A central focus of critical leadership development involves identifying and understanding how power flows through society. This requires a complex understanding of social systems. This chapter explores how leadership educators can more explicitly integrate learning related to power dynamics into leadership development initiatives.

Teaching Power as an Inconvenient but Imperative Dimension of Critical Leadership Development

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It is impossible to adequately study leadership without considering power. However, in most leadership development curricula, the role of power is minimized. In classrooms, textbooks, and leadership trainings, instructors rarely teach leaders to analyze deeper aspects of power or how it flows through social interactions and organizational norms (Gordon, 2002). The focus of leadership theory often shrinks to the realm of individual leader development (Gronn, 2000), creating an incomplete picture that omits power and the complexity of change (Dugan, 2017). The risk of leadership development programs failing to expand outside the realm of the individual is that practitioners, students, and organizations will not learn to challenge dominant ideologies and remain ignorant to their own abilities to advocate for and participate in social change.

Dugan (2017) described leadership development as a process that is intimately related to leadership theory given that the theories used to frame leadership development will impact how individuals come to understand and practice the concept. It is for these reasons that leadership educators must incorporate critical perspectives into all components of leadership development, which include the cultivation of leadership motivation, leadership efficacy, leadership capacity, and leadership enactment. This chapter demonstrates how to analyze the flow of power through social

interactions and how to attend to power within leadership development experiences by engaging the following questions: How do we practice critical self-reflection and begin to understand our own power as leadership educators? How can leadership educators infuse critical perspectives on power into the different components of leadership development? Finally, how do we build leadership development programs that allow for critical perspectives and encourage the analysis of power within students' leadership contexts?

The Importance of Power in Society

The ability of individuals to control or manipulate is one understanding of power (Vecchio, 2007). According to critical theorists, however, it is not the only form of power. Critical theorists are interested in helping us confront false logic and the hidden structures that keep us ignorant to and disadvantaged by social problems (Brookfield, 2005). One of the most prominent authors on the subject of power, Foucault (1980a, 1980b), shared critical theorists' goals of demystifying the ways society worked. Foucault hoped to give average people more control over their lives through studying how different power relations shape individuals and groups (Cook, 1993).

If you were to randomly ask a cross-section of youth, "What is power?" you would most likely get answers that describe one's ability to control or influence others. Those answers may use common examples of powerful people, including superheroes who use strength to defeat evil villains, politicians who control the levers of government, and wealthy individuals who influence others through the promise of sharing or withholding money. All of these powerful people use some form of direct force, whether physical, political, or economic, to create a desired outcome or prevent an undesirable one. Power is projected from the individual outward.

Sovereign Power. Foucault (2000b) acknowledged the common understanding of power as the ability to project influence and explicitly control others. He described this understanding as *sovereign power*, which is derived from a long history dating back to ancient monarchs (Foucault, 1977, 2000a). Many leadership educators may recognize sovereign power as similar to the concept of formal authority (Heifetz, 2010). The world no longer has many absolute monarchs who can do

whatever they please to their subjects, but our mental model of power existing and emanating from specific individuals or institutions has largely stuck. The general conception of power is that it is discretely held by some individuals or exists in certain places, waiting to be used or unlocked. According to this view, those with power get to tell others what to do and when to do it.

Social Power. The issue with only looking at sovereign power, or power as a repressive force, is that it is incomplete (Foucault, 1980a, 1978). Average people who make up a social group, city, or nation - the followers who are most often the targets of power (2000a) – often do not tolerate unequal power relations if those relations do not also create some benefit for them. This realization led Foucault (1980a) to declare that power is also creative, that it "induces pleasure, forms knowledge, [and] produces discourse" (p. 119). In other words, *Foucauldian power* is a *social power*. It is a relationship between people and institutions that can be activated to reward, teach, or develop an identity. According to this view, power is "always already there" and "one is never outside" power (Foucault, 1980b, p. 141). Power is what defines one's *social location* (i.e., a person's position in society based on salient social identities that influence how the world is experienced and understood; Dugan, 2017; See Chapter 1) and is the mechanism through which individuals adjust to that social location.

It is our connections to others and how those connections inform our sense of self that is likely to move us to action. If you think back to the last time you agreed to do something at work at the request of your supervisor, they likely did not immediately invoke their ability to fire you as a result of their formal authority. Instead, they utilized the personal relationship they developed with you or that you developed with your colleagues to ask for help. Maybe they remembered your professional goals and reminded you how this project would fit into them. Perhaps they drew upon concepts of collegiality, professionalism, and team spirit to sway your answer. Depending upon how your supervisor asked, you may not have even been conscious that these other types of influence were at play. From a critical viewpoint, these interactions are all examples of power as a connection between people that is continuously renegotiated resulting in ever-changing understandings of ourselves (as professionals, colleagues, or friends) and those around us.

Foucault (1978) stated unequivocally that power "is tolerable only on the condition that it mask[s] a substantial part of itself" (p. 86). Those who are adept at influencing others are concerned with utilizing the right mix of incentives, disincentives, and relationships. Just think back to how unlikely it would be for you to want to stay and work for a supervisor who is constantly reminding you that they have the ability to fire you. Few of us would listen to someone, despite how powerful we imagine them to be, if all they did was constantly remind us of our own powerlessness. Depending upon someone's social location, however, they may be conditioned and expected to accept more coercive or violent manifestations of power.

Connecting Power to Leadership Development. How is power relevant to leadership development? Without embedding analyses of power in leadership practice and education, the questions that lead to significant social change are neither asked nor answered. For example, in ignoring the identities and social locations of the authors of prominent leadership theories, leadership development programs miss how ideas of shared and collective leadership arose out of feminist, Black, and other activist traditions of the 20th Century (Dugan, 2017). Teaching leadership theories and practices in universalist and power-blind ways may make them more palpable to our privileged students; however, ignoring the power dynamics that shape leadership development divorces marginalized leaders from the products of their labor, delegitimizes protest and civil disobedience as leadership activities, and denies minority populations from seeing themselves represented in the leadership cannon.

During our current moment of increased social unrest and political uncertainty, it is particularly important that leadership educators become comfortable talking about power and familiar with what resources are available to help them understand power in different contexts. A few prominent theorists who have used Foucault's ideas of power include Saïd (1978) in cultural and international studies, Butler (1990) in sexuality and gender studies, and the legal scholars of the critical race theory movement (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Although there is a broad range of disciplines in which leadership development takes place, practitioners can also look to applied literature on power in business and management (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Collinson &

Hearn, 1994; Spicer, Alvesson, & Kärreman, 2009), public policy (Ospina, Diaz, & O'Sullivan, 2002; Ospina & Foldy, 2009), and education and pedagogy (Darder, Torres, & Baltodano, 2017; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Luke & Gore, 1992). In the remainder of this chapter, we will suggest ways in which educators can operationalize ideas of power in various leadership development contexts using strategies from human geography (Ettlinger, 2011).

Analyzing Power in Leadership Development

As leadership educators, our responsibility to prepare learners to engage in effective leadership practice necessitates the understanding of where and how power flows in different contexts and influences relationships. It is important to note here that we are not claiming that power is inherently bad. However, conceptualizing power as a relationship between people and institutions that can be activated to reward, teach, or develop an identity requires us to explore how leadership development programs may continue to benefit our most privileged students and perpetuate "the story most often told" of leadership (Dugan, 2017, p. 58).

Although there are multiple ways to deconstruct (and subsequently reconstruct) leadership development, we will utilize Foucault's conceptualization of power to critique the ways in which leadership development programs are built. We will do this through multiple layers of questioning (Ettlinger, 2011) that ask how language is used to design and carry out programs (discourse), what techniques are used to develop leadership (discipline), and what policies and practices shape leadership development as an institutional practice and subfield of student development (biopolitics).

Analyses of Discourse. *Analyses of discourse* challenge us to examine how language is used as an instrument of power (Ettlinger, 2011). Within leadership education, discourse can be found in the texts that are used as frameworks for programs, readings that are assigned, and words used by facilitators. Leadership discourse impacts leadership development, as leadership development is a result of the understanding of leadership constructs and ideas (Heifetz, 2010) and the continuous interplay of theory and practice (Dugan, 2017). Analyses of discourse includes the meaning words create and implications those meanings have in upholding and recreating social structures.

To illustrate the role of discourse in leadership development, let's use an academic leadership course as an example. The instructor assigns 10 readings to the class for the term, all written by authors who come from a business and management background. The assigned literature explores leadership development while omitting any consideration of social location. In lectures, the instructor reinforces the words of the authors with examples and activities that apply the leadership concepts to the same business context. There is no mention of how the applicability or veracity of these ideas may change based on leader or follower social identities or the varied contexts in which leadership occurs.

In this course, the instructor has used language and the power manifest in their relationships with students to teach two things about leadership: (1) leadership should be enacted through the lens of business and management, and (2) leadership exists in a social vacuum. Although leadership is an inherently social phenomenon that is context specific (Dugan, 2017), the language (and lack of language) within this course has encouraged students to either ignore social context or see it as a distraction to an idealized form of leadership. Critical leadership development requires us to analyze what discourses we use within and across programs and to identify what language and omissions of language may be promoting myopic, decontextualized, and overly-individualized understandings of leadership. Consider the following questions on language:

- How might our texts create a view of leadership education that is devoid of conflict, power, and context?

- What central problems and purposes of leadership are communicated?

- In examining literature that is assigned or used as the framework for curricula, who are the authors and what identities and social spaces do they occupy?

- Are students and participants presented with critiques of commonly accepted teachings of leadership?

Analyses of Discipline. *Analyses of discipline* allow us to critique the traditions, techniques, and practices that make up leadership education. Discipline reflects the micro practices used to

socialize us as we seek to embody an idealized identity (Foucault, 1977). This analysis includes the ways that we structure and apply pedagogical tools to shape and groom leaders. Disciplinary practices in leadership development may include the recruitment and selection of leaders, the individual trainings students complete to be considered leaders, and the ways in which we reward and discipline students for either embodying or failing to live up to our standards of leadership. Leadership educators can use the concept of discipline to critically analyze how these practices may limit who can be a leader or what is considered leadership.

For an example of disciplinary analysis, let's look at socio-cultural conversations, or conversations about and across difference, within a leadership development program. This pedagogical tool has been empirically shown to encourage socially responsible leadership capacity as well as leadership efficacy (Dugan, Fath, Howes, Lavelle, & Polanin, 2013; Dugan, Kodama, & Gebhardt, 2012; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Kodama & Dugan, 2013) and is, therefore, of interest to leadership educators. Within conversations across difference, participants may be asked to reflect on their own experiences and backgrounds to engage in dialogue with others as a way to build *social perspective-taking* (i.e., the ability to understand other's viewpoints and demonstrate empathy) or other leadership-related outcomes.

In our example, a facilitator shares the words of Brené Brown (2012), who encourages people to practice vulnerability and empathy. The facilitator then states that participants should share personal narratives with one another in small groups about a time they felt most vulnerable. The leadership educator has a good intent, but the impact of their decision to operationalize the concept of socio-cultural conversations in this manner may negatively affect their students. Because of power dynamics associated with social location and identities, some students may be expected to be more vulnerable or forthcoming in these interactions than others. Depending on what experiences students may have previously had, some may have to relive trauma for the learning of their peers. It is often hard to tell if these situations are even taking place because students are being conditioned, or disciplined, to accept that this is what it means to be a leader and do leadership.

The power differentials that exist due to diverse identities and experience must be explored in the above example. If a subset of participants is being asked to share a disproportionate amount of their stories that include hurt, lack of belongingness, and/or marginalization for the benefit of another group, the leadership capacity and leadership efficacy of that subset could be negatively influenced. While co-learning requires everyone (including educators) to bring their full selves into spaces, analysis of discipline requires us to identify the differing costs of these leadership practices for learners. Consider the following questions on practice:

- As a leadership educator, what are my own preconceived notions of what is considered leadership? How have these been formed and how do they show up in my practice?

- What are the characteristics and behaviors that I typically ascribe to a "good" leader? How might I use these to frame the knowledge, skills, and abilities that create leadership capacity?

- How do I try to instill leader characteristics and behaviors into participants? What role does power play in the ways that I construct learning experiences?

Analyses of Biopolitics. Lastly, *analyses of biopolitics* examine how power impacts entire populations to maintain a social order that is productive or advantageous to the most privileged elements of society (Ettlinger, 2011; Foucault, 2008). This may be through discourse, discipline, or a combination. Biopolitical analysis takes a macro look at the impact of power and encourages leadership educators to ask what stated (or unstated) principles guide on-campus practice, how concepts such as professionalism shape the field, and how we use policies and procedures (such as application requirements) to ensure that leadership development is a scarce resource and prestigious activity on campus.

For example, interviews to enter leadership programs give program staff the opportunity to meet potential participants and better understand their motivations and capacity for leadership development. In interview settings, participants are often evaluated on how well they demonstrate criteria needed to enter programs, along with how well they "fit" the goals and structure of the

program. For some programs, there may even be expectations on how participants physically show up in the space with regards to attire and presentation.

A biopolitical analysis of this leadership development practice questions what social requirements we are perpetuating through upholding a policy of evaluating candidates on word choice, articulation, and professional dress. Using interviews as a gatekeeping mechanism to leadership development without a critical lens ensures that privileged students have an upper hand, while those who have been told that their hair, dress, accent, or demeanor is "unprofessional" are at a disadvantage. As leadership educators and administrators, we determine the requirements for programs, shape their cultures, and have the power to make decisions about who can or cannot participate. We must ask ourselves how policies and best practices, which often do not have any grounding outside tradition, may be limiting who decides to participate in our programs. The macro lens of biopolitics shows how these decisions compound to influence the demographic makeup of our programs. Consider the following questions on policy:

- In what ways are we maintaining dominant narratives in our leadership lessons? Who benefits from the content we choose to include? How is leadership development constrained by this?

- Which groups are asked to sacrifice what to fully participate in leadership development opportunities?

- What groups have and continue to benefit from specific leadership practices across organizational, political, and temporal boundaries?

- Where have groups or individuals been subjugated in the pursuit of our learning goals? If harm has occurred, what has been done to rectify that wrong?

Deconstructing and Reconstructing Leadership Education

Having explored three ways to identify how power is exercised to influence leadership education and reinforce social systems, we will extend the analysis to further deconstruct and then reconstruct leadership development. Using *deconstruction*, an ongoing process of "deeply examining taken-for-

granted assumptions related to stocks of knowledge, ideology/hegemony, and social location"

(Dugan, 2017, p. 43), educators can apply the analyses of discourse, discipline, and biopolitics to

examine how power does and does not show up. Table 6.1 offers an application of the analyses to

deconstruct the four domains of leadership development: leadership capacity, leadership enactment,

leadership motivation, and leadership efficacy.

[INSERT TABLE 6.1 HERE]

While deconstruction dissects and examines the taken-for-granted assumptions in leadership

theory and subsequently leadership development, *reconstruction* asks us to "draw on personal power,

knowledge, and identity to alter, adjust, adapt, or otherwise rebuild theory in ways that contribute to a

more just world" (Dugan, 2017, p. 46). Even as we deconstruct using specific analyses, we might

reconstruct using a different analysis or a combination of multiple analyses to better frame leadership

development that acknowledges and engages power. We will suggest ways to reconstruct leadership

education by highlighting practices that center power, whether in the long term or the short term, for

four functional areas that intersect with leadership development: community engagement and service-

learning, global engagement, student organizational leadership, and curricular leadership programs.

These concepts are presented in Table 6.2. Our hope is that when considered in tandem, Table 6.1 and

Table 6.2 provide a template leadership educators might follow to deconstruct and reconstruct the role

power plays (or does not play) in the design and delivery of leadership development programs.

[INSERT TABLE 6.2 HERE]

Conclusion

As leadership educators, we have a responsibility to our students and our institutions to provide

transformative and inclusive leadership development. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to our

society to prepare effective members of communities who are able to create positive, sustainable

change. As our campuses and societies do not exist in social vacuums, leadership education must not

be void of context and history. The sociocultural foundations of society require an investigation of

power and how it is used in both productive and harmful ways. As professionals who craft, create, and execute leadership development opportunities, we must engage in our own personal learning and critically reflective practice to identify power relationships. This learning and reflection will provide opportunities to improve our leadership education practice in ways that are inclusive and challenge structures that uphold systems of oppression.

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Table 6.1 Deconstructing Leadership Education.

Leadership Development Domain	*Discourse* (How is language used to describe and develop this domain?)	*Discipline* (What practices and activities are used to develop this domain within individual leaders?)	*Biopolitics* (What policies and practices impact the development of this domain within students?)
Leadership Capacity (i.e., the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage in leader roles and leadership processes)	What words are we using to describe the skills necessary to be a leader? Where are we placing the most emphasis? Are we challenging and critiquing the norms around leadership capacity that preference dominant ideology?	What language are we using during presentations/ facilitations? Do we start introductions with preferred names and gender pronouns? Do we plan activities that allow introverts to excel rather than acknowledging the power of extroverts?	What are the goals of our leadership programs? Are they primarily focused on perfecting leadership capacities that are "most valued" by the most profitable professions and the dominant culture? How are we placing value on leadership practices rooted in different cultures, the arts, and the humanities?

		Do we ask students to critique the leadership messages, frameworks, and lessons learned from earlier experiences?	
Leadership Efficacy (i.e., one's internal beliefs about their likelihood of success when engaging in leader roles and/or leadership processes)	Is our language inclusive of all people and voices? Are we asking students to read literature from diverse leaders and multiple disciplines?	Are we highlighting diverse role models in examples of leadership? Who are the guest speakers or lecturers brought to campus? How are we creating opportunities to practice leadership within diverse groups? Do practice engaging followers in ways that are empowering?	Are we focused on cultivating agency for leadership in all students and not just the few who stand out as "student leaders?" Are we recruiting students from diverse demographic and cultural backgrounds? How are we making our leadership programs more accessible to all students?

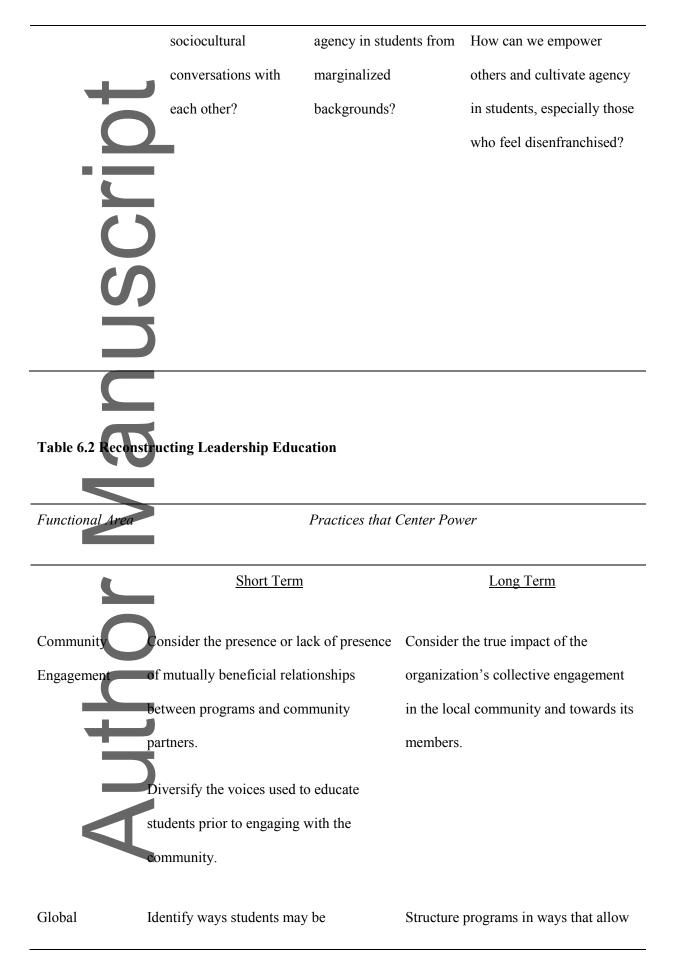| Leadership Motivation (i.e., drivers of individuals' desires to engage in leader roles and/or leadership processes)	What language are we using to describe leadership? Will the language being used motivate all students to see themselves as leaders? How does our language motivate or demotivate participation of students from marginalized background?	How are our programs and curricula motivating students to apply a critical lens to leadership? How are we motivating students towards an inclusive model of leadership? As educators, how do we demonstrate our own motivations for engaging in leadership?	How are we challenging the motivations of our colleagues, our offices, and our work as leadership educators? If social justice is not a focus of our leadership programs, how can we motivate others to critique existing offerings to include more of a critical lens?
Leadership Enactment (i.e., behavioral actions; the manifestation of leadership capacity)	Are articles and texts used to teach leadership inclusive of multiple backgrounds and perspectives? How are we encouraging students to engage in	Are we asking critical questions in our leadership programs about power, privilege, and dominant narratives? Are we creating leader positions that share power and cultivate	How are we as administrators, faculty, and leaders incorporating critical perspectives into our views of leadership? How can we continue to educate ourselves and critically self-reflect on our privilege and power?

sociocultural conversations with each other?	agency in students from marginalized backgrounds?	How can we empower others and cultivate agency in students, especially those who feel disenfranchised?

Table 6.2 Reconstructing Leadership Education

Functional Area	*Practices that Center Power*	
	Short Term	Long Term
Community Engagement	Consider the presence or lack of presence of mutually beneficial relationships between programs and community partners. Diversify the voices used to educate students prior to engaging with the community.	Consider the true impact of the organization's collective engagement in the local community and towards its members.
Global	Identify ways students may be	Structure programs in ways that allow

Engagement	incentivized to spread harmful narratives about communities through scholarships and organizational recognition. Diversify the voices used to educate learners prior to engaging with the community.	for extended exploration of historical, social, and political context. Involve educators from a variety of disciplines, especially those who may be able to add context about the respective culture and its power structure. Structure programs to allow for extended post-experience engagement and reflection.
Student Organization Leadership	Utilize resources and practices that promote democratic group processes. Identify and work with student leaders to name the power structures within organizations. Develop a plan to support student organizations engaging in campus and community activism.	Move towards democratic processes in decision-making, including budgeting, strategy planning, and curriculum development. Develop trainings that educate student organization leaders to become critical consumers of leadership education.
Curricular Leadership Programs	Audit the collection of leadership texts, speakers, ideas, and resources that you use and ask, "Who are the authors and what identities and social spaces do they occupy?"	Cultivate intentional interdisciplinary partnerships with faculty and disciplines that have successfully centered power in their literature or service.

Diversify the social identities and social locations of the voices present in your collection.	Develop new courses that critique leadership through the lens of power and privilege.