Review Essay
Public Leadership Development, Community Engagement, and Higher Education

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From Command to Community: A New Approach to Leadership Education in Colleges and Universities

Nicholas V. Longo and Cynthia M. Gibson, Editors
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Browse any college's current Website or open any college catalog, past or present, and look at their mission statement. You invariably will find a mention of leadership or a surrogate as the school's purpose. The mission statements will solemnly explain that each institution prepares students for leadership roles, for service to society, and/or the promotion of the public good. This ubiquity seems to make a college education axiomatically leadership development. Hence, the new book from Nicholas Longo and Cynthia Gibson, *From Command to Community*, would seem to be central to higher education.

Yet, if so many colleges and universities are already on board with the idea of leadership development for their students, why do we need this book? Nicholas V. Longo, Cynthia M. Gibson, and the contributors to this collection give two answers: (a) there is not enough attention to the right kind of leadership and, relatedly, (b) not enough civic engagement in the pedagogies of leadership education and development. In addition, they probe the role of higher education in promoting public leadership. This essay focuses on the promotion of leadership development on campuses.

What is the Right Leadership?

From Command to Community suggests we need a model of leadership that "has a public purpose—one that strengthens democracy and goes beyond individuals' 'standing out in the pack' and being recognized" (p. 9). The book draws on the "new" approaches to leadership of James MacGregor Burns, Ronald Heifetz, and Robert Greenleaf. It contrasts their emphasis on leadership as a relationship with purpose against the book's almost straw person caricature of "old" leadership as person- and position-centric enhancement.

The book underestimates how much of this new leadership is well-established in programs of leadership development and education. Both Burns and Greenleaf, in the 1970s, provided the study of new leadership directions. They portrayed leadership as a mutual and reflexive relationship and emphasized values as the purpose of leadership. Both were stung with the mediocrity of the time. Greenleaf (1977) was exercised about the failing of institutions to deliver on their potential for the public good and faulted the people within them, at all levels of authority, for not acting as trustees on behalf of the public purpose of our schools, faith communities, politics, economy, philanthropic foundations, etc. He called for servant leadership and insisted that the only claim leadership has to authority is the recognition by others that those in leadership roles are servants to excellence and common purpose. Burns (1978), in part dispirited by the failure of the democratic impulses of the 1960s to take hold in the 1970s, was dismayed with the intellectual mediocrity about leadership. He famously distinguished transactional leadership—the quid pro quo trading of influence and benefits—from transforming leadership—real change that removes some caste-like distinctions in society and brings people to a higher moral plane. Heifetz (1994) distinguished leadership from authority and provided insight into leadership with, without, and beyond authority.

The book correctly points out that these works and others provide a new normative structure for leadership practice and scholarship. Their caution about command and control leadership also correctly implies that the stream of leadership studies often meanders through formal organizational and inherently hierarchical settings. Its banks are strewn with language of authoritative relationships: "leaders and followers" or "subordinates" for example. As Juana Bordas (2007) points out and airport book stores tes-

tify, this cognitive model of hierarchical leadership generally reduces to images of leaders who are most often White males in formal positions of authority. Longo and Gibson capture this reductionist cognitive model as the great leader that "usually translates into being a superhero—someone who is independent, magnetic, comfortable with authority, and unafraid to make tough decisions" (p. 3).

This might describe popular notions but it would be misleading to think that the vast array of academic leadership programs teaches this Great Man theory as anything other than an historical approach to leadership. Thanks to the growing field of leadership studies, one finds general acceptance that command and control is an anachronistic model even in the most hierarchical organizations. Even a college or university with its administrative and professorial ranks, authoritative structures, and sanctions and incentives—including grades and promotions—suggests to Richard Morrill, president of three colleges and now president of The Teagle Foundation, "organized anarchies" (2010, p. 26). He and others have explained that leadership requires the soft power of influence as well as hard power of authority (Nye, 2008). Bordas (2007) develops new paradigms of leadership from African-American, Native American, and Latino cultures.

This softer and broader approach extends even to the U.S. Army, the stereotype of command and control leadership. The Army aims to develop leaders by instilling many of the qualities compatible with the idealized learning outcomes this book promotes for our students. For example, David Day and his colleagues reflect on the importance of identity in leader development implicit in the U.S. Army's framework of BE, KNOW, DO: "Identity is important generally because it grounds individuals in understanding who they are, what are their major goals and aspirations, and what are their personal strengths and weaknesses" (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009, p. 57).

The contrast of the "new" and "old" leadership model is misleading; the new normative structure of leadership studies has been widely accepted. A popular introductory textbook on leadership, such as Peter Northouse's (2009), defines leadership as:

> …A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal….Process means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader…Process implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. It emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event. When leadership is defined in this manner, it becomes available to everyone. It is not restricted to the formally designated leader in a group (p. 3).

In explaining this definition, Northouse, like Morrill and the vast majority of leadership scholars, emphasizes that "influence is the *sine non qua* of leadership" (p. 3).

The book also overdraws the distinction of old and new by moving away from traits and personal characteristics related to leadership. The authors may abandon the myth of the great leader but they seek to develop the self-awareness and the capacity for greatness in each person. They even suggest traits and characteristics for the learners of leadership development programs, such as the courage to ask tough questions. These personal development and skills approaches to leadership are well ensconced in the student affairs programs on just about any campus. Once again, the field of leadership studies may offer more avenues to the new leadership for which this volume searches. In fact, studies on followership even emphasize the danger of acquiescing to authority and keeping the dangers of unquestioned obedience to authority, such as in the experiments of Milgram and Zimbardo, very much front and center (Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008). Similarly, the scholarship on leadership development emphasizes moving people from one level of personal growth to another rather than competing for a higher place in the pyramid (Day et al., 2009).

What truly distinguishes the book's "new" leadership from the familiar is its focus on the public purpose of leadership. The editors' and contributors' reach beyond the ordinary context of leadership scholarship of formal organizations into community settings, and beyond the familiar leadership scholarship into the works of Saul Alinsky, Benjamin Barber, Harry Boyte, the Highlander Research and Education Center, and David Mathews, as well as others. These sources explain that democracy requires participation in building community, and that the romantic notions of heroic leaders who subdue social problems with command and control impede the development of democracy and community. The right kind of leadership that this book promotes, whether new or already familiar, uses participatory processes and addresses public problems.

Civic Engagement and Leadership Development

This brings us to the second reason for the book: to offer the best pedagogy to develop this type of leadership. The authors present exemplary programs at a range of colleges and universities as well as welcomed attention to community colleges. Some programs are very small and selective while others include a major and in the case of Tufts University, the first school of citizenship and public service. Community engagement forms the common denom-

inator of them all. Because of this, readers of this Journal will recognize pedagogies invoked for leadership development that are kindred to service-learning. These include community-based research, experiential learning, participatory research, problem-centered research and learning, and a host of others readily discernible to experiential educators.

Readers of this Journal also will be pleased with the explicit mention of service-learning as a tool in leadership development. Edward Zlotkowski continues his two decades-long commitment to service-learning, and with two student co-authors points out the role of service-learning in developing the "seven C's" of the *Social Change Model of Leadership Development*: (a) consciousness of self, (b) congruence of action and beliefs, (c) commitment, (d) collaboration, (e) common purpose, (f) controversy with civility, and (g) citizenship. They point to the role of students in assisting the conduct of these programs—sharing authority with them—as a form of their leadership development. The expanded role of students in their own learning is a theme of the volume and expressed by a number of student co-authors in several chapters.

In addition to the explicit mention of service-leaning, Matthew Hartley and Ira Harkavy point out in their chapter the flow of these streams into institutional practice. They point to the history of COOL and Campus Compact as precursors to the current emphasis on leadership development through civic engagement. The frequent references to the work of Alexander and Helen Astin suggest how the Astins provide some of the best research available to support the connection of community engagement and leadership development, as well as a host of other student outcomes to which higher education aspires (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). Thus, some of the harbingers of the integration of civic engagement and leadership education coincide with stalwarts in the pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings of service-learning. In particular, service-learning, civic engagement, and leadership development appear to be streams of idealism flowing from a common source—John Dewey's ideas of democracy and education.

These pages under-develop the relevant experience of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, now NSEE. For example, Robert Sigmon (1979), a driving force, which is to say leader, in that organization and in the national movement for service-learning, presciently related service-learning with Greenleaf's servant-leadership, an element of the new leadership this book promotes. Although "leadership" does not appear in the current mission statement of NSEE, contrary to our initial assertion, the compatibility of its goals to those espoused in this book are clear. Substitute "leadership development" for "learning through experience" in NSEE's statement of purpose (http://www.nsee.org/about_us.htm) and you find the beginning of a mission statement for a national association of leadership education in accord with the pedagogical goals of *From Command to Community*: (a) intellectual development, (b) cross-cultural and global awareness, (c) civic and social responsibility, (d) ethical development, (e) career exploration, and (f) personal growth.

Service-learning advocates and practitioners, having taken the long march into greater acceptance by institutions of higher education, also will recognize the challenges for the next stage of development in leadership education, within our academic institutions, that Longo and Gibson present us.

> Higher education must demonstrate an institutional commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary knowledge, integrating this approach seamlessly into the curriculum and assessing progress. In this approach, there is an understanding of the importance of infusing student voice into the culture of higher education, as well as giving students the opportunity to practice democratic leadership during their time on campus. (pp. 248-49)

Reaching Critical Mass and Familiar Remaining Problems

Drawing these parallels has a certain déjà vu element but only to invite a much more informative examination of the remaining challenge for both service-learning and leadership development through civic engagement. It would be unusual to find a campus without a service-learning and/or experiential education program. They are common now, but not so 20 years ago. Similarly, over the past 20 years, higher education has seen a proliferation of undergraduate leadership programs that seem deliberate and intentional about the leadership development of its students. On the curriculum side, courses on leadership are ubiquitous and minors and majors are common. A few programs have a dedicated faculty or department, such as the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond and the military service academies (curious omissions from this collection). Other curriculum programs find a home in business schools or departments. In addition, individual instructors, courses, or departments may host a range of leadership development initiatives such as outdoor adventure, ropes courses, trust-building exercises, and team-building.

Even more numerous are co-curricular efforts such as residential programs, retreats, and workshops for selected students such as student government officers

and residential hall advisors. Student Affairs divisions on many campuses have a major if not primary role in the conduct of these programs. There are national resources, such as LeaderShape, that provide on-campus and off-campus training workshops for students, as well as a model, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development; in addition, there is the National Clearinghouse of Leadership Programs, which is a valuable source for the range of leadership programs in undergraduate higher education as well as teaching materials and other resources.

Despite the success of the movement for leadership programs, they face the challenges with which service-learning has had to and continues to contend. These remaining challenges received clearest articulation in this book from an exemplary student in an exemplary program: Duncan Pickard at Tuft University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. Pickard, who was student body president at Tufts, enumerates the benefits of his various engagements with the Tisch program. He also, quite perceptively, points out that even at this vanguard school there remains the need for sustainable forms of community engagement that keep the community's needs foremost in mind (p. 185). Pickard points out the enduring challenge to balance accountability to the community members and organizations with whom we work and that also work as a students' learning experience.

Stephen Smith's chapter, "Organizing 101: Lessons I Wish I'd Learned on Campus," raises the same challenge from the long view of a Harvard graduate and student activist turned community organizer. He cites Illich's (1968) essay "To Hell with Good Intentions," which I required in my service-learning courses, as part of his temerity to suggest that community engagement pedagogies may actually do bad for communities (p. 237). Others point out that we might engage students in community service in ways that are bad for them unless we deal with unrealistically high expectations (p. 31). Clearly, service-learning educators and those in leadership development through community engagement have a common challenge to bring the genuinely difficult work of community change into alignment with the primary goal of academia: "learning and developing new knowledge to improve society," as Hartley and Harkavy (p. 67) put it.

If We are So Effective, How Do We Get More Respect?

Pickard's criticism illustrates a caveat that service-learning educators have learned well: our pedagogies may deliver on their promise in uncomfortable ways. Alma Blount, director of the Hart Leadership Program in Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, explains in her chapter: "My hope [for the students] is that something inside them will start to shift and turn. I want them to grow more and more comfortable practicing an agile, provocative, improvisation form of questioning that could become part of their everyday lives as well as their professional skill set" (p. 24). Obviously the people at Tisch and Tufts succeeded with Pickard in light of his perceptive criticisms of the program and, to be fair, an enduring challenge of community change efforts within higher education. The book provides lots of other anecdotal evidence, and behind these instances of success, the Astins have provided evidence to substantiate the connection of community engagement and the desired outcomes of education, including leadership development. This connection is perhaps the best documented claim that higher education can make about itself.

Despite this success, Pickard also picks up on an issue that has bedeviled service-learning and other pedagogies of engagement. "I believe the divide between civic engagement and academic rigor is false…We shouldn't balance work in the community and course work; we should merge the two" (pp. 184-185). Longo and Gibson, the editors, echo Pickard and the lament of service-learning educators, which is no longer nearly as prominent as it was two decades ago. "…Leadership education should no longer be siloed but instead be melded into a rich, comprehensive approach to helping people, especially young people, gain the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to become leaders in an interdependent, global society" (p. 250).

This is a battle that service-learning has fought and mainly won. How it won is instructive. As experiential education expanded, it faced the same current challenges as leadership programs. These included integrating this mode of learning into the curriculum; increasing faculty involvement; and ensuring quality, evaluation systems, financial and administrative structures, and strategies for institutional change. NSIEE formulated generic strategies for strengthening the practice of experiential education, recognizing that what was appropriate for a particular institution depended upon an assessment of the "values at the institution, the degree of student-centeredness in learning, goals of an experiential program, program staffing and operation, characteristics of student participants, faculty involvement on campus, the current administrative structure, the pros and cons of four administrative models, and use of an outside consultant." The primary general and particular strategy that stays with me was "building experiential education into the mission and values of the college" (Kendall, 1986).

Unlike the experience of experiential education,

our educational institutions have already built leadership into their stated missions and values and into their strategic plans. The power of these mission statements came to the fore as I prepared to work with a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. In the ceremonial launching conversation with the college president, he cited a difference he had with his on-campus leadership point person about this work. "She's always pushing this program for everyone. Not everyone is a leader, right? Why don't we just select a few students and work with them." Paul Light, in his chapter, calls this "the star system" (p. 221). I explained that such an approach presented him with a real problem. "Why?", he asked. I pointed to the college's mission statement of preparing its students for ethical leadership. I went on, "It doesn't say, 'This college prepares *some* of our students for ethical leadership and the rest for unethical leadership or drone roles.'"

He was caught a bit off guard and retreated to more abstract ground. "What is leadership?" he asked. As often as I had faced that question in the past, I had never been happy with my answer. I prepared another overly academic, stumbling, and incoherent response, when all the years of reading, writing, and talking about it dissolved and a simple, clear statement appeared: "Leadership is taking initiative on behalf of shared values. Not everyone has a position of authority but everyone can lead by taking initiative on behalf of shared values." College-wide planning had his support after that, including sessions with the plant operations, food providers, and housekeeping staff as well as the usual groups of students, faculty, staff, and coaches. With more presence of mind, I would have referred to Jackie Reed's definition of leadership for those with formal positions of authority, such as his. Reed, a community organizer in the west side of Chicago, explains, "Leadership sets up an opportunity for others to give their gifts, for others to contribute to community" (Couto & Eakin 2002, p. xii).

Several contributors to this book point out that the calls for leadership development through community engagement are not radical or "opposed to our mission" (p. 99). This overlooks that the case for leadership development has already been made in the mission statements of our schools, and that evidence abounds that community engagement, in all of its forms, is an effective pedagogy of leadership development. The question is not "What role should higher education play in the leadership development of its students?" but rather "Why aren't colleges and universities more intentional and deliberate about their goals and values?"

Very few schools, despite their mission statements, are clear about the intentional and deliberate goal of training *every student* for leadership. We are generally far more deliberate and intentional about developing the basketball skills of our school's 12 or 15 team members. Perhaps we can be forgiven for an emphasis on these few students because mission statements generally do not promise to develop the basketball skills of all students; they do not even promise winning basketball programs. Absolution is less available regarding the unspecified approaches to develop the leadership of *all* students because of the ubiquitous goal of doing so. The contrasts of deliberative and intentional efforts to develop the leadership competencies of all and the basketball skills of a few involve a powerful narrative of priorities and commitments.

Rather than a narrative of something new, however, the narrative of leadership for public purpose through community engagement is best presented as innovative (Gardner & Laskin, 1998) only because it draws attention to old values and goals that too often are overlooked. Pickard, the student from Tufts, pointed out the wisdom of building horizontal alliances rather than vertical ones, and the scholarship and experience on leading change supports him. We will get much further in winning support for community engagement as a means to public leadership when we explain this in terms of the goals of our institutions and of our colleagues. This volume may overestimate what is new about its narrative but it hits the bullseye about the leadership we require to continue the movement of community engagement pedagogies. We do not need heroic leaders, and waiting for them only hinders bringing about the changes we need sooner. We need the willingness of some to take initiative on behalf of shared values. Kathleen Knight Abowitz and her colleagues from Miami University in their chapter elaborate on this definition of leadership in a particularly effective way if we consider our academic settings as a microcosm of the public. "Leadership, practiced in and for public life, is comprised of the actions of citizens who convene, deliberate, inquire, collaborate, and act with the intent to improve life for fellow citizens in their communities and the larger society" (p. 86).

Naturally, change is not as easy as formulating a narrative about shared values. There are competing values and competing narratives. As Kurt Lewin (1947), another harbinger of community-based research and learning, suggested, trying to change a group or organization is the surest way of understanding it (Schein, 1996). In addition, treating a taken-for-granted statement seriously, such as the importance of leadership development to our schools, comes across as innovative, if not radical, and invites resistance. Those who see an emphasis on a pedagogy of community engagement for leadership development as unwelcomed change may have become comfortable with an unintentional and inde-

liberate approach to this goal and its related pedagogies. If so, Greenleaf and Burns become very relevant. Greenleaf's relevance revolves around protesting mediocrity of our institutions and advocating leadership as service with the highest aspirations. Burns's relevance revolves around suggesting that real change of transforming leadership requires abandoning the caste-like restrictions—set in the roles of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and community residents—that impede a direct role for all these stakeholders in achieving the goals and values of higher education. At times of resistance and conflict, it will be useful for those advocating and practicing leadership development through community engagement to remember another dictum, sometimes attributed to a "new" leadership scholar, Saul Alinsky: Our efforts to comfort the afflicted will sometimes afflict the comfortable.

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