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E X C H A N G E

YOU'RE STILL THE SAME: WHY THEORIES OF POWER HOLD OVER TIME AND ACROSS CONTEXTS*

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Changes in the values and careers of particularly younger employees and changes in organizations, including the reduction of hierarchical levels and greater use of teams and matrix structures—combined with new communication technologies and more social networking—have produced calls for new organization theories for these new realities. Using organizational power and influence as a focus, I argue that fundamental theoretical processes remain largely unchanged in their explanatory power, in part because such phenomena can be linked to survival advantages. The new workers–new work arguments are consistent with the continuing emphasis on novelty and theoretical innovation in the organization sciences, an emphasis that, while promulgated in virtually all the journals, may poorly serve the development of reliable and valid knowledge and hinder our ability to provide useful advice for both organizations and their employees.

When "Matt" graduated from a leading business school, he joined the business development unit of Facebook. Like many employees joining the innovative high-technology companies populating California's Silicon Valley, Matt was told: "We're not political here. We're young, cool, socially networked, hip, high-technology people focused on building and selling great products. We're family-friendly, we have fewer levels and less hierarchy, and we make decisions collegially." After all, in the Facebook world, you "friend" others and you are known by how many "friends" you have, so it must be a friendly place.

The description of the company Matt received when he joined reflects a commonly accepted view of the new world of work and organizations, a characterization that is not confined to either Northern California or high technology. That perspective encompasses the following observations. First, members of the younger generation (specifically those people born between 1980 and 2000, sometimes referred to as the Millenial Generation) work and interact differently and have different expectations from work—more emphasis on doing interesting things and less concern with staying in one place and on climbing the organizational hierarchy. For example, Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, and Kuron (2012) reported that members of the younger generation change employers at a greater rate and are more willing to accept non-upward career moves than previous cohorts. They seem to feel more "entitled" than their predecessors (Kolbert, 2012), with some evidence that younger people exhibit large differences in openness to change and engage in more self-enhancement compared to their older colleagues (Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2007).

In addition to the changes we see in this younger generation, we have also seen changes to their work environments. There is a widespread belief that companies either are already or are becoming fundamentally different from the companies of old—more global, more dynamic and innovative, and less formal and hierarchical (e.g., Friedman, 2006), with more importance placed on teams and teamwork. One logical conclusion is that, given the fundamental changes in interpersonal dynamics, we need new management theories for these new real-

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ities, and particularly new theories about power and influence.

There are numerous workplace and workforce differences adduced to explain why old ideas about power and influence are now less relevant. For instance, I often hear that women's well-documented career disadvantages (e.g., Haberfeld, 1992), including the glass ceiling that makes it less likely that women will ascend to the most powerful organizational positions in law firms (Chanow & Rikleen, 2011) or corporations (Carter & Silva, 2010), is no longer relevant for younger people with more egalitarian values and much greater acceptance of diversity in the workplace (e.g., *Personnel Today*, 2007). The idea that networking and personal relationships are important for career advancement sometimes draws remarks that in this new high-technology, more connected, LinkedIn world, networking principles operate differently and concepts such as brokerage—filling structural holes (Burt, 1992) to connect groups or people together, the importance of weak ties for acquiring nonredundant information (Granovetter, 1973), and achieving network centrality to control information flow and have more access to critical people and knowledge (Brass, 1984)—are now less relevant than such ideas once were. And any discussion of "hard" organizational power—expressing anger instead of sadness or remorse (e.g., Tiedens, 2001), acquiring resources and using those resources to build a power base, eliminating one's rivals either by strategic outplacement (Pfeffer, 2010) or by simply overpowering them—engenders comments that not only are these strategies no longer relevant, but in a world where reputations get created and transmitted quickly and anonymously through ubiquitous social networks, people who use such tactics would suffer swift retribution. Many people believe that the world described by Machiavelli (1532/1998) is over—we are now all living in some postmodernist, egalitarian, merit-based paradise.

Scholars, teachers, and managers confronted with claims that the world has changed in ways that obviate existing theory confront two fundamental questions. The first is an empirical one: Have organizations and their employees fundamentally changed—and if so, have they done so in a way that obviates existing organization theory? The second theoretical question: Are theories of power and influence still relevant given all the important changes in people and work, and what underlying mechanisms might make such ideas relatively timeless and, for that matter, largely although not entirely independent of cultural context?

Considering the empirical issue of change, there is certainly evidence that younger employees are raised in environments that are constructed to be less competitive and more indulgent (e.g., Kolbert, 2012) than those of their predecessors. For instance, many school districts in the United States now eschew the idea of recognizing outstanding academic achievement at high school graduation by having a single valedictorian (Hu, 2010), instead awarding the honor to many or doing away with it altogether. Data show that today's college students exhibit higher levels of narcissism than those in the past (Bergman, Westerman, & Daly, 2010), with the increases particularly pronounced among business students—possibly the consequence of not allowing young people to confront competitive failures and telling them all the time how wonderful and special they are. Clearly career stability and mobility expectations have changed as even companies on the Great Places to Work list no longer promise employment stability, and job tenures have declined, particularly for men (Farber, 2008; Ignaczak & Voia, 2011), as economic insecurity and layoffs have grown (e.g., Uchitelle, 2007). Of course, organizations have always varied in the amount of internal competition and also in the extent to which the employment relationship is seen as long term or as more transactional (e.g., Pfeffer, 1998). And employee expectations and work-related values and their willingness to fulfill work obligations vary across people and the work environments that influence their attitudes and behavior (e.g., Appelbaum, 2000).

But even as these and other changes in the work environment receive attention, the idea that organizational dynamics are fundamentally different is one that is sometimes difficult to document. Recent research shows that even women from leading MBA programs continue to be offered lower salaries and progress less rapidly in their careers than their male colleagues (Carter & Silva, 2010). Differences between the genders in attitudes and behaviors ranging from competitiveness (Gneezy, Niederle, & Rustichini, 2003) to social dominance orientation (Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997) to persisting in competitions (Hogarth, Karelaia, & Trujillio, 2012) to the use of coercion in organizational disputes (Offerman & Schrier, 1985) continue to be documented. Relationships with bosses still matter for people's job tenure and opportunities (Pfeffer, 2010), as do networking skills (Burt & Ronchi,

2007) and the ability to see others' points of view (Ferris et al., 2005). Research shows that political skill continues to predict dimensions of career success (e.g., Todd, Harris, Harris, & Wheeler, 2009) and individual and work group performance (e.g., Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004). Organizational gossip (Clegg & van Iterson, 2009) and organizational politics still have consequences for those who find themselves targets. Career derailments remain quite common, with an inability to master political dynamics one important cause (Gentry, Gilmore, Shuffler, & Leslie, 2012).

So despite all the talk about the new generation working in new types of companies, many things remain the same, as the case of Matt, introduced at the start of this paper, nicely illustrates. After being forced out of Facebook for reasons quite distinct from his job performance, he now works at another technology company. But Matt learned an important lesson in this process. He currently uses an executive coach, whose advice to him and her many other clients employed in high-technology companies starts with urging them to learn—and then practice—some reasonably old and established principles of power and influence as they navigate their careers.

The emphasis on new and different organizational arrangements and new theory often reflects wishful thinking that has beset organizational scholars for a long time. We would very much like to believe in a just world, to use Lerner's apt phrase (1980). Part of that just world would manifest itself in good, hard work getting rewarded without the need to resort to self-promotion and ingratiation. Another aspect of that just world would entail there being little or no effect of gender, race, or other irrelevant attributes on career success. And yet another aspect of the just world would encompass organizational arrangements that are less hierarchical and consequently produce less inequality and domination, with bosses who are more like coaches than autocrats (e.g., Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006). In short, a just world would be more like the one the leadership literature mostly talks about and less like the actual world that exists today, one in which there is pervasive racism, sexism, and ageism, and where Robert Sutton can make a fortune writing a book decrying a form of management and boss conduct that should no longer exist (2007). As scholars, however, we need to be careful to distinguish the normative from the descriptive and our hopes and dreams from the reality of the world as it is—a distinction sometimes lost in both our teaching and our writing.

In the remainder of this article, I address why theories of organizational behavior are likely to be valid both over time and across settings even as many aspects of the work environment and the people in it have changed. In doing so, I highlight some fundamental theoretical and empirical realities that suggest that not only are the old theories still relevant, certainly in the domain of power and politics in organizations, but they almost certainly always will be.

To borrow and slightly alter a phrase from an old Bob Seger song, "we're still the same." And how could we not be? In what follows, I argue that we don't need new theories for a new world but instead the systematic elaboration and development of our "old" theories for a world that is in many fundamental respects unchanged, at least as far as behavioral dynamics inside organizations are concerned.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL—AND UNCHANGING—SOCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

A number of features of organizational and social life are both fundamental and apparently unchanging and profoundly affect people's motivations and interactions in work environments. These concepts may not always be seen as socially desirable or attractive, but they are pervasive and thus core to understanding human behavior in organizations of all types. Although relying on mechanisms of evolutionary natural selection to explain these core ideas may not be necessary, virtually all the processes I enumerate here can be seen as emerging and being useful in a world in which survival, and the survival of one's own genetic material, provided a compelling reason to be able to quickly and effectively figure out the difference between friend and foe—who was similar and of the same tribe and who was different—and also who was likely to triumph in the quest for domination.

Below I describe six processes that are among those that help explain power and influence behaviors and why they are largely invariant both across different settings and over time.

Hierarchy

The demise of organizational hierarchy has been advocated as well as predicted by pundits and scholars for decades. That's because hierarchies "routinely transform motivated and loyal employees into disaffected Dilberts" (Leavitt, 2003), and as Gary Hamel (2011) has recently argued, hierarchy—and the intrusive control that often accompanies it—is scarcely the best way to encourage either innovation or employee engagement. The emergence of inexpensive communication technologies, social networking, and crowdsourcing has increased the tendency to see hierarchy as disappearing and being irrelevant even as these changes have made employees less disposed to being happy living in and being subjected to hierarchical organizational arrangements.

But hierarchy is a fundamental structural principle of all organizational systems, including biological, technical, and social systems—including social systems consisting of nonhuman organisms (Prigozhin, 1989). As Herbert Simon noted more than 50 years ago, hierarchy is not only a general feature of many if not most systems but, in fact, makes complexity—including complex, coordinated social and physical arrangements—possible (Simon, 1962). Hierarchy is found among communities of animals and fish. We may want hierarchy to disappear, so we actively seek out confirming evidence of its unimportance and imminent demise. But hierarchy and its consequences seem here to stay.

Leavitt (2003, 2005) persuasively argued that, despite attacks on hierarchical work arrangements by various management movements, such as human relations, and the fact that many people claim not to like hierarchy, hierarchical work structures have not only persisted but have actually thrived. Leavitt claimed that this persistence arose because hierarchy is consistent with fundamental elements of human nature; as he noted, hierarchy delivers practical and psychological value in part by fulfilling deep-seated needs for order and security. Leavitt was scarcely an apologist for hierarchy, showing how in work organizations hierarchical arrangements tend to devolve to various degrees and forms of authoritarianism. Rather, he simply noted how resistant to change or attack hierarchy as an organizing arrangement is.

Leavitt's comments were nicely empirically captured by the research of Tiedens and colleagues (Tiedens, Unzueta, & Young, 2007), who found that in experiments, participants given the choice to select hierarchical or other social arrangements chose hierarchy when they were faced with accomplishing some work task. These results speak not only to the efficiency of hierarchy as an organizing principle, something noted by economist Oliver Williamson decades ago (Williamson, 1975), but even more relevantly to the fact that individuals actually prefer and choose hierarchy. If people choose hierarchy—and note that the people in Tiedens' studies were very much of the younger, presumably post-hierarchy generation—then hierarchy will certainly endure because it is a natural arrangement and does not have to be imposed from on high.

Hierarchy creates important consequences for behavior. If there are hierarchies of power and status, it is inevitable that many if not most individuals will prefer to be nearer the top than the bottom of such hierarchies and will behave accordingly. Individuals are motivated to advance up hierarchies because financial rewards are higher near the top, and in fact, the differentiation in rewards and the resulting social inequality appear to be increasing not just in the United States and the United Kingdom but in many countries (Gottschalk & Smeeding, 2000). And as Sir Michael Marmot (2004) has empirically demonstrated, even life spans are hierarchically ordered, with those higher in the British Civil Service less likely to suffer and die from cardiovascular disease than others who did not occupy high-status positions.

The persistence of hierarchy and the competition for advancement it engenders suggest that the political dynamics and competition that characterize both work organizations and relations among employees are unlikely to have changed in the recent past or to change much in the future. Shared power arrangements (even to the modest extent of having joint CEOs) remain extremely rare in part because both internal and external agents want to be able to see "who's in charge" to assign accountability. These facts suggest that not only will career processes and organizational politics remain theoretically and substantively important, but that studies of hierarchical structural arrangements—including spans of control, the degree of decentralization of decision making and allocation of decision rights, and administrative rules that structure the career tournaments that determine rewards and advancement—should remain important foci of study. And it is also the case that many of the same communication technologies and the inexpensive computing power that make horizontal collaboration easier also permit much more computer-aided monitoring of work and communication (e.g., AMA, 2001), thereby creating environments with more control and less behavioral discretion than in the past (Aiello, 1993).

Perceptions of Competence

If hierarchy exists and people are going to compete for status and advancement in career tournaments (Rosenbaum, 1979), the next question is about the qualities required to succeed. It is, of course, others—bosses—who promote us, so therefore the issue devolves to one of how we are perceived by those others. And here the literature on person perception has much to say. Social psychologist Susan Fiske and her colleagues tell us that the two fundamental dimensions used to describe or categorize individuals are warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). However, although these dimensions are obviously conceptually independent, observers often perceive them to be related, and negatively related at that. In general, warm people are perceived to be less competent (Cuddy, 2009). And as Teresa Amabile (1983) showed, people who were critical and negative, in that they gave negative book reviews, were perceived as not as nice but as more intelligent than those who provided positive reviews.

These findings echo the advice of Machiavelli (1532/1998): If one must decide between being loved and being feared, choose to be feared. One of the reasons that displays of anger lead to more attributions of power (Tiedens, 2001) is because of the commonly observed reverse association: Powerful people have the discretion to be angry because their power provides them more latitude in their behavior. The co-occurrence of anger and power then leads to the heuristic association of power with anger—if powerful people get to be angry, people who display anger are assumed to be powerful. The fact that displays of anger may, because of various social media, now be even less private than before does not obviate this association and, in fact, possibly makes it even stronger. If people know that their anger may be public, the association between displaying anger and having the social power to violate apparent norms against expressing anger will be even more true, which means that displays of anger will be even more likely to lead to assumptions that the individual has more power. Anger is, of course, the obverse of warmth, so the research on anger and power attributions is nicely subsumed in the empirically observed negative relationship between warmth and competence.

The relationship between anger and power has probably existed throughout human history, for the simple reason that power leads to disinhibition in behavior (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Therefore, people in power experience less pressure or need to mask their anger. Moreover, because many people seem to be conflict-averse and react with alarm when others get angry at them, not only do displays of anger signal power; in many instances they may *produce* power as those subject to the anger back down (Pfeffer, 1992).

The existing evidence shows that warmth and competence as fundamental dimensions of person perception transcend national cultural differences (Fiske et al., 2007), so there is no reason to believe that these observations are particularly time- or generation-bound. For reasons of self-preservation, people are highly attuned to discerning who is going to prevail, who has the toughness and mental competence to succeed. Moreover, people often assume that powerful individuals will have the latitude to break with conventional rules of behavior (van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Gundemir, & Stamkou, 2011) and not display the likeability required of those who are not as successful and strong. Thus, we infer power from the behavior of others, and the behavior that produces perceptions of power on the part of others—breaking rules, displaying anger, not being warm and nice—is not necessarily behavior that we intuitively think of when we consider leadership.

One important implication of this argument is that instead of bemoaning the prevalence of bad bosses behaving badly and assuming that somehow these people and their behavior are aberrations, research should consider the functional career and influence outcomes that may derive from being a so-called "bad boss" and engaging in self-aggrandizing and even bullying behavior. Since these behaviors persist and are evidenced even in some of the most revered or at least most successful modern leaders (Steve Jobs comes to mind, as do Rupert Murdoch, George Steinbrenner of the New York Yankees baseball team, and Larry Ellison of Oracle), theories of leadership and power would do well to acknowledge the downsides but also the potential *individual* (as distinguished from organizational) benefits that accrue to leaders behaving "badly." In this regard, sociobiology has recognized, much more clearly than much of the leadership literature and organization studies, the inherent tension between what is good for the group and what benefits the individual working in that group. Wilson and Wilson (2007, p. 328) wrote about this tension this way: "The problem is that for a social group to function as an adaptive unit, its members must do things for each other. Yet, these group advantageous behaviors seldom maximize relative fitness within the social group."

The Self-Enhancement Motive

Related but distinct from motives to succeed and ensure our organizational survival by acquiring power and ascending the hierarchy is the motivation to think favorably and positively about ourselves and our capabilities. We assess ourselves as well as others, and in our own self-assessments and decisions that implicate the self, most people are motivated not to be as accurate as possible but instead to create and preserve a positive self-image. Consequently, there is a prevalent, although not universal, above-average effect in which more than half of individuals in various studies and surveys believe they are above average on virtually any and all positive attributes and characteristics (e.g., Williams & Gilovich, 2008), including overestimating their place in the income distribution and believing that the dimensions on which they score relatively high are more important for judging people. And because people like to believe they are efficacious and associated with positive outcomes, individuals frequently display an illusion of control over even random events. One manifestation of this illusion of control is that people will bet more on random outcomes, such as the draw of a playing card or the roll of dice, if they get to actually pull the card or roll the dice (Langer, 1975). Another manifestation is that in an experimental setting, participants rated an advertisement, themselves, and their supposed subordinate much more highly when they believed they had exerted some influence over the production of the advertisement—even if they had not (Pfeffer, Cialdini, Hanna, & Knopoff, 1998).

Positive self-illusions and a belief in the efficacy of one's actions serve several functions besides bolstering self-esteem. First, these perceptions induce more confidence—and confidence, like other emotional states, can be contagious (Barsade, 2002; Hsee, Hatfield, Carlson, & Chemtob, 1990). Not only does a leader's confidence inspire confidence and, as a consequence, greater effort on the part of others, confidence itself is useful in being selected as a leader in the first place. Reuben, Rey-Biel, Sapienza, and Zingales (2012), examining why men tended to be selected more often than women for leadership roles, experimentally found that it was men's overconfidence that resulted in their being disproportionately selected by groups for leadership roles.

Second, beliefs in one's own self-efficacy and above-average qualities produce an orientation toward action. Because an action orientation is itself associated with power (Keltner et al., 2003), being active can enhance the attribution of power. And taking action also provides a greater opportunity for success—the "many shots at the goal" theory that the more tries, the greater the likelihood of eventual success. Therefore, it is likely that these various positive reinforcement mechanisms operate to maintain both the above-average effect as well as illusions of control.

The desire to think well of oneself makes it difficult to admit mistakes, which helps account for the oft-observed phenomenon of escalating commitment. Confronted with signs that their decisions are not working out, people will escalate their investment of effort and resources into failing courses of action as a way of justifying their original decisions (e.g., Staw, 1976). Individuals are particularly likely to escalate commitment when they feel politically vulnerable, a circumstance in which admitting a mistake would entail more severe consequences not just for their self-esteem but for their careers.

As Pfeffer and Fong (2005) argued, self-enhancement ideas permit the derivation and prediction of many phenomena associated with organizational power. And there is little evidence that self-enhancement is less prevalent among the younger generations; if anything, their upbringing and the evidence on narcissism would suggest even stronger self-enhancement motivations. Consequently, illusions of control and the consequences of believing that everything one touches is better (Pfeffer et al., 1998) should persist, contributing to the persistence of hierarchical organizational practices.

It would be theoretically informative to assess the extent to which processes of self-enhancement mediate phenomena such as escalating commitment, the illusion of control, and the tendency to prefer and comply with requests from similar others. Self-enhancement is an instance of motivated cognition, and therefore, like all motives, is not always equally strong. Because self-enhancement is implicated in understanding numerous organizational processes, it would be useful to more fully understand the conditions other than ego threat that cause the strength of the self-enhancement motive to vary.

Us Versus Them and the Importance of Similarity

Self-enhancement motivation naturally leads to similarity—in attitudes, demographics, and even speech and physical behavior—being an important, maybe the most important, basis of interpersonal attraction (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Montoya & Horton, 2013). How could it not be? If people are motivated to think well of themselves, they would be motivated to judge favorably those who are most similar to them and therefore remind them of themselves. And the survival of oneself and one's gene pool biases people to quickly identify those who are similar to them and to proffer more help to those who are like them. This bias to prefer things that remind us of ourselves and to offer aid to similar others has become an almost automatic, unconscious response, so the preference for similar others influences actions and choices even in unlikely circumstances.

Research shows that people are more willing to offer assistance to others who share even incidental and trivially unimportant similarities such as birthdays or initials (Burger, Messian, Patel, Del Prado, & Anderson, 2004). Other research shows that because people prefer things that remind them of themselves, an effect sometimes called the egocentric bias, they are more likely to marry people with similar initials, choose occupations and cities that remind them of their own names, and remember the birthdates of others when those dates are closer, in absolute value, to their own birthday (Pelham, Carvallo, & Jones, 2005).

Another form of similarity that has been shown to influence liking and persuasion is mimicking the behavior of others. "People who speak in loud, animated bursts tend to feed off others who do the same. . . . [I]mmediate social bonding between strangers is highly dependent on mimicry, a synchronized . . . give and take of words and gestures" including posture and movements (Carey, 2008). One might think that copying another's speech and gestures would be transparent, but the evidence shows that a short delay in the mimicry, often just a few seconds, is sufficient to keep the behavior from being so obvious as to be detected.

The ego-based bias in favor of those who look, act, or in other ways remind people of themselves makes eliminating discrimination in organizational career processes both difficult and unlikely. Rosabeth Kanter's (1977) apt phrase, "homosocial reproduction," describes what is most commonly observed in organizational hiring, promotion, and review processes (even in academia): the bias toward similarity. It is, of course, possible for people to strategically present their similarity to those in power by dressing, speaking, expressing attitudes, and acting in ways that remind powerful others of themselves. Such strategies are likely to be effective, particularly to the extent that they are not so overt as to be readily observed by their targets. The fact that behavioral contagion may have evolved to provide survival advantages (e.g., Carey, 2008) suggests that this similarity effect is likely to be a persistent behavioral tendency, observed both in different cultural contexts and over time.

There are numerous strategic, political, and career consequences of the preference for others who remind us of ourselves. One such implication would be that people will have more successful careers in places where they are more similar to those who hold power. Another inference would be that people who master the ability to find or demonstrate their similarity to powerful others and develop the skill to imitate or mimic others and who are more willing to engage in these tactics and more skilled at doing so will achieve advantages in building and exercising influence and also in advancing their careers.

Basking in Reflected Glory and the Desire to Be With the Winners

Seeking to think well of themselves and to be associated with success, individuals "bask in reflected glory" by taking on the trappings, symbols, and colors of successful organizations (and people) with whom they may have very little actual connection (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976). The original study of basking in reflected glory noted that students on university campuses were more likely to wear clothing decorated with visible school insignia on Mondays following a Saturday when the football team won than on Mondays following a loss—even though the students wearing the colors and insignia had no actual connection to the performance of the team except for their association with the university playing the games.

The desire to be close to those groups and individuals who are prevailing may derive from the drive to have one's genetic material survive, which requires being able to accurately first discern and then associate oneself with the individuals and groups most likely to win in fights for survival. Whatever the source, the drive—the desire to associate with winners and to be close to success—

appears to be another enduring behavioral tendency, one that is largely independent of cultures and generational differences.

The wish to be close to success helps explain why many people will voluntarily work for organizations and for bosses who are difficult and unpleasant. For instance, for George Steinbrenner, owner of the perennially successful New York Yankees baseball team, to be able to fire former manager Billy Martin five times, Martin, a successful former player and a skilled leader of others, had to be willing to go back four times into this organization where he had such a problematic history and work for an owner who micromanaged and was twice barred from baseball (Goldstein, 2010). The Yankees have won many more division titles and World Series than any other team and have an enormous budget to hire talent. Being part of and thereby associated with such success may have exacted a price in being subject to Steinbrenner's tirades, but that price is one that many players and coaches, including Martin, were seemingly willing to pay.

One implication of this line of argument is that accumulating power and success will almost invariably bring supporters to one's side. Likeability may produce influence (Cialdini, 2009), but having influence will almost certainly produce lots of friends and supporters. People will want to associate with power, both for strategic reasons to access the resources that often accompany power and also to be able to bask in the reflected influence and accomplishment. Once deciding to be close, many individuals will come to rationalize that decision by noting the many ways in which the powerful individual or the organization is actually better than the public perception and in reality offers an attractive working environment and many social benefits. In other words, people will successfully rationalize their decision to get close to power by seeing the powerful more favorably and as being more likeable and pleasant. Power and winning, then, create a self-reinforcing dynamic in which talented people seek to associate with success and their ability to attract talented others to their side makes continued power and success more likely.

Hedonic Sense-Making and Post Hoc Rationalizations

Yet another process also helps explain power and influence behaviors and why they are largely invariant across settings and over time: motivations to reduce dissonance and therefore rationalize behavior, even as post-decision rationalization changes what people see and how they see it. The point of Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance is that people are motivated to eliminate or at least reduce discrepant cognitions. Many psychological theories, including the just-world hypothesis already mentioned, proceed from the premise that people seek to see a world that is predictable and controllable. Therefore, discrepant, inconsistent cognitions create enough discomfort to provoke motivated thinking to reduce such discrepancies.

At least two manifestations of the process of producing cognitive consistency can be observed in the domain of power and influence. First, as researchers have noted for decades, it is not just that various attributes produce success or high performance at either the individual or organizational level; it is also the case that when confronted with evidence of success and high performance, people come to attribute numerous positive traits and behaviors, presumed to *cause* that high performance, to individuals and organizations, regardless of whether they actually possess these characteristics or whether the characteristics have actually created the success. So, for example, Staw (1975) conducted an experiment in which participants were told that group performance was either positive or negative. This knowledge of performance affected the ratings of cohesiveness, motivation, openness to change, and communication attributed by members to their work groups.

In the domain of power and leadership, powerful individuals are presumed, because of their very success, to possess many positive traits. To avoid the cognitive dissonance of holding two incompatible ideas at the same time—one that an individual is successful and powerful and the other that the person is fundamentally flawed in important ways—observers will reevaluate the powerful in ways that create or infer positive traits even if such traits are not real. The old saw that the winners get to write history is true both in its original meaning—that those with power get to use their power to create what becomes perceived as reality—and in that those who write history recast the powerful and the winners in ways that make their success more justifiable and consistent with commonsense ideas of virtue and positive attributes.

The second manifestation of cognitive consistency is the tendency to make excuses for the powerful if dissonance-reducing attributions of positive qualities and behaviors are too difficult to construct. So close friends of the Clintons, not invited to Chelsea Clinton's wedding—one of *the* social events of the recent past—noted that not everyone, even friends of the Clintons, could be invited and that in any event the powerful are different from regular people. Hank Sheinkopf, a political consultant to Bill Clinton who was not invited to the wedding, noted, "It is dangerous to presume closeness to people in power, and it is very rare when there are real, unbreakable friendships" (Parker, 2010, p. A8). This rationalization permitted Sheinkopf to not take the non-invitation personally and to maintain both his self-esteem and his strategically useful relationship with the Clintons. Peruse the obituaries for George Steinbrenner or Steve Jobs or for that matter the media coverage of the sexual assault charges against Dominique Strauss-Kahn and you will see how often even obnoxious behavior and individual characteristics were excused in light of results achieved, or by some element of the person's history, or as being, in the end, relatively unimportant.

It is not just that, as research has shown, power leads the powerful to exhibit behavior that the less powerful would not engage in (Keltner et al., 2003). Although this effect is important, it is also the case that behavior that might not be tolerated when displayed by those with less power is rationalized and excused when exhibited by those who enjoy power and the reputational capital that comes from having power. This excuse-making helps explain why the powerful behave differently: Not only does power induce different motivations in individuals, but the powerful soon learn that they can get away with things that others cannot.

CONCLUSIONS

"New" is popular. Searching the books section of Amazon.com I found 2.7 million entries with "new" as the search term, but only 295,000 for the world "old." Google provides evidence of a similar preference: There are 25 billion entries for "new" and just 6.4 billion for "old." Nor are things different in the world of management scholarship. Journal reviewers and editors evaluate articles in part on their novelty and whether or not they develop *new* theory; replication is undervalued (e.g., Nosek, Spies, & Motyl, 2012). As Mone and McKinley (1993) noted, there is great emphasis in organization studies and in many of the social sciences on novelty, with people calling the same phenomenon by different names in an effort to attach their label to it. It is not just in the world of management practice where there are fads and fashions—such is the case in the domain of management scholarship as well (e.g., Abrahamson, 1996; Starbuck, 2009).

One consequence of the pursuit of the new at the expense of fleshing out and more fully developing the old is a lack of scientific progress in management research, an old but still accurate lament. Since I bemoaned the absence of scientifically rigorous paradigms 20 years ago (Pfeffer, 1993), several articles have provided various forms of evidence that speak to an absence of scientific progress, a condition that is surely not from a lack of effort or talent on the part of the research community (e.g., Davis, 2010). It is simply the case that, as Mackenzie and House (1978) argued, better understanding of the world of management and organizations requires not only knowing what is true but also what is false. Moreover, the scientific literature would be well served to be more concerned about what is true—the empirical validity of concepts and data—and less fascinated by what is simply new.

Even as neuroscience and the evolutionary explanations of human thought and actions gain in prominence (e.g., Buss, 1995; Buss & Kenrick, 1998)—with the implication that there are substantial continuities in behavior over both time and place—scholars claim that things are different now (and so should our explanations be), and new theories proliferate. What I have sought to accomplish is to, in one topic domain, organizational power and influence, outline some fundamental processes and propose why they are reasonably unchanging. Hierarchy, perceptions of competence, the self-enhancement motive, the importance of similarity, the desire to be identified and associate with success and winners, and post hoc rationalizations and attributions that make the powerful appear more virtuous were some of the theoretical ideas adduced here to understand organizational dynamics. There is little or no evidence to suggest that these processes are particularly time or place dependent and that therefore these would not be reasonable foundations on which to construct theories of management and organizations.

By telling ourselves and others stories that aren't true but instead contain a lot of wishful thinking and self-preservation, and by fostering a persistent confusion between what is and what should be or what we would like to be, we do harm to our students who enter organizational situations they are unprepared to cope with. As a consequence, a higher than expected or desirable proportion of graduates and for that matter executives derail and lose their jobs. We also adversely affect the development of our science. The changes in the world of management and work organizations that so many advocate have to begin with a deep scientific understanding of both the current circumstances and why they are as they are. One cannot change the world proceeding from inaccurate theories or data.

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