

The Psychoanalytic Relationship between Leaders and Followers

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Abstract *In this article I shall argue that contemporary leadership theories and managerial techniques require the separation of individual and social psychologies. We shall establish a Freudian critique of this separation. According to Freud all psychology is primarily social. We shall see that the concept of psychological individuality, represented in Freud's concept of narcissism, is most accurately conceived as a product of the social connections within groups rather than the foundation of leadership. Consequently we shall see how the narcissism of leadership is both a useful mechanism to secure strong group relations and also a precipitating cause in the termination of groups.*

Keywords *Freud; leader-follower relation; narcissism; psychoanalysis*

Introduction

A recent article published in *Leadership* suggested that a distinction between the terms leader and follower is a foundation of the leadership process:

The leader and the follower are not understood in ordinary language to mean the same thing . . . The distinction between the two terms has considerable usefulness. It obviously means something. Scholars and educators in leadership studies who wish to obscure the distinction between leader and follower will have chosen to go against common usage, which means the burden is upon them to justify the change. (Harter et al., 2006: 275)

In this article I shall investigate the psychological implications of Harter et al.'s claim through a psychoanalytic interpretation of the relationship between leaders and followers.

The analysis will begin by observing that the linguistic distinction drawn between leader and follower presupposes a psychologically autonomous individuality that requires a separation of individual and social psychologies. In turn, we will see this separation justified by Talcott Parsons. Moreover, we will suggest that through the influence of Parsonian theory certain contemporary managerial techniques have also come to rely upon individual psychological autonomy.

We will contrast this position with Freudian psychoanalytic theory that posits all psychology as primarily social. In the process our investigation will build upon a

fledgling body of research that has adopted psychoanalytic theories to analyse management and organizations. However, rather than review this literature we will return to Sigmund Freud's original texts. We will focus on *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921/2001) in which Freud provides a detailed investigation of leadership in the army. We will explore Freud's theory of leadership through his examination of panic and claim that the linguistic independence of leader and follower hides a psychological interdependence between the two terms. We shall conclude that psychological individuality is more accurately conceived as a product of the relationship between leader and follower rather than the basis upon which the relationship is founded. However, we will not only critique the separation of leader and follower but also offer a psychoanalytic explanation for presence of this false distinction within leadership theory and managerial techniques.

Background

Although there is growing acceptance of psychoanalysis as an appropriate tool for management, organization and leadership studies (see Carr, 1998; Diamond, 1993; Gabriel, 1999; Kets de Vries, 1988) rather than provide a review of this expanding literature we shall turn to Sigmund Freud's original texts. However, as there are a number of competing psychoanalyses that we may have chosen, such as Kleinian, Jungian, Lacanian, and so on, it is important for us to discuss our use of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Using Freudian psychoanalysis to investigate the relationship between the terms leader and follower requires Freud's theories to be applied to the 'socio-analytic' level (Sievers, 2006: 108). Unfortunately, there is some debate concerning the appropriateness of Freudian psychoanalysis for such work (Lothane, 2006; Tubert-Oklander, 2006). One side of this debate focuses on Freud's theories and therapeutic tools that targeted individual patients to contest that Freud is inappropriate for social analysis. For example, the psychoanalytic theorist Tubert-Oklander (2006: 147) suggests that within Freudian theory groups are seen as 'mere aggregates of individuals' and, consequently, Freud's writings offer us little by way of useful social psychology. Echoing this sentiment, Wollheim (1971: 219) explains,

to try to find in Freud's writings an articulated or coherent social theory or ethic, an enterprise to which some of the most speculative minds of our day have committed themselves, is a vain task. For Freud had no such theory and no such ethic: as he himself was able to recognize.

Similarly, Gabriel (1983: 27) contends that a 'sociological dimension' was only introduced into psychoanalytic theory by Neo-Freudians. However, a notable inclusion in the ranks of Neo-Freudians in both Tubert-Oklander's and Gabriel's accounts is Erich Fromm. The reason Erich Fromm is interesting concerning this issue is that he believed that Freud's theories did not maintain a distinction between the individual, the group and society. Fromm focused on Freud's later theories that described the social both shaping the development and conditioning the existence of the individual. Fromm (1963: 1) explains,

It is one of the essential accomplishments of psychoanalysis that it has done away with the false distinction between social psychology and individual

psychology . . . Freud emphasized that there is no individual psychology of man isolated from his social environment, because an isolated man does not exist.

While the distinction between individual and social psychologies is an important theme for our analysis, for the time being we shall focus on Fromm's conclusion that Freud's discoveries should not be limited to the individual. Indeed, Herbert Marcuse, another Neo-Freudian, echoed this conclusion. Marcuse (1955/1973: 167) suggested that Freud 'elaborated the concepts for the psychological critique' of the individual, not a dogmatic polemic advancing the merits of individuality. So, in opposition to the claim that Freud cannot be used for social analysis, writers such as Fromm and Marcuse have integrated Freud's theories into social research.

From this brief review we can see that the debate concerning the use of Freud's theories for social analysis is based on the transferability of psychological processes between individual cases and social groups. Clearly, our review is not intended to settle this debate. Instead, we shall note that our use of Freudian psychoanalysis as a social theory is contentious. Our analysis will follow Fromm and Marcuse in relying upon Freudian psychoanalysis to interpret a social relationship. In the process, we will offer a particular reading of Freud's work that emphasizes his later ideas.

The psychological independence of leaders

To begin our analysis we must acknowledge that we are taking Harter et al.'s account as an example of contemporary leadership theory that begins with the distinction between the terms *leader* and *follower*. As we have seen, Harter et al. (2006: 275) contest that this distinction is both supported and represented by 'ordinary language'. In the English language there is a distinction between leaders and followers. Two signs are employed. In other words, this distinction should be considered as a social fact.

However, aside from semantics, there are practical and theoretical implications of accepting this distinction as a social fact. Specifically, Harter et al. (2006: 277) claim that the distinction between leader and follower forms the basis of inequality within the leadership process. For them, inequality is a characteristic that exists between leaders and followers rather than a process at work within either term. Gabriel (1997: 329) provides an illustration of this point. He suggests that leaders come 'down' to meet followers, whereas followers 'go up' to meet leaders. Later we shall see that this conclusion may over-simplify the inequality caused by the leadership process. Currently we shall suggest that by conceiving of leaders, as either a conceptual term or as social actors, standing at a distance from followers (Collinson, 2005), certain leadership theories apply a heightened level of individualism to leaders. Indeed, the concept of 'followership' is a mirror image of this assumption (Collinson, 2006; Gabriel, 1997: 317). In psychological terms we might say that leaders have been conceived as autonomous individuals, whereas followers grouped in a herd. Or to put it even more simply, leaders are different from followers in their very uniqueness.

We can relate this proposition to an idea we introduced in the previous section concerning the relationship between individual and social psychologies. For us to accept the *psychological inequality* between leaders and followers that is inherent in

Harter et al.'s claim we must also accept that both individual and social psychologies exist as independent categories. As we have seen, for writers such as Fromm and Marcuse such a position is untenable. However, we can see evidence of this view in the work of Talcott Parsons (Adorno, 1967: 68). Moreover, Keller (1984) suggests that Parsonian theory has had a clear impact upon modern managerial techniques. Parsons (1950) suggested that social systems should only be understood by excluding the individual. He explains that we must 'treat the social system as a distinct and independent entity which must be studied and analyzed on its own level' (p. 337). Consequently, Parsons suggests that 'psychological analysis is oriented to the explanation of the concrete acts of attitudes, or ideas of individuals' (p. 340). In other words, for Parsons, we must analyse the individual as a complete psychological unit while social systems must be interpreted at an aggregate level that excludes the individual.

The discourse of human resource management illustrates this logic by emphasizing a direct relationship between management and individualized workers (Rose, 1989; Townley, 1994). We can include the work of writers such as Mayo, Maslow and McGregor within this discourse (Boddy & Patton, 1998: 64). Such theorists rely on an appraisable, quantifiable and responsible psychological individual. Techniques such as psychometrics also illustrate this point. Further, we can see a similar psychological autonomy demonstrated in theories concerning organizational citizenship, organizational justice, the psychological contract and organizational equity. Each of these theories relies on an ontologically complete and psychologically autonomous individual; an individual that is capable of not only managing but 'governing the self' (Rose, 1989). While we must note that this conception contrasts with the psychological distinction between leaders and followers as psychologically unequal, for our current analysis it provides practical evidence of the separation of individual and social psychologies.

To summarize, we have taken Harter et al.'s account as a representative of contemporary leadership theory that accepts the distinction between leaders and followers as a social fact. We have seen how this is represented in a psychological inequality between the two categories. Leaders are taken to be individuals while followers are placed in a group. We have seen that many contemporary leadership and management techniques also rely on a sharp distinction between individuals by negating any social influences that may act upon autonomous and measurable individual psychologies. We have claimed that both discourses rely on a separation of individual and social psychologies.

Individual and social psychology

We are now in a position to explore a psychoanalytic interpretation of this phenomenon. For Freud, the psychological autonomy of an individual is severely limited. Freud (1921/2001: 95) explains,

The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely . . . In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an

opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.

The removal of the boundary between individual and social psychology is reflected in Freud's theories. As we have seen, Freud's (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004) original psychoanalytic theory focused on therapeutics for individuals in the form of investigations into hysteria. However, he quickly came to realize that behind the sexual aetiology of hysterics lay the influence of other people. Freud concluded that many illnesses were formed in reaction to the influence of other people upon an individual. As Lothane (2006: 184) illustrates, 'it takes one person to develop pneumonia, a monadic disorder of the body; it takes two to develop paranoia, as it is an intrapsychic emotional reaction to and judgement of the actions of another person'.

The individual, then, was no longer fixed, but, through Freud, became a constantly developing entity standing between social pressures and instinctual drives (1923/2001: 369). This was a key insight for psychoanalytic thought. According to Wollheim (1971) this discovery is reflected in Freud's later works such as 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917/1991), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920/1991), *Totem and Taboo* (1913/2001) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/2001). Moreover, we see this conception of the individual in almost all other major psychoanalytic theories. For example, we see the importance of external objects in the work of British psychoanalysts such as Winnicott (1979). Freud's daughter, Anna Freud (1966–1981), constructed a theory of developmental psychology that emphasized the role of parents and carers in the psychological maturity of children. Within the French psychoanalytic tradition, Lacan (1949/1977, 1968/1981) demonstrated the importance of a social symbolic order in creating the subjectivity of a corporeal body; we also see the presence of social influences in Jung's (1946) theory of the collective unconscious.

Therefore, we can state with some confidence that for Freud the separation of individual and social psychology, evident in leadership theories and contemporary management techniques, is false.

Freud's interpretation of leaders and followers

We shall now see how Freud's account of leadership reflects his belief that all psychology is social. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* Freud took the army as a model social organization where the interaction of leaders and followers could be analysed in detail. Echoes of Freud's investigation are present within recent work linking organization and management studies with the military. Contemporary researchers have summarized 'militarization as a hegemonic, omnipresent and pervasive international influence on business management and organizations' (Stokes et al., 2007: 6). Freud began his examination of the army by exploring the nature of panic. To understand Freud's ideas we shall follow his exposition of this concept.

Freud felt that his peers had struggled to account for the contagion of emotions, such as panic, within groups. He wanted to understand how a group of soldiers could face seemingly insurmountable dangers free from fear then suddenly reject their collective courageousness while the dangers remained constant. Freud suspected that

this example of contagion held a common aetiology to the ‘suggestion’ of hypnosis (1921/2001: 116). Consequently he focused his analysis on the relationship between leaders and followers as he believed this relationship mirrored the structure of the hypnotic process. His explanation worked along two lines: the limitations of individual psychology, or narcissism, within a group and the narcissistic relationship between leaders and followers (1921/2001: 124).

The narcissistic foundation of groups

Freud suspected that the nature of panic must be explainable through the involvement of other people in the mental life of individuals. Freud’s (1915/1991) concept of narcissism is the key to understanding how external objects influenced an individual.

Put simply, Freud’s (1914/1991) concept of narcissism suggests that all humans are initially able to satisfy their early instinctual desires auto-erotically. Freud described this as a stage of primary narcissism. Specifically, primary narcissism is a developmental stage in which the human subject does not distinguish between the internal psychological world and the external physical world. The human subject experiences all satisfaction of instinctual impulses as a result of internal psychological action. To illustrate this point we can think of a hungry baby: before discerning a distinction between the internal and external world the baby’s desire for food, not an external object, is seen as the source of sustenance. Accordingly, in the stage of primary narcissism the human subject has no psychological need for other people. However, auto-erotic satisfaction meets limits in the external world. Specifically, such impulses are forced to inhibit their original narcissistic aims through the demands of the *Reality Principle* (Freud, 1920/1991: 278). The Reality Principle marks the end of primary narcissism. It is a construct Freud created to typify a developmental stage where the human subject accepts that instant gratification of their desires is not always possible nor within their control. The subject accepts the need to defer or sublimate gratification because of a growing awareness that certain desires and certain routes to their satisfaction will lead to punishment from the external world. Eventually a psychological representative of such societal rules begins to internally censor desires and satisfactions. Freud names this the *superego*. Thus, with the introduction of the Reality Principle and through the internalization of the superego the human subject enters a stage of secondary narcissism. In this stage of narcissism the human subject distinguishes between an internal and external world and is forced to redirect primary narcissistic impulses on to external objects in accordance with social rules. In secondary narcissism, then, the human subject begins to rely upon other people psychologically.

The intricate tensions between primary and secondary narcissism are most clearly illustrated in the well-rehearsed model of the Oedipus complex (1923/1991). For the time being it is important to note that the movement from primary to secondary narcissism binds individuals together by shifting the aim of psychological desires from the self onto other people. Narcissistic impulses that were satisfied auto-erotically during the primary narcissism stage become dependent upon external objects for their satisfaction. Psychological health, therefore, becomes dependent upon the external world and other people.

Freud confirmed his conclusions when he discovered a number of mental processes that betray the influence of narcissism within social interaction. Two are specifically related to groups. First, there is identification. Identification can be conceived as an attempt to incorporate aspects of an external object in order to represent that object to the self. For example, Freud (1917/1991) suggests that a spurned lover may adopt many of the idiosyncrasies of their former love in an attempt to replace lost romance. The second process, idealization, is the tendency to over-value an object-choice. A spurned lover may not only attempt to become like their ex-love but may also, through reminiscences and self-criticism, turn previously frustrating character traits into the height of perfection (Freud, 1917/1991). In psychoanalytic terms we can explain both identification and idealization as reaction-formations that pragmatically discharge libidinal energy by sublimating, or inhibiting, sexual aims (Freud, 1915/1991). They sacrifice individual psychological autonomy by passing narcissistic libido onto external objects (Freud, 1914/1991: 95).

It is, therefore, ironically through narcissism, a developmental stage that originally negated the need for other people, that the influence of social psychology is most clearly demonstrated. Narcissism, specifically the movement from primary to secondary narcissism, is, consequently, fundamental to understanding the formation of groups.

Groups and leadership

We have seen that psychological ties provided by secondary narcissism bind individuals. However, such ties may be broken (Freud, 1917/1991). To explain how groups continue Freud analyses identification and idealization in greater detail. He highlights two ambivalent features of these processes that facilitate the continuance of groups. First, Freud suggests that identification between group members creates aim-inhibited psychological attachments. Second, Freud tells us that identification also involves an attachment with a leader that formalizes the psychological links between followers.

Let us deal with each of these points in greater detail. First, let us explore Freud's definition of identification between group members. For Freud all groups are *formed* when a number of individuals have tied themselves around a common object but groups *last* when group members collectively defer the attainment of this object. In other words, groups are mechanisms that constrain jealousy and anxiety felt towards other people. Identification between group members brings recognition that if any one of them were to satisfy their individual desire the rest of the group would have to overcome the loss of the desired object. Therefore, renouncement of desire allows all group members to continue idealizing the desired object and may become a criterion for exposure to opportunities to satisfy desire.

Put most simply, Freud suggests that groups continue because group members prefer the safety of never losing the object of their desires. A lasting psychological bond is formed between group members as the very nature of group formation negates the possibility of satisfying the genuine instinctual aim of libidinal impulses. This may seem improbable were it not that a similar process of redirecting and inhibiting desire occurred during the movement from primary to secondary narcissism when desire passed from the self to other people. Groups can, therefore, form

organically wherever common sexual desires are inhibited in their aims. As Freud (1921/1930: 151) explains,

The first demand made by this reaction-formation is for justice, for equal treatment for all. We all know how loudly and implacably this claim is put forward at school. If one cannot be the favourite oneself, at all events nobody else shall be the favourite. This transformation – the replacing of jealousy by a group feeling in the nursery and classroom – might be considered improbable, if the same process could not be later on observed again in other circumstances. We have only to think of the troop of women and girls, all of them in love in an enthusiastically sentimental way, who crowd round a singer or pianist after his performance. It would certainly be easy for each of them to be jealous of the rest; but, in the face of their numbers and the consequent impossibility of their reaching the aim of their love, they renounce it, and, instead of pulling out one another's hair, they act as a united group, do homage to the hero of the occasion with their common actions, and would probably be glad to have a share of *his* flowing locks. Originally rivals, they have succeeded in identifying themselves with one another by means of a similar love for the same object.

So, groups emerge because they combine individual unconscious demands. Rivalry between group members gives way to equality through identification and this facilitates group continuance.

However, Freud (1921/2001) distinguishes organic groups, or crowds, from highly organized groups such as the army. He suggests that organized groups contain a number of visible mechanisms that formalize and guarantee group equality and consequently ensure that the group perpetuates. Freud tells us that within highly organized groups there is a consistency of existence based on structured membership, customs and routines and, more importantly, a hierarchy culminating with a leader or abstract conception (1921/2001: 114).

This leads us to the second ambivalent feature of identification within groups: the identification between group members and leaders. Group members identify with each other but they also identify with the leader of their group. Freud (1921/2001: 152) tells us all group 'members must be equal to one another' and that group members 'all want to be ruled by one person'.

Leadership frequently focuses upon a single person because this allows greater identification and heightened idealization. However, the ambivalent nature of these processes produces a curious result: group members' investment in the group pushes the leader further apart from the group and this encourages group members to submit even more dogmatically to group rules. There is, therefore, equality in the nature of inequality within the interdependent relationship between leaders and followers.

Unlike Harter et al.'s account, which suggests that inequality emerges from the separation of leaders and followers, Freud explains that inequality emerges from the links between them. By committing to the group rules, group members tie themselves, psychologically, to the leader. It is through this identification that group members allow themselves to express their desire to be the leader. Identification with a leader is, therefore, not only essential in formalizing group relations but also in satisfying the desire of group members to be the leader. Theodor Adorno (1951/2006: 142) characterizes this as 'the follower's twofold wish to submit to authority and to

be the authority'. Thus, we can understand why the introduction of inequality through the elevation of a leader is necessary even though groups are formed around common desire for equality regarding a common object.

Theodor Adorno (1951/2006) picks up this point from Freud. He highlights Freud's prescription that the twofold expression of idealization and identification depends on group members assuming the existence of separate psychologies for themselves and for the leader. Adorno suggests that the desire to be the leader is a narcissistic urge expressed by group members. However, Freud (1921/2001: 141) tells us that narcissistic identification with a leader can only occur when the leader appears 'absolutely narcissistic'. In other words, the leader's psychology must appear to followers as completely free from all social influence. To guarantee group equality the leader must appear to be above processes of identification and idealization (1921/2001: 156). In essence, group members demand that leaders emphasize their psychological individuality even though, in reality, this individuality does not exist. In this sense, leaders are separated from groups through the illusion of their ability to express instinctual urges and unconscious desires outside of the group (Freud, 1921/2001: 147).

This, I believe, provides our first hint towards a cogent Freudian explanation for the acceptance of the false separation of individual and social psychology that we have observed in certain contemporary leadership theories and managerial practices. Identification between group members is strengthened by identification with a leader. Identification with the leader is, in turn, strengthened when the leader appears absolutely narcissistic, when they appear to be above the group and separated from its social psychology. We might, therefore, conclude that leadership theories and management techniques *should* purport a separation between individual and social psychology as this facilitates more effective groups.

Panic

Let us summarize Freud's interpretation of groups and leadership. We have seen how the movement from individual psychology to social psychology is reflected in the movement from primary narcissism to secondary narcissism. We have also seen that this movement lays the foundation of group formation and continuance. We have explained these processes in detail through the ambivalence of identification and idealization.

We can now return to the cause of panic. According to Freud, when members of a group sacrifice the attainment of their desire to a group they identify their desires through a social psychology. This process mirrors the movement from primary to secondary narcissism. However, the process of group formation also mirrors the movement from primary to secondary narcissism in relation to the creation of the superego. When group members tie themselves to a group they internalize aspects of the group. Most notably they replace their individual critical agency, the superego, with a critical agent specific to the group. Freud (1921/2001) calls this a group ideal. He suggests that group ideals come to replace individual group members' superegos after the group ideal is linked to an idealized image of the leader.

Without the guidance of the superego an individual's moral conscience and internal censor are negated (Freud, 1923/1991: 41). The Reality Principle is temporarily forgotten. It is for this reason that Freud (1921/2001: 114) suggests that groups are liable to be emotional, violent, fickle, inconsistent and extreme in action.

However, when individual group members' ego ideals are not merely sacrificed to the group but replaced by a clear group ideal, groups become capable of collective courage and bravery far outside the capacity of any individual.

The power of the group ideal to bind individuals to a group and to a leader is reflected in panic. Panic is explainable as the reintroduction of the Reality Principle. It exposes the fallibility of the leader and the limitations of the leader's illusionary narcissism. It is when the group ideal is affected that panic occurs. Freud (1921/2001: 127) explains,

The loss of the leader in some sense or other, the birth of misgivings about him, brings on the outbreak of panic, though the danger remains the same; the mutual ties between the members of the group disappear, as a rule, at the same time as their leader. The group vanishes in dust . . .

For Freud, therefore, panic not only expresses the presence of narcissism in group relations it also highlights the limits and potential dangers inherent in groups that become too narcissistic. In so doing, Freud seems to suggest that groups that become overly reliant upon an unrealistic conception of their leader are helpless if the leader's fallibility is exposed.

In summary, we have seen that group members demand narcissism of their leaders as this strengthens group relations. However, we have now seen that there is also a potential danger in this strength. Ultimately, the narcissism of leaders is never as complete in reality as it may appear to group members. Reality may intervene to demonstrate this limit and consequently the group may crumble. With this explanation in mind we may begin to understand why the separation between individual and social psychologies is present within contemporary leadership theories and managerial techniques. It facilitates an appearance of individualism in leaders. Although it is an illusionary individualism it is a useful one in that it reinforces group relations. Moreover, we can also understand how such ideas, played out through Freud's concept of narcissism, can also be a precipitating cause of corporate decay as Howard Schwartz (1992) has pointed out. Narcissism is responsible for forming strong groups. It is also responsible for ending strong groups.

Conclusion

We began by observing a distinction between leaders and followers on the basis of psychological individuality and highlighted how this distinction is heightened within many contemporary managerial techniques. We saw that this distinction rests upon a particular interpretation of the relationship between individual and social psychologies. We have offered a detailed analysis of Freud's theories concerning groups and leadership in order to illuminate some peculiarities in this interpretation. Our engagement with Freud's theories, centring upon his investigation of panic in the army, has allowed us to undermine the distinction between leaders and followers and instead has presented these as interdependent terms in the sense that individual and social psychologies are interdependent.

We are in a position to offer a robust psychoanalytic explanation for the presence of the erroneous conception of leader and follower as distinct terms. We have seen how the psychological distinction between leader and follower is an illusion, albeit

a necessary illusion for the longevity of groups. It allows leaders to appear absolutely narcissistic. In other words, it gives the impression that leaders are more individual than they are in reality. We have seen through Theodor Adorno's elucidation of Freud that this illusion is a necessary factor for the longevity of leadership. Consequently, we have suggested that certain theories of leadership and management techniques establish the appearance of managerial narcissism by purporting a discourse based on individual psychology. However, there are problems with accepting the idea that narcissism, reflected in the distinction between leader and follower, is a necessary illusion for the performance of groups. Freud's own analysis of panic highlights the dangers inherent in allowing groups to rely too heavily upon narcissistic urges and focus too heavily upon the leader and group ideal. It is through these routes that panic occurs and groups disband.

We began our analysis of Harter et al.'s claims by exploring how the distinction between leaders and followers relies on a level of psychological individuality that exists prior to the leadership process. In contrast, our account has suggested that individuality is a concept that emerges from social psychology. Individuality is a product of the leader-follower relationship not a foundation for this relationship.

How does this relate to critical debates of leadership? If the distinction between leaders and followers is flawed but useful does this distinction become essential? Our task has not been to answer this question but, rather, to allow us to arrive at a position where this question can be asked. The introduction of a psychodynamic analysis, which questions assumptions such as the level of psychological individuality, should not cloud critical discussions of leadership but expose the complex relations within the leadership process that may be hidden behind common sense assumptions.

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