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Harnessing Power to Capture Leadership

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Napoleon once said, when asked to explain the lack of great statesmen in the world, that "to get power you need to display absolute pettiness; to exercise power you need to show true greatness." Such pettiness and such greatness are rarely found in one person.

—From *The Contender* motion picture (Lurie, 2001)

This chapter examines the relationship between the related yet distinct constructs of power and leadership. Although power (asymmetric control over valued resources) is often a foundation of leadership (influencing and motivating a group of individuals towards a common goal), we consider power to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the emergence of leadership. We distinguish power from leadership along a number of dimensions and highlight that the relationship of power to leadership lies in power's psychological effects. A number of the psychological properties of power—action, optimism, abstract thinking—can be seen as part and parcel of effective leadership. Other psychological consequences of power—diminished perspective-taking, risk-taking, overconfidence, and the tendency to objectify others by perceiving them through a lens of self-interest—are often associated with malfeasance and are the antithesis of leadership. Our model of power and leadership contends that an effective leader is one who is able to harness the positive psychological effects of power while mitigating the negative ones. Thus, the best leaders are action-oriented, optimistic perspective takers who see the big picture. We discuss how the springboard of power combined

with perspective taking can be a particularly constructive force that allows for the emergence of effective leadership.

The world has long been populated by powerful people striving to satisfy their personal predilections, but *leaders* are an altogether rarer species. Despite their intimate relationship, power and leadership are not synonymous: the mere possession of power does not qualify one as a leader and one can lead others without possessing power. The aim of this chapter is threefold. First, we define and distinguish between the constructs of power and leadership. We then summarize research documenting the psychological effects, both positive and negative, of power on cognition and behavior. Finally, we develop a model proposing that effective leadership requires harnessing the positive psychological consequences of power while mitigating its insidious and destructive psychological effects.

DISTINGUISHING POWER FROM LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a subject that has long captured the interest of researchers and practitioners. In conducting a search of the psychological literature, we found that more than 16,000 articles have been published on the topic of leadership since 1990. Although this sustained interest has led to a plethora of research, agreement on how to define and operationalize leadership remains elusive. This problem was best captured by Stogdill (1974) who commented that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 259).

Despite the lack of consensus on how to define leadership, we define it as influencing, motivating, and enabling a group of individuals to contribute to the success of a common goal or shared purpose (House et al., 1999; see also Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Rauch & Behling, 1984). According to our definition, leadership is a social phenomenon—one that requires the presence of others; a leader must have members to influence, motivate, and mobilize.

Many definitions of power involve control over resources, and we define power as the control over important or valued resources—our own and others' (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Lammers & Galinsky, in press; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). From this perspective, dependence is the inverse of power; the powerless are dependent on the powerful to achieve their desired outcomes. For example, subordinates must obtain approval from their bosses to embark on new initiatives and children must obtain permission from parents before they can partake in desired activities. In contrast, those who possess power depend less on the resources of others and are therefore more easily able to satisfy their own needs and desires. From this control over valued resources, power affords the capacity to influence others despite resistance (French & Raven, 1959; Weber, 1947) and, it could also be said, that

power provides the capacity to be uninfluenced by others (Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2007). Without power—when one's outcomes are determined by others—one is constrained. But with power, one is relatively free of such constraint. The asymmetric interdependence of power makes it an inherently social phenomenon.

Power and leadership share two common threads. First, both constructs involve influence. A leader is, by definition, someone who influences others; influence also often emerges from control over valued resources. Second, both constructs involve a focus on goals. A leader motivates a group of individuals towards a shared objective, and numerous research findings demonstrate that power increases a focus on goals and facilitates goal-directed behavior (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Guinote, 2007a; Smith, Jostmann, Galinsky, & van Dijk, in press).

But power and leadership are *not* synonymous, and they diverge on a number of important dimensions. First, power's influence is derived from the ability to provide or withhold resources or administer punishments (Keltner et al., 2003). In contrast, the influence of leadership emerges not from the lure of incentives but by inspiring through rhetoric and being the exemplar of desired behavior (Avolio & Bass, 1988). Likewise, although the concept of a powerless leader may seem anomalous, one can motivate others towards a shared goal in the absence of control over resources or the ability to administer rewards or punishments. For example, Nelson Mandela galvanized his fellow citizens to take up the fight against South African apartheid despite a 27-year imprisonment, and Rosa Parks inspired a nationwide fight for civil rights despite having neither A1 carrots to dangle nor sticks to wield.

Second, power and leadership often differ on the ultimate purpose or goal of wielding one's influence. Power's influence is often directed towards satisfying personal desires (Keltner et al., 2003; Kipnis, 1976). In contrast, leaders exert influence to help the group reach a shared goal. Thus, power is often egocentric, exercised in the service of the self, whereas leadership is directed towards elevating the common good for all its members. As a result, a power holder will often examine subordinates' assets and skills through a lens of self-interest—to discern how those strengths might be harnessed to serve his or her personal objectives. For example, a powerful male looking for female companionship may choose to have attractive female subordinates work on a task with him even if their talents are not well suited for the specific task. In contrast, a leader will also seek to capitalize on subordinates' assets and skills to meet a shared objective and not for the purpose of satisfying personal desires. Within the corporate setting, such shared goals can include launching a new product or entering a new market, and within the political realm, these goals can include altering oppressive practices or producing a comprehensive immigration or health-care policy.

Third, partially as a result of these disparate goals (personal versus collective), subordinates are subjected to markedly different experiences as the targets of influence by leaders and the powerful. Since power involves A2carrots and sticks as the vehicles of influence, members are likely to view their own behavior as externally demanded and therefore the product of extrinsic motivation. As a consequence, once the powerful's punishments or rewards are no longer present, the ability to influence will diminish and the previous displays of motivation will evaporate. In contrast, a leader moves members towards a goal through intrinsic motivation, transforming individuals through choice and commitment.

Fourth, leadership connotes status and respect, whereas such privileges do not necessarily accompany the possession of power. By virtue of a leader's ability to harness members' intrinsic motivation to reach a shared goal, a leader earns deference and esteem. The use of power, in contrast, does not guarantee positive impressions from subordinates or observers.

These distinctions between power and leadership, based in findings from empirical research, are consistent with seminal theories on what attributes define a leader. For example, Burns (1978) distinguishes between leaders and what he refers to as ''power wielders.'' In contrast to those who ''mobilize . . . resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers'' (p. 18), mere power wielders prioritize their own motives, regardless of whether those motives are shared by the individuals they seek to influence. Similarly, Bass and Avolio (1994) define transformational leaders as those who consider followers' needs before their own, motivate rather than coerce, and arouse interest in a shared goal.

In this section, we distinguished power from leadership on a number of dimensions, from types of goals (personal versus collective) to the type of motivation they inspire (extrinsic versus intrinsic). In the next section, we explore how power transforms individuals' psychological processes and alters their psychological landscape. We contend that power relates to leadership through its ability to alter an individual's cognition and behavior. Whether power leads to the emergence of leadership depends on whether the positive psychological effects of power engulf the more deleterious effects.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT OF POWER

Power has often been considered a foundational force that governs social relationships. Because power is so critical, it not only regulates social interactions but it also alters individual psychological states. Kipnis (1976) was one of the first empirical social psychologists to argue that possessing power has metamorphic consequences, and a review of the power literature by Keltner

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and colleagues (2003) provided ample evidence to support the idea that indi-
viduals are transformed by the experience of power. Indeed, a number of
researchers have argued that because of its transformative effects, power
and its effects come to reside psychologically within individuals (e.g., Bargh,
Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Galinsky
et al., 2003; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). An important implication
of this conceptualization of power is that its effects can persist beyond the
context where power was initially experienced (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006;
Chen et al., 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003; Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky,
in press; Guinote, 2007a; Smith & Trope, 2006). As a result, being given con-
trol over resources (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Galinsky et al., 2003) or even
being asked to recall a time when one had power over others (Anderson &
Galinksy, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003, 2007) are all sufficient to trigger power's
psychological and behavioral effects.

Our model of power is influenced by the power-approach theory (Keltner
et al., 2003), which has inspired a deluge of research on how power trans-
forms and directs individuals' psychological states. According to this theory
(Keltner et al., 2003), possessing power affects the relative activation of
two complementary neurobiological forces—the behavioral approach and
inhibition systems—that combine to drive behavior and cognition. Power
triggers behavioral approach, which is posited to regulate behavior associ-
ated with rewards. In contrast, powerlessness activates the behavioral inhibi-
tion system, which has been equated to an alarm system that triggers
avoidance and response inhibition. As a result of the relative activation of
these two systems, power has a number of predictable effects on cognition
and behavior.

In understanding how power relates to leadership, we argue that the foun-
dation of this relationship lies in power's psychological effects. Our model
asserts that how individuals conceive or construct their ability to control
important outcomes has meaningful implications for their ability to effec-
tively lead others. What matters most are the psychological effects of power,
which often constitute the proximate and driving force on the behavior of
potential leaders.

A number of these psychological effects of power can be seen as part
and parcel of effective leadership. Other psychological manifestations of
power are associated with malfeasance and are the antithesis of leadership.
Thus, we contend that an effective leader is one who is able to harness the
positive effects of power while mitigating the negative effects. In the next
two sections, we highlight how power alters the psychological state of indi-
viduals, beginning with the positive effects and concluding with the negative
effects.

THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF POWER

Power Increases Action

One of the most robust effects of possessing and experiencing power is that it directly translates into action. For example, Galinsky et al. (2003) found that participants who had high power in an organizational task (i.e., were managers) were more likely to ''hit'' in a simulated game of blackjack (an example of an action orientation) than were participants who had low power (i.e., were subordinates). The powerful are more likely to decide to negotiate an offer than to simply accept an initial proposal and are also more inclined to make the first offer in a negotiation compared to those without power. Both of these strategies have been repeatedly shown to garner significant financial gains to the individual (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001; Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007). Finally, the powerful are more likely to help in emergencies; whereas others sit back, trapped by diffusion of responsibility (thinking others will help so they do not have to) or by looking to the nonresponding pack to guide their own behavior (thinking since others are not helping, they should not either), the powerful spring into action and help those in distress (Whitson, Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, & Liljenquist, 2007).

Power Makes People Optimistic

Power increases a general sense of optimism, with the powerful feeling more hopeful about their own future (e.g., getting a good job or avoiding gum disease) (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). Power-induced optimism even extends to outcomes outside an individual's own life: power increases attention toward positive aspects of the environment and decreases attention to negative aspects of the environment. As a result, the powerful view the world as a less dangerous and threatening place. The powerful see mostly opportunity dancing in front of them, whereas the powerless are more likely to see potential hazards lurking about.

Power Increases Abstract Thinking

Power leads to a focus on the global rather than the local features of stimuli (Guinote, 2007b) and results in information being processed at higher levels of abstraction (Smith & Trope, 2006). As a result, the powerful compared to the powerless focus less on the details and more on the ''big picture.'' They are better able to perceive patterns and to capture the gist of information (Smith & Trope, 2006). They are also more likely to focus on and attend to task-relevant information (Overbeck & Park, 2001). All of these psychological

effects of power allow the powerful to see, create, and articulate a broad vision of the world—one that could potentially inspire others. By seeing the forest, the powerful are not constrained by the gnarled branches of the trees.

Power Increases Goal–Directed Behavior

Power channels thought and behavior toward accomplishing one's goals in a wide variety of situations (Bargh et al., 1995; Chen et al., 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003). Compared to those who are powerless, individuals who experience power are more likely to engage in behaviors that are consistent with currently held goals, and as a result, their observable behavior is more closely aligned with their internal states. For example, Galinsky et al., (2003) induced discomfort in participants by having a fan blow directly onto them. The experimenters constructed the situation so that the purpose of the fan was unclear to participants, thereby creating uncertainty about whether it was permissible to take action against the fan by moving it or turning it off. In their study, the powerful were more likely to remove that stimulus and satisfy their goal of reducing physical discomfort.

One consequence of this increased goal direction is that the powerful, compared to the powerless, often do not show decrements in executive functioning, which reflect attentional control mechanisms that coordinate various cognitive subprocesses (Miyake, Friedman, Emerson, Witzki, & Howerter, 2000). Proper executive functioning requires effective goal focus and impairments result from difficulty in actively maintaining a goal (Duncan, Emslie, Williams, Johnson, & Freer, 1996). As a result, lacking power produces goal neglect, which impairs executive functioning (Smith et al., in press).

THE PERNICIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF POWER

Based on the above effects of power, an image emerges of the powerful as focused, optimistic individuals with broad visions geared towards action. Power, however, does not always lead to beneficial outcomes (e.g., Burns, 1978). In a social context, power can also lead to dangerous and destructive behaviors. In this section we explore the less desirable consequences of power.

The Powerful Ignore Other's Perspectives and Emotions

The powerful appear to be particularly poor perspective takers. Indeed, power appears to reduce social attentiveness, placing a blind spot on considering the unique vantage points of others. Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, and Gruenfeld (2006) found that high-power participants were less likely to

spontaneously adopt another's visual perspective, less likely to take into account that another person lacks their privileged knowledge, and less accurate in judging others' facial expressions of emotion. For example, Galinsky et al. asked participants to draw the letter ''E'' on their foreheads with a marker. Those who had been made to feel powerless were three times more likely to draw the ''E'' so that it was legible to someone facing them. Those made to feel powerful, however, drew the letter so that it looked correct from their internal perspective but was backwards from the point of view of someone facing them. Possessing power seems to almost instantly impair the ability to see things from other people's points of view. Similarly, the powerful have difficulty recognizing and adjusting for the fact that others do not share this privileged perspective. For example, the same semantic content (e.g., ''nice suit!'') can be received as a compliment or a thinly veiled insult, depending on knowledge of the speaker's tastes and previous interactions. Galinsky et al. presented participants with a message that on its face seemed sincere (''About the restaurant, it was marvelous, just marvelous''), but privileged background knowledge about the speaker's intentions suggested a sarcastic interpretation. They found that the powerful inaccurately predicted that others would see the world as they saw it (i.e., that the message was sarcastic) even though these others lacked access to the private knowledge held by the powerful participants.

High-power negotiators are also less accurate in perceiving (Galinsky et al., 2006) and less influenced by the emotions of others (Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, & Manstead, 2006). For example, Van Kleef et al., found that low-power negotiators conceded more to an angry opponent than to a happy one. In contrast, high-power negotiators were often uninfluenced by the type of emotion displayed by their opponents.

The Powerful Objectify Others

Power increases objectification, or the tendency to view others as a tool for one's own purpose (Gruenfeld et al., in press). In essence, power heightens the tendency to conceive of individuals in one's social environment as possessing an instrumental and utilitarian purpose. As a result, the powerful approach and attend to useful others who will help them complete their goals (Gruenfeld et al., in press). For example, Gruenfeld et al. assigned male participants to either a manager or subordinate and then primed half of these individuals with words related to sex (e.g., *stiff, wet, bed, skin, sweat*). They found that the managers (the high-power participants) wanted to work with an attractive female but only after being exposed to words related to sex.

This tendency towards instrumental attention was captured in a series of studies by Overbeck and Park (2006). They found that when the powerful

were assigned goals related to making their workplace comfortable, they took greater effort to learn about their subordinates and remembered more distinct information about them. But when they were assigned goals related to making their workplace particularly efficient, they recalled less correct information about their subordinates and were less able to distinguish their unique characteristics. All in all, power is associated with instrumental attention driven by one's most salient, currently held goal.

This relationship between power and instrumental attention is not always undesirable. It can be dysfunctional for social relationships but functional for reaching many organizational goals. Within the corporation, as is true in nonhuman hierarchies, superiors are expected to use subordinates to complete important tasks and this power-induced tendency towards instrumental attention can improve efficiency. For example, Gruenfeld et al. (in press) found that when choosing among job candidates, high-power participants were more likely to select the candidate who best matched the position qualifications and requirements compared to those primed with low power. Similarly, instrumental attention can lead to efficient division of labor and the optimization of individual talents, and ultimately result in the maximization of wealth. By optimizing talents, the powerful can allow for and produce feelings of self-growth among subordinates. Of course, instrumental attention and behavior become less appropriate when a superior delegates professional tasks to someone who is not a direct report or delegates personal chores to or pursues his own personal desires with a professional subordinate (Bargh et al., 1995). Seeing others through the lens of self-interest can lead those others to feel alienated. Indeed, research on sexual objectification illustrates a variety of negative psychological effects for women when they are sexually objectified by men (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Frederickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn & Twenge, 1998).

The Powerful Are Overconfident

The powerful are also vulnerable to being overconfident in their judgments and decisions (Sivanathan & Galinsky, 2007). Overconfidence refers to an individual's tendency to overestimate his or her abilities or the accuracy of his or her thoughts and decisions. Sivanathan and Galinsky found converging evidence that power affected the three common strands of overconfidence—the tendency to overstate one's skills relative to the average (better than average effect, Alicke, Kotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995); the belief that chance events are subject to personal control (illusion of control, Langer, 1975); and the tendency to be overconfident in the precision of one's answers (miscalibration, Lichtenstein, Fischhoff, & Phillips, 1982). These empirical results support pejorative comments about numerous

powerful CEOs and politicians making decisions fueled by hubris and a boundless sense of overconfidence.

The Powerful Are Risk Takers

Possessing power not only makes one optimistic and overconfident but it also increases people's proclivity for risk (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). When people experience power, they attend more to information related to rewards and as a result, when presented with a risky course of action, the powerful are likely to direct their sights on the potential payoffs. At the same time, the powerful, with a subdued behavioral inhibition system, are less likely to focus on the potential threats or downsides of a risky choice. Thus, the dual focus on rewards and a lack of attention to potential dangers encourages the powerful to engage in risky choices. Across a set of five studies using myriad contexts, Anderson & Galinsky (2006) demonstrated a clear link between power and risk, such that the powerful were more likely to show greater risk preferences, make riskier gambles and choices, find risky sexual activity more attractive, and resort to risky tactics in negotiations.

One of the important implications of these findings lies in the taken-for-granted assumption that powerful individuals like CEOs engage in question-able behaviors, from unethical personal dealings or questionable corporate mergers and acquisitions, because of power's corrupting influence. Instead, as Anderson & Galinsky (2006) note, it may be an optimistic take on risk, rather than any inherent depravity, that leads power holders to engage in seemingly questionable acts.

The observed link between power, optimism, and risk taking has implications for how power, once attained, is maintained or lost. Positive illusions can lead people to achieve unlikely accomplishments by embarking on low-probability journeys and persisting when others would quit (Taylor & Brown, 1988). Such unbridled confidence can lead the powerful to make the seem-ingly impossible possible and, in the process, achieve leadership. The relationship between power, overconfidence, and risk taking, however, could also contribute directly to losses in power. For example, financial investments driven by overconfidence could lead to large losses, with overconfidence being one way that power often "leads to its own demise" (Winter & Stewart, 1983).

Selecting the Right Leader: Power Increases the Correspondence between Traits and Behavior

Power increases the correspondence between traits and behavior (Bargh et al., 1995; Chen et al., 2001) by reducing the strength of the situation that

usually exerts pressure on and constrains the behavior of individuals (Galinsky et al., 2007). Because power reduces the constraining influence of the situation on thought and expression, the personalities of high-power individuals are better predictors of their expressions and behavior than are the personalities of low-power individuals. For instance, the personalities of high-status members of a group predict the expression of both positive and negative emotions, but no such correspondence occurs for low-status members (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001).

This research suggests that power does not make the person but reveals the person. For example, Chen et al. (2001) found that the possession of power led those with a communal orientation to demonstrate greater generosity, but drove those with an exchange orientation to engage in more self-serving behaviors. This difference, however, was not found when individuals lacked power. Similarly, for men with a tendency to sexually harass or aggress, the psychological sense of power automatically leads to the activation of concepts associated with sex and to the perception of their female work partners in sexual terms (Bargh et al., 1995)

With power, the aggressive will become more fierce, the generous more magnanimous, and the flirtatious even more amorous. Because power leads to behavior that is consistent with existing dispositions and idiosyncratic tendencies, people should know the predispositions of those they would endow with power in hopes that they will emerge as leaders.

MODERATING THE EFFECTS OF POWER: LEGITIMACY AND CULTURE

Although our preceding analysis of the psychological effects of power suggests that power is a unitary construct with invariant effects, we posit that how power is conceptualized by the powerful and by the powerless will lead to differential downstream effects on behavior and cognition. Specifically, two variables have emerged as important moderators of the effects of power: legitimacy and culture. These moderating effects emerge from both the meaning attributed to the power relationship and the way power is acquired and exercised.

Legitimacy

The view of power as either a constructive or a destructive force often depends on whether power differences are considered to be inherently legitimate or illegitimate. Legitimate power is acquired through consensually agreed upon means and is exercised within certain established parameters. Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, and Otten (in press) conducted a series of

studies demonstrating that the legitimacy of power determines how the powerful and the powerless think, feel, and behave. Across their studies, legitimate power consistently led to more action and risk taking than legitimate powerlessness. But when power was conceived or expressed under the shadow of illegitimacy, the powerful no longer were more likely than the powerless to embrace risk and action. For example, in one study, power was manipulated by assigning participants to either a manager or a subordinate role, and legitimacy was manipulated either by basing these assignments on merit (the person assigned to the role of manager had scored well on a leadership questionnaire) or by explicitly violating merit (the person assigned to the role of manager had scored poorly on a leadership questionnaire but the experimenter wanted that person's gender in the role of manager). After being assigned to their roles but before engaging in the managerial task, participants were presented with a scenario in which they could pick a certain or risky option. Legitimate power led participants to choose a risky plan more often than legitimate powerlessness, which replicated the results of Anderson and Galinsky (2006), but this difference disappeared under illegitimacy. Importantly, the effect of legitimacy had equal and opposite effects on approach, risk, and cooperation for the powerful and for the powerless. This relationship between legitimacy and power may be one explanation for why individuals who rise to power through spurious (e.g., President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan) or corrupt (e.g., President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe) pathways face resistance rather than acceptance from their subjects.

Culture

In every culture, power is an important determinant of thought and behavior; however, cultures vary in their conceptualizations of power (Zhong, Magee, Maddux & Galinsky, 2007). As a result, the associations between power and attention to rewards and assertive action are culturally circumscribed—dependent on how cultures define the "self." In some cultures, such as those found in the West, the self is defined though independent self-construals and people think of themselves as autonomous individuals defined by unique personal traits. In contrast, members of cultures in which individuals have interdependent self-construals, such as countries in East Asia, are more likely to think of themselves as embedded in social relationships and define themselves in terms of their group memberships and relationships with others. Zhong et al. found that the basic associations with power differed by cultural background. Westerners who were subliminally primed with the word "power" (versus the word "paper") responded more quickly to reward-related words but more slowly to responsibility-related words, whereas East Asians showed the exact opposite strength of

association with power: greater accessibility of responsibility-related words and weaker accessibility to reward-related words. In another study, power led to decreased cooperation for Westerners but increased cooperation for East Asians.

HARNESSING POWER TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

Power activates a number of positive psychological processes: it increases action and agency, optimism, and confidence. Because leaders inspire through rhetoric and action, these consequences of power may help motivate individuals towards a common goal. Indeed, visions are most effective at capturing attention and motivating behavior when they are optimistic, forecasting a better world (Bass, 1985, 1990; Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001). In addition, their action orientation may inspire others to act alike, using the leader's behavior as a guide to direct their own behavior. However, unbridled overconfidence and the attractiveness of potentially costly risks must also be tempered for power to be converted into leadership. Similarly, diminished perspective taking and the myopic vision and task focus of power that propel individuals to psychologically objectify others and dismiss the non-task-related aspects of their humanity must be also reigned in, without negatively impacting a focus on the vision for the group.

We believe that a key to more effective leadership is to make perspective taking part and parcel of legitimate power. We offer the metaphor of driving a car to understand how power can be transformed into effective leadership. The agency of power is akin to pressing the gas pedal. Without acceleration, one is left standing still, unable to move forward. But one also needs a steering wheel, and the acumen for using it, to avoid crashing into obstacles along the way. Perspective taking without agency is ineffective and agency without perspective taking is dangerous and irresponsible. Effective leaders require acceleration and prudent steering—power coupled with perspective taking. We believe that the springboard of power combined with perspective taking is a particularly constructive force. The best leaders are action-oriented, optimistic, perspective takers.

One way to turn power into leadership is to make the powerful accountable because accountability increases perspective taking (Tetlock, Skitka, & Boettger, 1989). For example, American presidents who preside over a divided government (and thus have reduced power) might be psychologically predisposed to consider alternative viewpoints more readily than those who preside over unified governments. For example, President George W. Bush clearly showed greater capacity and readiness to integrate a wider spectrum of views after the Democrats took control of Congress in 2006. Because the

government's powers are separated into different branches, the President is dependent on and accountable to Congress and the Judiciary, and vice versa; as a result, each branch of government has incentives to consider the perspectives of the other branches. In fact, the beauty of the American constitutional system of divided government and separated powers may be that it often creates powerful perspective takers, turning presidents from potential demagogues into potential leaders.

In contrast, power that lacks accountability can lead to dangerous and foolish acts. The recent debacle involving American-hired private security contractors in Iraq illustrates this lethal combination. Unlike the U.S. military, the behavior of private security contractors has been accountable to neither the United States nor the Iraqi government and populous. This lack of accountability coupled with extreme power may have been the catalyst for the contractors' unprovoked killing of unarmed Iraqi civilians.

Some evidence to support the interaction between power and accountability in producing leadership comes from a study by Winter and Barenbaum (1985). They found that those with a high need for power—characterized by a desire to have influence and to maintain prestige—generally engaged in self-serving and self-satisfying profligate behaviors, including gambling and sexual promiscuity. However, a high need for power was transformed into responsible and socially supportive actions when those individuals faced life events—becoming a parent or having younger siblings—that increased their sense of responsibility. A high need for power combined with feelings of responsibility led individuals both to reign in their selfish desires and to display community-minded behaviors such as volunteering.

Leadership may be prevented from emerging not only when the powerful are unaccountable but also when power is achieved precipitously, without proper incubation. In the famous Stanford Prison study, for instance, volunteers who were suddenly thrust into the role of all-powerful prison guards abused their position to such an extent that the experimenters were forced to prematurely end the study (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973). Similarly, Sivanathan, Pillutla, and Murnighan (in press) found that individuals overreacted to sudden increases in power, exercising their newly obtained control against the weak. Given that contemporary organizational life often involves dramatic increases in power, future research should examine the effect of a sudden vertical advancement in the organizational hierarchy. To become a true leader, promoted individuals will need to harness the positive elements afforded by power, while mitigating the insidious negative effects. By understanding how to bring together the gas pedal and the steering wheel, hopefully we can understand why some individuals abuse and squander their power, whereas others harness their power in leading others towards a new horizon and a promising tomorrow.

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