever). He views this as one of his most important jobs, to create a supportive culture to facilitate their career journey. Poleman says that the main thing he has discovered in life is that it is not about yourself, it is about investing in others. Above all he believes the chief quality of a leader is to be a human being. No one is more special because of their job title or responsibilities. The best advice he says he got from his father is to not forget where you came from (a family of modest means) and keep your feet on the ground (Cunningham 2015). His best piece of advice to others is to always remember that it is not about yourself and to be grateful.

Level II Global Mindset

Remembering that the levels of being are holonic and incorporate and transcend the lower levels, leadership at Level II builds upon the leader's commitment to conscious awareness and self-transcendence in Level III to further recognize the dignity and commonality of the human experience and love and serve others. In doing so the leader experiences a deeper sense of purpose and connection with all things in the universe. The Level II leader's GM from the Cultural and National Identity Perspective rises above cultural differences and goes deeper to what unites us by creating organizational cultures grounded in the altruistic values of spiritual leadership that underlie the world's spiritual and religious wisdom traditions (Fry 2003). This GM also provides guidance for the leader, where appropriate, to overtly acknowledge the role spirituality and/or religion contributes to their leadership effectiveness. From the Strategic Perspective the Level II GM nurtures the leader's innate commitment to improving cross-cultural understanding, enhancing work quality and organizational effectiveness, and contributing to economic growth as well as being a champion and catalyst for change in confronting the economic, social, and ecological challenges facing business and society.

Although not a global leader of a large MNC in the ilk of Paul Poleman, Oprah Winfrey's brand, Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), and other global initiatives certainly qualify her as a global leader who works from a Level II GM. One of the most powerful women in the world whose net worth exceeds \$3 billion, Oprah has produced and acted in movies, given commencement speeches, launched products, appeared on talk shows, and been awarded the US's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom for "meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors" (Reliable Source 2013).

Oprah's Angel Network, a public charity formed in 1998, was established to encourage people around the world to make a difference in the lives of others. Her vision is to inspire individuals to create opportunities that enable underserved women and children to rise to their potential (McCovey 2015). Her Angel Network built the Seven Fountains Primary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Opened in 2007, the school serves more than 1000 boys and girls and is a model for teaching and learning throughout Africa (Oprah's Angel Network Fact Sheet n.d.). She also initiates and supports charitable projects and provides grants to not-for-profit organizations around the globe, such as the World Food Programme, Mpilonhle, and Heifer International that share in this vision (Oprah charity work, events and causes n.d.).

Oprah considers one of her big productivity secrets is being "fully present" and living life moment-to-moment with a level of intensity and truth. From this place of conscious awareness also come a space of humility and the realization that she doesn't have all the answers and must rely on a leadership team she can delegate to. This is reflected in conversations with trusted executives who use words like disciples, sacred, moral compass, and spiritual leadership when speaking of her (McCovey 2015).

At her spiritual core is her belief and understanding that there is a force she calls God that is a presence, a divine entity that loved her into being that helps her stay grounded, centered, and strong. She feels called to inspire people, to get them to look at themselves – to do better and be better to everybody (McCovey). What mattered most about creating OWN was having a platform where she could connect ideas that let people see the best of themselves through the lives of other people.

Discussion and Conclusion

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing today's global leaders is the need to address the demand for a new strategic business orientation that correctly perceives the nature of complex markets and maximizes global business opportunities. This has given rise to the call for cultivating a Global Mindset as a foundation for global leadership and competitive advantage. While there is some evidence of predictors of GM, such as number of languages spoken, holding an international degree, experience abroad, complexity of the leadership role, and intellectual, psychological, and social capital (Javidan and Bowen 2013; Javidan and Walker 2012; Story et al. 2014), little has been written about the process of GM cultivation.

While identifying predictors of GM may be of some benefit, we have proposed that any process for cultivating a GM must be grounded in the multinational perspective (Levy et al. 2007), which incorporates the existentialist, cognitive, and behavioral set of core properties; with the existentialist perspective being foundational as it creates the context within which the cognitive and behavioral perspectives emerge. Thus, any approach to cultivating a global mindset must first focus on an ontology grounded in the essence of being.

Being-centered leadership theory holds much promise in this regard as it was developed to address issues surrounding the ontology or essential reality of leadership with an emphasis on self-awareness and self-transcendence, which we have argued is necessary for a GM (Fry and Kriger 2009). Underlying the theory are five levels of being with a corresponding epistemology or way of knowing at each corresponding level. Each level of knowing and being represents a level of holonic consciousness with the higher levels transcending and including each of the lower levels. The levels can also be viewed as a spiritual journey whereby one commits to transcending ego-based programs for happiness and cultural conditioning (Levels V and IV) to seek mindfulness or self-awareness (Level III) in order to become more self-transcendent to better love and serve others (Level II), ideally from a nondual state which is beyond all distinctions, including the distinction between leader and follower (Level I) (Fry and Nisiewicz 2013).

Being-centered leadership as a process for cultivating a GM is grounded in the world's spiritual and religious wisdom traditions, all of which emphasize the necessity of a spiritual journey through levels of being to achieve consciousness or awaken to the present moment-to-moment and move from a state of self-transcendence to love and serve others (Kriger and Seng 2005). This process provides a roadmap for leading from a multidimensional perspective across cultures and

markets from levels of being that are innately common to all humanity. As a result, GM and global leadership research can shift its focus from how to develop leaders cognitively and behaviorally to the fundamental existentialist reality of multiple levels of being as context from which the cognitive and behavioral manifest for effective leadership. In practice, this multidimensional shift can provide impetus for a transformation of the purpose of conducting business in a global context beyond the self-serving goal of maximizing shareholder wealth today to one based on principles of equality, justice, and sustainability for all stakeholders.

To conclude, we have proposed that those aspiring to global leadership from a multinational perspective must seek to cultivate a global mindset (GM) that allows for higher levels of consciousness, self-awareness, and self-transcendence. With GM as its source, global leaders are more likely to align the organization's vision, values, and strategies with those of employees from diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and, in doing so, maximize the triple bottom line to foster economic, social, and ecological sustainability.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Activating the Corporate Soul](#)
- ▶ [Alternative Paradigms of Transformation: Levels of Consciousness and Collective Intention](#)
- ▶ [An Integral Approach to Transformation of Limited Consciousness in Personal and Organizational Life](#)
- ▶ [Global Transformation: Visions of an Imminent Future](#)
- ▶ [Identity and Meaning in Transformation](#)
- ▶ [Self-Knowledge: The Master Key to Personal Transformation](#)
- ▶ [The Role of Self-Awareness in Personal Transformation](#)
- ▶ [The Spiritual Wellspring of Being](#)
- ▶ [Transformative Leadership](#)

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