PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP

Re-imagining the framework for Leadership Analysis

Grace Elizabeth Thomas[a]

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Abstract

This paper presents a new six-stage framework for leadership analysis with the potential to be both accessible and effective for scholars to use when studying instances of leadership and their consequences. It can also assist people who are interested in reflecting on their practice of leadership. This essay will discuss the foundations of the framework as well as each of the six stages.

1. FRAMEWORK FOUNDATION

The six-stage framework for leadership analysis is built on six assumptions. The first assumption is that leadership functions as a problem-solving tool. The second assumption is that leadership requires both leaders and followers. The remaining four assumptions come from the four components that Peter Northouse claims to be central to leadership. The first of these components is that leadership is a process. The second component is that leadership involves influence. The third component is that leadership occurs in groups. The fourth and final component is that leadership involves common goals.[1] This paper goes through each of the proposed six-stages explaining their construction, laying out their purpose, and how best to utilise them.

Before getting into the individual stage of this paper's framework of analysis, there are a few things worth discussing. First, the order of the stages that make up this essay's framework of analysis is flexible. The stages

can be rearranged to best suit any particular analysis of leadership. The reason for each stage's place in the order is discussed in the following sections. Second, each section includes a list of questions. The intention of these questions is to aid in exploring the key concept of each stage. Similar to the order of the stages, these questions are by no means the only relevant ones worth investigating. Instead, these questions are only meant to act as a starting point.

2. STAGE 1: GROUP AND CONFLICT

The first stage is called Group and Conflict. The Group and conflict stage deals with the two prerequisites of leadership as well as the context that it occurs in. This paper places Group and Conflict first in the analysis because it serves as the prerequisites of leadership. For leadership to occur, two things must be present: a group of people; and the potential for conflict in any form. This

[a] PhD candidate at the African Leadership Centre, King's College London, on the PhD Leadership Studies with reference to Security and Development programme. **Email:** grace.e.thomas@kcl.ac.uk
[1] Northouse, Peter G (2018), *Leadership: Theory and Practices*, 8th edn. (London: Sage Publishing House), p. 5

stage is built on Northouse's third component, and the first assumption that leadership is a problem-solving tool. With these assumptions in place, leadership can only occur if there is both a group of people and some type of conflict. When analysing the group and conflict stage of the framework, the following questions may be helpful;

- Is there a group of people?
- Who makes up this group of people?
- Is there a conflict?
- What is the conflict?
- Why is this a conflict?
- How did this conflict come about?
- How did this conflict affect the group of people?
- What does success mean concerning this conflict for this group?
- What does failure mean concerning this conflict for this group?

When analysing the group and conflict, it is important to keep in mind that this will act as the foundation for the rest of the analysis. It is important to establish not only what the conflict is and who make up the group but also how the two relate to one another. It is just as important to make sure when defining success and failure that it is done in accordance with the values, attitudes and beliefs of the group.

3. STAGE 2: MUTUALITY

The second stage of the six-stage framework is called 'Mutuality'. Mutuality is built on Northouse's third component of leadership. Northouse describes the role of goals in leadership as:

'Leadership includes attention to common goals. Leaders direct their energies toward individuals who are trying to achieve something together. By common, we mean that the leaders and followers have a mutual purpose'.[2]

Mutuality expands on Northouse's stance that leadership requires a common goal. In terms of this

framework of analysis, mutuality describes the willingness of the individuals within the group to cooperate with each other. Not only do the followers need to cooperate with the leaders, and vice versa, but followers must also cooperate with each other. Mutuality encompasses everything that either encourages cooperation within the group.

Mutuality has been placed as the second stage of this framework because, similarly to Group and Conflict, there must be some degree of mutuality present within a group for leadership to occur. Mutuality has been placed after Group and Conflict because while it is possible to have a group without mutuality, there can be no mutuality without a group.

The following questions might be beneficial to consider when exploring mutuality:

- What is the shared goal(s) among the group?
- Does anyone in the group disagree with this goal(s)? If so, why?
- What reasons do the members of the group have to cooperate?
- What reasons does a member of the group have to not cooperate?
- Is there any conflict within the group? If so, what is it?

The purpose of these questions is to help investigate what encourages and discourages cooperation with the group. Mutuality is a spectrum with a high level of mutuality meaning that the individuals of the group are more willing to cooperation with each other and a low level of mutuality meaning that individuals in the group are less willing or unwilling to cooperate with each.

4. STAGE 3: DIVIDE

The third stage of the framework is called 'Divide'. The purpose of Divide is both to understand who within a group is fulfilling the roles of both follower(s) and leader(s) and to understand what the expectations of those roles are. Different instances of leadership might have a different expectation of leaders and followers. These different expectations, in turn, can affect the specifics of how leadership is utilised and how effective it will be. Divide can occur at any point in an instance of

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[2] Northouse (2018), p. 5

leadership and can also occur more than once. Who is acting as leader or follower may change over the course of an instance of leadership. What is critical is that Divide occurs at least once because leadership requires the presences of both leaders and followers.

There are two basic theories about how the role of followers and leaders are established in a group. Leaders and followers can either be assigned or emerged. Assigned leadership, as the name implies, is when the roles of leader and follower are assigned.[3] This often occurs if the group, prior to a particular instance of leadership, was already organised into some sort of vertical hierarchy. Emergent leadership is when leaders emerge from the group in response to a specific conflict.[4] This framework is compatible with both emergent and assigned approaches to leadership.

The goal of Divide is to investigate how the group decides who would act as a leader and who would act as a follower. Some questions that might be beneficial to consider when exploring Divide include:

- Who is the leader(s)?
- What does being a leader mean for this group?
- How was the leader(s) selected?
- Who is/are the follower(s)?
- What does being a follower mean for this group?
- How was/were the follower(s) selected?

5. STAGE 4: CONSENT AND POWER

The fourth stage of the framework is called 'Consent and Power'. In the context of this framework, the term 'consent' means an agreement on behalf of the individual to engage in leadership with a particular group of people in order to resolve a specific conflict. Consent represents the willingness of those involved to engage in the form of cooperative problem-solving. Similar to mutuality, consent within this framework should be thought of as a spectrum rather than a yes-no-binary. Individuals engaging in leadership can range from being very willing to reluctant. Once consent is given, or not given, by everyone in the group, power can be amassed. Within the context of this framework, 'power' means the potential to be able to influence people.[5]

Consent and Power are presented as the fourth stage of this framework of analysis because each of the previous stages will impact both the consent of the individuals involved and who amasses power within the group.

Some questions that might be beneficial to consider when exploring Consent and Power:

- Does everyone in the group consent to working together?
- What evidence is there that consent was given?
- Was anyone reluctant about giving consent and if so, why?
- Was anyone eager to give consent and if so, why?
- Was there anyone who did not give consent and left the group, and if so, why?
- Who in the group is amassing power and from whom?
- What type of power is being amassed?
- If there is more than one individual amassing power, does this lead to conflict within the group, and if so, why?

There are a couple of things to keep in mind when analysing consent and power. First, the term 'amassing power' refers to the potential ability of an individual to influence others within the group. The more power that an individual amasses the more people that they will be able to influence and/or the more influence they will be able to exert on others. Second, anyone within a group can amass power. Leaders are the most obvious candidate for amassing power, but followers can also amass power from both other followers and from the leader(s) as well. Third, when discussing what type of power is being amassed, the framework utilises the six bases of power laid out by Raven and French (see figure 1 for reference).[6]

[3] Northouse (2018), p. 8

[4] *Ibid*, p. 8

[5] Northouse (2018), p.10

[6] French, J. R. and Raven, B. (1962), "Base of Social Power", *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, ed. D. Cartwright, (New York: Harper & Row), pp. 259-269)

Table 1: Type of Power

Name	Type of Power	Description
Position		Positional power is given to a person through their formal position within an organisational system.
Legitimate	Position	Legitimate power derives directly from an individual's position within or by an organisation. It is the power that a particular title grants a person.
Reward	Position	Reward is the power that is derived from an individual's ability to reward others—the metaphorical carrot.
Coercive	Position	The metaphorical stick. Coercive power derives from an individual's ability to punished others.
Information[7]	Position	Is derived from possessing information that others believe is valuable.
Personal		Personal power comes from how people's perception of an individual.
Referent	Personal	Referent power derives from an individual that is liked by others.
Expert	Personal	Expert power, as the name implies, derives from an individual being perceived as knowledgeable or competent.

Consent and power and the fifth stage of the framework, 'Power and Influence', are actually part of the same process looking at how influence is used in leadership. While stages four and five describe a single process they have been divided into two parts so that the concepts of power and influence can be explored separately. Power and influence, in the context of leadership, are closely related terms.

6. STAGE 5: POWER AND INFLUENCE

The fifth stage of this framework is referred to as 'Power and Influence' based on Northouse's central component of leadership, which states that leadership involves the use of influence.[7] Influence within this framework is the ability of one individual to shape the behaviour of another. Within leadership, influence is used to shape the behaviour of the individuals within the group in order to resolve the conflict.

In any analysis, Power and Influence must follow stage four, Consent and Power. Consent and Power, and Power and Influence can be thought of as being two parts of a single process. Here, this framework divides this process to help ensure each stage remains specific, which aids in creating a more in-depth analysis. Allowing power to occupy a separate stage is done to encourage investigation into how power is amassed

within a group, without being biased or distracted by simultaneously exploring how influence is expressed within the group. Once an understanding of who in the group has amassed power, from whom, and what type of power there can be a fuller analysis of influence.

Some questions that might be beneficial to consider when exploring Power and Influence:

- Who within the group uses their power to influence others?
- What do they influence the other to do and why?
- Whom in the group is influenced?
- Is there anyone in the group who is not influenced?
- How effective is the influence?

When examining the influence, it is helpful to keep a couple of things in mind. First, that anyone within the group can potentially be influenced. Leaders can influence followers. Followers can influence followers. Followers can influence leaders. Second, not everyone who is exerting influence within a group is doing so in harmony. In other words, there may be factions within a group with different approaches to how a conflict might be resolved. This can lead to a group attempting to solve a single conflict in more than one way at the same time. Third, a single individual can be influenced by more than one individual, and those influences can be contradictory. Fourth, an individual who has amassed power does not automatically exert influence; as previously discussed, power is only the potential to utilise influence.

7. STAGE 6: RESOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

The sixth and final stage of the framework of analysis is referred to as 'Resolution and Consequences'. This last stage examines the outcome of leadership, taking into account both the consequence of leadership and examining if an instance of leadership was or was not successful. Some questions that might be beneficial to consider when exploring Resolution and Consequences:

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[7] Northouse (2018), p. 5

- Was the conflict resolved, and if so, how?
- Was the leadership successful?
- If the leadership was not successful, why?
- Did this instance of leadership create a new conflict and if so, what is it?
- What are the consequences of this instance of leadership?

When looking at the resolution and consequences of an instance of leadership, it is helpful to keep a few things in mind. First, the resolution of a conflict does not mean that leadership was successful. Second, leadership being successful does not mean that the conflict was resolved. Fourth, when discussing consequences what does or does not count as a consequence is dependent on the context in which an instance of leadership is being studied. Some studies are interested in long term consequences, while others are focused on a short term or immediate consequences. Therefore, it is up to the discretion of the scholar or interested individual to determine how best to analyse the consequence of a particular instance of leadership.

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