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**Cut Off at the Pass:
The Limits of Leadership in the 21st Century**

Barbara Kellerman

THE TRAJECTORY OF HISTORY

America has a leadership deficit. Notwithstanding the occasional moment of triumph, leaders across the board are in decline and disrepute; followers across the board are disenchanting and disappointed.

The indicators are beyond dispute. According to Harvard's Center for Public Leadership, fully 77 percent of Americans agree or strongly agree that we have a leadership "crisis."¹ Xavier University's Center for the Study of the American Dream found that only 23 percent of Americans believe the country is headed in the right direction.² A record low 10 percent approve of Congress.³ And even the once-venerable Supreme Court is suffering slings and arrows, with just 44 percent of Americans now approving the Court's performance.⁴ Moreover the deterioration in reputation is ubiquitous. Confidence in leaders decreased during the last year in sectors as various as medical, non-profit, charity, education, business, and religion.

On the one hand this phenomenon is new. Rarely, if ever, have so many of America's leading institutions and individuals been painted with so black a brush. But on the other hand, it is a predictable product of the trajectory of history. Over the centuries the tendency has been away from autocracy and toward democracy, which sometimes is fractious to the point of dysfunction.

In times long past, our real leaders were kings (infrequently queens), princes, and autocrats, and our imagined leaders were hero-leaders who in legend and lore were more than mere mortals. Confucius' ideal leader was a sage, a role model if you will, a gentleman to be emulated and finally followed because he was older, wiser, better. Plato conjured a philosopher-king, a leader who was the product of an intense and extended hothouse education, a ruler who was a philosopher, a philosopher who ruled. Mythologist Joseph Campbell described a different realm altogether, but the similarities are striking. Here too was a leader who transcended the ordinary - but this was a hero with a thousand faces, appearing and reappearing across time and space, venturing into regions of supernatural wonder, battling fabulous forces and winning decisive victories, finally returning from his adventures with the "power to bestow boons on his fellow man."⁵

As time went on, patterns of dominance and deference changed. Turning points (in the West) included the signing of the Magna Carta, the first document forced on the English king by a group of his subjects (1215); Martin Luther's revolt against the dictates of the Catholic Church (1517); England's Glorious Revolution (1688); and, of course, the Enlightenment. More than anything else, the Enlightenment was about decreasing the power of traditional elites (church

¹ 2011 National Leadership Index.

² Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates Executive Summary, 2011 American Dream Survey.

³ Gallup, 2012.

⁴ New York Times/CBS poll, June, 2012.

⁵ Joseph Campbell's classic, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, was originally published in 1949.



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hierarchy, royalty, nobility, state officials), and increasing the power of plain people.

John Locke's work on the relationship between the leader and the led was a watershed. His conception of social contract theory, which argues that governments must derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed; his insistence that if the leader does not sufficiently satisfy the led he may be recalled, if necessary by force; his advocacy of the separation of powers; his defense of the right to hold private property – all were breakthroughs.⁶ Nowhere was Locke more influential than on the North American continent. When the Declaration of Independence was signed, it was considered so derivative that Thomas Jefferson was charged with lifting from Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*.

The American and French Revolutions still stand as among the most striking examples of how the previously powerless can impinge on the previously powerful. They signify the start of a whole new era in relations between haves and have-nots, in which the latter sometimes slowly but always certainly stake their claims against the former. Less than a century later American slaves were freed, and so were Russian serfs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton had published her *Declaration of Sentiments* to assert the rights of women, and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels their *Communist Manifesto* to assert the rights of workers. And in the 20th century liberators, leaders who came from the ranks of followers, including Gandhi, King, and Mandela, changed forever our perceptions of who does have and who should have power, authority, and influence.

Followers on the rise, leaders in decline – in the 1960s and '70s the trend again accelerated, especially in the United States. Emboldened in part by the furies unleashed by the war in Vietnam, individuals and groups previously at the margins experienced a newfound sense of entitlement from which nearly no one was exempt: not women or African Americans; not the sick or mentally or physically impaired; not gays or lesbians or, later, transgendered; not the young or the old or the poor and disenfranchised; not even non-human animals. One president was shot and killed, the two who succeeded him were obliged to withdraw from political life, and the two who followed them, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, were defeated at the polls. Meantime, it was grassroots politics, street protests, and citizen activists that drove the national discourse.

It has been argued in the decades since that America's political picture has been more muted – no more marching in the streets, no more chanting at the gates of the White House, no more riots or relentless public protests, no more burning flags - or bras. I, however, have concluded otherwise. I have concluded that the trajectory of history continues now as before - inevitable, immutable, though of course, as always, in different form. Already in the first decade of this century, there has been evidence on the left, and on the right.

The 2008 election of Barack Obama as president was, just a year or two earlier,

⁶ Montesquieu similarly argued for the separation of powers.

inconceivable. He was unknown and untried, and he came out of nowhere to upend American politics by dethroning the then queen of the Democratic Party – Hillary Clinton. It was a triumph of outsiders over insiders, of young over old, of newly engaged black voters over traditional white voters, of newfound grassroots power over old-fashioned party power, and of new media over old media. Similarly, on the right, a couple of years later, there was the flowering of the phenomenon known as the Tea Party. To all appearances, leader-less, at least in any conventional sense, this grassroots initiative, this populist movement, became - in strikingly short order - the tale that wagged the Republican dog.

Finally, to place leadership and followership in the American political tradition is to even better understand why leadership in this country is so difficult to exercise now - and always has been. The American Revolution had its origins in the idea that people in positions of authority should be carefully constrained – it was better to resist than to revere them. Historian Bernard Bailyn described the decade before the revolution: Defiance “poured from the colonial presses and was hurled from half the pulpits of the land. The right, the need, the absolute obligation to *disobey legally constituted authority* had become the universal cry.”⁷ (Italics mine.) Nor was rebellion confined to the realm of theory; it was part of everyday life. In fact, most insurgents were plain people, from white farm families.⁸ So whatever the contemporaneous “crisis” of American leadership, in some ways it’s simply more of the same. American followers have usurped power and influence from American leaders since the beginning of the Republic.

The Earth is Round

Ideas are contagious. Long before the internet exponentially accelerated the rate of contagion, ideas on whom should dominate (and how), and on whom should defer (and how), migrated from one part of the planet (especially in the West) to another. How else to explain the American and French revolutions in such close proximity? Or Stanton’s treatise on women’s rights, and Marx and Engels’s on worker’s rights, both appearing in 1848? Or Martin Luther King’s, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, and Betty Friedan’s, *The Feminine Mystique* both seeing the light of day in 1963? Was all this by chance, a curious coincidence? No - ideas are in the ether.

In the last quarter century, relations between leaders and the led changed not only in the United States, and not only in politics; they changed the world over and in each of the different sectors. (There are a few exceptions to this general rule.) Put differently, more fully to understand America’s leadership deficit, the U. S. must be set in different contexts: historical and national, as well as contemporaneous and international.

⁷ *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 304-18.

⁸ T. H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* (Hill and Wang, 2010).

The end of colonialism is relevant to this discussion, as is the collapse of communism, the demise of the Soviet Union and disintegration of the Soviet empire, and the morphing of old-style Chinese Communism into new-style Chinese market authoritarianism. The Arab Spring also pertains – as does the crisis of the Euro zone. Whatever their significant differences, each of these historical happenings share certain similarities: 1) the end of an old order; 2) the rise of a new order - or disorder; 3) people with apparent power and authority constrained in unaccustomed ways; 4) people without apparent power and authority staking unaccustomed claims; 5) leaders increasingly demeaned and diminished; and 6) followers increasingly entitled and emboldened. Figures from Freedom House attest to the changes to which I allude: in 1972, 54 percent of countries were designated free or partially free; the other 46 percent were not free. By 2011, the numbers were rather different: now some 76 percent of countries are considered free or partially free, while only 24 percent are not.

Again, the decline in power and influence of people in positions of authority is endemic. Another example: the Catholic Church. In just the last decade it too has endured a crisis of confidence – a diminution of institutional power (the church itself), a devaluation of positional authority (the papacy), and a decline of personal influence (Pope Benedict XVI). While in the beginning the crisis was centered on the scandal involving priestly abuse, it turned out deeper and longer than anyone originally anticipated. Let me put it this way: when nuns begin publicly to speak out, to claim even a modicum of independence from the Vatican, as recently did a group of American nuns - with broad support from Catholic laity - the Vatican has a problem. Church officials had scolded the nuns for their purported failure sufficiently to uphold Catholic doctrine – and the nuns responded in kind. Through the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, they insisted the Vatican's assessment of them was based on a "flawed process," and consisted of "unsubstantiated accusations."

European leaders are being constrained and ultimately upended by European voters in record numbers. In the last year alone, presidents and prime ministers were toppled in France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, and Greece. Moreover even a leader as relatively strong as Angela Merkel is hamstrung by her people, in this case ordinary Germans reluctant to the point of refusing to bail out their Euro zone brethren. On the one hand, the recalcitrance of voters across Europe is understandable. They are victims of successive governments that for too long promised too much, leaving them now with no alternative but to pivot from plenty to paucity. But on the other hand, it could be argued they are followers out of control, entitled and emboldened to the point of jeopardizing the miracle of coexistence that has been the European Union.

Similarly, Russian strongman Vladimir Putin is less powerful a political leader than just a year ago. His reelection in March as president did not come without a political price – a restive middle class that in spite of being threatened and intimidated, is taking to the streets on a regular basis to protest Putin in particular.

This is not to suggest Putin is fragile to the point of falling. Rather, it is to point to a new political dynamic in Russia, in which even the most powerful single leader must, *for the first time in Russian history*, take into account the Russian people. Only brutal repression would permit Putin to do otherwise.

In the Middle East and in Asia, and for that matter in most of the rest of the world, the story is much the same – leaders who to varying degrees find it difficult if not impossible to lead, followers who to varying degrees find it easy to say no. For example, whatever the various outcomes, the 2011 Arab Spring - which led to crisis and revolutionary change in countries including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and, likely, ultimately Syria – ensured that regional politics and economics will ever again be the same.

Further east, Japan has been beset by a parade of prime ministers – no fewer than seventeen between 1980 and 2010; fully six between 2006 and 2012. Moreover, since the nuclear catastrophe (2011), local leaders have challenged Japan’s national leadership cadre in ways that historically are unprecedented. For example, pressed by a deeply distrustful public to resist the central government, Osaka’s mayor, Toru Hashimoto, openly defied Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda.

Myanmar, meanwhile, is evolving from rigid autocracy to fledgling democracy. Singaporeans are shedding their longstanding docility. And China remains precariously perched between market authoritarianism on the one hand and citizen activism on the other.⁹ In 2011, Chinese government officials began again to crack down on dissidents and activists, precisely because the former feared disorder - feared losing power to the latter. As a 2012 *New York Times* headline confirmed - “China Closes Window on Economic Debate, Protecting Dominance of State” – so far as Chinese leaders are concerned, the way to preclude people power is to clamp down.¹⁰

Is there any evidence the private sector mirrors the public one, that changing patterns of dominance and deference affected American business as they did American government? Are there signs that in spite of the apparent corporate greed, and in spite of the one percent (a good number of whom are captains of business and industry), corporate leaders and managers are more constrained now than they were, say, a decade or two ago?¹¹

⁹ Niall Ferguson put it well: “The rising middle class in emerging markets means not just soaring demand for Western brands. It also means soaring demand for Western rights. A revolutionary bourgeoisie in Asia is about to start demanding the rule of law and no taxation without representation. This is what the bourgeoisie has been doing since 17th century England.” Ferguson might have added his theory applies unless there is real repression. In “No Laughing in Jerusalem,” *Newsweek*, July, 2& 9, 2012.

¹⁰ The article was by Ian Johnson, and is dated June 17, 2012.

¹¹ There is no underestimating this shift. As Nicholas Lemann summarized it, “The most striking change in American society in the past generation... has been the increase in the inequality of income and wealth. In 1979, members of the much discussed ‘one percent’ got nine percent of all personal income. Now they get a quarter of it. [Moreover] the gains have increased the further up you go.” (*The New Yorker*, April 23, 2012.)

On the surface the answer would seem to be no. Unions remain weak, only occasionally a force with which to be reckoned, and many ordinary Americans are beaten down by high unemployment, stagnant wages, and the disappearing American Dream.

But dig deeper and you will find that corporate American has by no means remained immune to the larger trends to which I refer. It too has been impacted by the idea that leaders (and managers) must be more democratic and less autocratic, and that some stakeholders should be treated more equitably in the workplace (employees), while others should have more of a say in corporate governance (shareholders). The evidence for this is rampant in theory, though more meager in practice.

The humongous literature on leadership reflects the changing times. Leading by commanding and controlling is out; leading by cooperating and collaborating is in. Words and terms such as “team,” “network,” “flattened hierarchy,” “engagement,” and “empowerment” all testify to a time in which the leader’s power and authority are supposed to be diminished, and influence is supposed to be shared. Listen to leadership gurus James Kouzes and Barry Posner: “Leadership is not a solo act, it’s a team effort.” The “turbulence in the marketplace demands even more collaboration, not less.”¹² And to Bill George: “CEOs have tremendous influence ... However if we examine more closely the success stories ... we see that each was built by a team at the top, not by a single person.”¹³ And to Daniel Goleman: Leaders should be “true collaborators,” they should be “team members rather than top-down leaders,” they should “create the sense that they truly want to hear employees’ thoughts and concerns.”¹⁴

To be sure, there is as indicated a yawning gap between leadership theory and leadership practice. Still, the idea of the (relatively) democratic workplace; the idea that 21st century leaders need to listen and learn, not only order others around; and the idea that those who are other than leaders should also be heard – these ideas matter. It matters that new norms on dominance and deference did in fact infiltrate the private sector, as they did the public one.

Finally: a note on shareholder activists who, in comparison with citizen activists, have remained tame. The reasons for the discrepancy appear on the surface unclear. It is not immediately apparent why shareholder activism lags so far behind citizen activism, why political leaders are more vulnerable than are business leaders. Still, reasons likely include generational differences (shareholders tend to be older than voters), organizational history and capacity (the long history of organized political dissent, which other than the now diminished unions have no private sector parallel), and self-interest. But this is not about what was, but about what is. There is modest evidence that shareholder activists are increasing in

¹² *The Leadership Challenge* (Jossey-Bass, 2007), pp. 223-234.

¹³ *Authentic Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 2003), p. 91.

¹⁴ *Primal Leadership* (Harvard Business School Press, 2002), p. 69.

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number, and increasingly ready, willing, and able to challenge both corporate leaders and the boards that typically protect them. Additionally, the face of shareholder activism is gradually changing: “While proxy season has long been the domain of labor unions and activist investors with large personalities and forceful demands, increasingly it is mutual funds and other more tempered institutional shareholders who are criticizing lavish pay packages and questioning corporate performance.”¹⁵

In short the earth is round - ideas circle the surface. As a result, nearly no one now, nearly nowhere, is exempt from the devolution of power, authority, and influence.

Culture and Technology

In recent decades, the devolution to which I refer has accelerated, for which changing culture and technologies are responsible in roughly equal measure.

Not long ago someone like me – a professor in an institution of higher education – was addressed as “Professor” or “Doctor.” Now things are different. Now students are likely as not to call me “Barbara” - even if they’ve never seen me before. Similarly, we used to defer to physicians; we would take their word as gospel and do what they told us to do. Now we pocket their instructions and then second-guess them by getting another opinion - or another ten thousand opinions - on the internet. And if we wanted the name of a good restaurant, we’d consult an expert of some sort, someone who was trained to know about good food and where to get it. Now, we click on Yelp. Now, we implicitly diminish the value of experience and expertise by turning to others like us for whatever the advice.¹⁶ This decline in respect for traditional authority is everywhere in evidence, and everywhere in evidence is leaders who labor to lead. The change is cultural, contextual.

Cultural change usually is gradual. But at times, it’s more abrupt, for example, in the U. S., during the late 1960s and early 1970s. A more recent instance is the year of the Monica Lewinsky affair (1998), which dominated American politics and enthralled the American people, while ensnaring the American president in a trap of his own making.

My point is unrelated to whether or not the outrage against President Bill Clinton was justified. Rather, it is related to the stunningly unseemly national debate that was the result. It was a toxic mix: an intemperate president, an available young woman, a plethora of politicians excited by the smell of blood, a press corps with license to invade the most private parts of a president’s personal

¹⁵ Ben Protess and Katherine Reynolds Lewis, “From Reticence to Joining the Revolt.” *New York Times*, June 8, 2012.

¹⁶ Think, similarly, of the impact of pricing transparency. In the past, when we bought a car, we were at the mercy more or less of the seller. Now when we walk into a new car showroom, we do so with iPhones in hand, which arm us in an instant with comparative prices.

Now we implicitly diminish the value of experience and expertise by turning to others like us for whatever the advice.

life, and an insatiable public that felt no evident compunction about peeping at an unzipped president. Put differently, the most highly placed of our national leaders was subjected by his followers to a level of scrutiny that was aptly described by (Clinton biographer) John Harris as being “grotesquely literal.”¹⁷

Nor is Clinton the only leader to be publicly humiliated, leveled, in precisely this way. Others in the private sector as well as the public one include, Harry Stonecipher (former CEO of Boeing), Mark Hurd (former CEO of Hewlett-Packard), Eliot Spitzer (former governor of New York), Mark Sanford (former governor of South Carolina), John Edwards (former candidate for Vice President), and Anthony Wiener (former congressman from New York). The days when highly visible leaders can hide an illness (as did Woodrow Wilson), or an impairment (as did Franklin Roosevelt), or romantic recklessness (as did John Kennedy), for the most part are over.¹⁸ In their place is a time in which leaders are demeaned by being revealed, while followers stand and stare, no longer surprised to find that those at the top, like those in the middle and at the bottom, are merely mortal.

Of course, new media and old, the blogosphere especially, amplify the effects of cultural change by coarsening the conversation. In fact, in time, the web will likely have more of an impact on relations between leaders and followers than any of the previous information technologies, including - I do not write this lightly - the printing press. How more precisely do the new communications technologies change the balance of power between leaders and followers? Simply put, they take from the former and give to the latter. In the past, leaders could control the dissemination of information, the level of expression, the capacity for connection, and the motivation for action. Those days are over. Information is instant, porous and ubiquitous. (Wikileaks alone exposed a number of leaders as liars; as weak, foolish, and inept; and as intemperate and corrupt. No wonder governments, including the U.S. government, are doing what they can to stop the leaks, including aggressively pursuing Julian Assange and Bradley Manning.¹⁹) Freedom of expression is such that, as Clay Shirkey put it, “every member of the public is a media outlet.”²⁰ The capacity for connection is not only unprecedented, it is virtually (so to speak) limitless. And, as we by now know, taking action, especially in conjunction with others, can be relatively easy and low in cost.

About the impact of technology on patterns of dominance and deference, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman recently wrote: “The wiring of the world through social media and Web-enabled cell phones is changing the nature of

¹⁷ *The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House* (Random House, 2005), p. 293.

¹⁸ An exception to this general rule was Steve Jobs, who was unable to hide his illness from the public, but did manage to keep confidential the specifics thereof.

¹⁹ Assange is the founder, or instigator, of Wikileaks; Manning has been charged by the U. S. government with feeding the web site classified materials.

²⁰ The Richard S. Salant Lecture on Freedom of the Press, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard, 2011, p. 17.

conversations between leaders and the led everywhere. We're going from largely one-way conversations – top-down – to overwhelmingly two-way conversations – bottom-up and top-down.”²¹ Joseph Nye additionally pointed out that the information revolution changed leadership and followership not only at the national level, but at the international level as well. World politics, Nye maintained, are no longer “the sole province of governments.” Other individuals and institutions including non-state actors are now empowered “to play direct roles in world politics,” enabled by the distribution of power, by informal networks, and by the vicissitudes of cyberspace, which “undercut the monopoly of traditional bureaucracy.”²²

What I concluded is that thinking about leadership must now include thinking about followership, and about the context within which both necessarily are embedded.

What's a leader to do? Have the inmates taken over the asylum? Is there no end to followers intruding on leaders, especially in the public realm, precluding them from doing the work that needs to be done? Is the frothing of followers now so great – to wit, polls, blogs, Facebook postings and Twitter feeds – that leaders' hands are tied? Are we at a point where leaders are reduced to following followers?

One thing at least is clear: we need a new paradigm. Our incessant obsession with leaders - for example, with Barack Obama and Mitt Romney during the interminable 2012 presidential campaign – and our fixation on leadership development is now badly misplaced. In fact, it's more than misplaced; it's misguided and mistaken. Particularly as the boomers age out, and as the Gen Xers (born roughly between 1960 and 1980) give way to the Gen Yers (born roughly between 1980 and 2000), the old leader-centric model, with the leader at the helm controlling the action, no longer holds – it's passé, obsolete.

Several years ago, I developed a different paradigm, an alternative model if you will, of how to look at leadership in the 21st century.²³ What I concluded is that thinking about leadership must now include thinking about followership, and about the context within which both necessarily are embedded. The model can be easily be visualized: imagine an equilateral triangle, with the leader, the followers, and the context each constituting a single, pointedly equal, side.

The Leadership Industry

The “leadership industry” is my catchall term for the now countless leadership centers, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experiences, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, coaches, and trainers claiming to teach people – usually for money – how to lead.²⁴ The

²¹ “The Rise of Popularism,” *New York Times*, July 24, 2012.

²² *The Future of Power* (Public Affairs, 2011), pp. 124, 125.

²³ See *Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters* (Harvard Business School Press, 2004).

²⁴ In my most recent book - *The End of Leadership* (HarperCollins, 2012) - I elaborate on both the leadership industry and on leadership and change as discussed in this paper.

industry is relatively new, only some 30, 40 years old. Though leadership has always been taught (Confucius, Plato), only in the last several decades has it been taught by large numbers of purported leadership teachers to large numbers of purported leadership learners. Becoming a leader has become a mantra - in higher education, in many if not most of the professions, and in government and business.²⁵ It is widely presumed a path to money and power; a medium for achievement, both individual and institutional; and a mechanism for creating change.

But as we have seen, there are other, parallel truths: leaders of every sort are in decline and disrepute; the tireless teaching of leadership has brought us no closer to leadership nirvana than we were previously; we don't have much better an idea of how to grow good leaders, or of how to stop or at least slow bad leaders, than we did a hundred or even a thousand years ago; the context is changing in ways leaders seem unwilling or unable fully to grasp; followers are becoming on the one hand disappointed and disillusioned and on the other entitled, emboldened, and empowered; and, notwithstanding the enormous sums of money and time that have been poured into trying to teach people how to lead, over its approximately forty year history the leadership industry has not in any meaningful, measurable way improved the human condition. None of this is to say that there are no individuals and institutions that have profited from the plethora of programs on leadership development. Rather, it is to say that the returns on our investment have been meager.

Despite too many people committed to the idea that leadership can be taught both quickly and easily - say over a long weekend or during a single semester - there have been rumblings something's gone wrong. The evidence of the global leadership deficit is now so rampant it's difficult wholly to ignore. Nick Petrie from the Center for Creative Leadership concludes that leadership development programs have not "delivered" what is "really needed."²⁶ Business educators Warren Bennis and James O'Toole argue that the "root cause of today's crisis in management education is that business schools have adopted an inappropriate - and ultimately self-defeating - model of academic excellence."²⁷ Management consultancies feel obliged to "rethink how to train top managers."²⁸ And business schools around the world have acknowledged their inadequacies in teaching leadership and management by "adding courses in ethics and governance."²⁹ (Note: there is no persuasive evidence that ethics courses make people more ethical.)

Withal, the leader-centric model remains unchallenged. In spite of obvious

²⁵ Nearly all of Harvard University's professional schools now have the words "leader" or "leadership" in their mission statements - a comment in and of itself.

²⁶ "Future Trends in Leadership Development," Center for Creative Leadership, 2011.

²⁷ "How Business Schools Lost Their Way," *Harvard Business Review*, May, 2005.

²⁸ Alan Rappeport, "Leading Questions," *FT.COM/Business Education*

²⁹ Sara Silver, "Changed Climate Leads to Revamped Curriculums," *Financial Times*, June 18, 2012.

evidence to the contrary, the idea that followers matter, that people without authority now have as much of an impact as people with, continues nearly entirely to elude or be ignored by leadership experts. Moreover there is insufficient discussion of the importance of contextual intelligence, of, for example, understanding history or of mastering the changing technologies. In other words, while I argue for a leadership model that is more holistic and inclusive (leaders, followers, and context), the model that persists and prevails remains resolutely leader-centric.

The leadership industry continues to thrive.³⁰ This in spite of the fact that it is unmonitored and unregulated – you need a license to teach cosmetology, but not leadership - and largely bereft of reliable metrics. Until large numbers of leadership educators acknowledge and act on the need to professionalize the work they do, the past might provide more promising a paradigm of what to teach and how than does the present.

Remember civics – the idea that everyone benefits from a receiving a civic education? Unlike leadership education, which by definition is elitist, civic education by definition is democratic. It is based on the principle that plain people should be engaged and educated, taught not necessarily to lead, but to participate, collaborate, cooperate, and compromise in the interest of the common good. Doesn't sound bad, does it? Can it be that what we really need now is not more leadership education but less – not less civic education but more?

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³⁰ Why this should be so can be traced to perceived self interest – on the part of both leadership teachers and leadership learners. For more on this see, *The End of Leadership*.