

Followership and Discourse(s) Over Time

2023 Global Followership Conference Workshop Summary

On March 25, 2023, as part of the Global Followership Conference (GFC), 15 individuals contributed to a session on “Followership and Discourse(s) Over Time.” It was facilitated by Eric Kaufman, Ira Chaleff, and Israel Oyedare. A copy of the session proposal and related slides are publicly available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/114243>

As part of the session, participants were invited to comment on and contribute to three published timelines related to leadership and followership: “Leadership Through the Ages” (Harrison, 2012), “Taxonomic Organizational Branching for Ancient worlds Versus modernity” (Markham, 2012), and “Important Theoretical Milestones in the Evolution of the Role of Followers in Leadership Research” (Oc. et al., 2023). The ideas captured were transcribed and are displayed in the appendices of this document.

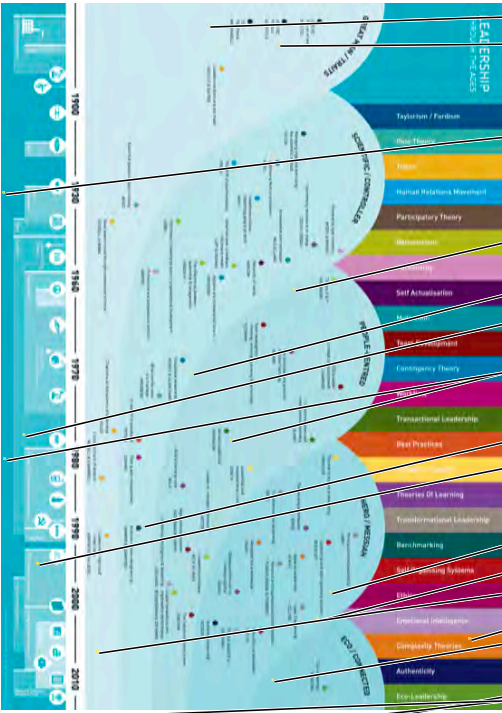
Following the gallery walk of the timelines, participants engaged in a World Café dialogue surrounding the following question: “What are the characteristics and influencing factors on followership discourse (or social implicit theory)?” As the group reflected on the café conversations, they surfaced the following themes: Social Media Trends; Blind Followership; Generational Differences; Technical vs. Cultural Followership; Censorship; Social, Economic, & Political Movements; Historical Trends; Religion & Level in Hierarchy; Fragmentation/Sub-groups; Antagonistic leadership vs. Communal Values; Relations to Authoritarianism; Conspiracy theories; Outcomes desired; and Timelines/Urgency. The group then considered potential followership discourse and identified the following phrases for consideration: Applied Followership - Contextual; Virtual Followership - Artificial Intelligence; Solution to Leadership Failures; Support for Leaders’ Vision; Balance/Antidote to Destructive Leadership; Humane Approaches; and Corporate Followership - Employment. Participants expressed appreciation for the conversation, as noted in the following post-session survey response: “Let’s keep the conversation going! This was fabulous.”



References

- Markham, S. E. (2012). The evolution of organizations and leadership from the ancient world to modernity: A multilevel approach to organizational science and leadership (OSL). *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(6), 1134-1151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.011>
- Harrison, J. (2012). *Leadership through the ages*. Mzuri Design Limited.
- Oc, B., Chintakananda, K., Bashshur, M. R., & Day, D. V. (2023). The study of followers in leadership research: A systematic and critical review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 34(1), 101674. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2022.101674>

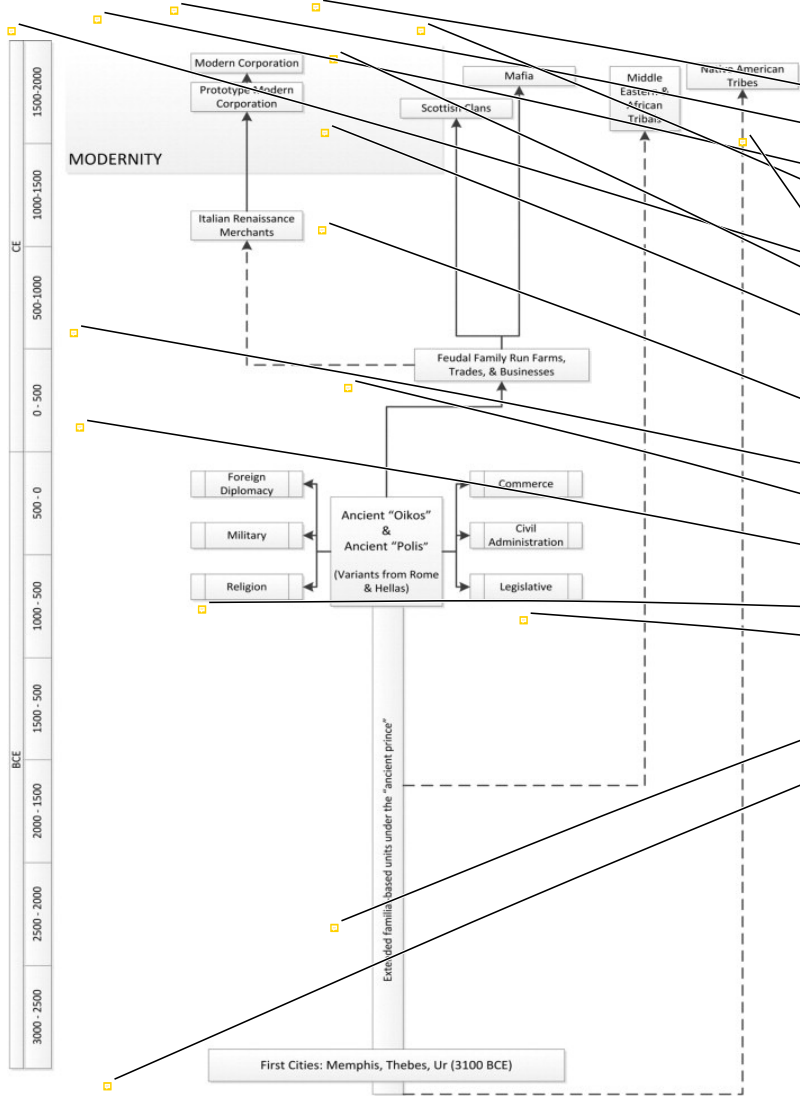
GFC 2023 Comments on Leadership Through the Ages



- Castiglione Book of the Courtier
- Paresis Speaking Truth to Power
- Holocaust: Followers of Hitler
- Change over time to characterize overarching traits rather than by field
- Why have we not quantified the Ds?
- Jonestown- mass murder/ suicide of followers
- Collective involvement of leaders and followers
- With messiah idea, leaders of countries are more important
- Following our president/people in power just because they are in power
- Mass Shootings
- Toxic/Bad Leadership
- Toxic Followership
- Social Intelligence
- Widespread use of social media and use of followers as online social influence
- The contribution that personality type inventories have had on the culture of leadership/followership over time
- Based on rise of social movement forms of organizing and Leadership
- Various nature/ecocentric Leadership approach/systems thinking
- Global Polarization
- Pandemic - feeling of loneliness
- Covid
- Artificial Intelligence... about to change culture?
- Tik Tok



Taxonomic Organizational Branching for Ancient World Versus Modernity (Markham, 2012)



GFC 2023 Comments on Taxonomic Organizational Branching

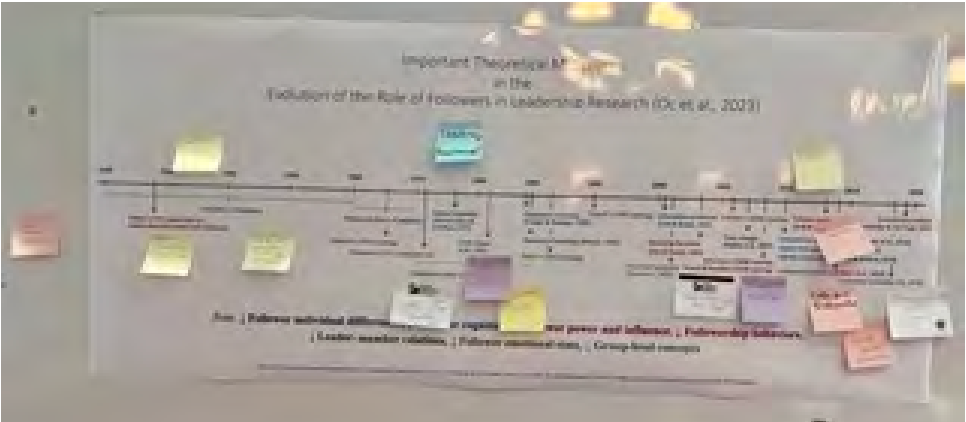
- ☞ drug dealers?
- ☞ Social media "followers" - rise of the Internet
- ☞ Global Followers
- ☞ Followers to leaders in different organizations? Evolution? Break offs?
- ☞ Command Intent, Military doctrine
- ☞ Occupy wall street
- ☞ Heroic leadership
- ☞ Bringing first principle into consideration
- ☞ Protestant reformation, management shift reformation, followership/religion
- ☞ Religious cults
- ☞ Virtue ethics
- ☞ Christians idea of a leader coming to after death
- ☞ catholic hierarchy- protestant decentralization
- ☞ Family as a heart of leader/ followership hierarchy
- ☞ mythic leadership
- ☞ First "Follower" Adam?



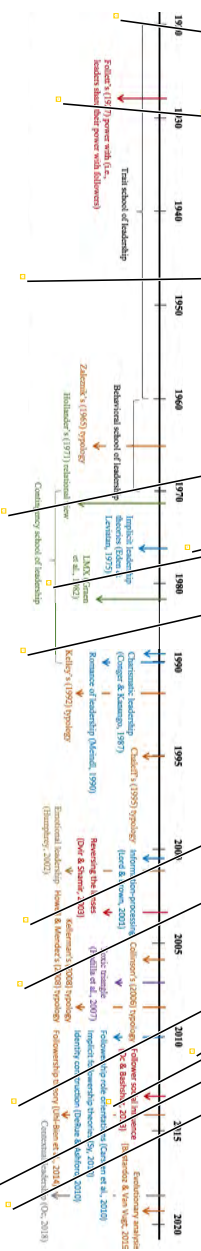
Note. From "The evolution of organizations and leadership from the ancient world to modernity: A multilevel approach to organizational science and leadership (OSL)," by S. E. Markham, 2012, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(6), p.1145 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.011>). Copyright 2012 by Elsevier.

GFC 2023 of Comments on Followership Timeline

- Leader-follower continuum?
- Follett's 'Invisible leader' concept crucial step towards empowering followers
- Facism and communism - huge implications for followership
- Rost's book on LDSP for 21st century fills in a lot of gaps (1920-1960)
- 1977 Greenleaf "Servant" as "leader" re-imagines power display
- Leadership Renaissance
- Treatise on followership - Kellogg Leadership Studies
- Followership Skills?
- Shared Leadership by Pearce & Conger 2007
- Followership first by Ricketson
- Government is not the only power over people
- Collective Followership
- Diffusion of Innovation
- Social Media followership
- Intergenerational effects Followership

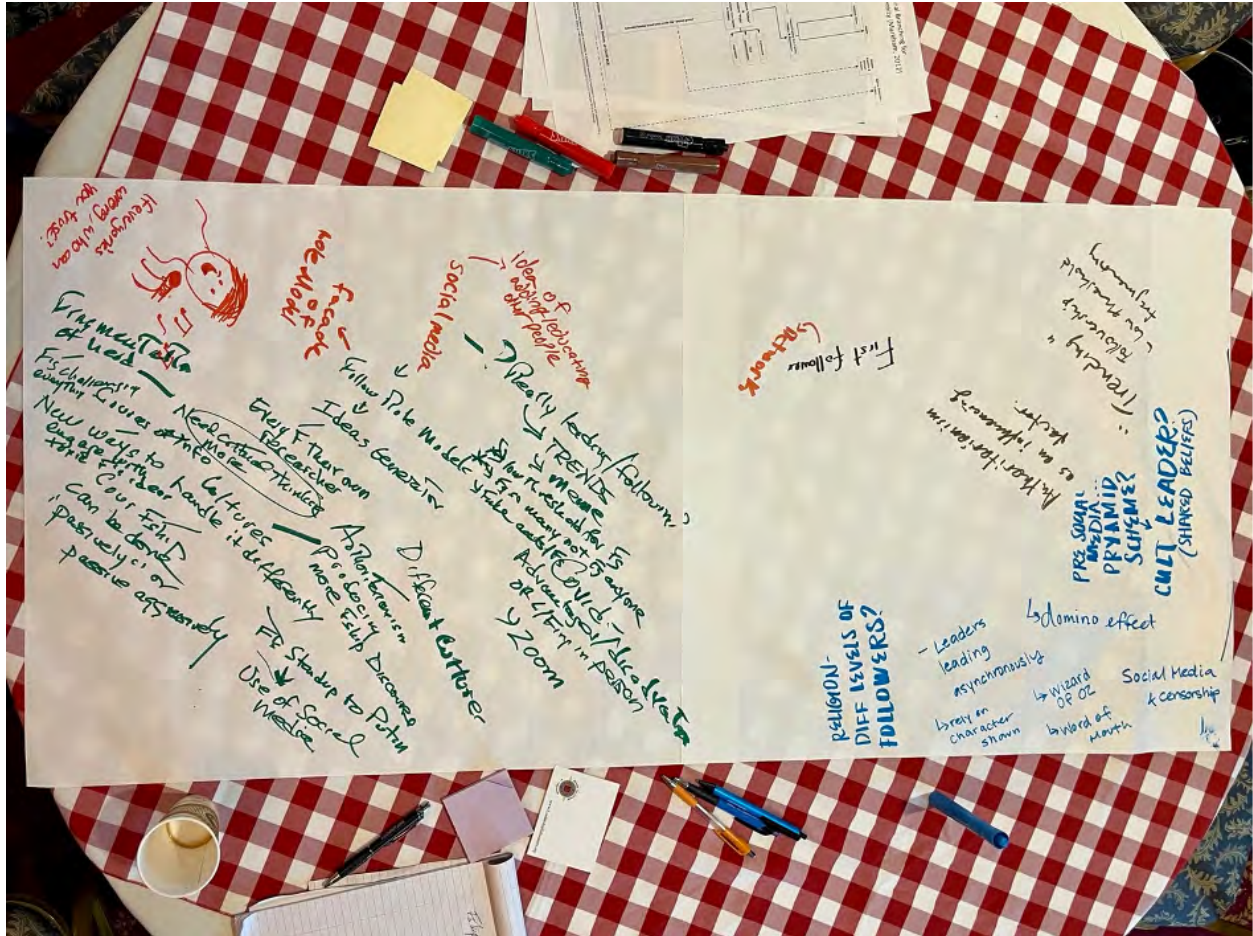


Important Theoretical Milestones in the Evolution of the Role of Followers in Leadership Research (O'Connell et al., 2023)



Note: | Follower individual differences, | Follower cognition, | Follower power and influence, | Followership behaviors, | Leader-member relations, | Follower emotional state, | Group-level concepts

GFC 2023 World Café Table 1: "Social Media: Idea of adding/educating other people", "Facade of Role Model", "Fragmentation of head", "Sources of Information", "Followers challenging everything", "New ways of engaging toxic followers' ideas", "Coup followers can be done passively or passive aggressively", "More need for critical thinking", "Cultures: New ways to handle it differently", "Authoritarianism producing more followership discovery", "Every follower own their researcher", "Really, Leading - Following? - Trends - Memes - Low threshold for followers - So many not following anyone, fake act of followership", "Advantage/Disadvantage of following a person- zoom", "Cult leaders (Shared beliefs)", "Domino effects", "Social Media and Censorship", "Leaders leading asynchronously", "Rely on character shown", "Wizard of Oz", "Word of Mouth", "Religion- Different level of followers", "Pre social Media - Pyramid Scheme?" "Authoritarianism as an influencing factor", "First follower- network", "Trending followership- low threshold fragmenting".



GFC 2023 World Café Table 2: "Attention economy scarcity", "Transformational Leadership dead or shifting?", "Prototypical follower?- Is that effective or ideal", "Power between leaders and followers", "Power distance", "Differing goals", "Relationship/Tasks", "Moving from follower to leader too fast", "Don't want to be the leader or bad guy to follow", "Personality", "Work-Life balance", "Mental health/loneliness", "group think", "Imposter syndrome", "Connecting without followers", "Algorithm", "Critical thinking", "Continuum", "Generations younger have more conceptual ideas", "Power Over vs Power with", "Not I, the We", "Follower Voice - Time, place, growth", "Bot followers, Blind followers", "Fluidity", "Fandom celebrity influencers", "Collaborative with leaders followers", "When to leave and when to keep following?", "Against social norms- be someone you are not", "Trenny- Social media, global reach, cause".



GFC 2023 World Café Table 3: "Education vs censorship", "Follower-fluidity-Leader", "Followers are necessary - Hierarchical followers", "Leaders equal followers?", "Trust Information", "Pandemic", "Following rules", "Global Polarization", "What do followers do? - Learn, Support (Encouragement, Emotional Support, Physical Support), Allyship, Achieve and Exceed goals, Continuous Improvement, Challenge/Question, Be a sounding board, Clarification", "Technical Definition vs Cultural Definition", "Followers viewed as the other part of leadership", "The end product is now different: Social Media, business etc", "It is scarier to see dysfunctional followership than leadership", "Followership is emerging", "Followership Discourse is Fluid", "Citizenship", "Conspiracy theory", "Social Media World - Exchanges between influencers and followers - Reciprocal following", "Value", "Generational difference - Reason for improvement in following discourse", "Maslow's hierarchy of needs - Where you are in the hierarchy", "Followership as a function", "Large scale social, historical, economic development - wars and geopolitics, population growth, facism kind of followers, capitalism kind of followers", "Why follow - credibility", "Social Media - Followers are numbers, Personal Preference, Reciprocity - Follow me back", "Literature/Research on trust", "Ethics".

