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Heroic Leaders and Despotic Tyrants

How Power and Status Shape Leadership

Anika Stuppy and Nicole L. Mead

When one thinks of a hero, one thinks of a leader. Leaders are an integral and coveted part of social life because they are essential for navigating their groups through murky waters and troubled times. When they succeed in doing so, they are raised up by the group and become a hero in their followers' eyes. From a young age, most people dream about becoming leaders of their group, perhaps even the world, in part because they strongly desire the many benefits that are bestowed upon leaders. In return for bestowing valuable resources upon leaders, followers expect that leaders use their influence for the good of the group (e.g., van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008).

Unfortunately, not all leaders use their position of privilege equally. Some use it for the betterment of others, while others use it for shameless self-enrichment. As an example of the former, Abraham Lincoln (former President of the United States) maneuvered an entire country through difficult times, worked selflessly to inspire his followers, and consolidated conflicts. Such examples highlight the great potential that leaders can have for acting as a hero. Yet other leaders grossly misuse their influence to exploit adherents for personal gain. Abusive tyrants such as Joseph Stalin (former General Secretary of the Soviet Union), Kim Jong-un (the supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) or Baschar al-Assad (President of Syria) act in stark contrast to the ideal of heroic leadership. Abuse of power is not limited to extreme cases. Relatively milder cases of ill-suited leaders (or mini tyrants) are prevalent in every-day life, as suggested by the finding that only half of all American employees were satisfied with their boss (Conference Board, 2010).

Which factors determine whether leaders use their influence to elevate others (thereby acting as a hero) or themselves (thereby potentially acting as a tyrant)? In this chapter, we sketch a simple yet comprehensive framework which can help explain when and why leaders behave in desirable or undesirable ways. To do so, we elucidate how two seemingly similar yet very different aspects of social hierarchies—status and power—can influence leadership. We then build on these differences in social hierarchies by examining how individual motivations toward prestige and dominance interact with structural forms of social hierarchies to influence leadership behavior. Finally, we examine how leaders react to power and status threats.

A second aim of this chapter is to provide practical guidance. Knowledge about status and power helps to sort out undesirable candidates who strive to hoard the social and material benefits of power for themselves. It also helps to clarify how social hierarchies and leadership

positions can be managed structurally in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the detriments of leadership (see also Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Northouse, 2015).

This chapter is organized as follows. The first half of the chapter theoretically differentiates status and power. We describe why power and status were selected throughout evolutionary history, identify empirically validated antecedents of power and status, and discuss the nature of power and status hierarchies in modern societies. The second half of the chapter examines how power and status relate to leadership outcomes. We explore why a person who is respected may be easily awarded power, and how being awarded structural power independently of status often fosters self-oriented behavior in the intended leader. Lastly, we identify theoretically and practically relevant moderators that identify when and why structural power can produce heroic leaders.

Power and Status: Two Core Dimensions of Social Hierarchy

Hierarchies are a universal feature of social life. In established groups, such as neighborhood communities, peer groups, and work teams, researchers have observed rank orders of varying stability (Bernstein, 1981; Buss, 1996; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Mazur, 1985). In new groups, people who were previously unacquainted immediately started to sort out a social ranking system (i.e., more outgoing and attractive students were ranked higher in perceived respect, influence, and prominence by their peers; Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001). These findings suggest that humans implicitly strive to construct hierarchies (Barkow, 1975).

Throughout evolutionary history, hierarchies facilitated group survival because they helped groups solve survival problems. During famines, war, or other challenging times, it was functional for the group to have the skilled, high-ranking members tackle the complex tasks while the lower-ranking members followed (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Halevy, Chou, & Galinsky, 2011; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). When they succeeded in fighting off immediate dangers, subordinates doubly rewarded the victors: respect and admiration were showered on the heroic leaders, which in turn gave them status, money, estate, and mates, which in turn gave them social power. Hence, power, status and leadership behavior are closely intertwined since ancient times.

This section begins by outlining why evolution shaped status and power for social stratification. Subsequently, we highlight individual differences that have been identified as antecedents of high social status and high power. We end this section by outlining the nature of power and status hierarchies in modern society and discuss how high-status and high-power individuals influence their peers.

The Evolutionary Roots of Dominance and Prestige-Orientations, and How they Relate to Power and Status

In the ancestral past, having power and status facilitated survival (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). As such, evolution has selected two distinct motivations and strategies that enable humans to ascend the social hierarchy. Dominance is characterized as a self-oriented motivation/strategy in which individuals manipulate others for the purpose of gaining influence and resources. Group members oriented toward dominance used physical violence, force, and coercion to gain control over desired resources and secure reproductive success. Although having power does not necessarily entail the ill-treatment of others, the present-day definition of power captures the desired outcome of a dominance-oriented strategy—namely, control over valued resources (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

While some people are indeed primarily motivated toward power for the sake of power itself, others seek power as a tool to realize other objectives. Those who seek power just because they enjoy having it often use the dominance strategy to secure power and, as leaders, will prioritize

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protecting their power over other tasks (Maner & Mead, 2010). However, others strive to realize goals that are far more important to them than the quench for power. For instance, Nelson Mandela (former president of South Africa) strongly desired to improve his peers' welfare. He managed to obtain power without harming others—hence not by applying the dominance strategy—and used the influence that power entailed to benefit the powerless.

In contrast to dominance, which is primarily a self-oriented strategy, the Mandela example may illustrate what is called prestige orientation, which is a relatively more other-oriented motivation and confers benefits on both the individual and the group. In the past, groups conferred prestige and respect upon individuals who used valuable skills to help their group achieve important outcomes (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Ingratiation with respected and skilled group members enhances the skills of the less proficient and abbreviates the otherwise tedious learning processes. It also provides fitness advantages for the esteemed individual, as prestige strategies are often met with social and material rewards from group members. Indeed, to this day, social status is defined by the degree of respect and admiration granted to a person (e.g., Ridgeway & Walker, 1995).

Prestige and dominance describe motivations towards status and power and corresponding strategies to obtain status and power. Because of the survival benefits conferred to those who successfully pursued strategies toward dominance and prestige, those distinct motivations may be hardwired and fundamental to humans. Those strongly motivated to dominate or be admired put effort into securing these social outcomes when encountering peers (Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013). As such, it may be the case that these motivations serve as a foundation for the power and status hierarchies that are defining features of human social life.

Notably, although prestige and dominance may have evolved as distinct motivations to serve different functions, they are deeply intertwined. Personality measures reveal that prestige and dominance motivations are moderately correlated, as one would expect (e.g., Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012). As such they may be predictive of some outcomes, such as motivation towards positions of leadership. However, as will be revealed later in the chapter, they are highly predictive of whether people use power in heroic or abusive ways.

The social structures of status and power are also often confounded in the real world. Wealth is a good illustration of this problem. On the one hand, the wealthy are powerful because they can pay others to obey their will. On the other hand, wealth can garner admiration and respect among peers. Possessions signal being successful in life, especially when “true” competence is hard to observe (Cheng & Tracy, 2013; Henrich & Henrich, 2007). Socioeconomic status (SES) is hence neither a measure of only status (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2013) or only power (Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015) as it confounds these constructs. The case of wealth exemplifies how power and status can often blend in the real world. As we will illustrate later in this chapter, status and power are even mutually reinforcing: Power can breed status, and having status can breed power—further increasing these constructs' overlap.

Antecedents—Individual Differences that Bring about Social Status and Power

To get a better understanding of the nature of power and status, it is informative to know who typically winds up in these positions. Past research identified personality traits, motivations, physiological characteristics, and acquired skills that correlated positively with having either status or power (Table 25.1). However, these characteristics do not exclusively boost either status or power—they often trigger both. For instance, skill and expertise can give rise to power and influence, because others depend on that person's abilities and knowledge. At the same time, knowledge fosters status because people admire knowledgeable peers (see also Anderson & Cameron, 2014 for a thorough discussion of the antecedents of power and status).

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Table 25.1 Antecedents of Power and Status

| <i>Antecedents of power</i> | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <i>Trait</i> | <i>Category</i> | <i>Relation to power</i> | <i>Source</i> |
| Dominance | Motivation/ interpersonal strategy | Dominance describes the motivation to obtain power. Dominance is also an interpersonal strategy in which power is obtained via force and the selfish manipulation of group resources. | Henrich and Gil-White (2001) Hawley (1999) |
| Need for power | Motivation | High need for power correlates with desire to control resources. | McClelland (1975) |
| Testosterone/ gender | Physiological | Higher baseline testosterone/being male positively correlates with dominance and power. | Johnson, Burk, and Kirkpatrick (2007) |
| Physical strength and size | Physiological | Physically stronger and taller individuals are perceived as more powerful and they occupy more powerful positions. | Judge and Cable (2004) |
| <i>Antecedents of status</i> | | | |
| <i>Trait</i> | <i>Category</i> | <i>Relation to status</i> | <i>Source</i> |
| Prestige | Motivation/ interpersonal strategy | Prestige describes the motivation to obtain status. Prestige is also an interpersonal strategy in which status is obtained by engaging in behavior that heightens esteem in the eyes of others (e.g., cooperation, generosity) | Henrich and Gil-White, (2001) Willer (2009) Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh (2010) |
| Extraversion | Personality | Extraversion is positively correlated with status attainment at first encounters. In the long run, extraversion can hurt status. | Anderson et al. (2001) Bendersky and Shah (2013) |
| Agreeableness | Personality | Moderate trait agreeableness is positively related to status attainment. | Anderson et al. (2001) Cheng et al. (2010) |
| Self-monitoring | Personality | High self-monitors adapt their behavior in ways that elicit status. For instance, they exchange resources strategically such that others perceive them as generous. | Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, and Ames (2006) |
| Attractiveness | Physiological | Attractiveness positively correlated with social status | Anderson et al. (2001) |
| Ethnicity | Physiological | Being white is positively correlated with social status. | Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch (1972) Lin, Kwan, Cheung, and Fiske (2005) |
| Intelligence/ knowledge | Trait and acquired skill | Intelligence, competence, and expert knowledge are positively correlated with social status. | Gintner and Lindsfold (1975) Sorrentino and Boutillier (1975) Littlepage, Schmidt, Whisler, and Frost (1995) Ridgeway (1987) |

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The Nature of Status and Power Hierarchies in Modern Society

Prestige and dominance strategies evolved because they were functional for survival in groups (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Until today, these two motivations toward social rank influence how hierarchies are formed and how individuals react to the endowment of power. While the nature of prestige and dominance *motivations* was conserved, the characteristics of power and status *hierarchies* may have been transformed radically. This section discusses why modern societies created roles and positions that award structural power and/or status. Afterwards, we outline which form of social influence results from structural power and status.

Power and Status Hierarchies in Modern Society

Leader-follower relationships entail an essential tension (e.g., van Vugt et al., 2008). Although group members recognize the need for leaders, the benefits they bestow on leaders and the control they give up to leaders leaves followers vulnerable to exploitation (van Vugt, 2006). Indeed, plenty of power-holders abuse their influence and mistreat their subordinates (Kipnis, 1972; Tepper, 2000). This research confirmed lay observations about the corruptive nature of power. (As covered later in the chapter, recent research has gone beyond this overly general picture, identifying conditions under which power does and does not “corrupt.” Given painful experiences with past abusive leaders, some groups began to take preventive measures to change the nature of power.

Many modern societies now restrain and structurally define power to prevent its abuse (Lasswell & Kaplan, 2013; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). Regulations define how, and to what extent a single person exerts power. To illustrate, police officers can incarcerate people, impose financial penalties, and use physical violence only in clearly defined circumstances. Another alteration concerns the stability of resource-control. In ancestral societies, power positions were quite unstable and superiors had to defend their resources by aggressing against subordinates who were motivated toward their power (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Nowadays, many powerful positions are relatively stable, allowing power-holders to focus on leading the group rather than protecting their power (Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012; van Vugt et al., 2008).

While many societies have modified how resources are controlled, the psychology of prestige conferral seems to have changed very little. Until today, the most competent, skilled, and cooperative group members (e.g., star-athletes and outstanding managers) attain high social status (Cheng et al., 2013; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). As covered later in the chapter, it may be that status processes have changed much less than power processes because the latter but not the former tends to be abused upon conferral.

Social Influence from Status and Power

Both the powerful and the respected exert influence in their group (Anderson & Shirako, 2008; Cheng et al., 2013). Because the relationships between the powerless and the powerful, and those high and low in status are qualitatively different, social influence takes on different forms.

A powerful person is influential because the asymmetry in resources creates dependence. Low-ranking group members comply with the demands of those who control possessions, knowledge, and/or skill in order to safeguard benefits (e.g., money or livelihoods) or avoid punishment (e.g., physical welfare, being deprived of the resource; Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010; Cheng et al., 2013). Dependency relationships are ubiquitous: Subordinates abide to orders to get bonus payments; IT specialists pressure their employer for a raise because the company depends on their knowledge. Power relationships can be similar to trading relationships in which goods and services are provided in exchange for the power-holder’s resource. Subordinates do

not freely defer, as in the case of status (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001), but their deference is contingent on a resource.

Powerful leaders make followers comply by administering punishments and rewards. Notably, this form of leadership lowers subordinates' intrinsic motivation. When people worked to avoid reprimands or secure a raise, they perceived their tasks and duties as less enjoyable which lowered work quality and job-satisfaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Eventually, this could force powerful leaders to monitor and patronize their employees. This encumbers the leader and puts followers under stress. Taken together, leaders who mostly steer through influence (instead of status) seem somewhat dysfunctional.

High-status leaders exert influence because others look up to them. Followers want to attain the approval, affection, and friendship of the prestigious because they are attractive interaction partners (Cheng et al., 2013; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). To improve relationship quality, followers will comply with the wishes of esteemed leaders. Furthermore, prestigious individuals are perceived as competent, making their suggestions seem valuable (Maddux & Rogers, 1980; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). For instance, a heroic, high-status leader like Mahatma Gandhi (leader of the Indian independence movement) exerted influence without coercion. Inspired followers tried to resemble his ideals because they admired him. These arguments suggest that status can put people on a pedestal, turning their actions and opinions into guidelines for those of lower rank.

High-status leaders do not lead by applying a carrot-and-stick approach—they inspire their followers. Pursuing intrinsically set goals motivates followers to work harder (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Future research should continue to disentangle how power and status as orthogonal leader characteristics influence relationship and interaction quality between subordinates and superiors.

From Status to Power

In the real world, people often enjoy power and status simultaneously. In both naturalistic and laboratory based groups, those who were well liked and respected also controlled the resources (Barth & Noel, 1972; Carli & Eagly, 1999; Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In other words, status may be an antecedent of power because people often want to give control over resources to those they like and admire. Historic examples illustrate how easily respected veterans ascend the political ladder. Charles de Gaulle (former president of France) was the single French general who successfully fought back German troops in the Second World War. His heroic actions proved his bravery and patriotism, boosting his prestige among the public. He was elected president of France immediately after the war. Similarly, 39 out of 44 US presidents had—often quite successful—military careers before taking office. In this section, we trace the routes from status to power. At the end of this section, we discuss cases in which dominance-motivated people may strategically strive for status and thus use status as a means towards the end goal of having power.

Status Can Pave the Way to Power

People with high social status can become powerful because peers voluntarily endow them with control over resources. This is not always a passive or indirect process. Quite often this occurs because high-status individuals pursue socially accepted ways to access resources. In an experimental setting, the prestigious were generous towards their partner and gave up short-term personal gain (Blader & Chen, 2012). Notably, this promotes dependency and influence in the long run because the partners will feel the need to reciprocate (Flynn, 2003; Gurven, Allen-Arave, Hill, & Hurtado, 2000; Wedekind & Braithwaite, 2002). Furthermore, prestigious individuals initiate and participate in cooperative transactions by forming alliances, collaborating,

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and returning favors (Cottrell, Neuberg, & Li, 2007; Griskevicius et al., 2007; van Vugt & Iredale, 2013; Stiff & van Vugt, 2008). While these strategies are effective for securing high resource outcomes in non-forceful ways, they serve a second purpose. Generosity, reciprocation, and prosocial actions actually increase prestige (Bateson, Nettle, & Roberts, 2006; Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002). Hence, in contrast to the dominant who prioritize accumulating resources at all costs, including costs to the group (Blader & Chen, 2012), those striving for prestige use strategies that provide resources and gain the affection of others. The concern about their social esteem makes them prioritize relationship quality over short-term personal gain.

High-status people put effort into gaining resources but they also receive them without any action from their side. Perceived status activates expectations about the person's capabilities (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). These expectations can change the way low-status individuals interact with an esteemed counterpart and result in a self-fulfilling prophecy (Berger & Conner, 1974). In an experimental setting, participants believed they took part in a gamble with a bogus opponent of either low or high social status (a student with a very high or very low GPA respectively). At the end of the game, this bogus high-status opponent had earned a larger share of money (Thye, 2000); merely because participants believed the high-status person was more capable than they were. This evidence suggests that status helps to gain control over resources simply because peers believe the high-status person should have more resources.

In a similar vein, groups perceive a prestigious individual's possessions and assets to be more precious which promotes power. Expectation states theory suggests that the status value of an actor spreads to exchangeable objects (Berger & Conner, 1974; Lovaglia, 1994, 1997). For instance, products that were designed or produced by famous actors or athletes will achieve higher prices and revenues because of their association with the esteemed person (Elberse, 2007). Experimental evidence supports this reasoning. In a gambling experiment, subjects could exchange their own blue poker chips for either purple poker chips associated with a higher status partner or orange chips associated with a lower status partner. Participants tried harder to acquire the purple chips, assumed they were generally more important than orange chips, and forwent profit to obtain them (Thye, 2000). These findings illustrate the many advantages of social status. The prestigious have a relatively easier time obtaining material wealth and are passively bestowed with resources by their peers.

High-status paves the way to gaining material resources but it also facilitates social power—having control over others. Followers expect their prestigious peers to be competent enough to take over difficult leadership tasks (Bruins, Ellemers, & De Gilder, 1999; King, Johnson, & van Vugt, 2009; van Vugt et al., 2008) and they have good reasons to believe that they will indeed make great leaders. Status signals intellectual competence, social competence, and commitment to the group's values, all of which would help tackle the leadership duties of solving complex coordination tasks like distributing workload, monitoring deadlines, and resolving disputes. Additionally, respected individuals seem to endorse norms and values that forbid the abuse of power (Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011). Because status partly emerges by repeatedly observing a person cooperate, followers might infer that this person will adopt a benevolent and fair leadership style.

And indeed, when given a free choice, group members often place their most prestigious members in powerful leadership positions. Participants who made high-quality comments (Gintner & Lindsold, 1975; Sorrentino & Boutillier, 1975), were perceived as experts (Bottger, 1984; Littlepage et al., 1995; Ridgeway, 1987), donated to charity (Milinski et al., 2002), and made large contributions to a public fund (Willer, 2009), were all more likely to be placed in influential positions by their peers. High-status candidates often prove worthy of the responsibility they are given. Historic examples illustrate that esteemed people in powerful positions turn out to be heroic leaders. Nelson Mandela endured 27 years in prison for his political beliefs. Accepting this great personal sacrifice for his moral convictions earned him respect and

admiration around the world. After being released from prison, Mandela was elected president of South Africa with a landslide win. He continued to use his political power as a heroic leader, continuously working to benefit the nation's poorest.

High-status group members seem to be great candidates for leadership positions and their peers recognize their potential. However, under some circumstances status can be a poor indicator of a person's intentions and character. Historic examples demonstrate how initially respected and esteemed people used their power in destructive ways. For instance, Josef Stalin possessed great charisma and was able to quickly surround himself with followers and admirers. However, he turned into a tyrant as soon as he was given power. The question emerges: why is prestige sometimes not a good indicator of a person's competence and moral character? The next section discusses how some people use status as a way to seize power.

When Status is Used Strategically to Accumulate Power

Group members prefer to entrust power to those they respect, admire, and generally like. As such, people who desire power may strategically pursue status in order to clinch power. To elucidate the difference between genuinely and disingenuously pursuing prestige, narcissism will be contrasted with prestige motivation.

Narcissism

Narcissists can possess great charm and are often well liked on first encounters (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010). In part this is because narcissists are preoccupied with feeling great and wonderful and so they can radiate self-confidence and self-assuredness, known as the grandiosity dimension of narcissism (Ackerman et al., 2010). Narcissists streamline their appearance and behavior, for instance by dressing neatly, being funny, smiling, and standing self-assuredly, to gain others respect and admiration (Back et al., 2010). Their desire to be admired and popular makes them act in ways that please others to gain social status. However, status might be awarded prematurely. Research indicates that in the long run, narcissists are actually disliked by their peers (Paulhus, 1998). Why might this be the case?

Narcissism can have a dark underbelly: the entitlement/exploitation dimension of narcissism has been linked to a strong aspiration for power and superiority (Ackerman et al., 2010; Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004) and interpersonally harmful outcomes such as disparagement of others, rape, and aggression (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Watson & Morris, 1991). Evidence suggests that some narcissists strategically accumulate status in groups to prepare the ground for obtaining power. They initially conceal their dominance motive because they know that others disapprove of it (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984). Cultivating status and tempering dominance motivations may be functional strategies as narcissists have been successful in securing leadership positions in groups (Brunell et al., 2008).

However, in the long run, the socially toxic consequences of the entitlement/exploitation dimension may unfold upon attainment of power because power gives people the freedom to act on underlying motives that are socially distasteful (Mead, Baumeister, Stuppy, & Vohs, 2016). To summarize, narcissists can appear as competent and likable initially. Because they quickly accumulate prestige on first encounters, others might think of them as ideal candidates for leadership positions (Back et al., 2010; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). However, when they are in power, their strong drive for dominance might be unleashed—resulting in the feared tyrant instead of the imagined hero.

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Prestige Motivation

Prestige motivation describes the authentic concern to gain others' respect, esteem, and affection. Unlike narcissists, who use status as a stepping stone on their way to power, those seeking prestige pursue status as a goal in itself—they do not necessarily also want power. Indeed, research demonstrated that status is an emotional reward that is different from any material resources (Emerson, 1972).

At first blush, it seems promising to measure prestige motivation or social status when selecting candidates for a powerful position. Evidence suggests that those who want to gain approval act as successful and desirable leaders (Blader & Chen, 2012; Fragale et al., 2011). Additionally, when endowed with power, those highly motivated toward prestige used their influence for the good of the group rather than to maintain their power (Maner & Mead, 2010). Although this initial evidence is promising, it behooves researchers and practitioners to keep in mind that there is a moderate but consistent positive correlation between prestige motivation and dominance motivation. Hence, when studying or selecting based on prestige motivation it is important to be careful with conceptualization and measurement. For example, when trying to staff leadership positions, implicit measures of prestige and dominance that are less prone to be biased by self-presentational efforts might be better indicators of a candidate's true motivational underpinnings (Schultheiss, Campbell, & McClelland, 1999).

The role of prestige motivation in leadership is currently underexplored and provides ample possibilities for future research. Initial evidence suggest that prestige-motivated leaders secured better group outcomes (Blader & Chen, 2012), acted in the best interest of the group (Mead & Maner, 2012) and were perceived as warmer by subordinates (Fragale et al., 2011). However, for a balanced discussion, it is important to look at the potential drawbacks of status-oriented leaders. It may be that leaders who are overly concerned with the needs of the group may have a leadership style that seems opportunistic and lacking directedness. This may even pave the way for dominance-motivated people to disrupt the social group and overthrow the leader to gain power. The field would benefit from continuing to investigate which circumstances allow prestige-oriented individuals to become successful and heroic leaders.

From Power to Leadership

Heroic leaders are central and valuable figures in the social realm. They protect their groups from harm and work towards securing better life outcomes for their followers. Identifying circumstances that make leaders act as heroes is thus a worthwhile endeavor. In this section, we first discuss *action-orientation* as a broad psychological outcome of power and outline how it relates to leadership behavior. Afterwards, we identify structural and individual differences that determine if a power-holder will act heroically or tyrannically. Essentially, we outline how threats to power and threats to status can prompt leaders to harm subordinates because it helps them protect their individual power.

Can Structural Power Produce Tyrants?

Structural power positions have been argued to trigger a state of action-orientation (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003) arguably because having control over resources enables individuals to realize personal goals without coordinating with others. For example, powerful people perceived that they could realize their goals more easily (Guinote, 2010) and were more likely to take action towards their goal (Galinsky et al., 2003). They approached others more (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002), made first offers in negotiations (Magee, Galinsky & Gruenfeld, 2007), and even produced better application letters for a job (Lammers, Dubois, Rucker, &

Galinsky, 2013). While there is initial evidence suggesting that an action-orientation might benefit status because it makes people more proactive (Kilduff & Galinsky, 2013), action-orientation may be a rather ambiguous outcome of power.

Depending on the individual's goals and motivations, the feeling that one has the power to act can be used to hurt or help followers (Cheng et al., 2003; Galinsky, Magee, Rus, Rothman & Todd, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010). Ample evidence suggests that feelings of autonomy foster egoism and disregard for dependents and subordinates. Those made to feel powerful were indifferent to others feelings (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2008). They put less cognitive energy into understanding other's behavior—even in delicate situations: Judges produced less complex judgments when they were in more powerful positions (Gruenfeld & Preston, 2000). The powerful blandly violated politeness norms by interrupting others when talking, taking more cookies from a plate, and eating with their mouth open (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Keltner et al., 2003).

More detrimental to status is the fact that power-holders often seem to prioritize themselves over others. In the workplace, a considerable amount of bosses act like tyrants—not leaders (Barrington & Franco, 2010). Why does structural power tempt people to abuse it?

One argument has been that, because of the many benefits of power, the powerful are motivated to maintain a power-distance gap between themselves and their subordinates (McClelland, 1975; Maner & Mead, 2010; van Vugt et al., 2008). In other words, powerful people abuse their power in order to protect it from others. For example, when leaders were given a position of unstable power—and hence, they could potentially lose their power to other group members—they use their power to protect their position rather than to help the group (Maner & Mead, 2010). In contrast, when power was stable and absolute, such detrimental behaviors were not observed.

When Does Awarded Power Produce Heroic Leaders? Moderators of the Effect of Power

Having structural power entails the tempting possibility to misuse one's influence to accumulate personal gain rather than securing the group's welfare. However, not everybody who is given control over others becomes corrupted. Prominent historic figures like Abraham Lincoln or Nelson Mandela, and everyday examples of esteemed bosses and supervisors (Conference Board, 2010), suggest that some power-holders do act as benevolent leaders and even heroes. This section examines individual differences and structural features of power—how positions are awarded and designed—that moderate how influence is exercised. Lastly, we discuss how threats to power and status influence the power-holders behavior.

Individual Characteristics

Dominance Motivation

As discussed earlier: those motivated to dominate are those who desire power the most. At their core, dominant people want to accumulate resources to establish a power gap, create dependent relationships to subordinates, and make sure others stay inferior (Barkow, 1989; Ellis, 1995; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Dominance-oriented power-holders took strategic actions that harmed the group goal just to maintain control and influence over their subordinates (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012). For instance, they excluded a highly skilled team member that could have helped the group progress because they did not want their superiority to be threatened. Prestige-oriented power-holders on the other hand kept the rival in the group because they prioritized their team's welfare over their own (Maner & Mead, 2010).

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Testosterone is the physiological antecedent of a dominance motivation. High or rising circulating testosterone has been linked to bossy behaviors in adult males (Mazur & Booth, 1998). Moreover, testosterone and dominance have a circular relationship in which dominant behaviors reinforce testosterone levels and vice versa (Mazur & Lamb, 1980). Trait testosterone levels predict who is drawn to power positions and who tries to avoid them. Participants with low testosterone levels did not desire power and felt uncomfortable and insecure when given power (Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006). Potentially, these people could make great leaders because they are not preoccupied with maintain the power gap but instead prioritize the group's progress. However, these findings illustrate that sometimes those with the right mindset and personality for influential jobs shy away from these positions which gives leeway for dominant individuals to take over.

Goals

The power-holder's norms, values, and goals will shape how power is exerted. Andrew Carnegie (an American industrialist) for instance, grew up poor but ascended to one of the richest citizens of the US. His own social advancement let him realize the importance of education and equality and prompted him to use his large fortune for philanthropic causes (Wall, 1989). Hence, those who have the "right" mindset will prioritize their follower's needs over personal wishes.

Multiple studies illustrate how structural power brings out the best in kindhearted people. Power-holders high in relational self-construal and empathetic concern divided resources fairly between themselves and others. Their concern for others made them act just as fairly as participants endowed with status in this study (Blader & Chen, 2012). They also tried to take other's perspective more (Gordon & Chen, 2013). In a similar vein, communally oriented power-holders divided workload equally while the exchange-oriented made their counterpart do the majority of work for a group assignment (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001). Lastly, as mentioned, individuals with a prestige motivation, or who associated having power with having prestige, used power for the good of the group rather than to protect and increase their own power (Maner & Mead, 2010; Schmid Mast, Jonas, & Hall, 2009). In conclusion, a person's goals moderate the effects of power on interpersonal behavior and codetermine leadership style. It is advisable for practitioners to assess personality traits that tap into other-orientation when selecting candidates for influential positions. Implicit measures that circumvent self-presentational efforts seem especially useful.

Structural Characteristics

Accountability

Making power-holders accountable for their behavior heightens their concern for the needs and wishes of their subordinates. Accountability mechanisms make sure that a superior's decisions are identifiable and the subject of critical evaluation (Grant & Keohane, 2005). For instance, companies closely monitor how managers spend their project budgets by installing internal revision teams that scrutinize irregularities in budget allocations. In experiments, inducing feelings of responsibility led the dominant to both rein in their selfish desires and display community-minded behaviors such as volunteering (Winter & Barenbaum, 1985). Accountability also prevented power-holders from taking credit for successes and blaming failure on their subordinates (Rus, van Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2012). Essentially, liability forces even dominance motivated power-holders to be concerned about their status. Because their actions are evaluated regarding their value for the group goal, power-holders will try to meet their subordinates' expectations in order to avoid punishment for misconduct.

The Basis of Power

Superiors exert a more functional, goal-oriented leadership style when the stability of their power is conditional on their group's performance. For instance, managers' structural power is often tied to performance outcomes. If performance objectives are missed, a manager could lose his job or be denied a desirable bonus. This prompts power-holders to be tuned towards the needs of their employees and show superior individuation ability and task-orientation (Galinsky et al., 2014; Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006). Practitioners are advised to tie the stability of power to overall group performance. This ensures that superiors prioritize to lead their team towards success and prevents them from becoming absorbed in power struggles.

Empowering subordinates to decrease the absolute power gap is another way to prevent abusive leadership. Nowadays, power dynamics are often somewhat reciprocal. To illustrate, while professors issue grades and award recommendations that can determine a student's career path, students give course evaluations that can influence a professor's likelihood to be promoted. Superiors will be more attuned towards their group's needs and wishes—and hence more concerned about being liked and respected—when their subordinates exert control over their outcomes.

Threat

Legitimacy Threat

Legitimization practices exist to justify a leader's superior power towards the inferiors. In the ancestral past, positions of power were often inherited which provided legitimization through birth right. In the case of kings and other royalty, power was even "approved by god." In today's society, power is often legitimately constituted via a democratic voting system. Essentially, legitimization facilitates prestige conferral because it underlines the admirable skills, knowledge, and traits that justify why the person exerts control over others. Subordinates perceive that the person was put in power for a reason: either due to some supernatural power, an inherited right, or superior skills and knowledge.

Superiors who attained power illegitimately have low social status in the eyes of followers. Illegitimacy implies that they do not possess the traits that would justify that they exert influence over other's life. Accordingly, it is more likely that those at the bottom strive to overthrow unauthorized power-holders. Research demonstrated that those low in rank took action to change the status-quo when they perceived the power hierarchy to be illegitimate (Martorana, Galinsky, & Rao, 2005). Illegitimacy also affects the power-holders behavior: If rulers felt that they did not deserve the power they were bestowed, they became inactive, hesitant, and more self-critical (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008; Lammers, Stapel, & Galinsky, 2010). Still other research demonstrates that a threat to legitimacy made power-holders demean their subordinates, partially in an attempt to restore threatened feelings of self-worth (Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2011). Taken together, illegitimate rulers have high power but lack social status. Whether being disliked and disrespected makes rulers aggress or socially withdraw is probably moderated by individual traits. In any case, power that begets status prevents effective leadership. Within a large organization, employees that exerted control over others but lacked prestige were involved in more coworker-conflicts than any other combination of power and status (Anicich, Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, in press). Practitioners are advised to make the legitimization for their power-holders explicit such that working relationships are not undermined by power quarrels.

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Stability Threat

When rivals challenge the current power-holder, the stability of the hierarchy is threatened. When they fear to lose their influence in the group, some power-holders use a primitive coping mechanism—the dominance strategy—to reassert their position. This entails applying brute force and violence to trump the rival. For instance, when Vladimir Putin (president of Russia) was criticized and ridiculed by a female activist group (Pussy Riot), he protected his power (and status) by sentencing the women to harsh prison sentences. Aggression could indeed be functional because it evolved in part as a strategy to coopt other's resources (Buss & Duntley, 2006; Tooby & Cosmides, 1988).

Will all threatened leaders act like Putin and pursue dominance strategies to protect their power? Previous research showed how a threat to power made leaders demean and tease their subordinates and express anger (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Georgesen & Harris, 2006; Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1986; Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, & Heerey, 2001). They do so in order to reassert control over resources and widen the power gap. However, a new stream of research discovered that threat does not trigger aggression in all types of leaders and against anybody. Rather, only dominance motivated superiors who have a strong interest in preserving their power take strategic action that harm their rivals (Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012; Case & Maner, 2014). The dominance-motivated but not the prestige-motivated excluded skilled rivals, withheld information from their group, and prevented their subordinates from forming bonds and alliances. Notably, they selectively hurt the most competent and hence most threatening individual, not the group on a broad basis.

In the long run, dominance is a dysfunctional strategy to confront power threats. In today's world, where status and legitimacy are important to maintain power positions, dominant behaviors deteriorate a person's prestige even more (van Vugt, 2006). A coercive superior with tarnished status will further destabilize the power hierarchy. As discussed earlier, power-holders that are low in status are disliked and appear illegitimate (Anicich et al., in press). This motivates members to leave the group or revolt against the dominant leader (Martorana et al., 2005; van Vugt et al., 2004).

Although highly competent and skilled in-group rivals can threaten both a leader's power (e.g., as the rival might try to get hold of the powerful position) and status (e.g., as subordinates might divert attention to the rival, and start conferring prestige to him or her), research is mute as to which one is more problematic for leadership behavior group functioning. Future research should explore whether prestige-oriented leaders prioritize to regain their subordinate's affection by working harder for the group instead of strategically harming rivals to secure power. Furthermore, scholars should test whether rivals that exclusively threaten power or status trigger tailored coping strategies in leaders and how this interacts with trait motivations.

Intergroup Competition

A very different form of threat that high-power individuals face is the hazard of a rivaling outgroup. When competing against another group, powerful individuals suppress selfish motives and prioritize to achieve the best possible outcome for their team. Intergroup competition leads power-holders, independently of their motivation for dominance or prestige, to aggress against the outgroup and support their ingroup as much as possible (Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012). Those who attack and defeat external rivals will accumulate prestige because they signal devotion to the group's goals (Halevy, Chou, Cohen, & Livingston, 2012). This mechanism underlines why power holders are often transformed into great leaders and even heroes in times of war or natural catastrophes. George W. Bush's (former president of the United States) popularity rankings skyrocketed after he declared war to those responsible for the 9/11 terror

attacks. Great Britain celebrated Winston Churchill (former prime minister of the United Kingdom) as a hero for leading British troops to victory in the Second World War. When the commander's abilities and goals are put to the test and he proves capable of securing the group's survival, he will achieve high social status.

Many external threats afford leaders to act in ways that harm their ingroup in the here and now but secure group survival in the long run. For instance, in times of economic crisis, managers have to enforce salary cuts or collective dismissals to prevent bankruptcy. Prestige-oriented leaders now face a difficult dilemma: They need to cause momentary suffering in order to secure group-survival in the long run. Future research could explore how prestige and dominance motivated leaders will handle this tradeoff. It is conceivable that prestige-oriented leaders delay painful but necessary decisions because they want to protect their image. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that they will make the difficult decisions that are needed because they are not concerned with keeping their high-ranking position. Dominance-motivated leaders may be quicker to make harsh but necessary changes. However, it is also possible that they neglect the needs of the group during times of crisis in order to solidify their power. Given the competing possibilities and the importance of these answers for practical and theoretical knowledge, it behooves researchers to continue uncovering the answers to these tough questions.

Conclusion

This chapter started off by differentiating power and status theoretically. Evolution brought about dominance and prestige based hierarchies because they help groups cope with survival challenges. Until today, prestige and dominance—hence desire to be high up in the status and power hierarchy—are central features in human's motivational portfolio. Even though power and status are often correlated and conflated in the real world, scholars should be mindful about their theoretical differences.

The second half of this chapter discussed linkages between status, power, and leadership outcomes. First, status and power are antecedents of leadership. Humans want those whom they like and respect to take control over group outcomes because they hope they will act as heroes. However, it is often those who desire to dominate that end up having power (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Cheng et al., 2010; Lord, de Vader, & Alliger, 1986) because they take strategic actions that lure others into bestowing power on them. Second, prestige and dominance are motivations that shape how leaders use their power. Prestige-motivated leaders had their followers' best interests in mind and came close to the ideal of heroic leadership. They behaved fairly (Blader & Chen, 2012), and stayed focused on the group goal instead of monitoring and controlling rivals (Maner & Mead, 2010; Mead & Maner, 2012). Third, the interaction between power and status shapes leader's actions. Leaders that lack status, for instance because they are seen as illegitimate, destabilize hierarchies (Martorana et al., 2005). Especially dominant leaders will then try to stabilize the rank-order in dysfunctional ways, potentially exacerbating the problem and harming their subordinates (Maner & Mead, 2010). To summarize, superior's *trait* and *state* concern for power and status explains many divergent leadership outcomes.

This chapter furnished suggestions to help practitioners detect potential heroic leaders and design more functional leadership-roles. First of all, indirect measures are advisable to assess the strength of candidates' dominance motivations. As mentioned, dominance is often concealed because others disapprove of it (van Vugt et al., 2008). Practitioners should avoid giving power to the dominant as they might set aside group goals to secure and increase personal power. Second of all, we recommend to design influential positions such that power is contingent on status. Transparent legitimization, accountability mechanisms, and built-in co-dependencies between managers and subordinates serve this purpose. Work teams will be more stable and functional when employees respect, and admire their supervisors.

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We hope that this chapter will inspire researchers to further disentangle the differential outcomes of power and dominance, and status and prestige, respectively and to examine them as separate constructs in the future. It also seems promising to expand the current framework by including even other individual difference factors. Especially the interaction between dominance motivation and other individual traits provides ample possibilities for future research. For instance, it remains puzzling why many real-world leaders undermine and circumvent existing structural power constraints even though their power is currently not threatened. Many real-world cases illustrate how the most influential and high-ranking people evade taxes, bribe government officials, enforce nepotism, and pad their expense accounts. Apparently, some power-holders constantly strive to aggrandize and monopolize power for other than functional reasons (Kipnis, 1976). The individual difference factors that cause the desire for power to be unquenchable are still in the dark.

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