

Inclusive Leadership and Leader-Follower Relations: Concepts, Research, and Applications

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Research on leadership over many decades has studied various psychological factors that have to do with effectiveness, such as leader personality traits and cognitive ability. Although leader qualities are especially important as they relate to followers, measures of leadership too often focus on leader behaviors apart from their effects on followers. As Burns (1978) has said, "Leadership, unlike naked power-wielding is ... inseparable from followers' needs and goals" (p. 19). This is recognized when a leader's ability to exert influence depends on the attitudes of followers toward that leader, as in Barnard's (1938) Theory of Authority and Hollander's (1958) Idiosyncrasy Credit Model, both stressing positive impressions.

Consideration matters, and its strength is exemplified by the research of Fleishman and Harris (1962) and Fleishman (1998) on the reciprocal relationship of the leader's "consideration" and "structure" behavior on performance of work groups in industrial settings. They found higher "consideration," in encouraging, communicating, and being concerned with employee needs, moderated the effects of "structure," in organizing and setting goals, on higher independent measures of departmental performance.

4.

The present paper is designed to introduce the Inclusive Leadership (IL) construct, the subject of a book (Hollander, 2008) that incorporates these concepts, with a scale developed to measure it. IL amplifies the role of consideration by emphasizing "Doing things with people, not

to people." It extends Mary Parker Follett's concept of "power with" (see Graham, 1995), and highlights creating *engaged followers*, and *two-way influence*. As John Gardner (1987) has said, "Executives can be given subordinates, but a following must be earned" (p. 4). The key features of IL include interpersonal evaluation, legitimacy as perceived by followers, upward influence, and fairness in social exchange. This mutual process occurs in individual contact in groups and at the macro level as well. IL can serve to bridge Transformational (TF) and Transactional (TA) leadership conceptions, both of which are interested in addressing follower needs.

The obvious prominence of directing activity is only part of leadership, which includes a complex of functions in which followers play a role. Among these are decision-making, resource allocation, adjudication of conflict, anticipation of problems, and external advocacy. Creator-owner of many successful restaurants, Danny Meyer (*Setting the Table*, 2006), strongly favors the practice of staff participation in problem solving, by "giving appropriate team members a voice" (p. 192). The benefits that flow from such active involvement also include bolstering of credibility, trust, and loyalty in leader-follower relations through *respect, recognition, responsiveness, and responsibility*, in both directions. These are the "*Four Rs of Inclusive Leadership*," *vital to successful practice* (Hollander, 2008, p. 3).

Leaders usually do have greater initiative, but still need follower support, and direction from even higher authority (Hollander, 1992a,b; 2004a). Hackman and Wageman (2007) underscore these points in stating, "Leaders are also followers, and followers also exhibit leadership.... Each boss also is a subordinate – even chief executives who lead entire organizations invariably report to some higher-standing person or group" (p. 45). Granted that complex factors were involved, the publicized recent dismissals of two stellar CEOs, Citigroup's Charles Prince, and Merrill Lynch's Stanley O'Neal, revealed their Boards took actions to remove them, despite their prized cognitive skills and drive. They reportedly failed to listen to and inform relevant others. Deficits of this kind were underscored by a headline "CEO Evolution Phase 3," on page 1 of the Business Section in *The New York Times* (Schwartz, N. D., Nov. 10, 2007), proclaiming the need for CEOs to create a team sense, to have people work together successfully, and to accomplish more for their organizations through improved communications.

A culture of disrespect, not recognizing those on the frontline and their input, is exemplified in Karen Cerulo's book, *Never Saw it Coming* (2006). She reports FBI leaders in Washington Headquarters repeatedly ignored warnings of possible danger before the 9/11 terrorist air attack in the U.S., in the "Phoenix Memo" from FBI field agents. She found institutional leader-centrism kept information from being

given attention at headquarters. The FBI's dominant pattern was to have information flow downward as directives, instead of urging *two-way* communication. Information also was kept in figurative "silos," away from other agencies, notably the CIA.

Relationship of IL to Transformational (TF) and Transactional (TA) Leadership

Inclusive Leadership (IL) seeks to bridge the Transformational (TF) and Transactional (TA) leadership distinction by recognizing that addressing follower needs is basic to both. TF is more reliant on the leader's initiative, and TA on the leader's exchange of rewards with followers. However, both of the main figures who have been TF proponents (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) acknowledge follower needs and identification with the leader as central to the relationship. Burns (1978) has said, both TF and TA leadership can provide for these needs and indeed the past separation of these two ignores the reality that "good" leadership is inevitably based on attention to followers (Hollander, 2007). Indeed, Bass (1997) has said, "Since 1980, general findings have been assembled that the best of leaders are both transactional and transformational. Again, for many situations the circumstances may not make that much difference" (p.132).

Recently, Burns (2007) wrote: "I think my book (1978) is overly dichotomized. There is a stronger connection between transforming and transactional leadership than I led readers to believe. I think we have a spectrum. A few leaders operate wholly on the transforming side, but most work on both sides of that spectrum and combine transforming and transactional leadership" (p. viii).

Though the constructs of TF, TA, and IL have similarities, the latter two emphasize two-way influence and

rewards. Furthermore, IL extends TA by emphasizing pathways to active followership and their impediments. Leadership that achieves positive results shows respect for and attention to followers and their needs. IL goes beyond that to provide for greater involvement by followers in leader-follower decisions. Let it be clear, however, that not all situations are open to this, as contingency models, such as Vroom & Jago's (2007) more recently, indicate.

Research with Critical Incidents on "Good" and "Bad" Leaders

The purpose of the research and writing about IL has been to highlight the positives in leader-follower relations, and reduce those negatives that interfere with successful mutual outcomes. The backdrop for this scale was research using "critical incidents" with a group of 293 (almost equal in gender composition) mainly organizationally-based respondents, who provided accounts of their experiences with either "good" or "bad" leaders. Respondents were volunteers drawn from Masters Level evening courses in organizational psychology at three universities in the Northeast. All had at least two years of work experience, and about two-thirds were or had been in leadership roles. After writing their accounts, they were then asked further questions about the incidents and gave ratings about the leader's behavior, their own response, the effect these had on their relationship, and the eventual consequences. Content analyses were then done to relate major qualities to the quantitative findings and outcomes. Analyses and results from the critical incidents have been reported in Hollander (2006).

In line with previous research by Kouzes and Posner (1986) and McCall et al (1988) on "derailment," interpersonal factors were again found to discriminate best between "good"

and "bad" leaders. The major differentiation found to be significant were respect and support, communication including listening, delegating with an action orientation, and being fair. The absence of these was most often associated with "bad" leaders, including the presence of anger and harshness. The consequences found for the reports of "bad" leaders were most often alienation and the departure from the situation or organization, as against more positive feelings toward the leader and greater commitment to the organization, without infringing necessarily on individual initiatives.

Research on the Inclusive Leadership Scale (ILS-16)

The "critical incident" research was extended into further measurement and application, within the IL conception, emphasizing interpersonal relations. Using the respondents' own words, Hollander created the original 20-item Inclusive Leadership Scale (ILS), labeled an "Evaluation of a Person in a Leader Role," in January, 2007, for his new book (2008). Respondents were asked to, "select someone to evaluate who recently was your supervisor, manager, director, or executive."

To capture those features, and refine the ILS measure, it was pretested with 160 respondents who had work experience, and ultimately reduced to the 16-item scale. Descriptive data for it are shown in *Table 1*, indicating the Means and Standard Deviations by item. The respondents were asked to indicate how frequently (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never) the particular behavior describes the person they have known recently in the leader role. For performance, they also were asked to rate the effectiveness of that leader on a five-point scale (Excellent, Very Good, Good,

Fair, Poor), and answered other questions about the relationship, including its duration, and several background factors. We hope to extend this research to assess further the construct validity of IL regarding the degree of successful performance of the leaders' teams and organizations (see Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008).

Factor Analysis Results on the ILS-16

Principal component factor analysis, with varimax rotation, was performed for the 16 remaining items in the IL Scale with a larger number of respondents (N=267; 166 females and 101 males). When the eigenvalue 1.00 criterion was used to determine the number of factors, the data yielded a three-factor solution. The initial eigenvalues for the three components were 6.28, 1.85, and 1.14 and they were changed, after rotation, to 3.22, 3.04, and 3.01, respectively. The three components accounted for 58% of the total variance in the 16 items. The first factor loaded on items that are Communication-Action-Fairness (5 items, $\alpha=.79$); the next factor on Self-Interest-Disrespect (5 items, $\alpha=.81$); and the last on Support-Recognition (6 items, $\alpha=.83$). Items for each factor are presented in Table 2. The results of the factor analysis indicate that this solution provides a viable framework to use the IL Scale in further research and practice.

6. Inevitably, there is some overlap in the content of these items with those from Fleishman's LOQ, SBDQ, and Bass's MLQ. The ILS items were generated from the respondents' words in the earlier research phase with critical incidents, and were not drawn in any way from these other scales. Their similarities to others suggest the effect of convergent validity on important elements recognized in leader-follower relations, but with the addition of negative,

punitive behaviors in a third factor not found in other scales. There also was highly significant predictability, at or beyond the .01 level, for the three factors when correlated with the respondents' overall evaluation of the leader's performance: support-recognition .420; communication-action-fairness .331; and self-interest-disrespect .185. External performance criteria will be sought next.

Conclusions and Applications

Inclusive Leadership can improve leader-follower relations by enriching the way that mutual goals are sought by both leaders and followers. It has many implications for training of leaders, in line with Peter Vaill's (1996) concept that "Leadership is learning." The IL Scale can provide ways of training as well as of measurement. Among these is to use the scale for discussions within groups about leader-follower relations, and ways of improving it. Sharing anecdotal information can bring realities to the fore, as people exchange experiences.

Some of the practices that can facilitate Inclusive Leadership are: Respecting members, and showing awareness and recognition of their contributions. Attention to listening and fairness. Having group discussions about goals, and what performance is needed to achieve those goals. Giving feedback on progress. Stressing a forward-looking approach, rather than just reviewing the past. Living up to the responsibilities of fulfilling one's role, as it is depended upon by others. Finally, throughout, being open to the degree possible, with honest communications that encourage trust and loyalty.

Not all situations lend themselves to the application of IL practices. Some resistance can be encountered from individuals, and from an organization's culture that bolsters them.

Reservations that some in leader roles have about sharing information and decision making are well known, and represent an impediment to desired functioning. However, these are not insurmountable hurdles. The practice and benefits of IL can be shown. They can be learned by experience, and taught by example, to encourage active followership. Respect and better two-way communication are among the major ways inclusion offers the prospect of improving group functions and relations between leaders and followers.

About the Authors

Edwin P. Hollander, a CUNY Distinguished Professor of Psychology Emeritus, joined the I/O Psychology Doctoral Program at Baruch College in 1988, has authored three books on leadership, with other books and papers he wrote or edited in social psychology and psychometrics, respective fields of his Ph.D. and M.S. from Columbia University. EPHLDR@aol.com

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Table 1. Descriptive data for the 16 ILS items

New #	ILS Items	Mean	SD
1:	Asks for my ideas about my work	2.94	1.09
2:	Encourages me to ask questions about my work	3.01	1.10
3:	Provides clear goals to be achieved	3.34	.98
4:	Listens to information from staff, even if bad news	3.59	.95
5:	Shows interest in how I am doing my job	3.34	1.03
6:	Gives me recognition for my work contributions	3.20	1.03
7:	Lets me make decisions about my work	3.25	1.02
8:	Takes credit for work I did	3.56	1.09
9:	Thinks of his/her own interests only	3.10	1.15
10:	Applies rules consistently to all	3.17	1.03
11:	Shows concern with fairness	3.29	.99
12:	Blames me in front of others when things go wrong	3.68	1.02
13:	Rejects my ideas about my work	3.37	1.01
14:	Makes comments to put me down	3.81	1.02
15:	Takes needed action on problems identified by staff	3.28	.97
16:	Concerned with how things are, or are not, being done	3.59	.91

Note. A 5-point Likert scale was used (1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4- Often, 5-Always); Items 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14 were reverse-coded. Inclusive Leadership Scale Copyright © 2007 by Edwin P. Hollander

Table 2. Inclusive Leadership Scale in Factor Loadings Order (ILS-16 Items by Original* and New #)

Item #s	Support-Recognition	Communication-Action-Fairness	Self-interest-Disrespect
Orig. New			
1 1	.808	.139	.123
7 6	.731	.286	.197
2 2	.648	.316	.070
8 7	.609	-.001	.416
6 5	.544	.536	.070
4 4	.489	.408	.164
19 16	.119	.736	.157
3 3	.012	.710	.196
11 10	.128	.655	.037
18 15	.280	.653	.284
12 11	.268	.630	.336
16 14	.206	.187	.836
14 12	.113	.162	.816
15 13	.128	.160	.768
9 8	.051	.041	.569
10 9	.311	.287	.501

16 Items by Factors & Loadings (*Without Four Original Items, Removed after Pretesting):

Support-Recognition -- 1: Asks for my ideas about my work; 6: Gives me recognition for my work contribution; 2: Encourages me to ask questions about my work; 7: Lets me make decisions about my work; 5: Shows interest in how I am doing my job; 4: Listens to information from staff, even if bad news

Communication-Action-Fairness -- 16: Concerned with how things are, or are not, being done; 3: Provides clear goals to be achieved; 10: Applies rules consistently to all; 15: Takes needed action on problems identified by staff; 11: Shows concern with fairness

Self-interest-Disrespect -- 14: Makes comments to put me down; 12: Blames me in front of others when things go wrong; 13: Rejects my ideas about my work; 8: Takes credit for work I did; 9: Thinks of his/her interests only

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