

The Leaders' Institute: National Leadership Survey

How do people today in the UK regard our present 'leaders'
Now with a 2019 update of comment

Introduction

In the last decade we have seen scandals from the corporate world, banking, the police, the parliamentary expenses scandal, sports scandals, care homes and hospital scandals with children found murdered by their parents and social workers and teachers blamed for not acting. What effect has this had on the whole concept and understanding of leadership and positional leaders for everyday working people? Every four years we undertake this research. This version was carried out in the UK in March 2016 before the Brexit Referendum. It shows how we arrived to where we are today.

Organisation Ready

In this survey over 1,000 questionnaires were completed by employees from three different sectors: financial services, engineering and manufacturing. Almost half were women, the majority were under thirty years of age and more men were in the over fifty age group. The second highest age group was 30-50 years with slightly more males.

In regard to their education, more females were in the GCSE group and worked in administration; it was a 50/50 split in the A Level group with more males working in technical work. More males were in the degree group with more males working in management while it was only males in the post -graduate group. This seems to indicate that although women graduates outnumber male graduates it is more likely still to find male managers.

In regard to their political affiliation, over half of the sample stated they had none. For those who did have a political affiliation, more females were Conservative with a 50/50 split for Labour while only males said they were Liberal Democrats.

Identifying Mentors

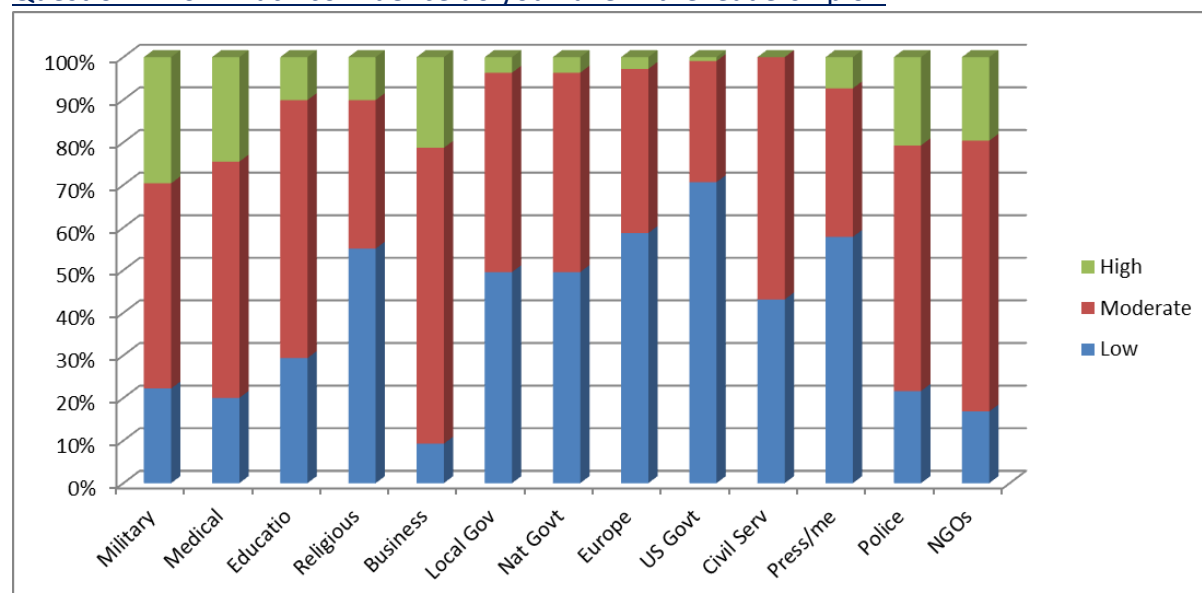
The survey began with four key questions about 13 groups of leaders in society. Those groups were described as such:

1. Armed Forces such as Generals, Air Marshals and Admirals
2. Consultant Surgeons (not administrators/managers)
3. Vice Chancellors of Universities and School Principals
4. Religious leaders such as Bishops

5. Business Chief Executive Officers
6. Chief Executives of Local Authorities and County Councils
7. Ministers in National Government and Prime Minister (regardless of party)
8. European Government including Council and Parliament
9. US Government including President and Congress
10. Civil Service including Permanent Secretaries
11. Press/media such as editors including television
12. Police Chief Constables
13. NGO Chief Executives

The Questions:

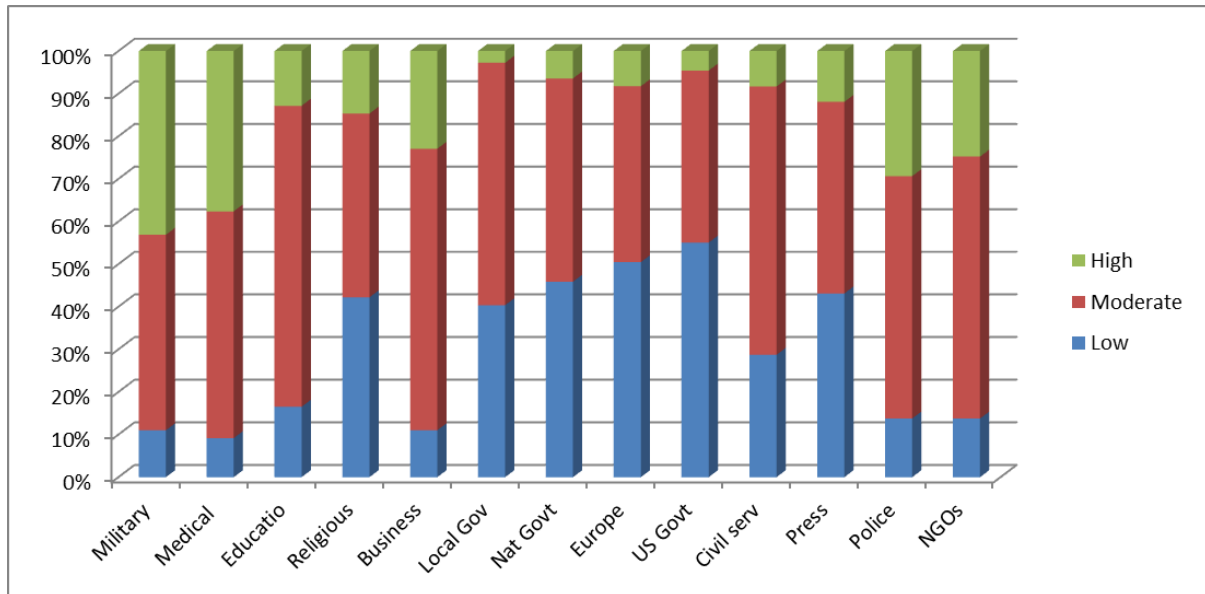
Question 1 How much confidence do you have in the leadership of:



It is clear that confidence in our political, religious and media leaders is very low compared to leaders in the military, medicine, business and NGOs. Although the police have slipped since our last survey, Chief Constables still have some confidence from people and far more than those in politics, the media and religion. Business leaders still instil confidence while education is lower but has a high moderate score. Likewise the civil service has a very low high score but higher moderate one.

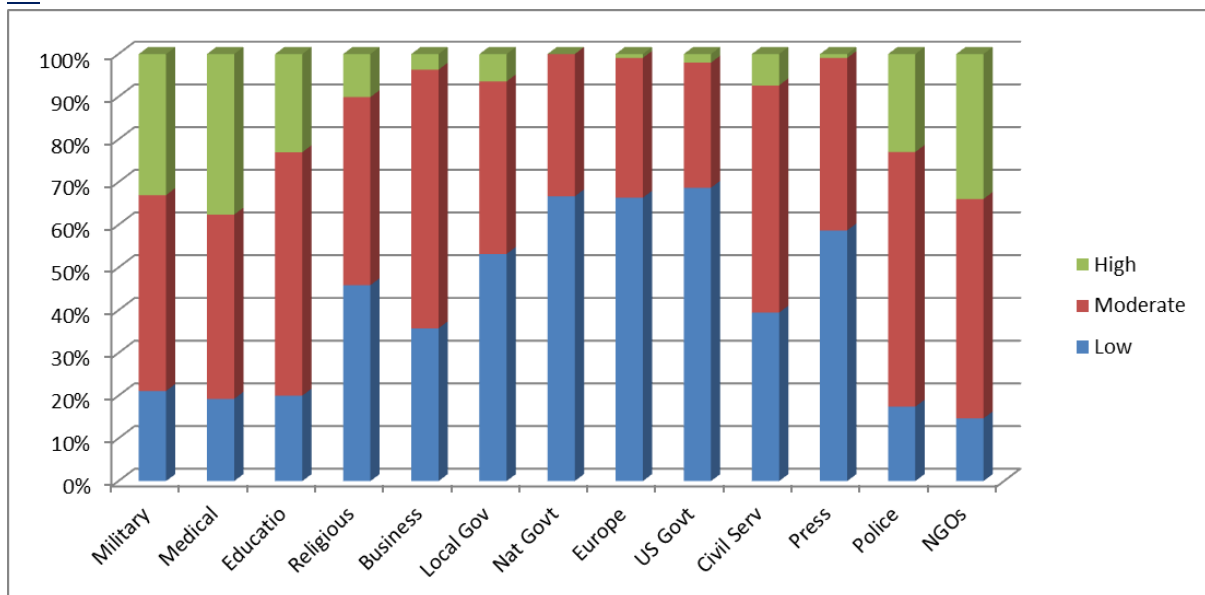
In 2019 looking back, it is not so surprising that so many voted for Brexit. This is the value of research which should be taken seriously. While politics was low in scoring here generally, it was particularly low for bot European politics and the USA.

Question 2 How much confidence do you have in the knowledge, skills abilities of leaders in:



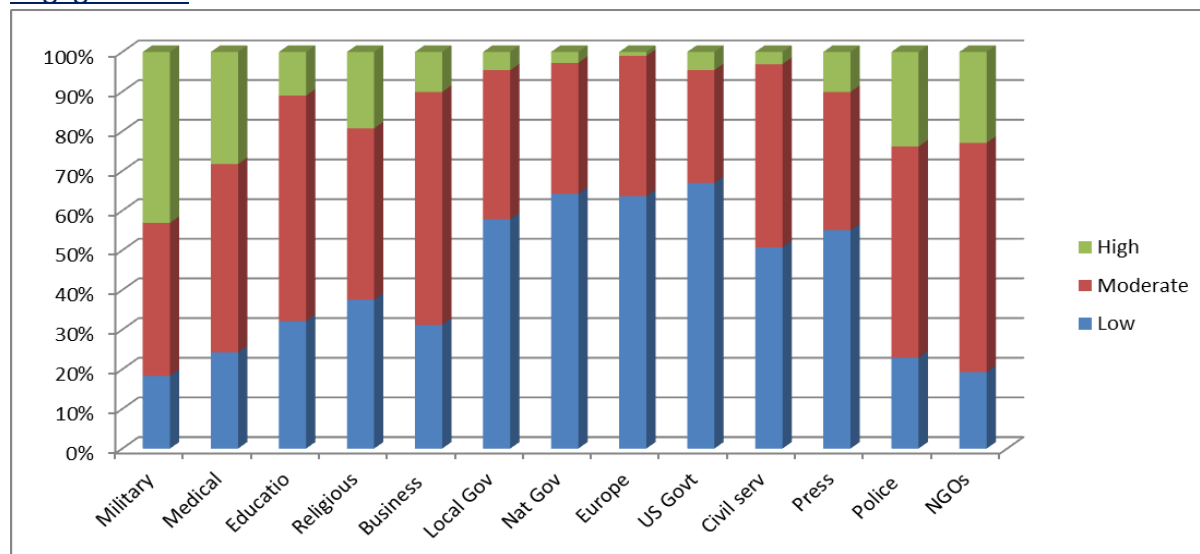
The top three were the military, medicine and the police, followed with NGOs and business leaders. The lowest was the US government, Europe, national government, media, religious leaders and local government. The civil service and business had a high moderate score.

Question 3 How much confidence do you have in the honesty, integrity and ethics of leaders in:



Here business leaders have dropped substantially to a lower score demonstrating that business ethics and integrity has been damaged while medical leaders have overtaken military leaders in this question. NGOs have done well but religious leaders are still very low. Education leaders while low in the last two questions have risen slightly in this question. Police leaders have a lower score here than in question 1 showing the effect of recent problems. Political leaders and the civil service are still very low.

Question 4 How much confidence do you have in leaders to inspire followers' loyalty and engagement?



Top is the military followed by medicine, police, NGOs, business and religious leaders. Thus people do believe religious leaders have the capability to inspire loyalty and engagement if the other results show they are failing to do so. The lowest scores are consistently the US government, UK government, Europe and local government. With political leadership throughout the questions being so low it does question how effective democracy is and seems to be based more on voting for the one who you think will do the least damage rather on the party who will do the right things for the country. In addition, the very low scores for the media throughout is a concern and should be noted by leaders in this industry. Education leaders were moderate throughout and if this was a school report would state 'could do better'. In another research report undertaken by the Institute universities were the lowest score for where small businesses would go to for advice.

These questions show in whom the British working public have lost leadership confidence in from key parts of British society. This research should be noted by those leaders as it shows there is much work to be done by those who have lost the confidence of people.

No more is this so than for the European Parliament that clearly lacks loyalty and engagement from the British public. Why is this when it has funded many large scale projects as well as smaller ones? Therefore Brexit isn't as black and white as immigration or about the bill we pay although these are a factor, but there has been a huge loss of confidence and lack of engagement by the people of the UK towards Europe an Europe has done nothing to address this.

In an earlier national survey carried out by the Institute it was found:

- Over 80% of respondents said they did not believe the present leaders could resolve the issues/challenges we face today in the UK
- 75% said they believed we have a leadership crisis in the UK today
- Nearly 90% believed there was a leadership crisis in the world today which was reinforced in the 2016 World Economic Forum survey that found 86% of their respondents said there was a leadership crisis in the world today.

- Nearly 80% of the respondents said they believed that unless leadership improved in the UK we would decline as a nation
- Over 90% said they believed leaders were out of touch with the average person
- Almost 100% of respondents said that more should be done to develop leadership in schools, communities and work organisations.
- While over 85% believed they had leadership talent, fewer than half had ever attended any form of leadership development.

This shows a remarkable need for action not just from organisations but from individuals to take responsibility for their own leadership development.

When asked how important are each of the below to good leadership it became clear what individuals wanted from leaders:

- 92% ability to communicate
- 91% honesty and integrity
- 91% trust
- 86% decisiveness
- 82% open mindedness
- 80% empathy with others
- 79.6% cooperating with others

Finally much lower down was charisma which the media would like us to believe what people want in positional leaders.

Conclusion

There is a leadership crisis in the UK and elsewhere but not across all of society. People know what they want from leaders but there is a gap in what is being delivered. At the same time much leadership talent is not being developed and there is a need for individuals to take responsibility for this themselves far more rather than relying on HR departments in organisations. Added to which a board member (not HR) should drive this.

To address the challenges the UK and the world faces we need to develop far more leadership capability across society and then be brave enough to challenge the status quo and reshape our world.

Does this research reflect the rest of the world? The World Economic Forum ran a similar survey and found 86% of respondents agreeing that there is a leadership crisis in the world today. They also identified the challenges that require leadership today on a global scale. They were:

- Deepening income inequality
- Persistent jobless
- Lack of leadership
- Rising geostrategic competition
- Weakening of representative democracy
- Rising pollution
- Increasing occurrence of severe weather events
- Intensifying nationalism

- Increasing water stress
- Growing importance of health in the economy

We are at a crunch point and leaders need to listen and focus on the issues rather than their own self-interests and ambitions. This is particularly true in politics.