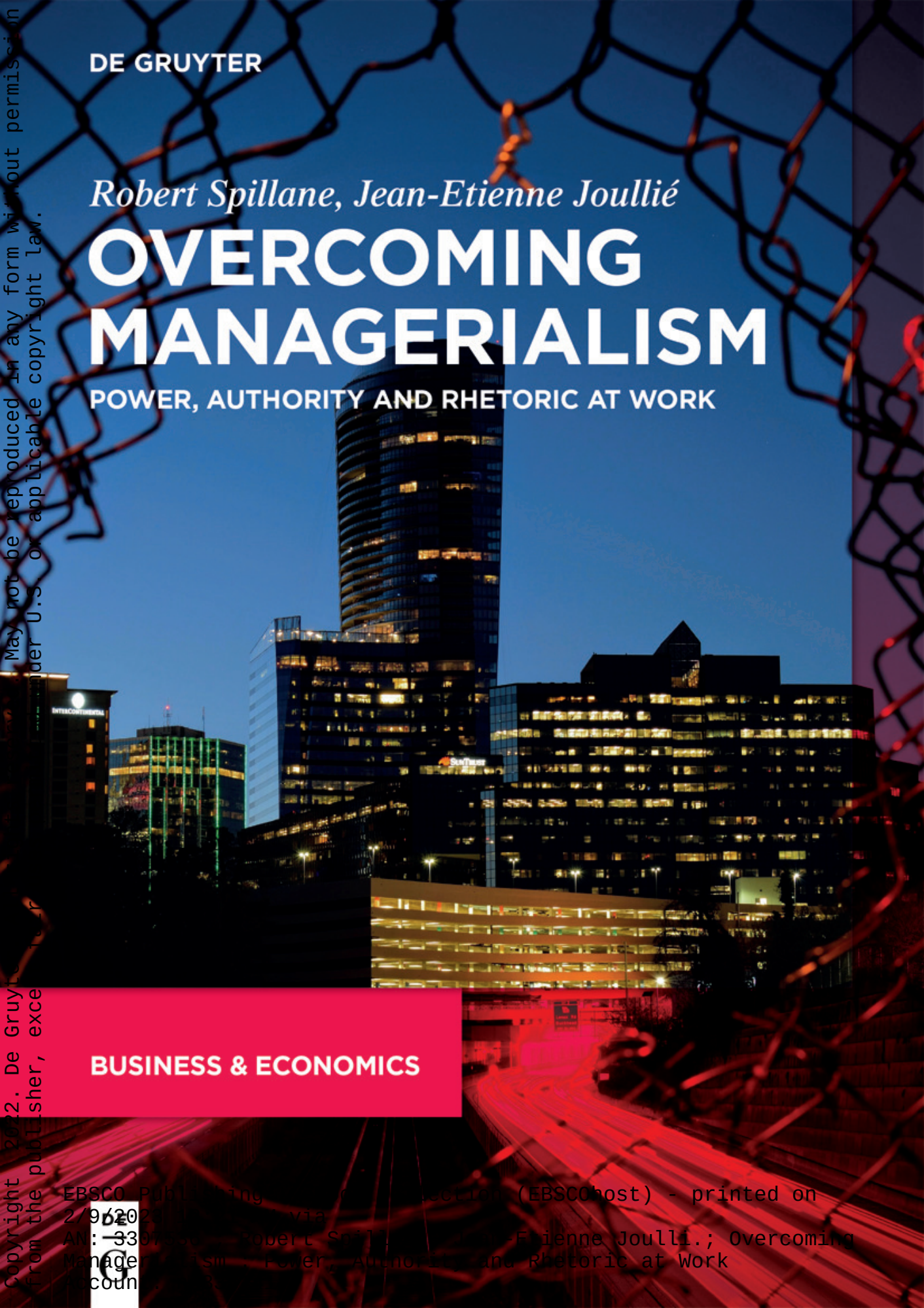

Robert Spillane and Jean-Etienne Joullié

Overcoming Managerialism

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Power, Authority and Rhetoric at Work

DE GRUYTER

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Contents

Introduction

The central thesis of this book is that the rise of managerialism as a practice is profitably analysed as manifestations of the decline of authority and the rise of managerial power. This decline has remained largely unnoticed by scholars because of the widespread conflation of power and authority in the management literature. It follows from this thesis that resisting and overcoming managerialism requires two undertakings. First, it necessitates the re-establishing of the conceptual distinction between power and authority. Second, it requires the rehabilitating of authoritative management as a protection against authoritarian practices. In other words, authoritative management is a defence against authoritarian managerialism because authority, properly conceived, redirects power to technical experts and professionals and thereby limits managerial power.

As an abstract noun, 'management' is a relational word and refers to an irreducible element in the interaction of managers and the resources they manage: the anchor points between which the concept has its meaning. For example, the relationship between managers and their colleagues cannot be analysed in terms of component relationships. Management is not the sum of managers' actions, let alone their putative personalities. While management overlaps with other relationships between parties, such as influence, persuasion, conformity and obedience, these may be present and management absent. These relational concepts demand attention and have been studied extensively by social psychologists. The challenge for management theorists has been to agree on foundational components which, if correctly identified, provide substance for empirical inquiry. In the relevant literature, two popular research themes have been power and authority.

Unlike managerial power, which is concerned with the ability to make things happen, managerial authority is concerned with rights and duties. Further, the exercise of power is bound to affect others who will assess its consequences and evaluate their acceptability. This observation establishes the inseparability, both theoretical and practical, of power and authority and their centrality in the management relationship. However, this inseparability does not imply that the two constructs should not, or cannot, be distinguished.

The authority of managers involves the right to direct power for productive purposes and this involves them in the search for people who possess reliable knowledge. When managers use knowledge for the benefit of others, researchers are justified in calling their actions rational. And when colleagues grant managers the right to use such knowledge, such assent is likewise rational since it replaces the ineffective applications of knowledge with effective ones. As managers cannot grant authority to themselves, their power is therefore dependent on their abilities to mobilise the activities of others, and this mobilisation is dependent on the extent to which authority is conceded to them. As such, managerial power is conditional on and is circumscribed by such concessions.

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In the second half of the twentieth century management mutated into managerialism. 'While management can be defined as getting things done in organisations through people, managerialism means that in businesses, managers have come to view themselves as a professional caste.'[1] The distinction between management and managerialism enables scholars to criticise managerialism while acknowledging the importance of management. Arguably, the most famous proponent of management and a critic of managerialism was Peter Drucker who wrote: 'Ignorance of the function of management is one of the most serious weaknesses of an industrial society', and 'Any serious attempt to make management "scientific" or a "profession" is deleterious.'[2]

Managerialism has been described as 'over-management' or 'hyper-management', 'a distortion of the study of management' which has had a doleful impact on society. It arises when management, as a practice, becomes a self-serving entity. Managerialism deprives employees of decision-making powers and justifies the authoritarian application of managerial techniques on the grounds of specialised training and the exclusive possession of managerial 'knowledge'.[3]

Manifestations of managerialism abound. Within universities, managerialist bureaucrats with little or no experience in higher education have ousted academics from decision-making bodies and now increasingly see themselves as 'the university'. Managerialism in higher education has created a greater separation of academic and management activity, increased control and regulation of academic work by managers, and a shift in power from academics to managers with a consequent weakening of the professional status of academics.[4] Consequently, faculty members have been relegated to the periphery, considered as expendable resources whose job is to deliver grades to students and publish journal articles to improve their managers' key performance indicators. Decisions about such issues as class size, face-to-face teaching or enrolment standards are based on economic rather than pedagogic criteria. The significant decline in academic and educational standards and the transformation of universities as educational institutions into training colleges is well documented and widely acknowledged.

Similar phenomena have been observed in corporations, hospitals, police departments, fire-fighter services, defence forces, utilities distribution, infrastructure maintenance and elsewhere. In each of these sectors, self-serving managerial considerations have taken priority over the objectives which led to the creation of these organisations. Consequences include lack of innovation and risk-taking in firms, declining service levels in administrations and a general decrease in the ability to achieve important goals. If management as a group benefits, society suffers.

1 Quoted in Locke & Spender (2011: x).
2 Quoted in Tarrant (1980: 258).
3 Barberis (2013: 327); Clegg (2014: 566); Klikauer (2013: 23); Locke & Spender (2011: xi).
4 Gordon & Witchurch (2010).

Although managerialism, as an 'ism', is generally treated as an ideology, it can be analysed according to its practical manifestations in terms of authority and power. Like management, managerialism is based on a theory of authority which is rarely discussed, or even acknowledged, by managerialists and researchers.

In proportion as managerialism gained prominence and studies of managerial power flourished, the scholarly analysis of authority declined. As Herbst observes, 'On the nature of authority – what it actually *is* – we are fairly silent these days, typically unwilling to open what we suspect is a rather densely packed can of slippery worms.'[5] It is unarguable, she concludes, that the study of authority in various academic disciplines has become 'oddly unfashionable'. This neglect is due, in part, to the conflation of authority and power and the identification of authority with authoritarianism. For example, a review by the authors of more than a dozen of the leading journals in management and organisational behaviour found no articles in which the phrase 'managerial authority' appears or studies which treat 'authority' as the main topic of investigation.[6] This curious neglect is also a feature of the voluminous literature on leadership. In an extensive survey of leadership research generated since the turn of the century, researchers conducted a qualitative review of leadership theory across 10 top-tier journals.[7] Of the twenty-three thematic categories of leadership which emerged from the 752 articles studied, none addressed the issue of authority. Likewise, recent books on managerialism discuss power but do not list 'authority' in their indexes.[8]

That managerialism is underpinned by authoritarian practices is a widely accepted thesis.[9] But what of authoritative management which is based on critical discussion between experts and managers? It is difficult to see how managerialists can practice, or indeed tolerate, authoritative management. If they do, they rely on a distorted view of managerial authority.

The present authors have argued elsewhere (a point returned to in Chapter 3) that when the basis of authority changes from authoritative to authoritarian forms, managerial power centralises.[10] That power has been progressively concentrated in a cadre of professional managers in recent years is well documented, as has the

5 Herbst (2006: 285).

6 Journals checked include *Business Ethics Quarterly, The Journal of Business Ethics, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Academy of Management Annals, Human Resource Management Journal, International Labour Review, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Management Behaviour, Journal of Organizational Behavior, California Management Review* and *Harvard Business Review*. The *British Journal of Industrial Relations, the Academy of Management Review* and the *Academy of Management Journal* combined have offered only a handful of contributions (all but two dating from the 1960s) in which the expression appears.

7 Dinh et al. (2014).

8 Considine & Painter (1997); Enteman (1993); Klikauer (2013, 2015); Locke & Spender (2011); Parker (2002); Rees & Rodley (1995).

9 Klikauer (2019); Locke & Spender (2011); Shepherd (2018).

10 Spillane & Joullié (2015: 216 – 220).

fact that as senior managers have enjoyed more power and income, middle management has been in decline for several decades.[11] Similarly, the authority of professional non-managers has been eroded.[12] In short, managerialism has transformed authoritative management into authoritarian forms of control. This transformation has gone hand in hand with significant, some would say obscene, increases in executive salaries and benefits.

Although early analysts of management, including Follett, Barnard and Bendix considered authority in some detail, authors of recent books on managerialism treat authority as a *form* of power and the secondary element in the managerial relationship. Authoritative management, however, treats authority as a *source* of power and the primary element in the relationship. In other words, authority, correctly understood, directs power to managers and redirects power to professional colleagues. In so doing, authority sets rational limits to managerial power. This is recognised in authoritative management which stands opposed to the forms of authoritarian control promoted and practiced by managerialists.

One of the central arguments of this book is that the confusion surrounding the use of authority in management can be avoided by drawing on Carl J. Friedrich's analysis of authority as reasoned elaboration. As the vehicle for reasoned elaboration is argumentation, a clear distinction can be drawn between those (authoritarian) managerialists who reject argumentation and those (authoritative) managers who actively promote and engage in it. Karl Popper's theory of language functions supports this view since it emphasises the crucial role of argumentation in personal and social development. Friedrich's and Popper's views are consistent with the theory of management advanced by Peter Drucker. In summary, study of the viability of authoritative management in the age of authoritarian managerialism is timely and deserves critical attention.

Overview of the Book

Chapter 1 revisits the golden age of research into managerial authority. After a brief discussion of the pioneering work of Max Weber and Chester Barnard, it revisits the classical studies of authority which dominated theoretical and empirical research between 1950 and 1975. The diverse views offered by scholars in this era have led to confusion about the relationship between authority, power and legitimacy.

Chapter 2 discusses authoritarianism and offers a theory of the authoritarian personality. Also examined are two classical laboratory studies of conformity, obedience and authority, an examination which confirms both the conceptual confusion

11 Abbott (2015); Barberis (2013); Clegg (2014); Ehrenreich (2006); Grey (2013); Heckscher (1995); Thomas & Dunkerley (1999); Wheatley (1992).

12 Deem (1998); Lynch (2014); Shepherd (2018); Smith & Hussey (2010); Vincent (2011); Ward (2011).

and the possibilities for a clearer understanding of conformity and obedience in terms of rational responses to authority figures.

Chapter 3 advances a new theory which captures the extensive character of managerial power as the production of *unintended* effects. The central hypothesis is that managerial power has centripetal and centrifugal tendencies which are subject to dynamic changes. Authoritative rules, inventions and human resource policies set limits to and re-distribute managerial power. Insofar as it qualifies the centrifugal effects of power, this perspective is capable of revolutionising management theory.

Chapter 4 argues that when corporate governance is defined as 'authoritative direction', authority is a source of power in the boardroom. In addition to the widespread conflation of authority with legitimate power, a second common misunderstanding concerns the alleged tensions that result when board chairmen and technical experts engage in argument, where the latter are assumed to weaken the authority of the former. To dispel this latter confusion, this chapter applies the ideas of Friedrich and Popper to boardroom behaviour. Its conclusion is that the authority of chairmen is enhanced by the presence and argumentative contribution of technical experts.

Chapter 5 argues that the production of scientific theory has been a central focus of management education. Indeed, it has allowed researchers to don the prestigious mantle of science and has done much to legitimise management education and, ultimately, managerialism. This argument is relatively uncontroversial. Less widely acknowledged is that in management studies scientific theory smuggles in a strawman view of human existence which cannot accommodate freedom and responsibility. This limitation of scientific theory has dubious moral implications for management education and limits its practical utility. If management is not a science, however, it should not be researched and taught like one.

Chapter 6 develops and applies Popper's hierarchy of language functions and values to managerial authority. Specifically, authoritative management is grounded on efficient signalling, true descriptions, valid arguing and reasoned advice. If managers aspire to authoritative status, they need to eschew meaningless jargon and obfuscating language. The philosophy known as empiricism has much to offer here because it provides managers with tools by which nonsense can be identified and eradicated.

Chapter 7 discusses the ways in which psychology has been misused by managerialists and how management by personality has compromised management by objective performance. This misuse of psychology has produced a personality cult which has taken various forms: psychoanalysis (Freud and Jung), personality theories and testing and motivational theories (Maslow). Also discussed is the issue of mental health which has consequential implications for managers since it re-directs attention to such matters as the medicalisation of moral behaviour and the related topic of personal responsibility.

In Chapter 8, Machiavellian ingenuity is contrasted with the notion of moral intelligence whose promoters have claimed that managerialists who endorse and promote compassion and forgiveness are of high moral intelligence. Machiavellian managers, therefore, are of low moral intelligence. This chapter argues instead that: (a) agreement with any moral perspective is not indicative of intelligence; (b) Machiavellian ingenuity cannot be reduced to a disposition without contradiction; (c) there is no logical or empirical justification for deeming moral intelligence superior to Machiavellian ingenuity in management; (d) the moral intelligence movement represents the tender-minded alternative to Machiavellian tough-minded management, which (e) accounts for, rather than rejects, the tender-minded qualities of management relationships.

Chapter 9 addresses the question of how managers can justify ethical values. Managerialism is dominated by emotivism and ethical relativism and a widespread scepticism about the possibility of basing ethics on reasoning. There are, however, alternative strategies for ethical justification in which ethical conclusions are derived deductively from purposive propositions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications for managers of a purposive ethics.

The final chapter discusses how managerialism is grounded on a theory of authority which has been neglected in the literature because authority has been treated as a form, rather than a source, of power. It is argued that managerialism draws on authoritarian ideas and practices, whereas management as conceived by Drucker involved a heroic element based on authoritativeness. To promote heroic, authoritative management, is therefore, to resist managerialism since authority redirects power to technical experts and thereby limits managerial power.

The book concludes with ten contentions which summarise the main theses in the ten chapters. Taken together, they represent a theory of the foundation of management in which authority, power and rhetoric are central concepts.

Chapter 1:
Authority in the Golden Age

It is conventional when writing a book on management to commence with a review of the empirical research conducted by previous investigators. From this review one can derive a map of the territory as it has been covered to date and settle upon questions of importance which have not yet been studied. One then proceeds to submit these to empirical tests designed to produce further knowledge.

The present authors have departed from this procedure to the extent of incorporating, prior to the customary research review, an extended conceptual analysis. This course was adopted partly because one of the central topics chosen – authority – is a highly abstract concept and it would be rather presumptuous to assume what needs to be shown if it were claimed at the outset that this concept can adequately be represented by any specified set of behaviours. Indeed, the approach to the definition of the term can be from several directions.

One object of any conceptual analysis is to establish criteria for making reliable distinctions of the concept at hand. The most sustained attempts at conceptual clarification occurred during what can be called a 'golden age' of research into authority from 1950 to 1975. With minor exceptions, there have been no further theoretical advances in the study of authority.

A lack of progress in the development of a theory of authority has impaired the empirical study of the concept. Specifically, it has prevented scholars from reaching agreement about the nature of those behaviours they seek to describe as falling within the sphere of authority. As such, the territory to which the term refers cannot be mapped. Such a situation does not preclude, however, seeking out some behaviour in appropriate settings (including management) which epitomises the way the concept is currently applied, nor of studying these isolated cases by empirical methods.

The present chapter is in the main an extended conceptual analysis because the decline of management and the rise of managerialism is best understood as a change in the nature of the authority relationship which underpins both forms of workplace behaviour. Authority is a pervasive factor in social relationships generally unless many distinguished scholars have been totally mistaken. For instance, Jouvenel remarks with engaging confidence: 'The phenomenon called "authority" is at once more ancient and more fundamental than the phenomenon called "state"; the natural ascendancy of some men over others is the principle of all human organisations and all human advances.'[1] In this statement Jouvenel equates authority with any form of ascendancy. His example has been followed by many scholars in the

1 Jouvenel (1957: 13).

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social sciences and management who fail to distinguish authority from related terms yet agree that it is an important social phenomenon.

Etymology

Authority derives from the Greek concept *arché*. This term has a variety of meanings and is used to represent the notions of 'initiative', 'cause' (in relation to its effects) and 'beginning'. These meanings are very close to the early Roman usage of *auctor* (originator, promoter, author).

In Homer *arché* signifies 'initiative' which 'gets things done' and is manifested especially as 'a cause of activity in others.' Aristotle goes further and speaks of an office possessing the 'double power' of introducing matters and bringing them to completion. The ability to conclude matters depended on the possession of sufficient power and the cooperation of those involved. To concentrate on the first category (introducing matters into a debate) is to risk ignoring the desirability of gaining voluntary cooperation in implementing tasks and failing to acknowledge that one has the right as well as the ability to implement them.

The Aristotelian tendency to refer to those in positions of power by the term *arché* and to focus on the implementation of action has helped to confuse authority with power. For instance, in ancient Greek literature *arché* is frequently used to designate 'rule' as the term *archon* refers to ruler.

The translation of *arché* into Latin confirmed the conceptual link with initiative but was ambivalent about representing authority as power. This ambiguity set the pattern for authority to be regarded as a special form of power. However, the Latin translators of *arché* emphasised initiative rather than power; the term they retained derives from *auctor* and *auctoritas*, which refers to producing, inventing or innovating in the public arena.[2]

Following Roman practice, from the early fourteenth century authority was associated with individuals who were recognised as possessing specialised knowledge, especially of a religious kind. This use gave rise to the notion of an 'authoritative viewpoint'. By the nineteenth century, this meaning was linked to that of 'expert', a person who is regarded as an authority in a certain field. However, scholars have noted that if authority weakened in relation to knowledge, it strengthened in relation to power.[3] Whatever the case, from the sixteenth century onwards, authority became and has remained to the present day a key political term. For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as power or right to give orders, make decisions and enforce obedience.

2 Benn & Peters (1959: 18); Myers (1968).

3 Ginsberg (2016: 92).

The change of emphasis from authority as 'special knowledge' to authority as 'the ability to give orders' set the scene for enduring ambiguity about the two faces of authority. The first is known as formal authority (of office) and carries certain powers which can be employed for or against subordinates; the second is known as informal authority (of knowledge) and is an acknowledgement that certain individuals demonstrate knowledge or skills which provide the basis for conceding certain rights to them.

The dual perspective of authority has a long history in social philosophy. Generally, those who view authority as the capacity to issue orders have emphasised the control-from-the-top aspects of the concept. This perspective is often referred to as the 'conventional approach', a label which acknowledges the impact this form of analysis has had. In earlier days, it was referred to by political philosophers (such as Jouvenel) as the theory of sovereignty. When authority is treated as a property of office it is scarcely distinguishable from the power which accompanies it. Yet, it would appear desirable in the light of the current use of language to separate power (which is a matter of capacity) and authority (which is a matter of right).

Scholars have argued that liberal society was formed by ridding authority, to a great extent, of its personal elements. The institutionalisation of authority based on a Lockean contract and ensuing laws has acted as an effective check to the vagaries of personality-based and tradition-based authority. The check is effective because individuals are authorised to act on behalf of the community only in specific tasks and in line with demonstrated expertise. Thus, we find the power of the sovereign replaced by the power of the legislature-cum-executive. It is this association with power which has encouraged many theorists in political science and sociology to analyse authority in terms of legitimate power.

A prime exponent of the argument that authority is represented by the notion of legitimacy is Max Weber. Specifically, Weber's theories of legitimacy and legitimate rulership are characterised by a combination of historical and sociological emphases through which he integrates earlier perspectives. As such, his theories warrant detailed exposition.

Max Weber on Legitimate Rulership

In *Economy and Society* Weber is particularly concerned to understand the fundamentals of social conflict. He represents conflict as an action within a social relationship orientated towards carrying out the actor's will against the resistance of another party or parties. Defined in this way, conflict (*Kampf*) is very close to Weber's definition of power (*Macht*). For example, he defines power as the probability that one person within a social relationship will be able to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which the probability rests.

Weber argues that in its general sense power is an aspect of most social relationships and used in this way has little scientific utility, since all conceivable qualities of

individuals and all combinations of circumstances can put them in a position to impose their will in a specific situation. Weber prefers the more precise sociological concept of *Herrschaft* which he defines as the probability that certain commands will be obeyed by a given group of persons.

If the widespread view that authority is a form of power is a legacy of Weber's analysis of *Herrschaft*, it is noteworthy that he does not analyse 'authority' and does not employ the German words (*Authorität* and *Behörde*). Rather, he prefers 'domination' or 'rule' and his analysis of 'authority' is derived from it. As *Herr* means Mister or Master, *Herrschaft* connotes a superior figure issuing commands to subordinates. In Fischoff's rendering of *Economy and Society Herrschaft* is translated as 'domination ("authority")' but this parenthetical emphasis is farther from Weber's thinking than is domination, which emphasises the power of command whether consent is present or not. Further, power (*Macht*) does not imply the right to command and the duty to obey, whereas *Herrschaft* implies a probability of obtaining willing obedience. It should also be emphasised that translators of Weber have disagreed on the English equivalent of *Herrschaft* and this has led to considerable confusion. Specifically, most authors translate *Herrschaft* directly into 'authority' which creates the misleading impression that to have a position of formal power is, *ipso facto*, to have authority.

In Weber's scheme, a social order is maintained through a system of command and obedience of which there are three aspects. First, coercive power may provide the prime motive for obedience to the ruler and hence to the social order itself. Second, the existence of a constellation of mutual interests may lead citizens to accept associations of command and obedience as useful. The third factor is the sense of legitimacy: the belief that the commands of a ruler are rightful, and that obedience is obligatory quite apart from questions of coercion or utility.

Legitimacy is ascribed to a social order by tradition, by emotions, or by a rational belief in its absolute value and by its legality. This last category shows that 'legitimacy' is not synonymous with 'legality' in Weber's framework. It must be admitted, however, that under certain circumstances the distinction between legitimacy and legality is difficult to draw. The legality of a rule is generally the result of its being in accordance with the stated law. Conversely, in those situations where rulers break the law, the question of their legitimacy in doing so is distinct from that of legality. For example, their actions will be found to be perfectly legitimate if they are believed to be in accordance with some generally held social value.

For Weber, the most usual basis of legitimacy is the belief in legality, the readiness to conform to and obey rules. Legality is treated as legitimate because of a voluntary agreement between interested parties or it is imposed by a dominating figure. Thus, submission to a social order is determined by a variety of motives and interests and by a mixture of adherence to tradition and belief in legality.

Legitimate rulership in work organisations refers to a relationship between managers and subordinates where the key factor is the *meaning* the parties attach to the relationship. Managers claim the right to issue orders and the obedience of

subordinates is guided by their judgement that managers have the right to control them within specified limits. In such relationships, the beliefs that sustain management positions are concerned with the perception of those positions as being legitimate rather than coercive or utilitarian. Thus, the distinction between power and legitimacy is phenomenological.

Weber applied his four bases of legitimacy to interpersonal relationships involving legitimate rulership. These he condensed into three categories: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational grounds for the legitimation of command positions. These constitute his ideal types of authority.

In traditional authority, the right to rule is based on tradition in the sense that it is in accord with longstanding customs and values. It rests on the established belief in the sanctity of traditions. Such rights are usually conveyed by birth and by general social belief, such as the divine right of kings. Obedience is owed to the person who occupies the traditionally sanctioned position.

The basis of authority termed charismatic refers to an extraordinary devotion to individuals who can convince others that they possess exceptional skills and abilities. Charismatically qualified individuals are obeyed by virtue of personal trust in them and their exemplary qualities. They are perceived to be endowed with supernatural or at least exceptional personal powers which are not accessible to the ordinary person. Individuals who demonstrate these exemplary qualities are generally treated as leaders.

Weber's explanation of the charismatic ideal type is confusing for he combines two distinct analytic orientations. On the one hand, he implies that charisma is based on affective sentiment which emanates from subordinates' beliefs in the extraordinary powers of the leader. On the other hand, he suggests that charismatics must produce evidence that they can guide group members to specific shared goals. Should they not be successful in this endeavour they lose their right to lead. These requirements for charismatic leadership have created a tendency among scholars to conclude that the foundations of charisma are anchored in subordinates' self-interests. As such, charismatics obtain support largely from the issues with which they are associated, the grievances they seek to right, and the manner and time in which they propose to make these issues the passionate concern of their potential followers.[4]

Weber makes rationality a basis for role authority only and considers all personal authority to be based on non-rational criteria. Further, he insists that there is a fundamental difference between a claim to authority based on technical competence and one based on personal qualities. He argues that charismatics derive their influence from exceptional personal characteristics of a non-rational nature (one can think of the Reverend Jim Jones and his suicide cult to illustrate Weber's point). Yet it is apparent that some managers secure a sizeable following not because

4 Ratnam (1964: 345).

of charismatic qualities but because they propose to solve problems with which others are grappling. In other words, Weber's analysis does not easily account for managers who are followed because of their superior ability to address challenging problems. He is thus oblivious to the fact that there is nothing so rational as following individuals because they can resolve dilemmas. To follow the advice of such people does not automatically impose charismatic status upon them but indicates that they are authorities in relevant matters.

Clearly, there are many cases of personal authority which fall short of the demands of the charismatic category. This observation implies that charismatic leadership emerges from demonstrations of technical expertise on the one hand, or from specific and exceptional personal characteristics of a non-rational nature on the other. Ambiguity about the two possible sources arises because the emotional element is aroused in people when they have a crucial unresolved problem which the 'leader' appears to be able to solve. Also left open is the possibility that authority is not a group phenomenon springing from sentiments of solidarity but may stem from rational judgements concerning an individual's expertise.

Weber's legal-rational ideal type is embedded in the impersonal social order and extends to individuals only insofar as they occupy legitimised roles, such as an organisational office, where their powers are limited to a 'sphere of competence'. For managers, this sphere of competence involves an obligation to perform tasks which are part of a systematic division of labour, the provision of necessary authority to carry out these tasks and clearly defined powers which are subject to definite conditions. There is thus a separation of the sphere of office and that of private affairs.

Weber hyphenates 'legal-rational' as both qualifiers are, for him, perfectly correlated in the impersonal order. His analysis holds that in the legal-rational structure authority is vested in the formally established position initially on rational grounds and is then secured legally. These developments are fundamental to the existence of organisations which have continuity beyond the terms of the active participation of any one person. They have a degree of immutability which overcomes the disadvantages of organisations dependent on the knowledge of allegedly irreplaceable managers.

According to Weber, changes in the rationale of an organisation can be accomplished only by a charismatic reformer whose revolutionary character lies in setting up personal authority against the established order. Thus, those who follow charismatics act irrationally because they reject the accepted rationale on emotional grounds. Later scholars contested this view, arguing that the foundations of charisma are anchored in subordinates' self-interests and their 'following' is eminently rational. Shils even argued that the social order itself has charismatic qualities.

History tells us that leadership often *precedes* the occupation of a formal office. Special individuals appear on a scene dominated by major problems which the local population cannot solve. Like religious cult leaders, they emerge from the pack, so to speak, and convince large numbers of people that they can solve their problems and

proceed to demonstrate their organisational abilities which appear to go well beyond the normal range. Such individuals also give the impression that they hold the key to understanding the important problems of human existence. History provides many examples of individuals of strong will who, in extreme situations, emerge from the ranks, or from nowhere of importance, as the bearers of extraordinary gifts. Such individuals can produce in people feelings of awe, respect and wonder which are not related to the recognition of specific technical skills, however important these may be. As the existence of serious, unsolved problems usually means that people in positions of power are compromised, leaders often find their initial supporters among the socially advantaged.

Historically, leaders differ from rulers by their different views and uses of power and authority. Rulers draw their following from those who agree that power is the necessary means for the solution of important problems. Leaders try to avoid the use of coercive power and work through authority. Some of the great religious leaders rejected coercive power when it was offered in favour of basing their leadership on personal authority unencumbered by punishments. Their goal was to demonstrate to their followers that authority is superior to power. If leaders use power against those who challenge them, they demonstrate by their actions that the claim of authority, and thus leadership, is shallow.

Similarly, leaders are usually opposed to the rules and roles of bureaucratic organisation with its emphasis on formal power. After all, it is because the managers of bureaucracies cannot solve recalcitrant problems that leaders evolve and develop their extraordinary abilities. As they lack institutional support, leadership of this type is inherently unstable. The status of leaders is established by the recognition of their personal mission and special abilities. When that mission is no longer relevant, or plausible, and when such leaders stop solving important problems, their authority evaporates. That is, having established themselves as miracle workers, leaders need continually to perform miraculous deeds without which they fade into oblivion or death.

Leadership is not necessarily grounded on the irrational behaviour of followers. It is reasonable to follow individuals who claim to have special problem-solving skills to the point where they are allowed to demonstrate them and are judged on the results. It is unreasonable to continue to follow such individuals when they cease to solve difficult problems. Superior problem-solving is thus the fundamental characteristic of the emergence and survival of leadership. To argue, as Weber does, that it is irrational to follow special individuals who set themselves against the status quo is to give prominence to the stability of the formal system of social power.

Part of the problem with Weber's analysis is due to his use of 'rational', in his legal-rational ideal type. His general thesis is that the great social change set in motion by the Reformation, notably Calvinism, was the decline of leadership and the rise of legal-rational rulership. The Renaissance witnessed many impressive displays of leadership which were usually brutish and short-lived. As personal authority gave way to the formal authority of the state, monarchs and governments became the

new leaders. In the place of the old personal leaders arose the legal-rational rulership of the new capitalism and its associated bureaucracy.

Weber insists that bureaucracy is a machine in which people are merely functionaries and that its impersonal character enables anyone who knows how to control it to prosper. The form of authority which operates in bureaucracies differs from earlier types because it is attached to a position, not a person. This setting effectively eliminates the possibility of leaders rising from the ranks to control the system. Insofar as leadership in previous eras was attached to a person, not a position, bureaucratic rulership depersonalises relationships and much of the uncertainty that goes with it and concentrates on the completion of tasks rather than the solving of transcendental problems. Technical experts and their ability to complete allocated tasks are thus sacralised.

Committed to his thesis of the progressive rationalisation of action, Weber employs an outdated faculty psychology which makes a distinction between (rational) thinking and (irrational) feeling. By burying individuals in 'rationalised' structures, Weber is left with the problem of the truculent individuals who refuse to bend their knees to bureaucratic systems. In defence of Weber, it is true that, in most cases, such individuals find work elsewhere, often as academics, entrepreneurs or artists. In a very few cases, they become leaders.

Beyond the case of 'rebels', what is left unresolved in Weber's analysis is the question of technical experts effecting changes in the rationale of the organisation. Since technical authority does not appear as a category in Weber's analysis, he does not consider the influence which experts have on legal-rational organisational structures. This is surprising given his interest in efficient legal-rational organisations which should be engaged in selecting the most effective means to achieve relevant goals. Thus, if effective means are suggested by a technical expert, they should be readily accepted. This issue is pursued in Chapter 4 with respect to boardroom behaviour.

For Weber, then, rulership may be based on legitimate or non-legitimate claims. Where it is based on legitimate grounds (traditional, legal-rational, charismatic), scholars talk of authority. (Whether Weber would accept this use of terms is another matter.) Authority, therefore, is defined as legitimate rulership. Those whose claim to rule is based on non-legitimate grounds (coercion or utility) are not authority figures. Thus, in Weber's framework, it is inappropriate to use the adjective 'legitimate' before the noun 'authority'; the former is always implied by the latter.

Applied to management, Weber's view implies that managers who convince others that they are competent to set them on a rational path which leads to goals appropriate to the group's power acquire authority. Accordingly, they are directed to exercise the group's power on future occasions. Organisational members are usually aware that to generate power involves some sacrifice of individual freedom. The subordination of all members in the interest of the organisation, however, typically creates a situation where there is no direction over the expression of power. As this situation is highly unstable, members are usually willing to disengage several of

their number from the task of generating power to have them direct its expression. Their task is to focus the power generated by the group on chosen goals. Ideally, this harnesses the power of the group to rational ends and renders the organisation's expression of power predictable. This neo-Weberian line of reasoning has similarities with traditional consent theory in politics where individuals grant to a ruler the right to direct the use of power in rational ways. It was notably defended by O'Donnell whose definition of authority includes the power to coerce subordinates to achieve organisational goals. His thesis is that humans have natural rights derived from the legal system and for them to coexist peacefully the state is empowered to develop and enforce laws. The system requires a social contract to be entered into which includes a right to command and a duty to obey. Authority, then, rests in the nature of the social contract. When this Hobbesian thesis is applied to modern organisational life without modification, it raises the problems of the difference between political and organisational authority.

An obvious difficulty with O'Donnell's argument is in the type of consent theory it involves. Consent theory is an attempt to define the conditions under which there is a moral duty to obey orders without surrendering personal judgement. Accordingly, consent theory attempts to harmonise the notions of a *right* to act according to one's own judgement and a *duty* to do so. While consent, as so theorised, is a necessary and sufficient condition for social survival in the wider sense, it is doubtful whether it is applicable without modification to work organisations where individuals have, in principle, a wide range of choices and actions available to them. It would be so insofar as individuals can move relatively freely from one organisation to another, restructure existing organisations without necessarily altering the social system generally or alter the basis of seniority and legitimacy within organisations. These actions are of course possible at the societal level although there are greater structural barriers which place significant limits on individual actions of this nature.

Peters argues that whatever its weaknesses, consent theory holds that a moral theory of authority can never be a theory of *absolute* authority.[5] Recognising that legitimate rulership is essential to social survival, rational individuals would concede that they cannot insist on a right or a duty to disregard commands whenever they disagreed with them and to act instead on their own judgement. Nevertheless, they need surrender only their right to act, not to judge the commands they receive.

Peters' emphasis on the phenomenological aspects of authority and consent poses a dilemma for those theorists who equate authority with hierarchical positions and who believe that the exercise of legitimate rulership is impartial and impersonal. To ensure impartial administration authority is vested in the office and not in the office holder. Authority of office entails a body of knowledge of a non-technical character and is generally called administrative knowledge, which includes information about rules, roles and policy decisions. This form of authority is often associated with

5 Peters (1967: 217).

the 'bureaucrat' or unqualified official in, say, a hospital who has little knowledge of the technical side of medicine or nursing.

Although several theorists have pointed out that the basis of authority lies with personal as well as social values, the argument that authority is always a matter of individual perception runs counter to ordinary forms of discourse.[6] For example, Homans holds that this argument points to the need to separate the institutional and personal aspects of authority and to investigate why authority is generally so stable resting as it does on such an apparently weak foundation as individual choice. Another example is Bierstedt who defines authority as institutionalised power and argues that power is transformed into authority when social action and interaction proceed in accordance with the norms of a formal organisation. The right to use force is then attached to specific statuses within the association and this right is what is ordinarily meant by authority. However, he also recognises that authority is used in a way which implies superior knowledge or expertise. In this sense, he sees authority as related to influence rather than to power.

De Grazia views authority as power over people but based on the esteem or respect of those people. Holders of authority are bound by common goals and by their desires and abilities to move toward them. Benn and Peters see authority as deriving from the fact that people can be seen as doing 'right' and 'wrong' things. Together with these notions develops the establishment of rules and procedures to determine norms and standards of action. Implicit in this idea is the need for organisations and umpires to establish, modify and maintain these standards. It is in this context that authority has developed. These authors criticise those who define authority in terms of power for they believe that those in authority can get their way by means other than those of force, propaganda and other modes of exercising power. Like many others, Benn and Peters are prepared to state that the ability to wield power may be a necessary condition for the exercise of authority in certain situations. 'Behind power, there lies authority and behind authority some conception of legitimacy or right.'[7]

Day sees power as depending on force whereas authority depends on voluntary obedience. A person who has power relative to another can cause certain effects which the other cannot effectively resist. Power is also used in a way which specifies the use of certain methods, such as force. This is power in the coercive sense in contrast to power in the causative sense where the methods of change are not specified. Authority, Day argues, cannot be any form of coercive power as it depends on subordinate obedience which is voluntary. Yet he also maintains that authority is a kind of causative power. He argues that anyone who exercises political authority can command obedience to laws and therefore has power in the causative sense. 'It makes sense to talk of authority as power if it is clearly understood to be causative,

6 Duncan-Jones (1958); Homans (1951).

7 Benn & Peters (1959: 261).

not coercive.'[8] Day acknowledges that those in authority sometimes successfully utilise coercive power. This does not imply, however, that political authority *is* coercive power. The idea of voluntary assessment of the situation and ensuing obedience or disobedience is central to this analysis. For example, those who voluntarily obey a government are accepting its authority; those who disobey or who obey through fear are responding to its coercive power, not its authority. The confusion surrounding power and authority is partly due to social institutions having both power and authority at the same time and Day points to occasions in politics where a person is perceived as having authority but no power. For example, police officers who are beaten by a gang they are trying to arrest have no immediate power, but they do retain legal authority. However, they are not able to exercise de facto authority because they lack sufficient causative power.

Peters recognises de facto and de jure uses of the concept. When it is claimed that authority refers to a right to do something according to a certain set of rules and where this right is distinguished from the power to do things, then Peters argues, this is authority in a de jure sense. This use of authority is to be contrasted with the de facto use favoured by Jouvenel and others. Peters says that authority refers to the ability of individuals to get their proposals accepted, a definition which implies that power and authority are virtually synonymous. 'To have *de facto* authority is to stand in such a relation to other people that one can, as a matter of fact, induce them to do [...] what one tells them, because, for whatever reason, they are convinced that they ought to do so.'[9]

Winch opposes the view that authority, or Peters' de facto authority, entails a direct causal relationship between people in authority and subordinates subject to their commands. Winch does not see authority as a form of influence but rather as an internal relation 'because of its connection with the ideas embodied in the form of activity within which it is exercised.'[10] Further, he holds that the concept is connected conceptually with the notion of there being a right and wrong way of doing things. However, the crucial point concerns the idea of voluntary submission, and here Winch is close to Jouvenel who argues that authority is the faculty of inducing assent. To follow an authority is a voluntary act. 'Authority ends where voluntary assent ends.'[11] Rather than view authority as a curtailment of freedom of social choices, Winch sees authority as a precondition of this freedom.

Duncan-Jones has sympathy with Winch's emphasis on voluntary acceptance of commands and directions inherent in the concept. However, he argues that in general usage authority has led to 'authoritarian' which connotes the idea of some group imposing itself on others against their will. Winch believes this applies to power or force rather than to authority. Day develops this point arguing that obedi-

8 Day (1963: 260).
9 Peters (1959: 216).
10 Winch (1958: 230).
11 Jouvenel (1957: 33).

ence to government is not necessarily voluntary. That is, when people obey through fear of being punished for disobedience, such action is involuntary. But insofar as people obey government through fear of punishment, they are not acting because they accept the authority of the government. Individuals who keep within the law solely to avoid punishment are not acknowledging the authority of the government but its power.[12]

In summary, the foregoing discussion shows that those who define authority in terms of power treat power in the causative sense referred to by Day. It is difficult to dispute this argument for when power is defined so inclusively any act of influence falls in the category. The coercive act of the dictator and the influence of the philosopher are equally represented by the notion of power. While technically correct, this usage is not in line with popular parlance. Furthermore, a term defined so inclusively has limited scientific utility, a conclusion reached by Weber regarding the notion of power.

Managerial Authority as Concession

Mary Parker Follett was one of the first modern management writers to challenge the idea of an ultimate or final authority in organisations. Expressions such as 'ultimate authority', 'final determination' and 'supreme control' she believes to be anachronistic. She argues that the most fundamental idea in organisational life is that of 'function'. People in an organisation perform a function and they should have commensurate responsibility and authority according to their function. Accordingly, function, responsibility and authority should be the three inseparables in work organisations. Follett argues that people talk of the limit of authority when it would be preferable to speak of the definition of the task.

Rather than relate authority to a hierarchical position, Follett argues that it should go with knowledge and experience and that obedience should go where it is due, whether it be up or down the hierarchy. This conception of authority and responsibility runs contrary to the almost universally held belief that senior managers *delegate* authority and responsibility. Further, the phrase 'delegating authority' assumes that managers have the right to authority. This right, however, should be commensurate with their function. Managers cannot delegate authority except when they are ill or on vacation. But then they have not delegated authority; someone else is doing their work and they have the authority which goes with that work. Authority belongs with the job and stays with the job.[13]

In Follett's case the concept of authority refers to the job function and the emphasis is still on the position rather than the person. Accordingly, her approach

12 Day (1963: 259).

13 Follett (1926: 149).

is an extension of the formal, Weberian model with its emphasis on organisational positions in the impersonal order. In fact, it is difficult to escape the influence of Weber's thesis in the management literature.

By the 1930s theorists were emboldened to combine aspects of the formal model with a consideration of the personal, subjective aspects of authority. This can be seen in the work of Chester Barnard who defines authority as a quality of a communication by virtue of which it is accepted by employees. However, he allows for the formalised aspect in the 'quality' of the communication. Disobeying a communication, therefore, represents a denial of its authority. This is closer to Follett's position than to Weber's: the decision on authority lies with the persons to whom communication is addressed and not with the initiator of the communication. Managers are neither possessors of authority nor do they have authority.

For Barnard, assent is a necessary and sufficient condition for a management relationship to be classed as one of authority. This position, however, is untenable. A more accurate analysis reveals that if assent is indeed a necessary condition for the management relationship to be classed as one of authority (which, for Barnard, implies willingness), it is not a sufficient condition. For example, if a manager (A) threatens a colleague (B) with dismissal if B does not behave illegally as instructed, B may assent to A's demands, but it cannot be claimed that A is exercising authority. The denial rests on the argument that B's situation was created by A's use of a form of power which runs counter to authority.

As a practicing manager, Barnard was struck by the frequency with which managerial directives are disobeyed. This observation led him to ask how it is possible for managers to secure consistent cooperation if the acceptance of authority rests with subordinate colleagues. His answer is that those who gain advantages from the organisation's rewards actively support the maintenance of authority therein. That is, the informal shared view of the work community makes individuals reluctant to question authority that is within their 'zone of indifference.' In this zone, employees uncritically accept orders because such missives are deemed to be consistent with the tasks implicitly accepted when they became employees. The formal instantiation of this principle is the commonly accepted, but nonetheless mistaken, view that authority comes from above. Conversely, disobedience of an instruction by an employee to whom it is addressed is an effective denial of its authority and amounts to challenging the organisation's structure, processes and objectives.

Barnard differentiates the 'authority of position' and the 'authority of leadership'. The former is to a considerable extent independent of personal expertise. Authority of leadership derives from the fact that people impute authority to those who are judged to have superior knowledge and abilities regardless of their organisational function. When the authority of leadership is combined with the authority of position, organisational members will accept orders far outside the zone of indifference. Authority, then, is another name for the willingness of individuals to submit to the necessities of organisational power.

Weber acknowledged that authority emanates from subordinates in the sense that, even when it is based on coercion, it is still generally accepted. What Weber saw as a limiting case Barnard saw as the fundamental nature of authority, leading him to the conclusion that the army is the 'greatest of all democracies' because soldiers decide 'on their own' to accept orders. Barnard combined this position with his view of the 'fiction of superior authority' and thus rejected traditional models of authority based on (legitimate) power. This conclusion, surely, is a pyrrhic victory for Barnard. The fiction of the superior authority is hardly a fiction when soldiers can be shot for disobedience.

Although there are many similarities between Weber's and Barnard's theories, scholars have generally seen them as champions of two different conceptual perspectives. One is derived from Weber where authority is a power structure legitimated by rational values, controlled by trained experts and defined by the principle of hierarchy. In the other, developed by Barnard, authority is based on communication processes which apprise managers of relevant matters of fact and inform them of their responsibilities. In this latter case, neither legitimacy nor hierarchy plays a central role; individual self-interests rather than shared moral commitments provide the main motivation.[14]

Converging Perspectives

Disagreements between the proponents of these two perspectives resulted in attempts at a synthesis to reconcile them. Like many of his predecessors, Hartmann in *Authority and Organisation in German Management* acknowledges the two general types of authority which he labels ultimate and functional. In the case of ultimate authority managers claim the obedience of their subordinates because both parties take this for granted. In German organisations, the most significant basis of ultimate authority is management's commitment to three systems of values: private property, community service orientation and a belief in the maintenance of a hierarchical society. Ultimate authority is independent of technical knowledge and job expertise. Based on such 'ultimate' values, formal authority is difficult to acquire and destroy. It includes an emphasis on value-orientation, the development of ideological attitude patterns, non-rational evaluation of performance and a generalised claim to obedience.

Functional authority derives from specialist knowledge and expertise. Hartmann refers to it as the problem-orientated type of authority and distinguishes it by a peculiar form of relativity dependent on the actual quality of performance. That is, while technical success creates a right to authority, malfunctioning destroys it. Functional authority, then, is relatively easy to acquire and lose. It is also situational and conse-

14 Hopkins (1961: 82–83).

quently is not of a kind to produce stability. Although the functional basis of authority should not be ignored, its very instability makes objective analysis difficult and ever-changing.

Another prominent example of an attempt at synthesis is Simon. In *Administrative Behavior*, Simon argues that authority should be defined in strictly behaviouristic terms since it is only when the behavioural interaction between a superior and subordinates occurs that authority exists. The behaviour of managers involves a command and the expectation that the command will be obeyed. Subordinates, in choosing to obey the command, are prepared to hold in abeyance their own critical faculties for evaluating it. They are said to accept authority whenever they permit their behaviour to be guided by the decision of a manager without independently examining the merits of the decision.

While Simon can be charged with begging the question in his definition concerning the motivation behind the suspension of critical judgement, he claims to avoid the charge because of the recognition of the value of the organisation itself and its achievable goals. Authority, for Simon, is one of several forms of influence. Its distinguishing characteristic is that it does not necessarily seek to convince subordinates, but to gain their acquiescence. When decisions and commands are questioned, it is the 'authority figure' who has the final word in the disagreement.

Simon's definition is incomplete on several counts. First, it does not allow distinctions to be made between authority, power and influence which would appear desirable in the light of the current use of these terms. This policy is scarcely in tune with the scientific requirement that categories be distinct, their population specifiable and their use consistent. Second, Simon's definition fails to account for degrees of acceptance. What he wishes to exclude from his notion of authority is the situation where an individual examines and evaluates the merits of a manager's proposals and becomes convinced that the proposals should be carried out. The difficulties of this argument are readily apparent. Some subordinates routinely give independent examination to their manager's orders and accept them whether they agree with them or not. Therefore, those cases where they agree with the orders are not instances of authority, even though they would carry them out anyway.

Situations where obedience arises from consent formed the basis of Peters' point. The basis of authority rests with those subject to commands: authority is conceded after examination of qualifications, expertise, official status and goal attainment, always according to the ability of the examiner to appreciate the rationale or to gain access to the premises on which it is claimed to rest.

A third problem with Simon's definition of authority is the extent to which it is 'purely objective and behaviouristic'. Simon's use of such terms as 'independent examination', 'judgement', 'critical review' or 'expectation' is inconsistent with his stated conceptual objectives. For example, if the verbal behaviour of managers is merely observed, it is impossible to know whether they are in a relationship of authority since the subjective states of managers and subordinates cannot be observed, or reliably inferred from observed behaviour.

Simon appears to have been aware of these problems for in later chapters he argues that authority is present where obedience anticipates and follows command. The observed behaviour, therefore, is not sufficient to demonstrate an authority relationship. Consequently, Simon adopts at least five definitions of authority.[15] In the end, readers discover that the subjective reactions of subordinates have been introduced into the category, a trend which was already well established in Barnard, but which compromises a behaviourist account of authority.

As Simon's example shows, attempts to define authority in purely objective terms inevitably lead to an overgeneralisation of the concept and confound a host of distinctions which make for important differences in human behaviour. Further, the association of authority and power remains unexamined as can be seen in Simon's discussion of the motivational bases underlying the acceptance of authority. That is, Simon follows Weber and Barnard in identifying confidence (technical skill) and legitimisation and adds social approval together with sanctions and rewards. The latter motivational base again confuses authority with power: a tendency which social psychologists have followed.

The Disappearance of Authority

In a notable essay 'What was Authority?', Hannah Arendt discusses not what authority is but what it was. Twentieth-century Western society, she argues, is in the middle of a crisis triggered by the disappearance of authority, which is the consequence of the decline, almost to the point of extinction, of authority's two historical sources: religion (which has been secularised) and tradition (which is seen as outdated). Manifestations of these phenomena include people losing their sense of life purpose and the pervasive impression that society is bereft of order and stability.

Contrasting authority with power, Arendt notes that authority precludes the use of external means of coercion; where force is used, authority itself has failed. For example, if violence makes people obey, then violence is authority. Authority, then, implies an obedience in which individuals retain their freedom. However, authority is incompatible with persuasion which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. Where arguments are used, she asserts, authority is left in abeyance. This dual incompatibility (with power and reason) of authority allows Arendt to argue against a return to the views of Plato and Aristotle.

For Plato, Arendt explains, authority cannot come from persuasion and argument. If persuasion and argument could establish authority, Socrates' trial would have returned a different verdict. Rather, Platonic authority, in Arendt's reading of *The Republic*, comes from truth because the self-evident nature of truth compels the mind in ways that are stronger than persuasion and argument. However, only

15 Simon (1957: 11, 22, 125, 128, 151).

the philosopher-kings can know and be subject to the authority of the truth; the multitude, which is easily swayed by myths, cannot be trusted to do the same. Ultimately, the establishment of Platonic authority requires violence; as is the case with Plato's later attempt to ground authority on laws, which will have to be enforced.

Aristotle's solution to the problem of authority fares no better than Plato's in Arendt's analysis. Aristotelian authority assumes a division between rulers and the ruled, with educators (and by extension, experts and scientists) playing the role of the philosopher-kings by imposing knowledge on their students.

The violence inherent in Greek authority, Arendt argues, is best understood when viewed against the Roman conception. Specifically, Roman authority did not require coercion because it was conceived of as flowing from the city's sacralised ancestors to its citizens by way of the Senate. Rome was thought as not having been simply built but authored and this glorious foundation infused Roman life with a collective spirit which guided its development. Roman authority thus united past and future generations through the acceptance of, and commitment to, a mythical vision.

In summary, for Arendt, authority has permanently died out. Neither truth nor persuasion, neither argument nor science will assist Western society in overcoming the existential crisis that the loss of authority triggered. Similarly, religion and tradition will not remedy the malaise since they are no longer authoritative. To alleviate the disappearance of authority, Arendt places her hopes in modern revolutions. The American Revolution with its ideals of freedom and justice enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, exemplifies the sort of political event which can provide the foundations for society's rejuvenation. Her conclusion shows that her 'authority' only tangentially connects with 'authority' as understood by Weber and Simon. In her effort to distinguish authority from power, Arendt divorces the two concepts entirely, arguing that authority is part foundational myth and part political vision. Besides, she does not identify reason or persuasion as a basis for ensuring its acceptance. Her conception embeds ideals that bring citizens together and create social cohesion, but she does not explain why people should embrace them.

Authority as Reasoned Elaboration

The present authors believe that there is a plausible answer to the vexed question of authority in Carl Friedrich's theory, overlooked by management writers, but revived by several scholars who argue that it has the potential to resolve the many conceptual confusions and problems associated with the empirical study of managerial authority.[16] Like Arendt, Friedrich bases his analysis of authority on the crucial difference between power and authority and the need to see it as related to commu-

16 Herbst (2006); Plant (2011); Spillane & Joullié (2015).

nications. However, he arrives at very different conclusions. Indeed, the differences between Arendt and Friedrich on authority, given their similar intellectual background and cultural heritage, are striking.

Friedrich was one of the earliest critics of the conflation of power and authority. Teaching full time at Harvard from 1926, then alternatively at Harvard and the University of Heidelberg from 1956 until his retirement in 1971, Friedrich wrote on public administration, political theory and totalitarianism. Noted for his knowledge of German constitutional history, he advised the US occupying forces during de-Nazification and participated in the drafting of West Germany's post-war constitution. Friedrich's lifelong concerns included the reconciliation of bureaucracy with personal and professional responsibility, the respective roles (and scope for decision-making) of policymakers and administrators and the possibility for administrators to engage in public argument and debate. Uniting these concerns is his theory of authority.

Friedrich begins his famous essay, *Authority*, with a statement of the problem confronting researchers. 'Ever since the eighteenth-century revolt against the established authorities in church and state, there has been a marked tendency among freedom-loving intellectuals to view "authority" with a jaundiced eye, if not to denounce it.'[17]

Friedrich is particularly critical of those scholars who conflate authority and authoritarianism. Authority, he claims, has been juxtaposed to freedom, to force and to reason. 'It has been praised and condemned in all these contexts, and as a result, the word has been incorporated in a pejorative adjective, 'authoritarian', and linked as a general characteristic to 'personality' as an objectionable and eradicable trait.'[18]

Friedrich disagrees with Weber's proposition that authority should be defined in terms of power, legitimate or otherwise, since authority may be held without power. He notes that authority derives from *auctoritas* which is related to the notion of augmentation: a*uctoritas* supplements an act of will by adding *reasons* to it. It is advice which cannot properly be disregarded, such as a doctor gives to a patient. It is a matter of adding wisdom to will, reason to interests. The role of reasoning in authority relationships is, for Friedrich, the central issue. For when good reasons exist for believing and doing something, such action or thought acquires a quality which is 'authoritative'. Etymologically, there is also a link to 'author': a person who creates and disseminates communications.

Authority, then, is the quality of a communication rather than of a person. Specifically, it is the quality of a communication which is capable of reasoned elaboration. The capacity for reasoned elaboration is consistent with the values, beliefs, interests and needs of the community within which the authority operates. In managerial authority, the communication requesting obedience is recognised as being

17 Friedrich (1958: 28).
18 Friedrich (1958: 29).

supported by reasons why the action is the desirable one. In this sense, authority is a source of power, not a form of power. This distinction also applies to the power wielder. However, one significant difference is that the power wielder may gain obedience without recourse to reasoned elaboration. For Friedrich, power is that relation among people which manifests itself in the behaviour of following. Although conceptually independent, power and authority are thus closely related. For example, much managerial authority can be maintained without managers needing to elaborate their directions.

Friedrich's analysis allows him to talk of both power and authority in terms of obedience and yet be able to draw a distinguishing line between them. This delineation is possible because of his emphasis on reasoned elaboration without which individuals lack or lose authority. 'Losing one's authority' is a way of saying that managers have lost power when the authority of their communications has disintegrated because of community changes and consequently their capacity for communal reasoning has declined.

Friedrich is also critical of those scholars who equate authority and legitimacy. These authors miss the key aspect of authority, namely its relation to reason. Legitimacy implies 'reasoning upon the title to rule' and authority can create legitimacy wherever it provides good reasons for the title to rule. Authority helps to legitimise power by the fact that the capacity to issue communications, with an appropriate convincing rationale, embraces the right to rule. Authority thus buttresses legitimacy. Authority is not 'legitimate power' for legitimate power exists in its many forms without a capacity for reasoned elaboration. What is required in organisations is a *rationale* for following managers: a demonstration or a conviction that managers can provide guidance and successfully direct colleagues to group goals.

Friedrich also criticises Barnard for extending a theory of informal organisation to remedy the defects of his theory of formal organisation. For example, Barnard broadened the concept of cooperation to cover all work relationships, including those that involve coercion and thereby failed to make a distinction between 'cooperative' and 'directive' styles of managing. In the cooperative (or authoritative) organisation, the contributions of all relevant colleagues are elicited and voluntarily made; in the directive (or authoritarian) organisation, they are ordered and enforced. Moreover, there is no role in Barnard's organisation for criticism or argumentation: disruptive factors are either endorsed or minimised.

Friedrich argues that the true nature of authority (as authoritativeness) has been obscured by the pejorative term 'authoritarian' which refers to managers who pretend to act authoritatively while rejecting reasoned elaboration and critical argumentation in favour of directives and commandments. When considered in Friedrich's sense, authority is quite distinct from the use of power and coercion that is ordinarily implied in the notion of 'authoritarian'. An authoritarian manager is one who orders rather than argues, directs rather than advises, commands rather than suggests.

Friedrich's analysis broadens the notion of authority since he sees it as a quality of knowledge. Authority thus approaches the notion of 'correctness' communicated

to others. Used in this sense, authority can be of two kinds: scientific and moral. In seeking out the 'authorities' on a scientific matter one is searching for the most reliable and effective knowledge for bringing about some specifiable aim. To seek out the 'authorities' on moral questions is thus to search for the best form of knowledge on which to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable aims or means. This analysis explains the difficulties encountered in analysing authority, for if the category is to include the range of values which influence human behaviour, then authority becomes so amorphous a concept as to be empirically inaccessible.

Organisational members who engage in reasoned elaboration will frequently find that their reasons are challenged by their colleagues who offer alternative reasons for various policies and practices. Thus, a process of argumentation is entered into as both parties exchange and offer reasons to support their contrasting views. Friedrich stops short of considering the consequences of allowing those people subject to reasoned elaboration a voice in the proceedings. Yet, his analysis is consistent with the view that once reasoned elaboration is enacted, the probability exists that disagreements and countervailing reasons will enter, if not dominate, the exchange. If argument is forbidden at the outset, it is difficult to conceive of authority as anything more than rationalised, rather than rational, communication. Karl Popper goes further, claiming that argument, and hence rationality, is the basis for social and personal development generally.

Understandably, Friedrich criticises those scholars, such as Fromm, who talk of 'irrational authority', which he (Friedrich) regards as false authority. While there are greater or lesser degrees of reasoning involved in authority relationships, the authoritative communication is capable of reasoned elaboration. Thus, attempts to identify authority with the irrational miss the fundamental point that authority is, by definition, related to reason. In authority relationships the communication requesting acceptance is recognised as being supported by *reasons* why the action is the desirable one. Authority is a quality of individuals that enhances their power, but it is not itself power.

Situations where individuals successfully pretend to have authority give rise to false authority which occurs when managers issue communications which are believed to allow for reasoned elaboration when in fact they do not. That is, colleagues sometimes believe that communications could be reasonably elaborated and are therefore worthy of acceptance when no such potentiality exists. Only when what is communicated can be reasoned upon and defended is authority secure.

The view that there are degrees of reasoned elaboration involved in authority is persuasive. For instance, to be authoritative, a proposed course of action, even if advanced by a senior manager, must be supported by convincing reasons. This observation amounts to saying that authoritative communications depend on the interests, beliefs and values of those to whom the communications are directed. Managers who have little authority have lost power because the authority of their communications has disintegrated, either because they have ceased to engage in reasoned elaboration or because the values of the other organisational members have changed.

The fact that managers' commands and other communications can be reinforced by reasoned elaboration relating them to established values and beliefs lends their acts that 'authority' which limits arbitrary abuse of power. Authoritative managers, therefore, recognise their responsibility for discretionary acts as an obligation to retain their regard for the importance of reasoned elaboration. 'Once this regard is lost – and it may be lost by [managers] at large no longer accepting reason as a guide – the night of meaningless violence is upon us.'[19]

As managerial authority is reflected in cooperative exchanges between managers and technical experts, management requires a language that emphasises valid reasoning culminating in authoritative advice. However, the ability to engage in critical debate needs to be supplemented with the ability to persuade others of the right course of action. What makes a specific course of action authoritative is that convincing reasons may be meta-rational in the sense that they refer to transcendental beliefs. As it is unreasonable to deny such beliefs evidential value, authoritative reasoning and persuasive skills constitute the field of authority rather than the more limited field of logic. As opposed to logic, persuasion is not a formal technique because it is linked to accepted ideas and probable opinion. Persuasive skills provide managers with strategies to protect them (and their authority) in debate since they deal with accepted ideas and probable opinions rather than logical proofs. When logical proof cannot be offered, reasoning needs to be supported by persuasion.

Power, legitimate or otherwise, is thus an insufficient basis for managerial effectiveness. Indeed, to be effective, managers need to supplement their legitimate power with authority which is vested in rational communications that are persuasively disseminated. Managerial authority, therefore, is grounded on technical and persuasive skills. Authority is not an alternative to argument: it is grounded in it.

As to leadership, Friedrich argues that leaders hold power, but they also create and spend power. He argues for three primary roles of leadership: innovation (e. g., entrepreneurs), authoritativeness (problem-solvers) and protecting (e. g., lawgivers), to which correspond characteristic behaviours: imitating, obeying and acclaiming. All three forms of leadership elicit consent and thus provide a foundation for consensual power. His theory applies to charismatics and their followers, although Friedrich disagrees with Weber's notion of institutionalised charisma (e. g., a church), since institutionalisation and charisma are contradictory terms. Charismatic leadership, for him, is of minor importance to theorists because the faith in transcendent beings is today not strong enough to provide an adequate basis for legitimising leadership.

By extending his definition of authority into the social psychological field Friedrich overcomes the problems of both the formal and informal models and emphasises the existential aspects of the relationship. His insistence on the psychological aspects of authority, when brought to bear on Weber's sociological analysis, raises the question of whether authority (in Friedrich's sense) can penetrate the resistance

19 Friedrich (1958: 48).

of large organisations with their formally ensconced managerialists. Whatever effects technical experts and others have on managerial power therefore will differ in degree according to the question at issue.

Finally, Friedrich's theory predicts that managerial authority is enriched through the contribution of technical experts. Existing anomalies concerning the rational qualities of the social order provide an empirical challenge of considerable importance for it links the two sides of the authority relationship: the concession of authority on the one hand and the consequences of compliance on the other. This latter aspect has been widely studied and has yielded much valuable information.

However, the other side of the relationship is still submerged in conceptual ambiguity and theoretical confusion. This state-of-affairs has serious implications should a researcher investigating any one of these concepts attempt to describe one in terms of another. Consequently, the analysis of managerial authority has yielded results at a level of generality which does not permit researchers to be able to make reliable and subtle distinctions in human behaviour. Authority is one of those concepts most in need of subtle analysis since it has a claim to be the foundation of organisational behaviour.

The conceptual review in this chapter highlights the difficulties facing those who aim to objectify abstract concepts, such as authority. Authority is a relationship which provides information about the nature of both superordinate and subordinate parties. It yields information which can lead to inferences about the phenomenological world of the representatives of both parties. This, in turn, provides the foundation for the establishment of law-like propositions of the degree to which authority has become institutionalised.

The function of the empirical investigation of authority is to set up situations in which this relationship appears and to note the conditions which define the situation where the appropriate consistencies appear between the two end points in which the relationship is anchored. One technique by which this is accomplished is to create empirical analogues of the Weberian ideal types for experimental manipulation. While there are certain problems with this technique, the applicability of such analogues to real-life settings is lent the appearance of some validity by the theoretical bridge inherent in the conceptual scheme.

It is clear from the studies quoted in this chapter that the criteria adopted by researchers in arriving at a conceptual framework for authority betray diverse assumptions. Authority is indeed a protean concept.

Regrettably, a common stance adopted in the literature is to think of occasions on which people change their behaviour as cases in which a single type of factor is operating and to conclude that it is of little importance whether this factor is called power, influence, authority, obedience, conformity or social pressure. There has been empirical progress in some fields, however. For example, the early studies of conformity and obedience have attracted widespread critical comment from both experimental and ethical perspectives.

While the possibilities discussed above assist in clarifying the conceptual ambiguities and empirical contradictions involved in the study of managerial authority, there is today little agreement among scholars about the nature and source of authority. Research after the golden age of research has failed to resolve conceptual confusions.

Chapter 2:
Authoritarianism, Conformity and Obedience

Much of the discussion in the preceding chapter concentrated on the essentially rational nature of authority. This perspective is to be contrasted with the psychoanalytic view that the basis of authority is irrational. That authority has an irrational (or non-rational) quality is familiar to political scientists and sociologists. Weber, for instance, emphasised this aspect in his analysis of charismatic leadership.

In Freudian theory the family is the prototype of authority relationships. Authority figures represent idealised father images which stand for superego functioning. The functions of the superego are the same as the function of parents and teachers and others who insist on appropriate social norms aiming at proper conduct. However, there are, as Freud recognised, two aspects of proper conduct: that induced by the fear of punishment and that resulting from the effective operation of the superego, or conscience.

According to Freud, authority relationships involve two qualitatively different identifications. On the one hand, such relationships are authoritarian as they involve a command figure who applies sanctions and curbs natural inclinations. On the other hand, the authoritative person offers guidance and counsel and, in the form of the father, dominates personality development. Yet, there is an ambivalence underlying all authority relationships which is reflected in the person who is perceived to be both authoritarian and authoritative. Understandably, Freud traces this ambivalence to childhood where early authority figures bear considerably on later authority identifications.

In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud wrote that the parents' influence includes not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the national and family traditions handed on through them, together with contributions from later successors and parental substitutes, such as teachers and respected figures in public life. Further, in Freudian theory, the historical bond between father and child is crucial for later identifications for ego interests are validated by the notions of right and wrong developed through early authority relationships. However, superego identifications are not always personal because institutions assume the guise of either a paternal or maternal presence. For example, churches, hospitals and universities, whose role is to protect and guide people, are considered maternal as opposed to aggressive masculine institutions, such as armies or business corporations. While an institution generally has a maternal identification, its management often has a parental identification. In the words of a Freudian scholar, 'What we are asserting, on the basis of Freudian theory, is that the *psychological source* of the intense

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emotions of loyalty and rebelliousness which institutions are able to evoke from their members is to be found within their original family relations.'[1]

In his analysis of group formation, Freud studied the bonds which developed between group members and the leader and the bonds among the members themselves. He argued that the bond which united the members in a group was founded on a shared identification with a central figure, object or concept. His ideas were followed up by Redl who identified several types of group leader, or central person, around whom the group process take place. The difference between the type of leader lies in their various roles. *Patriarchal Sovereigns* attract group members in a way that leads to identification and invites their approval. *Leaders* appeal to the love emotions and represent an ideal for others to model. *Organisers* render an important service to group members by providing the means for the satisfaction of common, and often undesirable, drives and thus prevents guilt feelings, conflicts and frustrations which otherwise are generally involved in the group. *Tyrants* gain their influence through the fears of their subordinates. *Heroes* initiate group activities, saving group members from anxieties and conflicts associated with a lack of goal clarity and direction. *Good Examples* render a service to group members by virtue of the infectiousness of the unconflicted personality upon the conflicted ones and thus save them from the necessity of facing their own anxieties.

Fromm, a social psychoanalyst, argues that a separation of authority into rational and irrational components clarifies the problem of ambivalence which bothered Freud. Rational authority has its source in competence but requires constant scrutiny and criticism. The source of irrational authority is always power over people where criticism is forbidden. Rational authority is based on the equality of both authority and subject, which differs only with respect to the degree of knowledge or skill in a specific field. Irrational authority is by its very nature based on inequality, implying difference in value. In Fromm's analysis obedience to directives is a possible outcome of either form of authority: rational authority is seen in the teacher-pupil relationship and irrational authority in the master-slave relationship. The essential difference is the meaning which is attached to the relationship and the basis on which it rests.

According to Fromm, authoritarian ethics can be distinguished from humanistic ethics. Authoritarian ethics denies the human capacity to know what is good or bad since the moralist is a power figure who claims transcendent knowledge. Such a system is based not on reason but on awe of the power figure and on the subjects' feelings of impotence and dependence. Authoritarian ethics, which is really a moralism, answers the question of what is good or bad in terms of the interests of the power figure: it is basically exploitative. The power figure ordains obedience to be the main virtue and disobedience to be the main sin. 'The unforgiveable sin in authoritarian ethics is rebellion, the questioning of the authority's right to establish

1 McIntosh (1970: 908).

norms and of its axiom that the norms established by the authority are in the best interests of the subjects.'[2]

Humanistic ethics, in contrast, is based on the principle that only individuals can determine the criterion for virtue and sin. It is based on the principle that the criteria of ethical values are human purposes and welfare. These matters are discussed further in Chapter 9 in relation to a purposive ethics for managers.

If Fromm's analysis is accepted, that is, if it is agreed that legitimacy is a prerequisite of authority, authority-related concepts reveal the emphases of the underlying components of the dichotomy between authoritarian and humanistic ethics. For example, rational authority points to notions of influence, persuasion, respect, recognition, prestige and expertise. Theorists who emphasise irrational authority employ terms in accordance with Fromm's definition, such as power, domination, coercion, control, inequality, force and obedience. This tendency appears in the extensive work on the authoritarian personality.

The Authoritarian Personality

In the years after the Second World War, the American Jewish Committee subsidised a research team from the University of Berkeley to study the psychology of anti-Semitism. The team, led by Adorno, included Jewish authors who were escapees from Nazism. In 1950 they published *The Authoritarian Personality,* a work which continues to attract the interest of scholars.[3]

The team began by constructing an Anti-Semitism (AS) scale which included items describing Jews as offensive, threatening, seclusive or clannish. A second scale was developed to see whether a negative view of Jews was associated with negative views of minority groups generally. Scores on this ethnocentrism scale (E) scale correlated positively with scores on the AS scale. A third scale (PEC) was developed to assess conservative political and economic attitudes, since fascism was generally regarded as a political movement of the extreme right. Scores on the PEC scale correlated positively with the AS and E scales. This result was interpreted to mean that conservatives are more ethnocentric and anti-Semitic than those from the radical left.

As the three ideological scales correlated with each other, the research team argued that a central personality factor explained a potentiality for fascism. Accordingly, a fourth scale was constructed to assess this hypothetical personality factor. As the scale, known as the F-Scale or Authoritarianism, correlated positively with the

2 Fromm (1967: 22).

3 Adorno et al. (1950); Altemeyer (1996); Christie & Geis (1970); Christie & Jahoda (1954); Stone, Lederer & Christie (1993).

three original scales, the Adorno team concluded that it is a valid measure of the authoritarian personality.

Adorno and his researchers found that authoritarian subjects thought well of themselves but lacked accurate interpersonal perception. Importantly, they were able to hold contradictory ideas without undue concern or even awareness. Buttressed by the Freudian view that ambivalence towards parents is inevitable, the team concluded that the authoritarian subjects' use of the Freudian defence mechanism of denial was a consequence of a repressive upbringing. Also, in the Freudian vein, they believed that authoritarians re-direct their feelings of hate from their parents to minority groups.

Publication of the F-scale was followed by an avalanche of research studies. It was quickly established that scores on the F-scale correlated negatively with scores on IQ tests, measures of socio-economic status and with length of education. Spillane and Martin argue that the independent variable common to these relationships is intelligence.[4]

The items of the F-scale are proverb-like clichés expressing a rigid adherence to middle-class values, a submissive attitude to idealised moral authorities, denigration of tender-minded individuals, dogmatic thinking, a pre-occupation with dominance and leadership, identification with power wielders and exaggeration of the importance of toughness, a denigration of human nature, topped with an exaggerated concern with danger and with sexual activities.

High scorers on the F-scale demonstrate a strong tendency to endorse items that have opposite meanings. For example, authoritarians agree that Jews are clannish and obtrusive, an obvious contradiction. As the scale items are statements of general rules, the tendency to endorse them leads relatively unintelligent people into this kind of contradiction. The persistent tendency of authoritarians to endorse general rules and contradict themselves and the relationship with IQ indicates that what lies at the basis of authoritarianism is a specific intellectual factor. Spillane and Martin identify it with the *perception of patterns*.

People feel comfortable in social interactions when they can predict the actions of others with a reasonable degree of reliability. This is achieved generally by observing patterns in the actions of others and referring these to purposes, beliefs and emotions. There are, of course, significant differences in people's ability to perceive such patterns, especially where individuals are acting relatively freely. If, however, a large proportion of the actions of others is governed by rules, prediction becomes easier for all concerned.

For those who are poor at detecting patterns in social life, the environment appears as a dangerous place where people act in unpredictable ways for mysterious reasons. The obvious way to cope with this tension is to insist on strict obedience to rules, roles and authorities so that the social world is rendered more predictable.

4 Spillane & Martin (2005: 79 – 87; 2018: 76 – 83).

Moreover, in a predictable social world one can gain or regain a sense of personal power, whereas an unpredictable world renders them relatively impotent. Social life is, as Machiavelli and Nietzsche insisted, a world of power and one needs a strong will to power to survive and overcome adversaries. Those individuals who are good at detecting patterns in social life are thereby empowered and are likely to feel less anxious and more secure in their social relationships than those in which this ability is less developed. Further, good pattern perceivers are likely to be unimpressed by rules and fixed roles and more idiosyncratic in what they do. This thesis makes authoritarianism a relative matter.

To support their thesis, Spillane and Martin argue that the conditions in pre-Nazi Germany increased unpredictability to the extent that many people were unable to tolerate it and, consequently, became alarmed. As a result of the decrease in predictability they experienced, society's regulation of its citizens' behaviour slackened. This situation generated a desire for more effective regulation and encouraged people to endorse authoritarian attitudes and practices which in turn created a demand for authoritarian leadership. Even in less dramatic times, there are inevitably people who do not enjoy a comfortable level of predictive power. These people are susceptible to the emphasis given by conservative politicians to law and order. This observation assists in accounting for the persistent support for conservative politicians among members of the working class, whose interests are not otherwise served by conservative parties.

Minority groups, including migrants, frequently encounter prejudice and rejection from those people who are easily threatened by customs and behaviour which appear to be incompatible with the traditional ways and thus are relatively unpredictable. These minority groups are invariably criticised by those most disturbed by the change in patterns of social life who engage in strategies by which they endeavour to regain personal power in the social structure. Such strategies include extreme demands for social conformity, insistence that minority groups are punished for perceived transgressions and the establishment of a new set of standards by which the offenders are to be judged. The intensity of these prescriptions varies according to the degree to which the minority groups abide by the new, sometimes draconian, rules. The presence of clans and ghettoes, especially of a religious kind, exacerbates the problem and inflames the emotions which drive the authoritarians to permanent prejudice. In this sense, authoritarianism has universal significance which is resistant to learning and which compromises rational behaviour. Whether it is a personality trait is another question.

Spillane and Martin argue that the assumption of a personality trait should include the following considerations. First, consistency of behaviour over situations is not a sufficient condition for the inference of personality traits because role-playing and habitual behaviour are relatively consistent rational means of achieving goals. Second, where people are ignorant of effective behaviour, their ineffective behaviour is not a sufficient condition for the inference of personality traits. Third, an explanation in terms of personality traits demands that the behaviour must be

consistent over situations in some or all of which it is effective, and the instances in which the behaviour is ineffective must not be the result of personal ignorance, which means that people had the opportunity to adapt their behaviour to the circumstances. As personality traits are assumed to be stable, it follows that behaviour which is explained in terms of personality traits is only that which implies a *lack of adaptability*.

Spillane and Martin conclude that if their hypothesis about authoritarianism is correct, it qualifies for the status of a personality trait as they define the concept since it is, by definition, a deficiency in a specific aspect of intelligence, so that its possessor acts in a consistent but often ineffective or non-rational way. Whatever the case, there has been no shortage of studies of the correlation of scores on authoritarian scales and other personality traits. This line of research is not worth pursuing further since correlating psychological scales reveals more about item selection than about authoritarianism per se.

Stimulated by the problem of academic anti-intellectualism in the 1960s, Rudin argues that although the study of attitudes to irrational authority has attracted considerable attention, this has been at the expense of the study of rational authority and its products. Rudin argues that the acceptance of the authority of people judged to have greater competence than oneself in specific areas is different from the indiscriminate acceptance of authority. Similarly, Martin and Ray point to the fact that: 'Authority is a many-faceted element in experience, and it is not conceptually satisfying to regard acceptance of any and every form of authority (without distinction as to time, place or situation) as indicative of incipient fascism and necessary prejudice.'[5] They point out that the Adorno research reports carried strong evaluative suggestions concerning those people with high scores on the F-Scale. In the final chapter of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno et al. even assert that authoritarianism is 'a disease to be cured'. Subsequent research in this field has generally reinforced such value judgements and perpetuated the identification of authoritarianism with potentiality for fascism.[6]

Rudin published a scale which claimed to be a measure of 'rational authoritarianism' as defined by Fromm. He assumed the F-Scale to be a measure of 'irrational authoritarianism', since the description by Adorno's team of the authoritarian's personality conforms closely to what would be expected of a participant in a master-slave relationship. However, the Rudin scale has failed to generate much interest within psychology. Martin and Ray argue that this neglect reflects the *Zeitgeist* of the post-war decades which has viewed permissiveness versus authoritarianism as the dominating factor in socialisation. In this worldview, special approval is reserved for anti-authoritarianism since it is an important element of liberalism.

5 Martin & Ray (1972: 17).

6 Christie & Jahoda (1954); Shils (1954).

Using Rudin's scale, Martin and Ray found that agreement with anti-rational authority statements was positively related to measures of emotional instability and negatively related to socio-economic status and intelligence. Agreement with pro-authoritarian items, on the other hand, was independent of these measures. Martin and Ray conclude that the concept of authoritarianism has been overgeneralised and that a more relevant question is whether the authority to which one defers has claims to rational support or not. They argue that rejecting rational authority and accepting irrational authority are equally indicative of personal inadequacy. In this regard, the relationships with intelligence are illuminating. Agreement with pro-authoritarian (F-Scale items) and agreement with anti-rational authoritarian items (Rudin) are both negatively related to intelligence. People of low intelligence are likely to accept irrational authority and reject rational authority. In short, they fail to discriminate between what is rational and what is not.

Autocrats and Democrats

In the 1930s there was considerable interest in the differences between autocratic and democratic political regimes. In the US, this research was taken up by psychologists and applied to managerial behaviour. The classic study in this field is that reported by a team led by Kurt Lewin who categorised supervisory styles as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.[7] As Lewin's study was reported in 1939, countless subsequent studies have extolled the virtues of democratic supervision and indicted autocratic supervision. The study has since become a classic in this field.

Lewin was a refugee from Nazi Germany who arrived in America determined to promote the ideals of democracy in its various forms. His aim was to demonstrate empirically the social, economic and psychological benefits of democratic leadership. He drew a sharp distinction between autocratic and democratic styles of supervision and sought evidence for the superiority of the latter.

According to Lewin and his colleagues in the autocratic style: policies are determined solely by group supervisors; techniques and activity steps are dictated by supervisors one at a time so that future steps are always uncertain; supervisors dictate work tasks and work companions; supervisors are personal in their praise and criticism of group members; supervisors remain aloof from active group participation except when demonstrating tasks. By contrast, in the democratic style: policies are a matter for group discussion and decision, encouraged and assisted by supervisors; general steps to achieving goals are sketched by supervisors and when technical advice is needed they suggest alternatives; members are free to work with whomever they choose and division of tasks is a group decision; supervisors are objective in their praise and criticism of group members; supervisors try to

7 Lewin, Lippitt & White (1939).

be regular group members in spirit without taking over the work of others. It is widely reported and believed that the study found that the democratic supervisors developed higher levels of 'morale' in their groups than did the autocrats. Further, it is generally accepted that the democratic groups achieved higher levels of output.

There have been few major criticisms of Lewin's influential study. An exception is Carey who showed that the results point to the conclusion that the autocratic groups produced less aggression (sometimes interpreted as a higher level of morale) and higher levels of output than did the democratic groups. Carey concludes:

> It is a considerable tribute to the experimenters' attachment to the word 'democracy' (both in its political connotations and in the sense in which a human relations supervisory style in industry is called democratic) that they are able to interpret this evidence in a way favourable to democracy and conclude that it was more efficient and produced less frustration, less aggression or both [...] After a while it was widely reported, in textbooks and articles, that output was highest in the democratically-led groups.[8]

Lewin's study can be criticised on other, technical grounds. For instance, goal clarity is a necessary condition of effective supervision. Lewin made it a condition of the autocratic condition that the supervisors reveal to group members the steps to the group goal one at a time, whereas in the democratic condition the path to the group goal was a matter of group discussion and decision. It is simply not the case, however, that lack of a group goal is fundamental to autocracy. It is a key feature of totalitarian regimes that their leaders make the goals of their countries explicit whereas in democracies national goals are frequently confused and unclear. For example, Hitler and Mussolini were very clear about their plans for domination while the Kennedy regime in America was not. It is therefore instructive to note that two Australian psychologists reported results which support the hypothesis that when goal perspective is equally clear to both autocratic and democratic groups, there is no difference in morale between the groups.[9] Autocratic groups, however, were found to be significantly *more* effective in performance, as measured by quantitative output. These results offer convincing evidence that clarity of group goal perspective rather than supervisory style was the major variable accountable for the findings of the Lewin study.

To this day, the debate about autocratic and democratic management styles misses the crucial point that what is at stake is the utilisation of managerial power, not merely differences in communication styles. Autocratic managers are judged unfavourably because it is claimed that they wield power ruthlessly in the pursuit of their goals. Democratic managers are judged favourably because it is claimed that they are subjected, or subject themselves, to a variety of checks and balances to their power. However, it is when managers direct the power of a group

8 Carey (1976: 238).

9 Lansbury & Spillane (1983: 95).

successfully that they are accorded the right to direct group members in certain tasks beyond their level of expertise. Management style is influenced by several variables including the power inherent in their position, the structure of the task itself and the expectations and power of group members. Some jobs require that power be exercised to a greater degree than others. Prescriptions that managers and supervisors ought to be democratic (supportive, participative, friendly) in all work environments remain unsupported.

Conformity and Obedience in the Laboratory

Social psychologists working in the field known as group dynamics attempted to bridge personality and society by investigating relational concepts, including conformity, obedience and authority, in the experimental laboratory. The early experiments on groups emphasised that people find meaning in carrying out plans to achieve relevant goals. In later work, the emphasis was more on techniques for manipulating and deceiving subjects. Importantly, psychologists brought to bear on their results deterministic explanations which led them to employ such problematic constructs as 'group pressure' and 'malevolent authority'. This differed from earlier research which had concluded that human behaviour depends largely on how individuals perceive patterns in their environment, monitor their actions and direct them to specific goals.

Conformity, or yielding in laboratory settings, is rarely discussed in terms of authority. This omission is surprising because at least one interpretation of yielding directly involves the concept. This interpretation is that proposed in a classic study in social psychology.

In the 1950s, Asch conducted a laboratory study in which subjects yielded to a majority judgement even when that judgement was wrong in fact and in appearance. Subjects' choice was, therefore, to answer accurately and become a deviant or to yield to the majority. The impact of this study is due to subjects yielding to a group opinion which is contrary to the direct evidence of their senses. This situation is not one in which people are expected to change their judgements. Yet, when confronted with the difference between their own and their peers' judgements, the subjects tended to err in the direction of the group consensus. Only about one quarter of subjects remained independent. Conformity, such as that which Asch produced in his experiments, is widely regarded as a change in behaviour towards a group due to 'group pressure.'

A general theme in conformity studies is the belief that the response which indicates the effect of social influence implies a suspension of rational processes. One of its influential advocates was Moscovici who wrote: 'The Asch studies are one of the most dramatic illustrations of conformity, of blindly going along with the group, even

when the individual realises that by doing so, he turns his back on reality and truth.'[10] Notwithstanding Moscovici's enthusiasm, whether the conformity observed in the Asch-type experiments can be explained by yielding to group pressure or by authoritative direction remains an unsettled question.

Early sociologists Tarde and Le Bon were among the first to argue that group influence occurs independently of reason. Drawing on analyses of common social phenomena, they pointed to the blind and irrational effects of group influences. Their position reflected the Darwinian emphasis, typical of their period, on unknown mechanistic factors controlling behaviour. Other researchers of this persuasion have argued that wherever individuals respond to social influence their actions are uncritical or unreasoned. This approach has been carried into the laboratory studies in small groups where conformity is thought to be the result of irrational and blind conformity.

This general policy has been questioned, however. For example, it has been argued that individuals are influenced by 'prestige suggestion', a notion not inconsistent with authoritative guidance which is explicable without evoking notions of irrational forces. When combined with a mechanistic view, conformity in the laboratory becomes conformity to the group, occurring non-cognitively as the result of 'normative social influence' or reflects individuals' (cognitive) agreement with the group based on what has been called 'informational social influence'.

A significant feature of the normative social influence process is that it leads individuals to agree with a group judgement in public, while they remain privately unconvinced. Normative social influence arises from various sources: from wishing to remain in a group to instances where individuals seek a 'reality' upon which to base their opinions. A group with similar opinions can provide them with a 'social reality'. The 'pressures' arising in a group in this way lead to informational social influence. This sort of influence focuses on the content of the influence and not the social effects of accepting it and thus resembles the notion of authoritative influence where individuals accept the guidance of a person or persons regarded as likely to think correctly on a subject. As such, relatively less conformity in situations is expected where subjects had cause to doubt the authoritativeness of group members. For example, researchers have found that where subjects had reason to believe that they were more competent than the group they conformed less. Others have shown that as the number of errors made by group members increases, so individuals' confidence in the group decreases and they conform less. Conversely, the more competent the group (as perceived by subjects), the more conformity occurs. It has also been argued that subjects attribute some level of ability to themselves and some level to others and whether they hold to their own judgement or yield to that of others depends on the relative levels of ability they attribute to each party. Finally, several experimenters investigated self-confidence as a predictor of conformity. The findings

10 Moscovici (1985: 349).

are as expected: the more confident subjects who believe themselves to be authoritative yield less.[11]

A central question is whether all the conformity in the Asch-type experiments can be explained by the notion of authoritative direction. The distinction between normative and informational social influence points to a negative answer. Yet, there is considerable confusion in the identification of these two categories. The presence of normative social influence is an inference deriving from the procedures which encouraged 'cooperation' in the group. These findings are open to alternative interpretation: subjects complied with the wishes of experimenters. This represents conformity to experimenters, not to the group. It is also possible that the two influences (normative and informational social) operate side-by-side and for this reason the methods adopted to study the processes have not been successful in distinguishing them in practice. Consequently, their meaning remains unclear.

It should be emphasised that Asch's experimental programme was based on Gestalt field principles which were given their most explicit formulation by Lewin. In Lewin's theory, the dynamic elements are forces which move individuals about. It is thus unsurprising that Asch's commentators have generally interpreted his results in terms of yielding to social pressure, a form of expression that not only indicates a causative explanation but happens to accord with a metaphorical usage of these terms in everyday language.

The mainstream causative interpretation of Asch's studies has been recently questioned on two accounts. First, against Le Bon, it has been argued that groups regularly display more rationality and less bias than individuals do.[12] As such, going with the group in perplexing situations is rational behaviour, whereas ignoring it would be irrational (a point made by Asch). Second, it has been noted that if Asch's research reports provide apparent evidence for irrationality on the part of the subjects, they also contain abundant evidence for their rationality.[13] For example, when asked why they conformed, subjects reported that they did not want to appear foolish or isolated. Others thought that the first person to speak had a visual impairment and assumed that those who spoke after him did not want to come across as impolite: thus, they decided to follow suit. Further, if most of Asch's subjects conformed at least once, about a quarter never did. If there is evidence for conformity, there is also clear evidence for deliberate resistance.

In standard conformity experiments the subjects' perception of the task is deliberately restricted by experimenters. Crucial features are concealed from the subjects so that it is almost impossible for them to make correct inferences about the true state-of-affairs. That is, the subjects' perceptions are carefully structured by experimenters. If the subjects knew that others (including the experimenter) were

11 Rock (1990).

12 Spears (2010).

13 Cialdini & Goldstein (2004); Jetten & Hornsey (2011; 2017); Mori & Arai (2010).

conspiring against them, it is doubtful whether a language of 'forces,' 'social pressure' or 'blind conformity' could be justified to account for their behaviour. In other words, it is the deception applied to the subjects which constitutes the baseline for interpretation of the results in terms of 'forces' or 'pressures,' and which allows experimenters to ignore the possibility that subjects are acting on their own evaluation of the situation. The necessity for deception renders the 'scientific' explanation in mechanistic terms very contrived.

It should be emphasised that Asch was himself cautious in his explanations. Although he relied on such expressions as 'pull', 'group pressure' and 'social pressure' in his accounts, he did not claim that his results were explained adequately by these constructs. His restraint was presumably based on the finding that increasing the majority size does not increase the yielding effect monotonically. Asch found that beyond four, further increases in the majority have no effect on the responses. This finding is not what one expects if pressure is to be measured by the number of contrary opinions encountered. Yet, the mechanical model of conformity has prevailed throughout much of the literature. It pictures individuals as a system of needs and regards social interaction as directed towards satisfying those needs. This model is very limited since it is unable to explain psychological phenomena of any complexity. By failing to consider the ways in which individuals apprehend the situation in the Asch-type experiment, explanations have been reduced to terms like 'social pressure' and a 'need to conform'.

An alternative explanation is to be found among researchers who argue that the Asch-type studies are not concerned with social pressure but with a cognitive operation. Accordingly, subjects conform because they believe others (posing as subjects like themselves) are competent. However, if social pressure is operating here, it requires qualification. Specifically, there is little doubt that subjects are directly influenced by the group in that they believe the group to be correct and conform with it. Conformity, however, can also occur because of indirect influence. That is, subjects respond to a psychological process and conform because they focus on the effect of their responses, rather than on their content. This focus on the effect of action can be used to account for the lower level of yielding in the experiment conducted where subjects were partitioned from each other (in contrast with Asch's early studies).

In summary, social psychologists would do well to move towards a theory of the person as a rational, role-playing agent to account for conformity. To modify one's judgement in response to people who are equally authoritative on a topic is a reasonable form of activity.

Since the mid-1970s and the start of what has been called the 'dark age' of obedience research, salient questions about the subject have still to receive convincing answers. While authors have explained the decline of obedience studies by calling on ethical concerns, a brief survey of textbooks in social psychology reveals that authors generally associate authority either with the authoritarian personality or link it to Milgram's obedience studies. In the latter case, authors typically define

authority as legitimate authority or legitimate power. Interpretations of the obedience studies remain problematic, however.

Studies have shown that occupancy of office lends legitimacy to occupants which enables them to extend their powers. Poignant examples come from research on experimental demand where the power of formal authority, represented by the experimenters (usually older and of higher status than their subjects), has been graphically demonstrated. As legitimate figures, they can and often do extend their powers. Further, by entering the experimental environment group members expect experimenters' directives and accept them as legitimate. Consequently, experimental subjects generally follow the directives of experimenters without complaint or resistance.[14] An early example is Landis who, during a study of emotional reactions, told subjects to behead a live rat. Fifteen of the 21 subjects obliged, after what was described as 'more or less urging'.

Landis's experiment is a precursor of studies in which participants are requested to perform ethically debatable tasks, including the doing of harm. More generally, researchers have consistently found that when students agreed to be subjects in an experiment, they typically gave such power to experimenters that they could not get subjects to resist their efforts to have them perform disagreeable tasks. Many social psychological studies support this finding. Examples are to be found in the studies of demand characteristics of the experiment, experimenter bias effects, and from diverse examples of compliant behaviour in experimental settings and studies which stress the unreasonableness, tediousness or even apparent danger of the experimental task.[15]

A telling example of compliant behaviour is provided by Orne. Presenting subjects with approximately 2000 pages of random numbers and instructing them to sum adjacent numbers and continue until his return, Orne found almost no subject was willing to relinquish the absurd task, even after five hours. Extending the unreasonableness of the task by asking subjects to tear up completed pages and to dispose of them in a waste-paper basket had little effect on subjects' persistence. When asked by the experimenter why they persevered with such an obviously meaningless task, subjects said they believed the experiment to be a test of their persistence.

In the studies referred to above, subjects invariably gave as the rationale for their actions the statement that they were an integral part of a 'scientific investigation' and were determined to fulfil their commitment to the study despite having to incur some discomfort.[16] Some subjects provided several reasons for continuation, including trust in experimenters and their institution. When conducted in the name of a noble cause with which they identify, the cooperation of subjects with an experi-

14 Frank (1944); Hodges & Geyer (2006); Hollander & Turowetz (2017).

15 Orne (1962a & b); Orne & Evans (1965); Rosenthal (1963); Verba (1966).

16 Haslam, Reicher & Birney (2014); Hollander & Turowetz (2017); Smith & Haslam (2017).

menter (such as demonstrated in Milgram's studies) has been recently analysed as one of 'engaged followership'.[17] Though they reported feeling rather uncertain about the tasks and reported strong emotional reactions to the repugnant activities, the subjects reported that they were quite convinced they would not be harmed because the experiment was being conducted by responsible experimenters.

Findings such as Orne's point to the degree of overt behavioural control which experimenters can exercise in the laboratory. Such control is well demonstrated in the obedience studies conducted by Milgram. However, Orne's experimental findings demand caution in the interpretation of Milgram's studies. A common view is to see Milgram's experiments as epitomising not only an ill-considered and dangerous subservience to formal authority but also man's inhumanity to man. Milgram, for example, wrote:

> The kind of character produced in American society cannot be counted on to insulate its citizens from brutality and inhumane treatment at the direction of malevolent authority. A substantial proportion of people do what they are told to do, irrespective of the content of the act and without limitations of conscience, so long as they perceive that the command comes from a legitimate authority.[18]

These interpretations are somewhat tenuous given the findings that experimental subjects will comply with the experimenters' requests to inflict possible injury to themselves.

Milgram's experiments attracted much attention, if not notoriety, because of the apparent willingness to obey the experimenter's instructions to deliver potentially lethal shocks to loudly suffering victims. Milgram was surprised at the results and concluded that a dictator would find it easy to persuade Americans to electrocute their fellow citizens. A close inspection of his experimental procedure, however, reveals that considerable persuasion was brought to bear on the subjects. The experimenter repeatedly instructs them to continue raising the shock level. There is also the explicit statement of the experimenter that no 'permanent tissue damage' would result from the shocks which were 'not dangerous.' As no person has been reported as being killed in a psychological experiment, Milgram's results can be regarded as a measure of the subjects' trust in the experimenter's competence and responsibility. Researchers in universities are responsible for the outcome of their experiments and, accordingly, there is every reason to believe that they would be held accountable for serious mistakes. It bears noting that, despite these checks and balances, many subjects displayed signs of indecision, agitation and stress.

The results of Milgram's experiments seemingly offer convincing evidence for the existence of a human tendency to submit to the control of others and to abdicate one's claim to rationality and responsibility at the first excuse. This line was taken

17 Haslam, Reicher & Millard (2015); Haslam & Reicher (2017; 2018).
18 Milgram (1965a: 75).

by Milgram, who argued that his results imply a general personality which is overly compliant to malevolent authority.

Two related questions need to be asked. First, did Milgram's subjects view the experimenters as a malevolent authority? Second, is their obedience owed to the fact that what the studies' protocols require subjects to do permit expression of their covert aggression? A careful examination of the situation of subjects in the experiment reveals that the answer to the first question is negative. Indeed, the experimenter clearly and repeatedly states that 'no tissue damage will result from the shocks,' which are 'not dangerous.' Combined with the legitimate status of scientific investigators, this constitutes a strong claim for the experimenter to be regarded as a non-malevolent authority and the subsequent administration of shocks to serve the cause of 'learning' is consistent with this claim. The status of Milgram's subjects is thus better compared to that of nurses who, under instruction, engage in activities that hurt patients, but which do not imply malevolent intent. The conclusion that Milgram's results can be generalised to cover cases of people obeying authority viewed as malevolent appears vacuous.

An early challenge to Milgram's interpretation was mounted by Mixon who found that subjects were faced with cues and definitions of the situation which favoured the conclusion that the 'victims' were not likely to be harmed. To support his analysis, Mixon conducted a mock-up version of the Milgram experiment in which subjects were told that the shocks were not real but agreed to pretend that they were. Subjects' emotional reactions and rates of obedience matched well with Milgram's results. Mixon concluded that experimental subjects construe their situation as governed by rules compatible with the rational (non-malevolent) authority code of the day.

Another challenge to Milgram's interpretation is a study by Martin et al. who designed a similar experiment to Milgram's, except that the only possible sufferers from the subjects' readiness to obey the experimenter were the subjects themselves. The study was designed to create a set of conditions in which subjects were asked to run a considerable risk of lasting personal injury (hearing damage in this instance; obviously no such risk existed). A feature of this experiment was that the voluntary nature of participating was stressed several times. Unlike the Milgram procedure, there was no prompting by the experimenter to continue the experiment when subjects showed signs of faltering. Also, the condition of the experiment precluded the introduction of the cries of pain and pleas to desist on the part of the victim which were so dramatic a feature of Milgram's procedure.

The Martin study produced similar results to the Milgram study. Responses to the post-test questionnaire showed that the subjects felt under no obligation to risk personal injury but experienced a strong element of curiosity about the study. Very few admitted to any doubts about the genuineness of the experimenter's explanations and a substantial number expressed trust in his authority. One conclusion of the study was that: 'the post-test questionnaire suggests a combination of curiosity and trust in formal authority, while the close similarity between our results and

those obtained in the Milgram situation suggests that there is no necessity to postulate any explanation involving aggression towards the helpless victim in the latter.'[19] Commenting on the argument raised apropos Milgram's results that the subjects enjoyed the situation in which they were placed because it allowed them to express covert aggression, Martin et al. argued that if this is the true explanation, the subjects should see authority as by nature malevolent since it legitimises the expression of their own malevolence. It would then be expected that the subjects should not only support the commands of the experimenter as an authority figure but should show signs of tension release. The evidence provides no support for this view. Rather, the opposite seems to have been the case since manifest signs of increasing tension were observed among Milgram's subjects. The Martin team noted that their results carry the objections to this interpretation even further, since to explain them in similar terms would necessitate postulating aggression against the self at the behest of an authority figure, which is absurd.

The Martin study has attracted little comment. An exception is Miller who, in *The Obedience Experiments*, dismisses it as a critique of Milgram's studies on the grounds that Milgram measured obedience while Martin assessed compliance. However, Miller does not think it necessary to explicate the difference between compliance and obedience. Further, Miller comments that the pressure, or what he calls the agonising conflict between an authority's commands and the subject's personal desires, seems missing from the Martin study. This comment begs the question at issue: did Milgram's subjects respond to 'pressure' and did they experience agonising conflict? The standard textbook presentation of the Milgram studies answers in the positive.[20] Other scholars have answered in the negative.[21] The present authors concur with the latter view. The reasons for this conclusion are worth exposing since they hinge on conceptual distinctions between power, authority and legitimacy, distinctions that neither Milgram nor Miller made.

For Milgram, authority means the person who is perceived to be in a position of social control within a given situation. This definition, apart from being phenomenological, conflates authority with control and power. To operationalise authority, Milgram added verbal prods which are delivered as (allegedly) malevolent commands. The ensuing 'obedience to authority' enabled Milgram to talk of 'forces' which impinge upon individuals and change their behaviour in undesirable directions. For example, Milgram states that an authority system consists of a minimum of two persons sharing the expectation that one of them has the right to prescribe behaviour for the other. He argues that there is general agreement that experimenters can influence behaviour and that they *ought* to be able to do so. One of these 'forces' is an illegitimate or malevolent 'authority.' Moving from 'influence' to 'power,'

19 Martin et al. (1976: 353).

20 Griggs (2017).

21 Darroch & Steiner (1970); Elms (2009); Gibson (2014); Greenberg (1967); Haslam, Reicher & Birney (2014); Hodges & Geyer (2006); Hollander & Turowetz (2017); Passini & Morselli (2009).

Milgram concludes that experimenters' power is based on the consent of subjects. He refers to this power as legitimate authority with the consequence that he can talk of illegitimate (or malevolent) authority as the second 'force' operating on amenable subjects.

Commentators on Milgram's work almost invariably follow his tendency to confuse authority and legitimacy. Such confusion is visible in the implication that at the beginning of the proceedings, experimenters' communications are perceived by subjects as authoritative but as the experiment developed, they came to seen as authoritarian.[22] In that case, however, the question as to how exactly the experimenters are perceived is unclear to say the least.

Miller acknowledges that the Martin study challenges Milgram's assertion that his experiment exposed subjects to 'malevolent authority.' However, Miller argues that, unlike Martin, Milgram deliberately used such verbal prods as 'you must go on' to fit with his view of authority. The prods were supposed to turn authority into a malevolent form. Yet, the experimenters in the obedience studies did engage in reasoning to establish the bona fides of the experiment.[23] Miller's assertion that the prods both operationalise (malevolent) authority and prove the existence of obedience to orders (rather than voluntary compliance to rules and norms) is thus circular.

That power and authority are conflated in the obedience studies is evidenced by Miller's statement that Milgram was influenced by the 'impressive' analysis of social power by French and Raven. The confusion could hardly be clearer: authority is to be represented by different forms of power. Milgram's conceptual analysis leads to the conclusion that coercive power is consistent with authorisation. People under torture are obviously reacting to coercion but it cannot seriously be maintained that they are authorising it.

In more recent times, researchers have analysed exchanges between the experimenter and subjects in Milgram's studies and argue that the experiments are not demonstrations of obedience to authority but an exercise in persuasion and rhetorical skill.[24] An analysis of the Milgram tapes held in the archive at Yale University shows that the subjects often argued with the experimenter and, in several cases, won the argument. Defiant subjects were able to mobilise arguments and draw the experimental session to a close. In these cases, 'the participants are not so much disobeying as engaging the experimenter in rational debate.'[25] That some subjects mobilised arguments for ending the session well before the experimenter resorted to directives demonstrates that the Milgram studies were not about obedience to authoritarian commands or to orders as conventionally understood.[26] Rather than

22 Kaposi (2017: 393).
23 Gibson (2014; 2019).
24 Gibson (2013; 2014; 2019); Gibson et al. (2018).
25 Gibson (2014: 434).
26 Burger et al. (2011); Burger, Girgis & Manning (2011).

studies in obedience, the experiments look more like tests of experimenters' rhetorical skill.

Miller described the Milgram's verbal prods as one of the most important features of the obedience paradigm because they allegedly operationalise authority. But do they? It has been argued that if Milgram's verbal prods operationalise anything, it is persuasion.[27] It is a conspicuous feature of the interactions that subjects were prepared to argue with experimenters about their verbal prods and the general logic associated thereto. This well documented fact all but annihilates the conventional view that subjects surrendered their powers of reasoning to a malevolent figure in a white coat and performed inhumane acts, as Milgram argues, and as generations of textbook writers have accepted. Researchers who have recently studied experimenter-subject interactions through post-experiment interviews concluded that it is unlikely that Milgram's results can be explained by a single psychological process, such as 'obedience to authority', 'agentic state' (Milgram), or 'engaged followership'.[28]

Understandably, much of the attention in the Asch and Milgram studies is directed at the subjects' behaviour: judgements in the Asch studies and action in Milgram's. These behaviours are then embedded in relationships of conformity and obedience, respectively. However, (rational) authority is a more suitable embedding of the behaviour exhibited in Asch's and Milgram's studies.

The role and behaviour of experimenters is of crucial importance to the outcome of laboratory studies. Asch described the role of experimenters as that of 'impartial chairmen' who open the meeting with brief comments about the purpose of the experiment and make it clear that it is a test of the subject's ability. Milgram's experimenters gave a longer introduction which emphasised the importance of psychologists and their theories of learning. In the Milgram case, the experimenters needed to communicate and demonstrate potentially distressing information subsequently to downplay it with assurances that no permanent damage will result from the actions of the subjects.

In their mainstream interpretation, the Asch and Milgram studies demonstrate that most people permit a group or experimenters to impose upon them a definition of reality which is different from their own. However, this orthodox account offers no rational explanation for such phenomenon. It has encouraged researchers to employ a language of forces, social pressure, conformity and obedience to (malevolent or illegitimate) 'authority,' or what has been called 'irrational' authority. This tendency is explicit in Milgram's studies.

Subjects in the Milgram studies were not always convinced by the experimenters' reasoning. The subjects' interests, beliefs and values could hardly be expected to

27 Gibson (2019).

28 Haslam & Reicher (2017; 2018); Hollander (2015); Hollander & Maynard (2016); Hollander & Turowetz (2017); Reicher & Haslam (2017).

coincide with the task Milgram set for his subjects. In fact, such a misalignment (and the subjects' response to it) was the very point of the study. Further, the study mobilised the community's view of an admired university (Yale), research for humanitarian purposes (learning) and the exemplary role of experimenters as agents of both.

The experimenters in the Asch study had an easier task since the experiment was presented as a test of *ability*. If it is accepted that subjects in laboratory experiments, when under observation, approach their task as a test of their abilities, most of the problems in the interpretation of the experimental results disappear. Indeed, in the Asch and Milgram studies, the situations are deliberately contrived to obscure clues about what ability is being tested by allowing two conflicting criteria for performance to be equally prominent. The subjects who want to perform well are presented with alternative judgements (Asch) or actions (Milgram). It is reasonable to assume that they wonder what is expected of them and this assumption is supported by their questioning of and seeking further advice from the experimenter. Since they believe some ability is being tested, any feedback they receive will be crucial to further performance. Consequently, the feedback must be either nil or conflicting if the in-built ambiguity of the experiment is to be preserved. It is unsurprising, therefore, that subjects select from those alternatives available that which satisfies the experimenter and themselves. This situation would not arise if experimenters informed their subjects about the specific ability to be tested. This move, however, would convert all experiments into tests, so that the information gained would be about what subjects *can* do and not what they *will* do.

It is a function of authority to give reasons to support actions where the steps to a goal entail a cost. Experience shows that individuals will act in accord with this view of authority provided they accept that they are furthering the desirable purpose claimed by the authority. The experimental literature on conformity and obedience has shown that subjects can readily be deceived by misleading statements concerning the purpose of the experiment, or by false claims that certain steps are necessary for its fulfilment. In the case of Milgram's study, there is no evidence to show that authority would be conceded if either the experimenters' declared goals were judged to be malevolent, or the claim that the specified steps are necessary for their achievement were shown to be false.

The results of the Milgram and Martin studies indicate that subjects respond to the edicts of formal authority in the laboratory as they do elsewhere. Subjects arrive in the laboratory with a cultural perspective with which they interpret the demands of the situation.[29] Consequently, an explanation of action in terms of a cultural perspective of authority is more feasible than approaching the problem the other way around and regarding experimental results as explaining action in 'real-life'.

29 Tajfel (1972).

Chapter 3:
A Theory of Managerial Power

In *Economy and Society*, Weber, under the influence of Marx and Nietzsche, argued that power must be the starting point for the analysis of all social relationships. Many later scholars followed Weber in pursuing questions of how and by whom power is exercised over people. Consequently, the topic of power has come to be viewed as one entailing the production of *intended* effects, notably domination and submission. However, Weber also argued that social scientists should investigate the production of *unintended* events because if an event occurs as the result of a person's intentions, that person knows what causes it. By contrast, if an event is not intended by anyone, it can be assumed that its causes are not known, and a scientific enquiry is justified to discover them. In other words, science, according to Weber, aims at extending the power obtained through knowledge and social organisation aims at extending power over material conditions.

Bertrand Russell went further than Weber. He argued that power is the fundamental concept in the social sciences, as energy is the fundamental concept in physics. 'The laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power, not in terms of this or that form of power.'[1] However, Russell defined power as 'the production of intended effects' and made no attempt to consider the 'laws of social dynamics' as such. Like Weber, he treated power as domination which is only one form of power. The notion that to qualify as an exercise of power a person's actions must be intentional is refuted by the fact that the exercise of power often has effects beyond that intended.

In *Philosophy of Leadership*, the present authors made a start in the direction indicated by Weber and Russell.[2] Specifically, they defended the thesis that managerial power has both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. This theory draws a crucial distinction between power and authority and argues that the latter sets limits to the former. However, the theory remains underdeveloped and calls for elaboration. It is the aim of this chapter to revisit the foundation of their theory, offer supporting arguments, relevant examples and develop implications for management and organisation studies.

Managerial Power: A Selective Critical Review

The literature on managerial and organisational power is too extensive to review in detail. It is also, in the opinion of more than a few commentators, confused and

1 Russell (1938: 9 – 10).

2 Spillane & Joullié (2015:203 – 222).

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confusing.[3] Anderson and Brion, Fleming and Spicer, and Sturm and Antonakis provide extensive reviews with a total of 673 references. The overlap of referenced authors is only eight between Fleming/Spicer and Anderson/Brion, and six between Fleming/Spicer and Sturm/Antonakis. The overlaps include the works of Weber and an influential article by French and Raven. These authorial teams have eliminated the need to fill the pages of this book with references. Another of their merits is to highlight tensions between three influential perspectives: behaviourist, phenomenological and generative.

The behaviourist view, notably promoted by Simon in *Administrative Behavior*, holds that power is equivalent to cause, because specific actions by managers cause specified actions on the part of colleagues. Another example is Dahl who argues that power is anything that emanates from managers and affects the behaviour of colleagues. Kelvin puts these two assumptions together to prosecute the case for power as the central concept in organisational relationships (so much so that his index does not contain a reference to legitimacy or authority).

Kelvin assumes that any case in which the behaviour of subordinates is affected by managers is an instance of the power of managers over subordinates. This assumption leads him to view organisational relationships in terms of the power of managerial over subordinate *positions*. He then admits that for such power to exist it needs to be accepted by subordinates, an admission which acknowledges the existence of personal powers. The quandary then arises that if subordinates fail to accept the norm legitimating the power of managers, then managers become the object of the exercise of power of their subordinates.

Kelvin's analysis implies that there is no difference in situations where individuals behave in accordance with the wishes of others out of the belief that such behaviour is right, and those cases in which individuals act under duress. The standard defence, which is usually brought forward in justification when the conceptual confusion is pointed out, is that empirical and experimental evidence does not permit the distinction to be made. Experiments such as those on conformity and obedience, for example, do not permit researchers to say whether the subjects follow the group or experimenters' instructions because of beliefs that they are correct or because of fears of what might happen to them if they remain independent. A quasi-behaviourist approach to the evidence is then adopted which maintains that the group and/or experimenter *cause* the change in behaviour. The question of perception and volition on the part of the subjects is thereby avoided. Further, Kelvin sidesteps issues about whether the behaviour of managers who are supposed to be exercising power was intended to produce the specified behaviour by colleagues, or whether the specific effect was produced unintentionally or accidentally. Kelvin

3 Clegg & Haugaard (2009); Greve & Mitsuhashi (2007); Haugaard (2012); Laslo-Roth (2017); Joullié & Spillane (2021); Scott (1994; 2001); Tjosvold & Wisse (2009); Wrong (1968; 2002); Zhu & Westphal (2021).

thereby ignores questions about whether the effect was planned and so promotes a behaviourist account.

Despite Simon's, Dahl's and Kelvin's analyses, power is not equivalent to cause since managers often cause an event unintentionally, or accidently. In these cases, they are unable to repeat the event because they are unaware of the relevant causal relations. Such occurrences provide evidence that to be the cause of something is not the same as having the power to bring it about. Power depends on the knowledge of causes and of how these are exploited to produce intended effects.

An alternative approach to the behaviourist account is the phenomenological perspective. It is represented by Lukes who argues that behaviouristic accounts of power are inadequate and proposes a 'three-dimensional view' of power-over-people. His approach includes those cases in which managers affect subordinates by influencing their needs. He argues that where there is no conflict of interest, influence is not power. Conversely, the terms are synonymous where there is a conflict of interest. However, where there is a conflict of interest involving coercion, power and influence are different. Lukes considers authority to be a sub-classification of influence to be called power if conflict of interests exists, or not power if there is consensus.

Lukes offers a possible criticism of his analysis when he asks whether power can be exercised by person A over B in B's interest. This question presupposes that B's view of his interests is incorrect and that A's view is the correct one. Lukes provides two answers to his question. First, if B acknowledges his interests the power relation ceases. But as Lukes notes, this answer opens the door to paternalism. A second answer is that all forms of control by A over B where B resists represent violations of B's autonomy. Therefore, such exercises of power cannot be in B's interests. Lukes considers this answer to open the door to an anarchist defence against paternalism.

Lukes is in deeper trouble than he realises. Specifically, since he defined cases in which A acts in a way which is not in conflict with B's interest as *not* being an exercise of power, the question whether power can be exercised by A over B in B's interest cannot be raised.[4] That is, the dilemma Lukes posed depends on A and B having different perceptions of what is in B's interests and that situation is only one step removed from declaring that A and B have different perceptions of what constitutes an exercise of power over B.

Lukes' 'radical' theory of power is thus phenomenological since it depends on how the situation is *perceived*, especially by subordinates. His analysis leads directly to the theories of such social psychologists as Cartwright, French and Raven, which all in their own ways reveals the consequences that follow from adopting the phenomenological perspective.

4 Spillane & Joullié (2015: 205).

Among social psychologists, discussions of power, influence and authority provide evidence of conceptual ambiguity and widespread disagreement. This is the result, in part, of the tendency of most psychologists to commence their analyses with the inclusive concept of power and attempt to derive the concept of authority from it. This approach has its own dangers, for at the psychological level, power is more amorphous a concept than it is at the sociological level.[5]

Cartwright explained this situation: 'While there are theorists that would still maintain that power always involves some form of coerciveness, the general trend toward defining it to include many forms of social influence ought to reduce substantially the social psychologists' reluctance to employ it in describing social interaction.'[6] This statement helps to explain the inability of the discipline to arrive at an adequate conceptual analysis. His view also confirms the apparent arbitrary basis on which power theorists chose their terminology.

As an example, Adams and Romney's formulation applies operant conditioning principles where authority is identified with control over the behaviour of others. Adams and Romney assume that authority is a relation between persons in which A commands or otherwise specifies some behaviour of B, and B complies with or carries out the commands of A. Adams and Romney further assume that: authority relations are asymmetrical in that one of the parties has greater power over the other than the other holds over him; authority relations are stable in the sense that the asymmetry of power between the two persons holds over a range of situations; functional authority relations arise in many situations without necessarily being legitimised by society at large.

The example given by Adams and Romney is as follows: A is under the control of deprivation or aversive stimulation (say she is thirsty). A then emits a response to this stimulus which specifies what is required to reduce her discomfort. She says to B: 'Give me water.' B 'emits a response' to this communication by giving water to A. B's behaviour serves as reinforcement to A, and as a stimulus for her to emit a verbal reinforcement for B, for example 'Thank you'. In this relationship, A is supposed to be in authority over B because A's initial response specifies its own reinforcement.

The remainder of Adams and Romney's theory is cast in similar Skinnerian operant conditioning terms and depends on the familiar behaviourist definitions of such constructs as 'reinforcement', 'stimulus' and 'response'. The central concept to which the whole system defers, however, is control which is wholly in terms of the power to dispense rewards presumed to be sufficient to seduce or coerce each party into a reciprocal behavioural sequence. One may question whether authority is involved here at all.

The cogency of this question was illustrated by Mulder et al. who defined social power as the control of reinforcers. The experiments they conducted on this basis

5 Schopler (1965).

6 Cartwright (1959: 184).

produced results consistent with the Adams and Romney theory. It is therefore interesting to note that, faced with an apparent conceptual contradiction, two psychologists could write: 'Since their definition of power is the same as Adams and Romney's definition of authority, the results from this study may be taken as support for their [Adams and Romney's] theory.'[7]

The conflation of power and authority is also visible in the well-known categorisation of social power undertaken by French and Raven, which has become something of a classic in management textbooks where it is treated uncritically.

French and Raven's approach to power and authority stems from Lewin who defined the power of person A over person B as the quotient of the maximum force which A can bring to bear on B and the maximum resistance which B can muster. Cartwright offered a modified version of this: the power of A over B with respect to a change from X to Y at a specified time, is equal to the maximum strength of the resultant force which A can set up in that direction at that time.

Cartwright's definition is elaborated by an attempt to reduce the meaning of force to seven 'primitive' terms, one of which is 'act of agent' (influence attempts). For Cartwright, A's power over B is the maximum difference between the force induced by A and the resistance offered by B, where this resistance is also induced by A's act. The formulation permits a distinction between power and control, but one which is vacuous. If A asks B to do something, B may experience a tendency to comply, but may not do so; or again he may do so. In either case, A is said to have power over B; but only in the latter case, where B's behaviour is changed in the direction *intended* by A, is A said to control B. Intention is left undefined although it is said to be essential in discussion of the effectiveness of any influence attempt.

French attempted to quantify the influence each member of a group has over the opinions of others in terms of forces induced (in the Lewinian manner). The definition of power in terms of these forces is identical with that of Cartwright and is apparently synonymous with influence.

French and Raven argue that social power has five distinct bases: *referent* (or attraction) power which arises from liking or identification; *reward* power based on the ability of one party to administer or procure rewards for the other; *coercive* power based on one party's ability to punish or harm the other; *legitimate* power based on one party's belief that the other has the right to prescribe behaviour; *expert* power based on one party's belief that the other has more effective knowledge within a given area.

French and Raven's division of power is not satisfactory. To start with, the five categories are not independent as evidenced in the relationship between referent, expert and legitimate power. Reward and coercive power differ from the other three in that they do not depend on the consent of subordinates. Legitimate, expert

7 Shaw & Costanzo (1970: 113).

and referent power cannot operate without the active concurrence of subordinates. The five bases of social power therefore reduce to two categories, namely 'power' (coercive and reward) and 'authority' (referent, expert and legitimate).

Furthermore, French and Raven's use of the term 'legitimate' is confusing. Legitimate power, for them, arises because one group of people believes that another party has a right to prescribe behaviour which implies a normative base (typically moral) and thus allows for the term 'right to be considered phenomenologically: what is a 'right' prescription for one individual may not be so for another. However, French and Raven's definition also allows 'right' to be received in a narrower legalistic sense. Since French and Raven distinguish legitimate power from referent power (which includes subjective elements), it is safe to conclude that they employ the term 'legitimate' in its more exclusive sense. Given such context, to avoid confusion a better expression would have been 'legal power'. French and Raven's conceptual imprecision has resulted in later theorists defining authority as legitimate power and thus identifying authority with formal power. This identification in turn leads to the view that referent and expert power are somehow of a different order to the notion of authority, muddying further the conceptual waters.

The philosophical significance of this policy is important since it assumes that the differences in behaviour arising from the impact of legal power as against referent and expert power are objectively discernible. This is contrary to the use of 'legitimate' in the phenomenological sense. In these cases, the assumption is that the criteria on which the division of the categories of social power rests are phenomenological.

French and Raven's sources of power (except referent power) depend on employees perceiving their managers as possessing power of a certain type. This perception, therefore, is a necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of the specified effects. As for referent power, it depends on managers being perceived as worthy of emulation. None of French and Raven's categories of power is such that managers must be aware of exerting influence. Employees are free to regard anybody as an exerciser of power. The perspective of managers supposedly exercising power is in fact irrelevant.

As French and Raven's taxonomy shows, once the perception of employees is accepted as the primary element in the definition of power there is no limit to what constitutes a possible exercise of power. This view presumably appeals to psychologists, some of whom work therapeutically with people who believe that real or imaginary powers are conspiring against them. That is, French and Raven's perspective permits psychologists to regard such 'powers' as real, but at the cost of losing any basis for distinguishing between real and imaginary powers. Besides, the theory obliges French and Raven to deny the existence of powers which many people treat as real since it compels them to regard as powerful only those sources that affect people *psychologically*. However, if power is manifested only psychologically, burning people alive at the stake for refusing to change their religious beliefs would not be an exercise of power.

A variant of the phenomenological approach is represented by the 'potential' theory of power. In this vein, Emerson asserts that power must be defined as potential influence and thereby conflates power and influence. Mott's latency theory claims that power is the ability to apply force, not its actual application. However, shifting the focus from manifest to latent forms of power does not address the problems associated with the phenomenology of power. For example, the belief that a management team has power is an insufficient ground for scientific enquiry. A management team cannot be said to have power unless its activities yield objective changes. When the team offers this evidence, it manifests its specific power. While the view that a management team has actual and potential power is unproblematic, the inference to the existence of latent power in the absence of evidence is not. In other words, the latent or potential power perspective is thus overtly phenomenological and does not require an empirical criterion. As such, it is no more likely to lead in a fruitful direction than is the general phenomenological approach which it embraces.

The 137 references in Sturm and Antonakis's previously mentioned review are dominated by writers who adopt the phenomenological view and, consequently, conflate power, influence and authority. Sturm and Antonakis' own analysis, which continues the trend set by Lukes and French and Raven, offers an example of this conflation. Indeed, Sturm and Antonakis conceive of (interpersonal) power as 'having the discretion and the means to asymmetrically enforce one's will over others.'[8] They have therefore defined power in terms of power wielders and argue that to have power managers must have the ability to act (intention) and the means (position) to dominate others. Insofar as the power of an organisational position is authorised by others, power and authority are thus conflated.

When authors define power phenomenologically as a form of domination or influence, they create insuperable problems for social scientific enquiry because they leave the definition of power dependent on people who *claim* to be influenced or dominated. If power is to be the basis for the 'laws of social dynamics' (as Russell maintained), a phenomenological view of power is inadequate because of the conflation of power and influence and the failure to acknowledge that power and authority refer to independent events taking place in different situations. Indeed, individuals are influenced by many things about their managers, including these managers' behaviour and reasoning, whether directed at influencing their colleagues or not. This observation is not an admission that managers are exercising power over anyone. Colleagues can be impressed that managers have special powers, but they can be equally impressed when their belief about managers' power is shown to be false. Further, managers can try to influence colleagues psychologically and fail, even when they exercise the power to fire them. Even then it can be said that subor-

8 Sturm & Antonakis (2015: 139).

dinates are influenced by managers since, once fired, they do something different and go home.

Coercion is a case of power which should not be called influence. Indeed, managers typically exercise power by direct control of the workplace which can result in indirect control over the conduct of colleagues. To reuse the previous example, when managers fire people, they exercise power whether colleagues are influenced psychologically by the change or not. That the sacked employees are glad to be free, does not imply that power was not exercised by managers.

In summary, Lukes', French and Raven's and Sturm and Antonakis's power perspectives begin and end at a phenomenological, non-ecological position where the notion of power falls short of contact with empirical reality. Weber's concerns about the protean nature of power are, therefore, vindicated.

The Generative View of Power

Most scholars offer some conceptual analysis in support of their definition of power. A notable exception is Foucault who, drawing on the work of the late Nietzsche, promoted the view that the world is a product of a mysterious, free-floating will to power which is inexorably a will to more power. Nietzsche himself did not develop this idea beyond a few jottings in his notebooks and there are reasons to believe that he abandoned it because of its logical and empirical difficulties.[9] Nevertheless, Foucault claimed that power is everywhere, being neither a particular structure nor a possession. Specifically, beginning with the view that life is a constant string of strategic conflicts and coercion, Foucault ended with the view that the institutionalisation of positions of power represents a constant use of force: power is co-extensive with the social body and there are no spaces of liberty between the meshes of its network. Eagleton concludes that power in Foucault's writings is 'self-grounding, self-generative and self-delighting, without origin or end, an elusive blending of governance and pleasure which is thus a kind of subject all in itself, however subjectless it may otherwise be.'[10] Despite (or thanks to) his excruciating, nebulous prose and dubious historical sermons, Foucault continues to dazzle scholars of a certain persuasion, notably within critical management studies.

Parsons went beyond the 'power as domination' perspective and treated power as something generated by cooperation between people.[11] If the definition of power is confined to power over people, theorists are committed to a view of power, such as Foucault's, where social life is nothing but domination and submission. Parsons calls this a 'zero-sum perspective', for he sees it as implying that when

9 Joullié (2013).
10 Eagleton (1990: 388).
11 Parsons (1937; 1967).

a manager gains power colleagues are disadvantaged to at least an equivalent degree because for every individual who has power there must exist people who are subject to its exercise.

Parsons' main point is that there is a discontinuity between power exercised by individuals and power generated by the coordinated activity of several people. Furthermore, the amount of power available for distribution in a work organisation can be increased. Consequently, we should not confine the definition of power to the 'power as domination' perspective.

Power refers to a group's ability to effect specific changes and accordingly managers must apply a method to achieve the required results. To have such a method implies knowledge of causes which can be manipulated to produce a foreseen result. In the case of a management team, such knowledge requires a practical plan; for individual managers, it is an intention. Successful management is based on the discovery of the cause of an event and is demonstrated when managers exploit this cause to produce or prevent a desired event.

To appraise scientifically the existence of managerial power, the present authors proposed elsewhere the following criteria: (a) an empirically recognisable effect (or change) is produced; (b) the effect can be produced by managers recurrently and reliably; (c) the production of the effect by individual managers and management teams is intentional, rather than accidental; (d) criterion (c) means that managers can cause the effect and that these causes can be manipulated by human action; (e) the effect cannot be cancelled by the mere dissent of subordinates; (f) accidents, unintentional or unplanned events are all rejected as cases of the exercise of power. Also rejected are states of affairs which arise from the concatenation of many powers exercised simultaneously but independently.[12]

A New Theory of Managerial Power

The authors accept Weber's and Russell's assumptions that organisations are power fields, and that personal power involves the production of intended effects. These interlocked assumptions are supported by the fact that managers produce intended effects on organisations.

As opposed to personal power, however, a major form of managerial power is produced by managers joining with each other and with others in directed endeavour. As such, managerial power is produced collectively and is often alienated from individual producers. However, because managerial power cannot be produced individually, its effects are not necessarily intended by those individual managers who contribute to them. Indeed, managerial power regularly yields results that were not intended by anyone. The possible absence of an identified individual source

12 Spillane & Joullie (2015: 215).

makes the question of deciding whether managerial power exists particularly difficult.

A scientific theory about the ways in which powers interact in organisations brings intended and unintended events within the range of predictability for individuals and organisational change within the scope of collective control. To be useful, such a theory would: move the discourse about managerial power to a level of generalisation of a scientific kind; assume that individuals are purposeful actors without obstructing an approach to the unintended results of the independent actions of many individuals; avoid the pitfalls inherent in accounts of individual action which depend on ethical or subjective points of view.

The theory sought is an empirical generalisation. To be scientific, it must be falsifiable. Further, it must assert an occurrence which is independent of conscious control and of cognitive events. That is, the theory must preserve the insight that the aspect of organisational affairs which is independent of conscious control results from the unintended interplay of different forms of power.

The central thesis is: managerial power centralises.

This statement is falsifiable. Managerial power does not invariably centralise. Further, the thesis is deterministic because it admits no place for human intention. It is concerned with relations that pervade a vast range of human activities. It demarcates what is to be explained, including cases (like accidents) which do not accord with it. It generates as many specific hypotheses as there are situations to which it may be applied. It asserts something about the interplay of all the specific powers operating in organisations and since it assumes no predetermined form for organisation, it is universally applicable. It offers a starting point for the explanation of organisational change and therefore for a host of unintended events which otherwise appear as organisational or personal problems. Although the statement is not the only one about the interplay of managerial powers which fulfils all these conditions and thus provides a starting point for causative explanation of organisational phenomena, it is a starting point for a theory of managerial power.

The view that social power generally has centripetal and centrifugal tendencies is not new. It was, for example, asserted but not developed by Gergen. The concern here, however, is with managerial power and the theory proposed is an attempt to capture some of its crucial features. The theory uses the notion of power, understood as a statement that organisations accomplish things, as a basis for a scientific explanation for unintended events. If the theory explains *one* such event it will have justified its existence and practical relevance.

Critics are welcome to challenge the theory by citing an event which, in their view, it cannot explain. However, for their challenge to be effective, these critics must show that this event falls within the scope of the theory. In particular, the theory that is advanced here is deterministic in that it identifies the causes of unintended events. A proposed counterexample which can be explained as the intended result of an action falls outside the scope of the theory.

The statement 'managerial power centralises' is considered here as a 'First Law of Managerial Dynamics'. It is not proposed as a definition of managerial power. It is noteworthy, however, that the construct as considered here excludes the abilities and potentialities of individuals, which are their personal powers. That is, managerial power is the result of an organisation of individual powers and is characterised by its alienation from its producers as individuals. Rather, the function of the First Law is to set up a conceptual platform by asserting something which demarcates *what the theory is not proposed to explain.* Accepting the First Law means, inter alia, accepting that all empirical cases where managerial power centralises are already covered and call for no further explanation. All other cases, however, do call for explanation and it is the function of the remainder of this chapter to point the way towards such explanations.

A starting point is with Parsons' concern that power is a finite resource for which people compete implying that in management power is a zero-sum game.

The Organisational Zero-Sum Game

A zero-sum game in organisations has the following characteristics. First, there exists within organisations a given quantity of power which is incapable of increase and accessible to all players in principle. Second, all players are in outright competition for this power. It follows that any one person's gain is equalled by the losses suffered by others. In this sense, the elimination of any player from the game is the culmination of a process of *de-organisation* which has been in progress throughout the play. Each time players are weakened they are bought closer to the point of elimination and each such event constitutes a step towards de-organisation. When de-organisation is complete (i.e., when all interaction under the existing rules ceases), the game ends. As a social system, the zero-sum game is self-destroying.

The existence of the managerial zero-sum game implies that there are now two laws to consider, namely:

(a) managerial power centralises;
(b) in a zero-sum system, de-organisation continues without limit.

Where these two laws apply the system will be in the process of disintegration. The level of de-organisation at any point in time is a function of the extent to which players lack equal power to resist elimination.

The first law envisages a process in which the power passes naturally from those people with less to those with more. Although the zero-sum game is only a theoretical model, it accords with the observation that individuals typically distribute power unequally among themselves. Indeed, in 'real' social systems it is much more difficult to re-distribute power than often appears. For example, deliberate attempts at

decentralisation in the public sector commonly fail.[13] Some decentralisation occurs – some degree of centrifugal seepage rather than centripetal flow – but such seepage is typically offset by centralisation in other aspects. In any case, decentralisation, in the rare cases where it does take place, constitutes an exception to the first law which, as such, requires an explanation.

The built-in destructive tendencies of the zero-sum game are counteracted when one or other of the characteristics which define it change. That is, if such a game is saved it is no longer of the zero-sum type. There are two ways in which the possibility of salvage can be conceived: external and internal changes in the dynamics of the game.

An external change in the game occurs when those players whose loss of power has reached a critical point are supplied with compensatory power drawn from sources outside the game. Such a process requires that there exists some entity outside the game with access to power whose origin does not depend on the play and that this entity has an interest in keeping the game going. A mechanism of rescue of this type implies the existence of a source of power which intervenes in response to the pleas of the losers. An example is offered by trade union officials who have a vested interest in maximising membership in, say, the public service. To achieve their goal, they support managers with similar ideological commitments and, in effect, prop up middle management where game losers abound.

Another way of dealing with the self-destructive tendencies of the zero-sum game is to supply the players whose losses have reached a critical point with power drawn from those who are 'winning', i.e., those in whose hands power is concentrated. In this way, the game can be kept going indefinitely, since no player need ever be eliminated. The accomplishment of this manoeuvre, however, demands the creation of an entity which has the power to impose restrictions on the most powerful players. Since this entity must be a creation of those within the game, it cannot be insulated from the attentions of the powerful players whom it is proposed to inhibit. Accordingly, they will treat it as another player and attempt to remove its power. This entity will meet not just opposition from the most powerful players, singly or in coalition, but active attempts to put it out of the game such as would be directed at any other player. The outcomes of this power struggle then determines the extent to which the zero-sum law operates.

Within a work organisation, an example of an entity able to restrict the power of the strongest players is the human resource (HR) department. Indeed, if the HR department is to stay in existence, it will preserve the system by taking from the more powerful and giving to the less powerful players (who would otherwise be expelled from the game) and will thus set a ceiling to the development of de-organisation. In doing so, however, it reduces the incentive for competition among players, because if the HR department is ready to relieve some players of a substantial part of

13 Pollitt, Birchall & Putman (2016).

their gains, it is less rational for them to exert themselves unduly. The gap between the winners and the losers is thus relatively smaller under the HR regime than it would be if the zero-sum game operated unchecked.

Another possible way of preventing or stalling the development of de-organisation is through charity, for instance through devolvement of decision-making power. That is, powerful players, observing that others are relatively powerless, can pass some of their gains to the latter, thus making it possible for them to remain in the game. Charity is unreliable because it depends on the powerful perceiving that other players are reaching the critical stage where they are likely to be forced out of the game. Furthermore, the probability that the powerful contact the powerless is low. Even if such contact were universal, there are many circumstances in which it is difficult for even the well-intentioned to know when the losses of other players are such as to threaten the continuity of the game. For example, HR trainers are not always able to give their trainees the kind of training which would equip them to become adequate players. Even if such matters are detected, the fact remains that the powerful are not primarily interested in raising up rivals. In general, the powerful see the continuance of the game as secondary to the process of winning.

In some organisations charity is institutionalised, often through HR policies and practices. Insofar as they operate, these policies and practices depress the rate of de-organisation, but they seldom come into effect until their recipients are in severe straits; in any case, there is a floor level above which they cease to function. Further, those individuals wishing to see the system operate in something other than a zero-sum fashion can subsidise less powerful players to the point where they become rivals. Such behaviour does not break the zero-sum pattern, for if one promotes the fortunes of another in this way, one merely shifts the point at which power centralises from oneself to the other. The system operates as before except that it is now oneself who is in danger of being 'retired' – or at least shifted to a more peripheral position in the power structure. Individual sacrifice does not affect the principle at work.

The two ways of salvaging the zero-sum game differ in effect. Those ways that convert the system to a circular flow neglect the possibilities of increasing the total power in the system, make no special provision for preserving what power is already available in the system, and run counter to the spirit of competition which is assumed in the zero-sum model. They simply prevent collapse by a partial – even token – re-distribution of what power is available. Those ways which depend on support from external sources envisage a system in which power is continually growing and neglect the possibilities of collapse from within. All large work organisations have drifted into the position where both forms of support are in use.

Even in simple organisations, players suffer some degree of alienation from the result of their actions and from each other. Indeed, some provision must be made for poor players if a system is to endure. Consequently, players allow their labour to go under-rewarded leaving some surplus to be distributed to colleagues or stored against times of scarcity. Insofar as an individual's labour goes under-rewarded

the system gains in power, even if this power is represented merely by an increase in numbers. From this viewpoint – which can be consequential psychologically – all productive workers are a source of external support feeding power into the system. Thus, even when they gain their living through the system, the psychological position of workers is always likely to be equivocal. They can, and sometimes do, see themselves as exploited and set out to fight the organisation, especially if this organisation is large and unionised.

In organisations where the distribution of power already exhibits a pronounced gradient, labour is deployed by agents which command much greater power than any individual. Consequently, power from this external source does not favour decentralisation, but the reverse. The new power influx will be distributed in direct relation to the pre-existing distribution. The powerful grow more powerful and the powerless remain at best relatively powerless. Thus, even though the system is 'open' in the sense that its producers are continually feeding new power into it through the labour of employees, centralisation accelerates rather than decelerates unless exceptional circumstances allow employees to retain the full value of their product. Similarly, income from external sources is positively correlated with power held and supports (or increases) the rate of centralisation and the level of de-organisation. The claim that 'real' organisations are 'open' is thus true in the sense that it is possible to inject more power into them continually, but it does not insulate them from the zero-sum law.[14] Indeed, the historical record offers ample evidence of organisations that have collapsed after achieving great power, mostly from internal causes.

Power Vehicles and the Rate of Centralisation

Human beings are tool-using animals. Some of these tools are physical objects (computers), some are controlled processes (fire), some are forms of social organisation (firms). All these, insofar as they have a tool-like property which allows them to be used for human purposes, can be called *power vehicles*. The appearance of new tools inevitably results in two effects: (a) an increase in the power of the organisation which possesses them and the managers who control them, and (b) a sharpening of the distinction between members of the organisation as human resources (whose powers remain constant) and the power generating system per se. As an aside, this distinction underlies the separation between sociology (including economics) and psychology.

Managerial power is embodied in *power vehicles,* not persons. Power vehicles are man-made objects and devices which are used to achieve purposes beyond their own production. Human purposes are built into power vehicles which can be modified without affecting the personal powers of the individuals who use them. However,

14 Scott & Davis (2015).

once a power vehicle has been acquired, disposed of or modified, a new balance of power is struck between members of the organisation. Besides, as physical objects, processes or social entities, power vehicles are in a state of continual decay. If ignored, they will sooner or later cease to function. If the advantage to those who use them is to continue, the power vehicles must be maintained by human effort. Such effort will come in the form of an exertion of organisational power and will therefore have centripetal effects (as per the First Law).

The greater the effort required to maintain a power vehicle the greater will be the rate of centralisation within the organisation that has it, with a corresponding increase in the power of management. However, the maintenance effort required is not in proportion to the total power available in the system. Some power vehicles (say a concrete building) require little maintenance but offer great utility over a long period; others, while being necessary tools for some purpose, require a sustained maintenance effort or, like work organisations, a high investment in administration.

The foregoing comments can be summarised in the following additions to the theory:

(a) all power vehicles decay over time;
(b) the minimum rate of centripetal flow necessary to maintain the status quo within an organisation depends on the amount of power required to prevent deterioration of the power vehicles in use within that organisation.

The first of these statements is an empirical generalisation which admits of no exceptions. The second is a conditional statement. It derives from the first statement and the centripetal law taken together. As it is a valid deduction and self-evidently true, it leaves the premises from which it is drawn unfalsified.

Expansion of the Power Base

Besides the effort required to maintain the power vehicles, the rate of power centralisation is affected by the rate at which the stock of power vehicles is expanded within the organisation. At first glance, the reverse is more plausible. Indeed, the rate at which the power base is expanded seems to be governed by the rate of centripetal flow. In practice, however, means exist by which the power base is expanded now on the expectation that the centripetal flow will be high enough in the future to cover the investment. A typical means of expanding the power base in such a way is monetary credit. Loans carry interest (which is one channel of centralisation) and payment of interest requires that future labour continues to go under-rewarded (as compared to capital) if the debt is to be amortised. The increase of the stock of power vehicles (through monetary credit) thus precedes the increase in the rate of centralisation.

Loans, or reserves from which expansion of the power base are financed, are accessible in direct proportion to the power already held. Consequently, the ability to influence the future of centripetal flow, and thus the degree to which future labour will go under-rewarded, is also possessed in direct proportion to the power held. In a so-called free market economy, this necessary under-rewarding of future labour occurs through a reduction in the amount paid as wages per item produced. This reduction covers the requirements of the increased centripetal flow but leads to a Keynesian bind, because the process of production often fails to distribute enough money to ensure that its products can be purchased within the community. That community must then seek outside purchasers (international trade), and this provides an influx of power to the entire community but contributes nothing to decentralisation.

In summary, the rate of centripetal flow of managerial power at any point in time will therefore be related to the sum of:

(a) the amount of power devoted to maintenance of the assemblage of power vehicles in use;
(b) the amount of power directly devoted to expansion of this assemblage;
(c) the amount of power contracted for but not directly supplied for expansion in the past.

Factors Impeding Power Centralisation

Physical barriers, such as distance, oceans and impassable terrain, impede the power centralisation process. It follows that the development of specific power vehicles which facilitate transport and communication also facilitates the centralisation process. However, certain geographical features create more favourable conditions for the generation of managerial power than do the general run of locations throughout an area. Indeed, locations where a combination of geographical characteristics such as port, raw materials, water and other necessities of life are found together tend to become locations at which managerial centralises geographically. Such locations can be regarded as the soft points of the environment, where the efforts of human beings have been found to be most readily combinable and most efficient (they achieve their purposes for the lowest effort). Such locations typically become the site of cities. The development of such a concentration of powers as marks a city inhibits the growth of rival centres in the near vicinity unless these rival centres are separated from the original by physical barriers. The effect of the physical features of the environment upon the rate of power centralisation and the loci at which it centralises is a topic for human geography theorists but falls outside of the scope of the present chapter.

Authority: Psychological and Legal Impediments to Centralisation

Selective barriers to channels by which power could otherwise centralise operate psychologically and legally. As these are closely connected, they can be grouped under the rubric of authority.

The application of sanctions against illegal activities requires that power be directed towards suppression of breaches of a given rule which is based on the local authority code. For example, within work organisations, HR departments, as legitimated power vehicles, require centripetal flows of power to operate. Paradoxically, power must be directed towards suppressing internal competition before the cooperation which generates managerial power can develop. Hence, competition must be moderated by cooperatively generated power, and insofar as this is done, the assumption of outright competition contained in the zero-sum game is rendered unrealistic and the operation of the zero-sum law tempered. Further, a group's suppression of internal competition is positively related to its potential for generating managerial power. Therefore, 'the psychological factors which make the working of authority possible are logically prior to the creation of [managerial] power.'[15]

Societies have developed by small steps in cooperation which create advantages and thus increase the value of trusting a transpersonal moral code. Although moral codes are usually regarded as a-rational, they are rational insofar as they are the product of profitable experiments in voluntary cooperation. An example of factors blocking the centralisation of managerial power are rules preventing slave labour. Slave labour involves human labour deployed at minimum cost, i.e., the short-term subsistence of the slave labourer. Where unskilled labour is required, slave labour produces the greatest surplus and the greatest centripetal flow of power possible. Once the rule outlawing slave labour takes hold, however, the rate of centralisation falls, and the system loses power unless substitute channels are found.

The alternative to slave labour is paid labour. If the amount paid in wages does not exceed the cost of maintaining slave-labourers, no reduction in the surplus available for centripetal flow occurs and no loss of power by the system eventuates. This outcome shows that the concerned organisation was in fact not dependent on slave labour. However, if the amount paid in wages exceeds the cost of employing slave labourers, and the productivity of labour does not increase to take up the difference, the rate of centralisation falls. If the fall is great enough to prevent the maintenance of the assemblage of power vehicles in use, the system loses power or is threatened with such a loss. In this case, three outcomes are possible: the organisation regresses towards subsistence functioning; it is absorbed by more powerful competitors; or it finds tools which make labour more productive.

15 Spillane & Joullié (2015: 218).

The result of any change in the authority code which blocks or restricts channels by which managerial power centralises leads to one of the three possible outcomes (regression, absorption and discovery of new tools). Since the first two are normally considered undesirable, fluctuations in the rate of power centralisation are monitored. When signs of a fall are noted, extra effort is normally directed towards the third outcome (the search for ways to make labour more productive). In the presence of an adequate monitoring process, then, a reduction in the centripetal flow of power leads to an increase of the potential value of any conceivable power vehicle which could replace human labour or make it more productive.

Authoritative rules only enter the determination of the rate of power flow and the consequent distribution of power insofar that they affect behaviour. A decree does not affect the flow of power; it merely specifies authors' thoughts about its legitimacy. Decrees are usually accepted when authors are already legitimated as their source. They are typically supported by sanctions that apply where the prescribed rules are not respected. However, sanctions do not ensure that decrees are respected, as the fate of Prohibition in the United States illustrates.

The effective application of sanctions does not guarantee that decrees have the effect envisaged by their authors since it is difficult to make rules to cover all cases. Accordingly, when a law is made which removes power from individuals, they look for and often find a self-advantageous loophole. For this reason, those who are authorised to sit in judgement in legal disputes often seek to influence the effects of authoritative decrees on the centralisation of power. An example is a judge who asserts that the court only works on the letter of the law but cannot account for the intentions of the government in framing it. (As an aside, the rule that a court considers only the letter of the law was reversed by the English Law Lords providing a further demonstration that the literal content of a decree or rule cannot be taken as having a direct causative effect on the structure of power.)

Authority: Indirect Effects Resulting in a Centrifugal Power Flow

Obedience to authoritative rules explains why certain channels by which managerial power centralises are unused. In these cases (and only in these special cases) of effective prohibition does authority constitute a force equal and opposite to the centralising tendency of managerial power. It follows that the kinds of power generated by managers depend on what channels are left open.

Activities which result in the production of useful commodities are often regarded as legitimate channels for the centralisation of power. If a corporation that creates highly valued products is somehow deprived of customers, its capacity to secure profits and thereby centralise managerial power disappears. In a 'free market' economy, no justification for continuing to make such products would then be available, the corporation would go out of existence, and the labour and materials would be deployed elsewhere. This hypothetical case shows that certain

ways of generating managerial power operate only on condition that they incidentally empower people by providing them with useful goods. It is as if an automatic feedback mechanism exists to ensure that labour and materials are so managed as to produce what is most useful to consumers. Such a putative mechanism supplies the basis of the argument that some economists advance in favour of allowing 'market forces' to operate unchecked. In a 'free market' system, the capability of making profit is accordingly taken as the index of whether the operation is distributing power to members of the community; any operation failing to do so is eliminated, Darwinian style.

The 'free market' is, of course, a myth which economists employ for their own purposes. Indeed, fully informed customers do not exist, and even if they did, they would not be interested only in the tool-like qualities that the market offers. That is, consumers do not think solely in terms of power but are influenced by a host of other properties. This influence is easily seen when one considers the profit-making capacity of the producers of illegal drugs. The 'profit-motive' has a built-in tendency to direct production to cheap but attractive goods rather than those which have a long useful life.

Another fallibility of profit-making capacity as an index of the extent to which power is distributed to members of the community arises because products are more useful to some individuals than others. To people who need a life-saving drug, for example, the value of that drug in a free market is any amount lower than the worth of the rest of their lives. Its first producers would therefore be able to extract a very high margin of profit and use their increased financial power to suppress possible competition. Variations on this theme are commonplace in business practice. Profit-making is increased by restricting the distribution of a desirable form of power beyond what is necessary.

Although certain forms in which managerial power is generated empower the members of the population as a condition of their functioning, this empowerment is neither automatic nor is it universal. Profit-making is, however, a reasonable comprehensive index of the rate at which power is centralising in the profit-makers. That is, at a general level, access to goods produced by an industrial complex is one factor which explains why the members of an industrialised community have a greater range of powers at their disposal than members of non-industrialised communities.

The second part of the argument in the previous section held that: (a) when a system contains an effective apparatus for monitoring the centripetal flow of power, and (b) when a diminution in this flow is detected through this apparatus, then (c) an increase occurs in the potential value of any conceivable power vehicle which could replace human labour or make it more productive. It cannot be said that this situation causes inventions, but it sets the scene in which they are most likely to be accepted as potentially useful and experimented with. Recurring situations of this kind, coupled with the success of some inventions, creates a social

climate in which invention is seen as a contribution to the generation of managerial power.

Inventions can be regarded as falling into two classes. The first comprises those inventions that are effective only within a massive power vehicle itself, like computerised factory processes. They indirectly increase the flow of power down to the consumer by decreasing the cost of the manufactured products. In the short run, however, these inventions are apt merely to restore the centripetal flow to its previous level, that which existed before the investment in the invention was made. The second category of inventions consists of those which not only serve the interests of the productive system by empowering individuals in their role within that system but also, if incidentally, empower them in their capacity as independent citizens. A large category of inventions has this effect. Indeed, such objects as mobile telephones make people not only more productive, they also greatly extend the range of things they can do personally wherever they have access to them. Inventions of the second category (those which empower individuals as citizens) are not produced to make organisational members independent of the system. That such inventions sometimes do so is a by-product of the struggle to maintain the centripetal flow of power when it is threatened by restriction of the channels through which it flows. Innovations are thus not the direct result of 'market forces', but the indirect result of a combination of circumstances which include the selective effects of authority upon market operations and the human capacity for invention. Inventions, then, represent another kind of factor (after rules) which set up a centrifugal flow and serve to empower the person qua person.

In summary, the power structure of management reveals two factors at work: a centralising tendency and a countervailing, centrifugal tendency. Changes in one tendency are neither wholly dependent nor wholly independent of changes in the other, and changes in both are neither wholly dependent on human decision-making, nor wholly independent of it.

The Utility of the Theory

The thrust of the present theory of managerial power is towards an explanation of 'unintended events' – such as fluctuations in labour relations, employment, strikes, theft, crime, retrenchments and other so-called social problems. Although such phenomena have sociological and economic manifestations within and outside work organisations, they result from the confluence of individual actions, be they personal decisions or habits. Such a feature makes these phenomena relevant to management and organisation theorists, sociologists and social psychologists.

The orientation of this chapter is close to that of Durkheim who concluded that rates of suicide depend on the 'social climate'. Like him, the present authors argue that human decisions are affected by variations in social climate but, unlike him, we propose that the principal dimension of social climate within organisations arises

from the distribution of social power. Further, we accept as a premise that the effects of managerial power are not entirely under human control.

The current theory endorses five propositions of interest to management theorists. First, the theory starts from the premise that human behaviour is intentional, i.e., performed on the basis of expected results so far as these can be foreseen by the actor. Second, such behaviour cannot be controlled except by altering the pattern of relationships in which a given result can be seen as likely to be achieved by a specific plan of action. Third, the principal element in human relationships (both with others and with the environment) is the distribution and dynamics of power, in which managerial power plays a crucial role, and that this element explains the widest range of organisational behaviour, but not all. Fourth, individuals differently placed in a power structure act differently and by virtue of the power vehicles they can activate. Fifth, the theory describes factors countervailing the centralisation of power through constraints placed on the power of the parties to the organisational relationship. These centrifugal factors take the form of authority, inventions, and HR practices, among others.

Implicit in this theory is a host of questions for management theorists, not the least of which concerns the origins of those forms of authority which either encourage or outlaw the accumulation of power by certain specified means. On the surface these factors seem to originate in a concern for others. Altruism, however, has two levels. One level appears when individuals aid another by their own actions. The other level is revealed when direction of managerial power is necessary for such aid to be effective. In the latter case, the decision to be altruistic is not simply a personal matter but is associated with some consensual position. If the required power to do so is not available, altruism cannot be effective. Generation and direction of the required power are thus pre-conditions for the enactment of ethics. That is, progress in ethical behaviour is dependent on progress in the scientific and material spheres. It is hoped that this intriguing question will steer psychological enquiry and management theory into ecological channels.

An explicit aspect of the theory is that it portrays managerialism as a natural and spontaneous phenomenon within work organisations. Indeed, since managerial power centralises, the collective power of managers who benefit from this centralisation increases. As a result, these people can be expected to use their growing power to entrench themselves further in the structure, at the expense notably of experts, front line workers and other professional colleagues. Fortunately, however, the theory also indicates how resistance to managerial power is possible. As was argued, authority is one of the processes which represents a barrier to centralisation and thus to seemingly unstoppable managerialism. How that barrier is erected in practice is the subject of the final chapter.

Chapter 4:
Authority and Argumentation in the Boardroom

Peter Drucker tells the story of Alfred Sloan, chairing a GM board meeting which had before it a proposal for a major campaign.[1] Normally, a proposal of this kind would generate considerable argumentative discussion. In this instance, however the proposal was so well prepared that everybody supported it and believed Sloan was also in its favour. When everyone thought that the proposal had been agreed upon, Sloan said, 'I take it all you gentlemen are in favour?' 'Yes, Mr Sloan,' they all replied. 'Then I move that we defer action on this for a month to give ourselves a chance to think.' A month later, during the next board meeting, the proposal was drastically revised. As they left the boardroom, Drucker asked Sloan whether he was disappointed with the result. Sloan replied that he accepted the result since the critical arguments raised about the proposal were valid.

Drucker's vignette implies that the boardroom is a model of the human encounter based on authority and argumentation. Elsewhere, Drucker maintains that if managers perform, they earn the right to be argumentative, even annoying. Managers, Drucker insisted, are not paid to share their feelings with each other: they are paid to give reasons to support their views. In boardrooms, as elsewhere, authority – in Friedrich's sense as a quality of a reasoned communication – is distinct from the use of power and coercion that is ordinarily implied in the notion of 'authoritarian.' So, when corporate governance is defined as a system of 'authoritative direction,' attention needs to be paid to the precise meaning of these words.[2] Surprisingly, such scrutiny has not been exercised; although the definition has been widely accepted, its dependence on a valid definition of authority has not been discussed in the corporate governance literature.

Scholars have discussed the ways chairmen (the legally correct term in some countries) direct their boards and offered recommendations to that effect.[3] There are times (during crises especially) when chairmen lose control of their board. However, while the power of board members generally and of chairmen specifically has been widely discussed, less attention has been paid to authority in the boardroom. For example, influential articles on boardroom behaviour make no mention of authority and do not investigate the difference between authoritarian and authoritative practices in the boardroom.[4] Popular books on the topic fare hardly better and typically do not list 'authority' in their indexes.[5]

1 Drucker (1979a: 287).

2 Colley et al. (2003: 3).

3 Bailey & Peck (2013); Bonn & Pettigrew (2009); Kakabadse & Kakabadse (2008); Kakabadse & van den Berghe (2013); Roberts & Stiles (1999).

4 Finkelstein (1992); Letendre (2004); McNulty et al. (2011); McNulty & Pettigrew (1996); Nicholson & Newton (2010); Pettigrew & McNulty (1995; 1998).

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Although here have been studies of directors' professional expertise, little is known of how chairmen interact with professional experts during board meetings.[6] Moodie argued that the challenge for chairmen of boards is to adopt a management style which acknowledges a broad range of perspectives, draws on recognised professional expertise and encourages independent thinking while ensuring 'authoritative direction.'[7] Yet, researchers have observed that most board meetings are formalistic affairs, with meagre debate, few probing questions and little serious discussion.[8] While scholars have argued that boards with diverse professional experts enhance effective problem solving, others hold that the conflict between board members that such diversity generates is prone to sabotage problem solving.[9] In the same vein, researchers have noted that boards often eschew critical discussion and debate.[10] Analysis of such phenomena is usually couched in terms of cognitive conflict or refers to board members' disinclination to appear incompetent.[11] For example, after interviewing hundreds of Australian board members, Moodie concluded that a common reason for board members' refusal to ask relevant questions stems from a concern that their questions reveal a lack of knowledge or experience. Whatever the reasons for board members' reluctance to speak, central questions remain: why do chairmen allow this reticence and, in their own case, avoid critical discussion and argumentation? On these two points the relevant literature is unhelpful. This chapter is dedicated to showing that Friedrich's theory of authority is relevant to boardroom behaviour insofar as it addresses most, if not all, of the themes to which the two questions refer.

As per Friedrich, the vehicle for reasoned elaboration is argumentation. A clear distinction can thus be drawn between those (authoritarian) chairmen who reject argumentation and those (authoritative) chairmen who promote and engage in it. Further, when chairmen reject argumentation for fear that it weakens their power, they also reject the authority of professional experts on the board. In so doing, they revert to authoritarian practices and present authority as a form of power, rather than a source of power. There are reasons to believe, however, that the authority of chairmen is enhanced by the presence and argumentative contributions of technical experts on boards.

Insofar as boardroom meetings are bureaucratic processes, they are regulated by conformity to legal and technical standards. Board members are functionaries in a system in which power is exercised by people occupying specific positions. Power is therefore attached to the position (or role) of board member rather than to specific

5 Clarke & Branson (2012); Johnson (2004); Leblanc & Gillies (2005).
6 Gray & Nowland (2017).
7 Moodie (2001).
8 Winkler (1987: 140).
9 Baranchuck & Dybvig (2009); Williams & O'Reilly (1998).
10 Forbes & Milliken (1999); McNulty, Florakis & Ormrod (2013).
11 Ranasinghe, Mather & Young (2020).

individuals and this setting allows the system to achieve a high degree of predictability and stability. Nevertheless, Weber's model does not account for board members who expand, ignore or rebel against the boundaries of their role. Weber concedes the inevitability of such intrusions into bureaucratic groups of personal and non-rational elements. Such behaviour is, for him, disruptive and threatens the cohesion of bureaucracies; it can be tolerated only if disputes between group members are based on and limited to legal or technical issues which should be subjected to rational discussion and debate. This subjection presupposes a commitment to a rational tradition which has its roots in Aristotle's principles of argumentation.

Empirical Studies of Authority

As discussed in Chapter 1, Weber regards the two faces of authority – legal and rational – as perfectly correlated because bureaucracies are based on offices which are (allegedly) filled on merit. However, most scholars disagree and argue that these two dimensions are independent. The distinction deserves attention because of the possible conflict between the following four categories: (1) office without knowledge; (2) knowledge without office; (3) office and knowledge; (4) neither office nor knowledge.

Office without Knowledge

Occupation of organisational office encourages group members to retain authority figures in such offices.[12] Authority figures, such as board chairmen, come to be accepted as part of the status quo and this acceptance helps to explain the accrual, and even extension, of powers that accompany such positions. Specifically, the powers that accrue to office holders are related to the authority of the office combined with subordinate endorsement of the office holder. One method of increasing the authority attached to a position is thus to increase and utilise the powers of office.[13] As such, the authority of chairmen accrues from the perception of their positional power; those chairmen whose positions carry high powers are more favourably regarded by their colleagues.[14]

Research has shown that when asked to rate each other on degree of liking and perceived power, group members with high power are better liked than those with

12 Blau (1963); Burke (1966); Cohen (1962); Cohen & Bennis (1961); Crozier (1964); Etzioni (1965); Flament (1956); Hollander & Julian (1970); Julian, Hollander & Regula (1969); Pryer, Flint & Bass (1962); Udy (1959).

13 Newman, Summer & Warren (1967).

14 Bennis et al. (1958); Pelz (1952).

low power.[15] Subordinates seek to be liked by high power figures and employ subtle ingratiation strategies to gain acceptance. Low status members who can increase their status in the group tend to communicate in friendly, ingratiating ways designed to enhance their relations with those controlling the mobility process.

The general conclusion of studies in these matters is that the very occupancy of a formal position lends legitimacy to the occupant. Applied to the boardroom, directors tend to accept the position of chairmen and their power as legitimate within a wide sphere of operation. However, if board members believe that chairmen have the power to effect changes in their environment and do not utilise that power, they judge them less favourably. That is, colleagues have high-level expectations and ideas about how chairmen should behave in the performance of their duties and conformance to these expectations determines how chairmen's general performance is assessed.

Knowledge without Office

The popular expression 'informal authority' refers to the use of technical knowledge and skills in the allocation of means to the effective attainment of goals. Cases of informal authority encompass situations in which the knowledge-holder possesses professional competence, task and social expertise, social status and personal qualities. Interestingly, research has found that demographic or biographical variables, including age, level of education, levels of motivation and self-esteem are unrelated to perception of technical authority.[16]

After reviewing factors associated with the emergence of authority in small groups, Stogdill appealed to five classifications. *High rate of participation* without negative affect increases personal authority. *Dominance* is related to personal authority. *Task expertise* is one of the most influential variables in the perception of personal authority. *Attempts to influence group members* increases authority. *Exclusive possession of information* is related to acquiring and maintaining authority. Specifically, it has been shown that a technical expert's opinion is more influential than the majority group opinion in determining group response to a judgemental task.[17]

Applied to boards, the general conclusion of these studies is that the more directors are perceived to be technically competent by colleagues, the greater the probability of their success. Accordingly, their information skills and personal characteristics are determining factors in the attribution and maintenance of their authority. Research has also shown that where group rather than individual performance is

15 Baum (1961); Cohen (1958); Hurwitz, Zander & Hymovitch (1953); Jones & Jones (1964).
16 Student (1967).
17 Luchins & Luchins (1961).

rewarded, as in boards, competence to achieve the group's goals is a crucial determinant of selection for a senior position.[18] Technical expertise, however, is not necessarily sufficient to guarantee success, or even accommodation, within the formal bureaucratic system.

Knowledge and Office

Peabody conducted a questionnaire study to investigate related perceptions of different forms of authority. He found that managers viewed authority strictly in terms of their relationships with employees. Subordinates, on the other hand, were more likely to emphasise their relationships with clients when asked to elaborate on the meaning of authority.

It is noteworthy that while Peabody predicted that knowledge-based authority would serve to bolster formal authority, his results highlight a basic ambivalence, if not an inherent conflict, between the different bases of authority. Specifically, in work environments where technical competence is important for task execution, the technical aspects of authority are significant, and the authority of the position may act as a hindrance to the furtherance of this expertise.

In an influential study, researchers separated experimentally the legal and rational components of Weber's typology, varying technical knowledge while holding authority of office constant.[19] They found that differences in conformity across the experimental conditions were accounted for, in part, by shifts to the belief that people in formal positions have the right to occupy their offices. Almost all subjects, regardless of experimental condition, felt obliged to obey the commands of their superiors, albeit for different reasons. If people in formal positions are judged to lack relevant technical knowledge, the attribution of authority shifts to a 'bureaucratic' base. The conclusion is that people occupying organisational offices require personal authority to maximise their influence, although formal authority is paradoxically strengthened without it. This finding is supported by research which found that faculty members' satisfaction with their deans was higher when these deans enjoyed a relatively high degree of influence and when this influence was based on expertise in addition to positional authority. Expertise was found to be the most prominent factor in the deans' influence with positional authority second. Interestingly, an earlier study reversed this finding when account executives were the subjects.[20]

Applied to boardroom behaviour, a general theme of the empirical literature stresses the need for positional authority to be combined with personal and technical expertise on the part of the chairman if maximisation of power is desired. Board

18 Hollander (1964).

19 Evan & Zelditch (1961).

20 Bachman (1968); Bachman, Smith & Slesinger (1966).

members will be more satisfied with chairmen who combine both components of authority.

Chairmen and Technical Experts

Following Friedrich, a board member is acknowledged as authoritative owing to special knowledge or skills. Authoritativeness, however, does not necessarily involve legitimacy (right to rule). A distinction is thereby made between the authoritative communications of chairmen and those of board members with specific technical expertise.

Boards of directors have a stewardship role. As such, they are meant to preserve the correct ways of doing things in organisations and to achieve organisational objectives. However, board members occasionally act as a source of innovation by providing the board and the organisation with improved ways of achieving its goals. Thus, the contribution of technical experts, provided it accords with organisational aims, should receive general approval. In this sense, any model of boardroom behaviour which attempts to account for change in board effectiveness needs to account for the way the benefits of technical experts are utilised.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli acknowledged the role of technical experts, insisting that rulers should surround themselves with competent, loyal people.

> A prince should show his esteem for talent, actively encouraging able men, and paying honour to eminent craftsmen [...] The first opinion that is formed of a ruler's intelligence is based on the quality of the [people] he has around him. When they are competent and loyal he can always be considered wise, because he has been able to recognise their competence and to keep them loyal.[21]

Applied to boards, Machiavelli's advice means that chairmen derive kudos from the presence in the ranks of competent and loyal board members. While this implication is perhaps obvious with respect to loyalty, it is less obvious that argumentative experts enhance the authority of chairmen since they can be seen as competitors, or even enemies.

The general argument for holding that position-based authority (chairmen) conflicts with knowledge-based authority (technical experts) is that the development of the latter within a boardroom is, in part, an outcome of task specialisation. Restriction of attention to a relatively small number of problems increases experience within these limited areas and improves the individual's ability to deal with problems arising from within them. Such a practice, however, often results in over-specialisation and unduly diversification of interests among board members.[22] In

21 Machiavelli (1973: 123–124).

22 Tuggle, Schnatterly & Johnson (2010).

this sense, diversification within the board increases the risk of conflict among board members. This argument, however, is inconsistent with Machiavelli's observation that group leaders derive credit and trust from the presence in the group of technical experts, even where vigorous debate occurs.

Machiavelli's observation has found empirical support in two studies.[23] Tensions between chairmen and technical experts are less likely to be acute when chairmen have the same technical background as the experts because in such situations they have similar approaches to problems, or at least use the same language to describe them. Similarly, tensions between chairmen and experts will be less pronounced when and if the experts act in accordance with the goals of the board generally.

In a laboratory test of Machiavelli's observation in small groups, Spillane showed that a marked tendency exists for group leaders to be granted credit by most of their colleagues for the contributions to goal achievement made by technical experts when leaders and experts are promoting the same goal.[24] The offerings of experts, when seen as rational, lead to an increase in their prestige *and* to an increase in the prestige of the group leader. This finding implies that the crucial element is the perceived rationality of the task-solution at which the group arrived. This result is in accord with Weber's theory that the bureaucratic system is fundamentally one in which control is dependent on the cumulation of knowledge and this is in turn consistent with the view, promoted by Friedrich and of Roman origin, that authority is concerned with growth through correct knowledge.

In a second unpublished study, Spillane found a positive relationship between the perception of a technical expert and satisfaction with the group and with its leader. Group members did not perceive the leaders and experts as antagonists. Rather, many of the favourable satisfaction ratings were attributed to the experience of participating in groups in which people were exposed to and preferred an ongoing process of argument, in the form of a dialectic. Others stated that they gained the strong impression they were being guided through the agenda in a competent fashion. Hence, the ability of group leaders effectively to coordinate group activities, including the contributions of experts, is a major factor in obtaining group support.

Spillane also found that the rate of verbal participation contributed to the identification of the informal authority figure. In such cases, it is unlikely that the group leader dominated group members. In fact, according to self-reports, the presence of experts encouraged formal authorities to assert themselves more frequently, but not in an authoritarian fashion. Further, a reduction in the perceived power of the position was reported by some group leaders when task experts were present. This finding points to the differences between group leaders' and members' judgements and feelings of satisfaction in groups where authority figures of both kinds are pre-

23 Bezemer et al. (2014); Van Oortmessen et al. (2014).

24 Spillane (1983).

sent. This disjunction helps to account for the divergent views which have characterised the sociological literature concerning the instrumental and emotional value of informal authority figures. That is, rather than exert a divisive influence, informal authorities bolster the formal authority of group leaders and their administration from the subordinates' perspective when the same goals are accepted by both parties. In the last analysis, the debate turns on whether investigators study the authority relationship from the superiors' or from the subordinates' perspective. Interestingly, the more favourable attributions resulting from the presence of informal and formal authorities in the same group came from subordinates. Formal authorities experienced a relative loss of personal influence when a task expert was present. Yet, the authority of the expert increased subordinates' support for formal authorities.

Applied to boards, Spillane's psychosocial finding supports Friedrich's explanation of authority. The interaction between chairmen and technical experts sets up the process of reasoned elaboration and, being open to monitoring by all members, has the effect of enhancing the authority of chairmen. The implication for boardroom behaviour is that the presence of technical experts acts to enhance the prestige of chairmen even when the latter lack commensurate technical expertise. This result points to the need to assess the impact of the behaviour of chairmen on group morale, productivity and goal attainment, particularly when technical experts are prepared to engage in reasoned elaboration with colleagues. Used in such a broad sense, authority approaches the notion of 'correctness.'

The notion of authority as a quality of knowledge gains support from the foregoing discussion. In a boardroom, in seeking out 'the authorities' on a technical matter, board members are searching for the most reliable and effective knowledge. Boards in which both chairmen and technical experts are present are thus judged (by members) to perform more effectively. Furthermore, part of this effectiveness is credited to chairmen. Indeed, while the expert is acknowledged as an informal authority, chairmen are acknowledged as the successful coordinators of board decision-making. The added weight of the authority of chairmen and the expectation that they have the final responsibility for board performance acts to enhance their general influence. As they control access to technical expertise, chairmen exercise power in groups. Insofar as chairmen channel group power, including the knowledge of experts, for the benefit of the group, they are effective to the degree that they direct group power to achieve desired goals.

Experimental studies in small groups have generally found that group leaders are granted credit by group members for the contribution to goal achievement made by technical experts, provided that both parties are promoting the same goal.[25] However, the theories reviewed in the early part of this book fail to predict this result, nor do they offer an explanation. Machiavelli comes closest, although

25 Germain (2012).

he takes the process for granted, as a matter of observation, since he nowhere argues for it. One should therefore look further for an explanation or theoretical framework in which the phenomenon can be set. There are several possible candidates in the realm of theory which start with different assumptions from the theories previously discussed.

Allport's theory, which was put forward to explain a wide range of empirical results in social psychology, holds that people who find themselves in groups adopt a posture which will permit, or promote, the emergence of structure.[26] Although no reason or motive is adduced to explain this tendency, the form of the theory implies that structure is valued, either for itself or for some (unstated) purpose. The theory parallels several others found in social psychology which hold that order itself is a necessary foundation for psychological functioning and will therefore be sought out and retained.

Weber argued that the teachings of charismatics are 'routinised' by the followers, thus making them compatible with a legal-rational order from which the aura of the sacred has been stripped. Approaching the same question from a different departure point, Shils argued that Weber's discussion of the concept of charisma is incomplete in that he does not acknowledge that the social order itself can be, and often is, regarded with similar feelings of awe and potency as are directed at charismatic individuals. Shils' counterargument is in the tradition of Durkheim, in that the latter's theory of religion ascribes an element of the sacred to the wider social order.

The concept of charisma has not been treated in this chapter. Indeed, the concern has been primarily with Friedrich's rational aspects of authority and its relationship with a presumed rational order represented by occupants of formal positions, specifically chairmen of boards. Furthermore, even though the term 'charismatic' has been widely (ab)used in modern parlance, it is absurd to ascribe it to chairmen. Further research would thus be well directed to assessing board members' predilection for maintaining order or for regarding it as having the cluster of qualities implied by the term 'charismatic.' Until then, Allport's and Shils' theories remain open possibilities.

Research has shown that the offerings of technical experts, when seen as rational, lead to an increase in their prestige and to an increase in the prestige of the group leader.[27] Such a finding opens a different set of possibilities from those canvassed by Allport and Shils, since it implies that the crucial element is the perceived *rationality* of the task-solution which has been decided by the group. A possible implication is that charisma as an individual quality is also based on perceived rationality and that the social structure is perceived as the preserver of the rational solutions (correct means to goals) once these have been attained. Among the more comprehensive theories reviewed in this book, Weber's theory is

26 Allport (1962).

27 Selznick (1957).

that which best explains such findings. That the prestige of group leaders increases in proportion to the perceived rationality of decisions supported by technical expertise is consistent with Weber's view that the bureaucratic system is fundamentally one in which control is dependent on the cumulation of knowledge. This observation, in turn, is in line with Friedrich's theory of authority as concerned with social growth through correct knowledge. However, there remains room for further hypotheses and future investigation could profitably be directed towards deciding between other possibilities, which are now examined.

In the boardroom environment, authority is ascribed to individuals on personal expertise or effectiveness as indicated by their ability and willingness to impart relevant knowledge. Objective measures of that phenomenon are thus possible, at least in principle. At first sight, the question of whether such individuals have authority (i.e., correct knowledge) seems beyond doubt, but caution needs to be exercised. For one thing, if technical experts have effective knowledge and communicate it to others, then chairmen have their formal authority enhanced since they impart further knowledge due to the interchange. For another, it is probable that empirical study would reveal differing perceptions of directors' expertise: while the authority of chairmen is generally secure, the attribution of authority to other board members is less certain. Nonetheless, at the individual level, the positive influence of experts on the authority of chairmen remains a strong hypothesis worthy of further study. Such research could be conducted along the following lines.

In board meetings, chairmen control access to technical experts and this represents a form of power in the group. There is considerable evidence in the literature of the relationship between power and the attribution of authority. Task expertise represents personal power of a type. Chairmen are, in principle, able to channel group power, including the expertise of directors, for the benefit of the group. Mulder's power distance theory is relevant here. Mulder argues that there is a tendency towards reducing the psychological distance between oneself and more powerful others provided that the distance is not too great. This hypothesis was put forward as an alternative to ego-defence theory which claimed that individuals in groups with a powerful person have feelings of uneasiness because the former depend on the latter for rewards and the satisfaction of various needs. As a result, the less powerful people try to reduce their uneasiness by deferential behaviour, directing communication to the more powerful person. According to Mulder, this is not a power theory but an insecurity theory. He argues that this explanation is not adequate because the less powerful people do not adapt themselves with ego defensive reactions but often strive to reduce power differentials by initiating behaviour, modelling the behaviour of powerful people and by emotional reactions.

Mulder et al. developed different power conditions which produced behaviour consistent with a power distance reduction hypothesis. They found that there were stronger liking tendencies manifested when the power distance between subjects and the more powerful were small. Further research in this direction could investigate the perceptions of power in relation to authority figures on boards and the

tendency of directors to reduce power distance in contrast to a defensive adaption to the more powerful board members, especially chairmen.

As an explanation for the phenomenon under discussion, power equalisation theory is, in some respects, antithetical to power distance theory. Indeed, the presence of a technical expert acts to balance the power of chairmen.[28] In the boardroom, where experts actively involve themselves in group tasks, power equalisation has two possible effects. First, it reduces the distance between board members and chairmen by involving the former in the group tasks. Second, it conveys the impression that chairmen are prepared to delegate responsibility (i.e., decisions) to board members. These effects should increase feelings of satisfaction among board members, which in turn can be expected to reflect on their judgement of chairmen.

More generally, according to power equalisation theory, one expects that boards members' satisfaction to be inversely related to the degree to which chairmen are perceived to dominate the group in an authoritarian fashion. In such instances, technical experts balance the interaction by involving at least one of the members in the information exchange. This exchange, in turn, reflects favourably on judgements of the chairmen and of board meetings generally. Further research could involve comparative studies of board meetings where degree of involvement of chairmen and board members and the types of informational exchanges are assessed.

While research into the themes sounded in the previous paragraphs will clarify boardroom behaviour, further theoretical and empirical analyses are required to elucidate the process by which the authority of chairmen is enriched through the contribution of technical experts. Existing anomalies concerning the rational qualities of the social order provide a fascinating empirical challenge because it links the two sides of the authority relationship, namely the concession of authority on the one hand and the consequences of compliance, conformity and obedience on the other. As noted in Chapter 2, this latter aspect has been widely studied and has yielded much valuable information. However, the other side of the relationship is still submerged in conceptual ambiguity and theoretical confusion.

In a context marked by a general scepticism about authority, it is unsurprising that chairmen are losing control of their boards or see their role (and that of the group they superintend) challenged.[29] The effectiveness of boardroom authority depends on its acceptance and the minimum condition for this acceptance is that chairmen's reasoning is weighed by the board members. This evaluation implies some form of open discussion that board members can follow and in which they participate. When such discussion is rejected, chairmen typically use their power to enforce 'authority,' leading to its decay as a source of consensual psychological control. This is often followed by further attempts at coercive control and bullying

28 Leavitt (1958); Likert (1961); Strauss (1963).

29 Kakabadse & Kakabadse (2013).

of their colleagues.[30] A vicious circle is thereby established from which it is difficult to emerge as an authoritative figure worthy of respect.

In board meetings it is relatively easy for directors to assess whether the actions of experts are in accord with group goals. Hence, experts who can achieve group goals more effectively than existing members are candidates for authoritative status. If, however, both chairmen and experts are perceived to be working towards similar goals, which are commensurate with the goals of board members generally, there is little incentive to alter existing patterns of authority and power relationships. The increased member satisfaction which obtains from the presence of experts is attributable to the perception of directors that the group is being expertly directed from two distinct but concordant sources. The added weight of the power of office and the expectation that chairmen have the final responsibility for board performance enhances the general influence of managers, thus indirectly supporting Friedrich's theory.

30 Harvey et al. (2006).

Chapter 5:
A Critique of Management Education

With Anthony M. Gould

One of the assumptions upon which managerialism, as a practice and ideology, rests is the view that managers are equipped with the type of specialised knowledge that enables them to devise and implement value-free and reliable means for achieving their organisation's objectives. The previous chapters have implicitly adopted the position that this assumption is unwarranted because such knowledge does not exist. The present chapter is dedicated to substantiating this position. Further, it is argued that the sort of knowledge currently imparted in management schools is particularly deficient in educating managers about the fundamentals of human relationships. A consequence of this thesis is that a radical overhaul of management education is called for.

As is generally the case with applied disciplines taught at university, management education hinges on the assumption that there exists a codified, teachable body of knowledge without which the practice of management is impaired. Ever since Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, the conceptual building block of this corpus has been scientific management theory. This emphasis on theory modelled on the natural sciences was explicitly manifested in Simon's landmark work at the Graduate School of Industrial Administration (GSIA), the successive waves of behavioural science orientations throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, and the Ford Foundation 1959 report that took the GSIA's approach as exemplary.

Today, scientific theory is at the heart of management research and education. For researchers, theory production is a career imperative because management journals require that their articles make a theoretical contribution. For example, the formal mission of the *Academy of Management Journal* is 'to publish empirical research that tests, extends, or builds management theory'; other leading publications, such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Research in Organizational Behavior* and *Organization Science*, have similarly worded mission statements. For management educators, theory is an equally pressing concern. While management gurus tour the globe and attract large audiences keen to learn the latest wisdom, their classroom counterparts are obliged to keep abreast of theoretical developments and incorporate them in their courses lest they be criticised by their students for not being 'up to date.'

The production and promulgation of scientific management theory have had at least two justifications. First, such theories professionalise researchers by creating a shared embrace of a scientific framework and a commitment to disseminating findings in a common language. Second, theoretical knowledge acquired within the academy offsets the inexperience of novice managers and improves the practice of

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more seasoned ones. Evidence-based management scholars, such as Rousseau, Pfeffer and Sutton, are particularly resolute proponents of this offsetting and essentially managerialist thesis. They insist that the best managers operate like medical doctors do, not according to ideology, preconception or intuition, but constrained by the principles of logic, a commitment to evidence-gathering and an allegiance to the application of the fruits of science. In short, scientific theory legitimises management research, education and practice as professional vocations and management schools as places of learning.

However, and despite decades of effort, management researchers' legitimation quest has not been crowned with unmitigated success. On the one hand, since the 1960s, measured against student enrolments and academic status benchmarks, the credibility and status of business schools are well established. Moreover, the emphasis on analytical skills (quantitative analysis in particular) that the reforms of the 1960s introduced has remained largely unchallenged. Business and management schools now attract about one fifth of all US undergraduate enrolments and their faculty command the second-highest salaries in tertiary education, just behind those of academics in legal studies. On the other hand, management researchers face a growing chorus of detractors. From Flexner in the 1930s to Mintzberg in the 2000s, criticism has been unremitting. Three decades ago, perceptive scholars lamented the lack of progress of management research and the ephemeral nature of the theories it produces. It is unlikely that substantial progress has been accomplished since. Indeed, in a noted editorial for the *Academy of Management Journal*, George observed in 2014 that the more management studies proliferate, the more they resemble 'black cats in coal cellars.' Notwithstanding its defenders, the debate about the value of theory-driven management research continues and there is evidence that the sceptics are winning it.

Critics of mainstream management education typically advance two lines of attack. First, they argue that the output of management research is difficult to apply to workplaces and to teach in classrooms. They lament that researchers prefer abstract explanation over practical knowledge and that management research has become inward looking, producing theory for theory's sake to boost business schools' rankings and ensure their accreditation. The second line of attack against theory-driven management education is on ethical grounds, with detractors charging that contemporary scholarship has an unduly short-term and individualistic focus. Business schools are accused of elevating materialistic and excessively 'winner-take-all' values above those concerning societal betterment and equitable sharing of prosperity. The recurrent corporate scandals of the 2000s (such as Enron, Tyco and WorldCom) and the 2008 Financial Crisis have provided impetus for such criticism.

Doubts about contemporary approaches to management education have reached a point where the legitimacy of business schools is being questioned by credible sources from outside and within the academy. An academic commentator has gone so far as recently to accuse management researchers and educators of being

'genuine imposters,' busying themselves with work they know is nonsensical.[1] Calls for management schools to be shut down altogether have been heard, and while some schools have indeed been closed, their faculty retrenched or absorbed within business and economics departments, others have terminated their MBA programmes. The malaise is such that a former Dean of Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University admitted that the industry suffers from 'a bad case of existential angst.'[2]

This chapter is dedicated to arguing that the charges of practical irrelevance and moral turpitude levelled at management education have a common source: the desire to explain (and to share explanatory knowledge of) management phenomena by exclusively proposing theories about them. Specifically, an obsession with scientific theory blinds management academics to an insight long established in philosophy of science but not well ensconced within the management literature: theory explains in a narrow sense but does not deliver understanding. Concisely, a scientific explanation is a deduction from the general to the particular, presented in terms of necessary relationships embedded in a theory whereas understanding obtains through reflection about reasons and values in a way that marginalises forced outcomes. Such a nuanced distinction between scientific explanation and the broader notion of understanding is a necessary first step in the quest to create alternatives to management education which, in fact, impart understanding of management situations and cut to size the 'know-it-all-better' mindset typical of managerialists.

Clarification of the concept of theory in management studies is obtained through first analysing the generic meaning of explanation in science. It is noteworthy that the definition and construct of theory to be presented applies within the scholarly frame of reference, whether the origin is scientific, critical, quantitative or qualitative, as opposed to the view embraced more broadly in everyday parlance to refer to conjecture or unsupported speculation. The term 'scientistic' is used here to emphasise the difference between science as a broadly based system of empirical enquiry and logical inference, and scientism which is the belief that the human sciences require no methods other than those of the natural sciences. As scientism refers to practices that pretend to be, but are not, science, the term is used generally by opponents. Consequently, the present use of 'scientistic' should not be interpreted as a general attack on science, logical positivism or logical behaviourism. Second, conceptual and technical problems associated with the pursuit of scientific explanation in management research are presented. Third, the contribution of critical management studies, sometimes seen as *the* alternative to orthodox (theory-driven) management studies, is examined and criticised. Practical implications for manage-

1 Tourish (2020).

2 Thomas, Lorange & Sheth (2013); Thomas & Wilson (2011).

ment education are then presented and contrasted with existing non-theory driven pedagogies.

The matters dealt with in this chapter have attracted attention beyond management studies and are relevant to social science education generally. Philosophers of science, sociologists and psychologists, including Dilthey, Weber, Horkheimer and Hempel have made notable contributions. Although educators in these scholars' disciplines have been receptive to some of their arguments, their management counterparts have, for reasons to be exposed, typically remained unreceptive. One of the contributions of the present chapter is that it invokes disparate bodies of scholarship to assess the state of management education. However, its central contribution is practical in nature. Specifically, the present argument is that those who only espouse the promulgation of management theory should not have an exclusive franchise on management education. Although this case has already been prosecuted in the literature, the exercise is undertaken here by drawing on the often-overlooked constructs of theory, explanation and understanding.

Law, Theory, Explanation

Philosophers have long debated the degree to which science explains and its mode of so doing. A dominant perspective on this matter, the deductive-nomological model, was formalised by Hempel whose conception is also called the 'covering law theory' or 'received view'. Although Hempel's model is no longer mainstream in philosophy of science, its enduring influence justifies a short exposition.

According to Hempel, a scientific explanation is an account of a phenomenon consisting of two components. The first is the *explanandum*, a structured description of what is being explained. The second is the *explanans*, a series of statements which specifies certain conditions and includes one or more laws from which the *explanandum* deductively follows as a conclusion. An example provided by Hempel is the following: the level of the element mercury rises in a thermometer in proportion to the temperature of the liquid in which the thermometer is immersed (*explanandum*). This is because mercury is contained in a glass tube (specific conditions, first part of the *explanans*) and because bodies expand in proportion to their heat and mercury's coefficient of expansion is greater than that of glass (two laws, second part of the *explanans*).

The deductive-nomological model of scientific explanation suffers from weaknesses the elucidation of which are beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say that philosophers of science have proposed alternatives. Two such substitutes dominate contemporary literature: the so-called 'causal' and 'unificationist' modes of explanation. For proponents of the causal model, to explain something in science is to provide details about how that something was caused. In contrast, promoters of the unificationist model base their analysis on what scientists do, which is to develop explanatory schemes that can be applied as widely as possible. As such, unification-

ists hold that an explanation in science is an account which connects facts and relationships by reconciling them within a set of general patterns and principles. The overall objective of unificationist science is to minimise the number of patterns and principles which are established as fundamental.

To advance the present argument it is not necessary to attempt to reconcile the causal and unificationist models of scientific explanation. Rather, two comments are relevant. First, proponents of each perspective have conceded ground to the other. Indeed, a causal process can be interpreted as the manifestation of a general principle operating within material reality and a general principle, if it is to explain material change, can be conceived of as causal in nature. The difference between the causal and unificationist models thus seems more a matter of presentation than of substance. Second, and more consequentially, both models use the same semantic structure to formulate a scientific explanation, a structure that is indebted to Hempel's initial *explanandum-explanans* articulation. Namely, to explain something in science is to propose an account which goes from the general to the particular. Advanced on causal or unificationist logic, this shift rests on laws, either universal (exception-less, i.e., causal) or statistical.

In science, a law is a generalisation which summarises observations made under experimental, quasi-experimental or natural conditions. A scientific law only reports what is observed. For example, it is a law that ice floats on water. The converse (water floats on ice) is conceivable but has not been observed to be the case. In contrast, a scientific theory is an explanation for a law that has been successfully tested using accepted standards and protocols (an untested explanation for a law is hypothesis, conjecture, speculation or proposition). For instance, Darwin's theory of evolution by means of natural selection is an explanation for the law of evolution evidenced by the fossil record and other phenomena. Not all phenomena have been explained with theories: no theory is available to explain how life originated on Earth, but conjecture exists.

Scientific theories explain all pertinent laws as well as more specific theories. For example, knowledge of fundamental physical theories affords scientists a head-start when seeking to explain fluid dynamics. Like Russian dolls, scientific explanations are inclined to be cascading in nature. In all cases, however, a theory consists of statements about an aspect of the world (the laws subsumed by the theory itself) from which logical consequences are derived. A scientific theory thus codifies predictive knowledge. In so doing, it allows for a measure of control or, in cases such as meteorology and astronomy, at least permits prediction of the phenomena the law describes and the theory explains. Indeed, to resurrect Lewin's adage, it is because theory captures predictive knowledge about a feature of reality that there is nothing so practical as a good theory. It is noteworthy that this predictive feature, at least according to orthodoxy, characterises theories of both the social and natural sciences.

The construct of theory exemplifies the bond of empirical discovery which unites researchers irrespective of their epistemological and methodological orientation. This

unity is perhaps easiest to appreciate when reflecting on quantitative research, but it also applies to qualitative protocols. With quantitative research, the notion of a dataset's message is by convention often parsed as a binary set of propositions: analysts establish a hypothesis (a theory) and seek to reject its null equivalent. This approach makes quantitative research protocols replicable and is meant to yield stable results, at least across multiple trials. With qualitative research, the production and presentation of data are somewhat merged with interpretation of those data. However, as in quantitative research, considerations of the presence of a finding, its effect size, and its generalisability constrain the overall message. Specifically, qualitative researchers, rather than providing truncated conclusions, create a narrative about these three elements. Besides, in qualitative studies the conception of measurement is altered because data are not in numerical form and are rarely amenable to being represented by so-called higher order measurement scales, such as interval or ratio-based formulations. Moreover, qualitative researchers typically de-emphasise effect size and are comparatively less conservative than their statistically orientated counterparts in generalising a finding. Whatever the case, qualitative researchers, like their quantitative compatriots, remain concerned with theory production.

Theory and Explanation in Management

The characteristic elements of scientific explanation were implicit in sociology and psychology even before philosophers of science attempted to formalise them. For example, Durkheim sought to explain how societies maintain internal cohesion by calling on the presence of either of two possible forms of solidarity: mechanical for primitive societies and organic for industrialised ones.[3] The phenomenon that is analysed (social order) is thus explained by proposing a theory. Management theorists have made equivalent contributions. An example which adheres to Hempel's semantic structure of scientific explanation is as follows. 'Sales representatives performed well last month' because working conditions are adequate and financial incentives attractive and because, according to Herzberg's two-factor theory, employees go beyond compliance when both hygiene and motivating factors are in play.

In the management literature, inquiries into the nature of theory and the foundations of theory building began with Burrell and Morgan's 1979 book, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. For the following two decades, protagonists debated, at times in vigorous terms, the nature of organisational reality and how best to study it. However, despite these controversies, a consensus exists amongst mainstream researchers concerning a central issue: explanation in management studies follows the causal model of scientific explanation. Specifically, these commentators

3 Durkheim (1969).

hold that causal chains are present in organisational reality and describing their modus operandi constitutes management theory. Indeed, it is thanks to theory that researchers and practitioners can formulate predictions about the behaviour of firms.

In summary, for mainstream management researchers, management theories are statements which disclose an aspect of organisational reality the knowledge of which enables prediction and possible control of future work-related phenomena by positing causal interactions, relationships, processes or structures. While some authors have challenged Burrell and Morgan's analysis of sociological research and disagreed about which paradigm is best suited for management research, the acceptance of the causal model of scientific explanation in mainstream management studies has remained largely uncontested.

Challenges to Theory and Scientific Explanation

Scholarly interest in scientific explanation is understandable in the light of the purported ability of scientists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to explain physical, social and psychological phenomena. Not everyone was so easily convinced, however. For example, Dilthey held that science cannot explain all human affairs. He argued that whereas nature is characterised by 'objective necessity' and causal continuity, human beings find within their self-consciousness a sovereignty of the will, a responsibility for actions, a capacity for subjecting everything to reasoning and for resisting any encroachment on their personal freedom. While all science is experiential, the facts of consciousness, such as willing, feeling and thinking, are not knowable through the means of natural science. These phenomena have a different epistemological status because they are accessible only through reflective analysis, introspection and exegesis of the records of human existence. In his late works, Dilthey clubbed together such methodological orientations under the umbrella term 'hermeneutics.'

The difficulty inherent in studying human inner life generally and consciousness specifically by the same means that scientists use to study nature led Dilthey to distinguish between *Naturwissenschaften* (the natural sciences) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (literally, the sciences of the mind or spirit), generally translated in English as the human or social sciences. On Dilthey's view, the task of the natural sciences is to propose causal explanations of phenomena. Since the notion of causality renders the notion of 'free choice' meaningless, such an explanation is acceptable within natural sciences where researchers typically inquire into behaviour which is amoral in nature and not associated with human agency. By contrast, the mission of the human sciences is to understand lived experience. For Dilthey, this undertaking entails identifying and articulating aspects of social and cultural life which highlight intrinsic reasons and provide meaning for human action and relationships. In Dilthey's conceptualisation, understanding requires an analysis of the ideals, values

and norms which manifest in human choice. Such an approach marginalises necessary interactions and forced outcomes, i.e., scientistic theory.

It is noteworthy that Dilthey did not deny the existence of structures governing human thought and socio-historical reality, constructs that he sometimes referred to as 'forces' or 'laws.' For Dilthey, however, such structures do not determine human behaviour. On his view, social scientists are less concerned with what people do individually or collectively, and more with what they should do. If individuals exhibit behavioural continuity, if they behave in regular and even predictable ways, it is because they have ultimately chosen to do so. Hence, the structures uncovered by social scientists govern human reality only insofar as they are normative. Behavioural patterns emerge exclusively because humans, as an act of volition, conform to precedents which they have established for themselves purposefully, for idiosyncratic reasons or because they seek to comply with group norms. Human action, therefore, cannot be reconciled with cause-and-effect reasoning because it is the product of choices, mostly made in constrained circumstances.

Dilthey's analysis of the natural and human sciences has been influential. For example, his dichotomy between scientific explanation and understanding was not lost on Weber, who tried to combine both approaches when developing interpretive sociology. For Weber, the interpretive sociologist's job is to reconstruct the meaning of social events from the perspective of those who live them, rather than exclusively through the detached and objective standpoint of natural scientists. That is, Weberian sociologists are to account for the actions of other human beings by attributing to them the feelings and thoughts which they would have if they carried out the same actions, rather than as manifesting impersonal causal processes. However, Weber acknowledged the merit of scientific explanation where social and historical phenomena have no known origin or when actions have unintended consequences. In these circumstances, the interpretive understanding of social action is to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects.

Explaining Management Laws

The world of managers and the resources they superintend offers an abundance of laws (in the descriptive sense of observed regularities). For instance, most employees arrive to and leave a place of engagement at set times. When called to meetings, they typically attend them. Beyond these kinds of basic regularities, some employees consistently exceed compliance-related expectations. Managers are inclined to reward such conscientious workers and discipline or otherwise admonish their peers who are identified as underperforming. Customers satisfied with the offerings provided by a firm tend to do repeat business with that entity and may recommend it to others. Executives generally look for and discuss opportunities to increase return on capital deployed under their stewardship. Behavioural laws of such kind are pervasive and well known in the world of commerce and workplaces. Accordingly,

management and organisational researchers typically attempt to account for them by way of theories.

The domination of theory production in management research has an illustrious history which commenced (in the modern era) with the archetypal scientistic theoretician, Frederick Taylor. Indeed, in asserting (and providing formulaic rationale) that there is 'one best way' to do each production-related task, the great man was advancing a theory of management, in his case one of job design. However, despite Taylor's enduring influence, to date no management theory has been articulated that can be implemented with the same reliability as those addressing the physical world's interrelationships. This shortcoming represents something of an elephant in the room for the custodians of management studies.

Management researchers have often argued that the lack of progress in identifying domain-specific theory which can be reliably implemented arises principally because of validation difficulties. Such problems have been comprehensively documented. One is particularly noteworthy because, although it manifests as a technical matter for those caught up in the process of quantitative analysis, it starkly exposes a crucial conceptual distinction between social and natural science. The issue is this: the constructs of interest to social science researchers, although in principle often amenable to experimental control, cannot be investigated using the same laboratory protocols that are associated with the natural sciences, mostly for practical and ethical reasons. Furthermore, even in the case of field or natural experiments on work-related phenomena, delineating experimental and control groups is not straightforward.

Techniques exist in the social sciences that are intended to compensate for the difficulties associated with the inability to conduct laboratory experiments. Most of these techniques aim to offset problems arising from the lack of robust control groups. These techniques include manipulations such as statistical control (random sampling being the most widespread instantiation) and use of proto-control groups à la field or natural experiments. However, as Andreski notes, unambiguous explanations invoking cause-effect relationships are typically not realistic in such domains as sociology and humanistic psychology.[4] Owing to the compromise of the principle of laboratory control within the social sciences, conclusions based on experimentation protocols are beset by the fact that competing explanations for changes to a dependent variable exist simultaneously. A generic case in point concerns the shifting intentions of individuals whose behaviour is under investigation. A manifestation of this problem is the current 'replication crisis', wherein social science researchers have had difficulty reproducing findings of published studies.

The malaise which currently besets management studies highlights a shared feature of some of the arguments offered by Dilthey and Weber. Despite their differences, these authors share the view that accounting for observed regularities (laws)

4 Andreski (1969).

by way of scientific explanation and theory is appropriate in natural science but of questionable relevance in social science. As explained, scientific explanations encapsulate predictive knowledge in the form of an objective, logical account. Such an emphasis on prediction is particularly noticeable in mainstream management studies where explanations advanced by researchers are decompositions of the phenomena under analysis which rely on causal chains.

The existence of scientistic management theory implies the presence of causal chains operating within and across workplaces and their broader milieu. In more practical terms, if the scientistic management theoreticians are correct in their worldview, organisational participants behave as theory specifies, that is, in accordance with the causal chains postulated. Accordingly, within the domain of activities explained by scientistic theory, participants do not behave purposefully, only involuntarily. This perspective takes no account of notions of morality, imagination, choice and creativity. If valid, a vision of the human experience which can be represented exclusively through invoking theory applies as much to those doing research as it does to the phenomena they examine. This has a disquieting consequence: the quest to identify scientistic theory in management studies is tantamount to seeing oneself (and one's peers) as alive and ambulant but bereft of planning capacity, or of agency generally. Most social scientists do not come across as aware that their work has such implications. It is worth stressing that this comment does not apply to theory, such as that expounded in Chapter 3, which explicates the *unintended* effects of social action.

Alternatives to Scientific Explanation

In a widely quoted essay, Ghoshal argues that management researchers and educators do little else but convey liberalism dressed up as 'pretence of knowledge.'[5] For Ghoshal, such pretence arises because researchers adopt the approach of natural science when they study organisational reality. In so doing, they develop a sort of physics in which 'causal theories' operate on employees (and others) who are incidentally but unavoidably established as non-human input in the process of productive transformation. Such an impoverished view of organisational reality, Ghoshal insists, is at its core ideological and socially harmful in that it tends to be self-fulfilling. 'Physics envy' is perhaps a better way to describe how management researchers undertake their mission.

To move from pretence to substance, Ghoshal urges management researchers to accept that no single idea captures social complexity and that human beings do not exclusively pursue personal gain, as alleged in much current management scholarship. He further holds that management research requires a unifying framework

5 Ghoshal (2005).

which can accommodate simultaneously different views of human nature. As a first step on the journey towards developing such a framework, Ghoshal calls for the acceptance of intellectual pluralism in the academy. Within such a pluralism, multiple perspectives sit beside each other with equanimity and thus the currently dominating research framework is downgraded. However (and despite his pluralistic inclinations), Ghoshal does not give up on scientific theory. In fact, he encourages management researchers to produce more of it, not realising that a single-minded quest for scientific theory puts researchers on the path to scientistic theory and its narrowly specific mode of explanation.

The research agenda of critical management scholars is potentially seductive for researchers endorsing Ghoshal's indictment of management academia. If one believes that orthodox management research rests on and conveys a socially harmful ideology, then it is tempting to abandon two of the most noteworthy pillars of scientific research, namely objective observation and ensuing logical reasoning. However, a closer inspection of the objectives and assumptions of critical management authors reveals that the kind of research they advocate cannot in fact make good on its stated promise. There are identifiable reasons for this, some pertaining to critical theory in general, others to its more specific adaptation in the hands of critical management advocates.

It is not necessary to debate here whether critical theory can deliver a more just and humane society. Of greater relevance is the evaluation of critical theory to see whether it fundamentally differs from the general construct of theory discussed earlier. After all, critical theory is still theory. Further, if critical theory differs from traditional theory for being historically contextualised and directed to a particular social end, it shares with traditional theory its overall unificationist logic. As such, critical theory's objective is to provide explanatory knowledge through the application of a deterministic semantic structure to the business of making predictions.

Critical theory follows unificationist logic because it rests on a general explanatory principle. This general principle is apparent in Horkheimer's view that the discrepancy between fact and theory must be overcome because behind them lies a deeper unity, namely the general subjectivity upon which individual knowledge depends. From this deeper unity or ultimate explanatory relationship derives Horkheimer's general contention that traditional theoretical knowledge cannot be objective but must be historically and socially situated, and his more specific view that traditional theory serves the interests of bourgeois society.

Horkheimer acknowledges that social science based on traditional theory delivers knowledge of society and that such knowledge is useful in specific circumstances. For example, it can contribute to improving production processes by way of division of labour. However, he insists that, failing to take account that reality is itself the product of society's work, knowledge arrived at from traditional theory contributes to maintaining the status quo and exploitation of the masses by the capitalist elite. By contrast, the objective of social critical theory is to deliver knowledge

that will drive societal change. Whatever the case, it is noteworthy that explanatory knowledge of society is an objective pursued by critical and traditional theory.

According to Horkheimer, the traditional theoretician's goal is the prediction of future psychosocial phenomena based on the most suitable conceptual apparatus. This is also true of the exemplary critical theorist, Horkheimer himself. Indeed, if one is to believe him, applying critical theory when doing social science will improve society by unmasking capitalist oppression. To this general prediction about critical theory, one can add another, implicit in Horkheimer's arguments. Specifically, on his view, what sets critical theory apart from traditional theory is critical theorists' self-awareness of their social and historical contexts and their ambition to improve society. Hence, a future theoretical contribution not advanced under such auspices will not count as critical in nature.

In summary, as Horkheimer himself admits, if the works of the traditional and critical theorists differ in their specific interests, they manifest the same logical form. Indeed, from a purely unificationist, explanatory and predictive logic, they are indistinguishable. In other words, management scholars looking for an alternative to traditional theory, its specific mode of scientific explanation, and its accompanying deterministic picture of human agency, will not find solace in Horkheimer's critical theory irrespective of the merit of the research programme it makes possible. Similarly, the work of critical management scholars offers little to management researchers who remain wary of the limitations of scientistic explanation. There are two main reasons for such a letdown.

First, critical management scholars, like traditional ones, pursue and seek to disseminate theory. Indeed, critical authors face the same legitimation challenge as their traditional colleagues; in fact, they face it with greater intensity, since a purely critical (negative) stance is bound to lead to the role of an irrelevant gadfly rather than to that of a contributor. In this sense, critique has always been in tension with a desire for recognition through practical influence. Thus, as leading proponents of critical management studies have had to concede, critical authors pursue legitimation by proposing theory which improves the practice of management, like the traditional management authors which they otherwise criticise for adopting a managerialist stance.[6]

Second, the research programme of critical management studies cannot deliver definitive outcomes, even in the form of emancipation or theory. If social structures are alienating, by definition, as the critical management community claims, then critical management studies are likewise alienating since this scholarship, with its dedicated journals, conferences and institutional grants, has created for itself a social structure. Besides, if rationality is misleading as critical authors propose, then rational arguments (including a defence of the proposition that rationality is

6 Alvesson & Willmott (2003); Bowden (2018); Parker & Parker (2017).

misleading) are also misleading. On these matters, critical management advocates lack the reflexivity they trumpet as one of the strengths of their epistemology.

More generally, in the absence of knowledge of ultimate truth (or ways to obtain it), definitive theoretical conclusions or practical courses of action cannot be proposed. Critical management inquiry will reveal only that underneath every alienating institution or managerial layer lies another which is equally estranging. Hence, rather than emancipation, critical management research leads to a theoretical abyss and practical paralysis. In the final analysis, critical management authors play the role of their academic orthodoxy's good conscience. They speak from self-claimed high moral and epistemological grounds, but their epistemology denudes them of the ability to influence mainstream management research and practice.

Management researchers and educators who seek a substitute for their theory-driven orthodoxy but are wary of critical management studies can find refuge in at least one alternative. Indeed, they need only return to Dilthey's core arguments, namely those that were subsequently defended by Weber. Specifically, rather than seek scientific explanation for management laws, scholars can attempt to understand such phenomena. That is, if researchers want to account for the regularities they observe within workplaces, then scientistic theory production is not an optimal strategy because the accounts it generates leave no room for the roles played by reason, choice and values.

Since antiquity humans have developed pictures of themselves in which they choose and consequently attract merit or blame for their actions. People have expended energy in maintaining systems of thought, like religion, to guide them in making sense of their existence and demonstrating such sense through their choices. Modern justice systems also assume, as their most elementary characteristic, that individuals are responsible for their actions, insofar as they understand and can predict the consequences of those actions. It is also noteworthy that US Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, which applies to social science research, insists that human subjects should be dealt with by researchers as autonomous and responsible individuals.

Work settings are microcosms of human societies. For example, they typically reproduce, in simplified form, the dilemmas that individuals confront in other contexts. Hence, models of workplaces in which actors are characterised as bereft of choice, self-selected purpose and other distinctively human forms of agency are of dubious value. Scientistic management theory is one such model. Furthermore, attempting to validate a management theory as part of a research project would de facto contradict the basic ethical principles of the Common Rule, since it would require the assumption that the individuals whose behaviour is being compared with what the theory predicts are bereft of responsible autonomy and decision-making capacity. In this respect, teaching management theory as if it were valid (because scientifically established) sets much of the stage for morally compromised employer conduct and restricts the scope for creation of principles that are relevant to management practice.

Insofar as moral turpitude is concerned, problems arise because management theory cannot be reconciled with a picture of humans as moral beings, responsible before their communities for the way they use their freedom. The language invoked by theory-driven management education is one of the key culprits here. This parlance, for the most part, does not embrace moral language, or, to the extent that it does, distorts and trivialises meaning associated with language's customary usage. Such corruption typically occurs with words such as 'good,' 'wrong' or 'ethics'. In managerialist language, these words are generally intentionally deployed in an equivocal way or used merely to refer to matters of compliance with arbitrary rules which are put in place by and designed to suit the interests of one party. Insofar as theory-driven management education's lack of practical relevance is concerned, pedagogies which entail a vision of human existence that contradicts how managers and their subordinates understand themselves are likely to be ignored or, if applied, typically yield disappointing results.

Implications for Management Education

Thirty years ago, commentators thought that management education was so deeply entrenched in its ways that it was invulnerable to reform. Although evidence to date mostly supports such a bleak prospect, criticism has continued to accumulate which gives hope that management schools will change their curricula. Ideally, in the light of the limitations of theory-driven education highlighted in this chapter, management schools should jettison their current curricula and replace them with a few business subjects (e.g., law, economics, marketing, accounting and finance) which are offered as complements to an education grounded in the study of the humanities. Such a shift in emphasis would bring programmes in line with the spirit of the recommendations of the 2011 Carnegie Foundation Report on management education which argues for the inclusion of liberal arts in the curricula of business schools. Although programmes based on these principles exist (in the form of business majors in arts degrees), their proliferation is unlikely to be endorsed by management educators. It is hard to imagine a revolution led by those it relegates to peripheral roles.

Realistic reformers will note that, although mainstream management education has been theory-driven since the 1960s, other pedagogies have been available since the academy's inception. For example, in addition to internship electives, which have in recent decades become available to management students, the most prominent of the alternatives is the case-study method, pioneered at Harvard Business School and historically one of this institution's distinctive pedagogies. For its advocates in management and business education, the case study method, insofar as its main objective is not to illustrate theory application, notably dispels the illusion that real-life problems can be entirely analysed and addressed by way of morally neutral solutions, such as scientific theories. However, case studies have been criticised

because, in presenting complex situations in a truncated (not to say simplistic) form, they convey biases and discard nuances and necessary details. Despite such limitations, for their advocates the incompleteness of cases is something of a virtue. Indeed, summaries are susceptible to varying and often conflicting interpretations concerning the 'real' problem, its antecedents and its possible remedies. The case study method also reveals how and where work- and business-related phenomena are unique. Thus, for some educators, the case study method offers a bridge between rigorous quantitative analysis and artistic work (insofar as cases, being incomplete, require analysts' imagination) through which students hone their problem-solving skills and enhance their critical and creative abilities.

Another alternative to theory-driven education, long used in military educational institutions if yet to make inroads in management schools, is the so-called 'staff rides' methodology. Grounded in experiential learning, staff rides are re-creations of significant historical incidents, prior to and during which participants engage in research, collective critical analysis and exchange of information. According to their promoters in management education, staff rides combine long-term thinking, improvisation and careful examination of protagonists' motives for action. They empower participants psychologically because they require contextual and time-constrained decision-making. As such, staff rides are purported to be especially effective for developing intellectual maturity and resistance to executive stress.

Other non-theory-based pedagogies which exist in management education include critical incident methodology and problem-based learning. These have in common with the case study and staff rides approaches (beyond their limited popularity in business schools) an emphasis on psychological development. Each requires that students analyse human behaviour, engage in situation-based decision-making and fine-tune their communication skills. That is, these alternative methodologies aim at cultivating the psychological maturity of management students by requiring them to evaluate critically complex situations on a case-by-case basis and persuade others to create shared and well-defended solutions.

The stated learning outcomes of case studies, staff rides and critical incidents can be enhanced through the parallel and more conventional study of a well-established body of knowledge. Western thought offers a repertoire of unifying frameworks each of which intended to enable individuals to make sense of their existence and surroundings. Science is one of these initiatives, religion another, artistic endeavour yet another. Philosophy is the discipline which analyses and attempts to reconcile these perspectives. In this regard, it is noteworthy that from Plato until the middle of the twentieth century, education for business and community leaders included the formal study of philosophy.

For more than 2000 years, education for citizenship and community leadership was based on the *studia humanitatis*, that is, on a critical engagement with the body of knowledge through which people document and attempt to understand their existence. One famous example is Machiavelli who prepared himself for a senior administrative position by studying Latin, rhetoric, logic, diplomacy, history and philos-

ophy. This type of education provides analytical and critical methods of inquiry rooted in an appreciation of diverse human values, surely a requirement of management today. A critical evaluation of assumptions (as entailed in the *studia humanitatis*) cultivates awareness of alternatives. Indeed, intellectual freedom, citizenship engagement and leadership development stem from such an endeavour. Critical analysis, however, is impossible in the darkness of an imprecise language, in the absence of moral referents or in a senseless world divorced from its historical and intellectual foundations. Mastery of language and an appreciation of philosophical systems support the use of reason, encourage argument and produce mature individuals. In other words, the unifying language allowing intellectual pluralism, the embrace of which Ghoshal pleaded for, already exists. It is only waiting to be included as part of management curricula, as a course of its own in management programmes or to complement the alternatives to non-theory driven methodologies.

Gellner argued that, if science is characterised by its ability to generate consensual, cumulative knowledge capable of improving human existence by way of predictions, the so-called 'social sciences' are not scientific.[7] Three decades earlier, Winch contended that the social sciences (to which theory-driven management research claims to belong) are in fact not science but a branch of philosophy.[8] This is so because explanations of human behaviour are not of the same order as, and are not reducible to, the kind of explanations produced by natural scientists. As such, the established central role for theory, as captured in the expression 'physics envy,' must be reassessed. If management is not a science, then it should not be taught like one. So long as researchers attempt to formulate answers to management problems in the scientific, deterministic language of their academy's current orthodoxy, they will fail to produce ethically defensible and practically relevant contributions to management.

The introduction, in the 1960s, of a programme to base management research and education on the model of the natural sciences was doomed to failure. In its place, philosophy should be returned to the management curriculum. While psychology has enjoyed an enviable place in MBA degrees, philosophy has been largely ignored. Yet, like the other social sciences, psychology is based on philosophical foundations. It is true that philosophers are rarely content with answers to recalcitrant questions. It is also true that they are impatient with dogmatic answers or appeals to practicalities. Philosophers insist that the real contribution of any perspective is not what it explains, but the elucidation of what it *assumes*. It is to philosophy that one turns for arguments about first principles, foundational assumptions and the validity of reasoning therefrom. Most managers are somewhat forgivably unreceptive to such questions but there is no excuse for management

7 Gellner (1986).

8 Winch (1990).

researchers and educators to be frustrated by them. On these matters, Keynes is worth quoting:

> Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas.[9]

Managers are reluctant to acknowledge that their ideas have come down to them from 'academic scribblers.' They would do well, however, to remember that Plato advised the King of Syracuse; Aristotle was tutor to Alexander the Great whose favourite philosopher was Diogenes the Cynic; a philosophy professor, Martin Luther, invented the Protestant religion; Locke provided the blueprint for the American Constitution; Rousseau was the inspiration for the French revolutionaries; Schopenhauer's ideas were appropriated by Freud and Jung; Hegel influenced Marx whose ideas have changed the lives of more than a billion people; and Nietzsche was Hitler's house philosopher, even if it is unlikely that Hitler ever read him.

It should also be asked who is prepared to accept the challenge of 'weeding the management garden' to criticise the proliferation and use of jargon and the attack on facts, truth and logic which is a feature of managerialism. A specific philosophical perspective (logical positivism) provides the tools by which hundreds of pages of meaningless jargon can be reduced to a few pages of truth-bearing propositions. Hobbes warned readers of the dangers of the misuse of language. 'For words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them: but they are the money of fools'.[10] In *Leviathan*, Hobbes insists that people engage in the privilege of absurdity in the ways they use and abuse language. Nature cannot err; but in human society ignorance on a grand scale abounds. For Hobbes, the abuse of language is a form of madness. People who are ill-educated are not mad, but many educated people who abuse words are mad or seek to render others mad. Wittgenstein agreed and said that philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.[11] If so, managers should be dragged kicking and screaming to the study of philosophy. It is, however, a sad historical fact that philosophy has not been regarded as a suitable candidate for inclusion in MBA degrees, a neglect that has contributed indirectly to the rise of managerialism.

Business and government workplaces, as well as management classrooms, are infected with what Don Watson calls 'weasel words', contemporary clichés and obfuscating jargon.[12] There seems to be some powerful force disposing managerialists to inflict significant damage on the English language. This force is so undiscrimi-

9 Keynes (1949: 383).
10 Hobbes (1996: 28 – 29).
11 Wittgenstein (1953).
12 Watson (2004).

nating that it takes seriously the tortured syntax, pleonasms, tautologies, metaphors, oxymorons, and nonsensical propositions of today's popular management writers.[13]

As thinking is talking to oneself (and others), reasoning is defective when one's internal dialogue is jargon-ridden. To communicate effectively, all parties to the management relationship need to be sensitive to language. If managers want to develop this sensitivity, philosophy is the subject of first choice. Attending to the meaning of words, true descriptions and the validity of arguments is the primary learning outcome of philosophy. That it is not a mandatory subject in MBA courses raises several urgent questions which cannot be answered here.

If the pages of management books and journals are replete with content that is difficult to implement and laden with questionable ethical consequences, then a case exists for the academy to change course. If nothing is done, management schools are likely to become the principal institutional causes of their own de-legitimation. When the Titanic was taking water, the orchestra kept playing. The doomed were to remain entertained. The failure to act makes the closure of management schools an ever more credible threat.

13 Joullié & Spillane (2021).

Chapter 6:
The Rhetoric of Managerial Authority

That those who master language have control of themselves and others is a view embedded in Western thought. The ancient Greeks granted persuasive words a central role in human existence and applied them to the solving of personal problems in living. For example, In Homer's *Iliad* suggestive speeches empower warriors. Later, the Sophists believed in the power of 'therapeutic oratory' based on language and dialectic.[1] Plato noted that 'physicians of the soul' use language while physicians of the body heal by physical means. Some words have the power to implant the conviction of virtue, others that of vice. For Plato, language has the power to strengthen will, re-organise values and replace ineffective beliefs with more effective ones. A fundamental aspect of Plato's thinking is the distinction between noble and base rhetoric.[2]

Aristotle argued that suasory effectiveness has three intertwined elements: logic, pathos and ethos. He insisted that persuasion demands style, analogies and metaphors which are more persuasive than literal expression. Later authors have not deviated markedly from such recommendations, adjusting only their illustrious predecessor's analysis to modern circumstances. For instance, Atkinson's study of the ways in which politicians' speeches arouse audiences is, on the author's own admission, a simplification and adaptation of Greek techniques. Similarly, Burke did not diverge from Aristotelian guidelines when he argued that hearers should identify with speakers if they want to persuade them. Despite their enduring merits and applicability, however, these suasory techniques do not include linguistic analysis. Specifically, they gloss over the fact that language can be decomposed into functions which, when employed, at least partly disclose information about the personal values of the speaker.

Building on the distinction outlined by Plato and Aristotle, Weaver argues that language is never value-free; it is sermonic because all speakers are preachers in their public capacity. Further, Weaver notes that 'there are but three ways for language to affect us. It can move us toward what is good; it can move us toward what is evil; or it can, in hypothetical third place, fail to move us at all.'[3] The noble speaker uses language to inspire individuals to speak clearly, think independently, challenge dogmatic pronouncements and choose autonomously. On the other hand, the base or ignoble speaker attempts to deprive individuals of their personal autonomy and dignity.

1 Edman (1956: 316 – 317).
2 Lain Entralgo (1970).
3 Weaver (1953: 6).

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In the parlance of Plato and his disciples, noble speakers seek to strengthen the willpower of and promote self-control in their listeners. Achieving these objectives entails identifying and clarifying ambiguity, as well as replacing destructive beliefs with constructive and self-promoting ones. Overall, noble speakers empower their listeners by showing them better versions of themselves. In contrast to noble language, base language undermines personal courage and erodes liberty and dignity. Base speakers try to keep their listeners in a state of dependency by inhibiting the rational examination of alternatives. They achieve this control by exaggerating problems to elicit feelings of despair and by contextualising advice in a milieu of hostile forces. Base speakers use words and phraseology that consolidate their control over those who listen to them.

According to Weaver, nothing is more feared by the base speaker than argument and debate. Indeed, whereas Weaver holds that noble language protects individuals by showing them better versions of themselves and encourages critical thinking, he sees base language as promoting heteronomy and blocking critical thinking. Such features of base language are particularly evident when speakers attempt to identify the origin of practical problems, because by discussing only one side of an issue, by mentioning cause without consequence or consequence without cause, acts without agents or agents without acts, the base speaker often successfully blocks cause-effect reasoning. Managerialists employ such base techniques to increase their own power and to create sycophantic followers. By contrast, managers use noble language to wean colleagues away from their inclination to depend unthinkingly on their senior managers and to teach them to strive for authoritative rather than authoritarian status.

Weaver's analysis of noble and base language is open to the objection that it is biased toward the speaker. Such criticism would be mistaken, however, because the characterisation as noble or base depends on the assessment of hearers. Furthermore, the noble speaker seeks to maximise authoritativeness for all and minimise authoritarianism generally. For example, that Churchill and Hitler were accomplished rhetoricians can readily be admitted. That both men empowered their audiences can also be admitted. It follows that the characterisation of rhetoric as noble or base depends on whether certain rhetoricians are judged to influence others toward what is good or what is bad, a judgement that will differ according to the values of those who render it. That Churchill is remembered as a noble rhetorician and Hitler as a base rhetorician is owed, in large part, to the perception that while both political leaders empowered their respective audiences, the latter directed his listeners toward authoritarian goals.

As planners and persuaders, managers have little choice but to be sensitive to and have mastery of language's effects on those to whom it is directed (a point generally overlooked in the management development literature). In this sense, they operate at their best when they take advantage of its full repertoire. The same is true for those who interact with them, because simply to highlight people's performance shortcomings and insist that they improve (as base speakers often do when

they seek to dominate their listeners) is to hinder professional development. Indeed, disproportionately emphasising performance deficits in feedback sessions undermines their worth because it breeds instinctive defensiveness and creates an unnecessarily adversarial dimension to a relationship. Furthermore, appraising and passing judgement on someone's performance assumes that the appraiser is technically or psychologically superior to the appraised. Such circumstances of psychological inferiority are exacerbated when recommendations (or directions) that are intended to improve performance follow an instance of appraisal: when improvement recommendations are made, those to whom they are directed are implicitly deemed incapable of identifying and proposing solutions of their own. Should psychological dependence and inferiority become internalised by the concerned manager, performance deficiencies will likely continue or worsen. Conversely, managerial effectiveness requires a degree of independence of judgement and a measure of autonomy in decision-making; these constructs are precisely what noble language seeks to promote.

If one accepts that managerial performance requires high-level judgement and responsible autonomy in decision-making, noble language can be redefined as a speech that inculcates and reinforces development in these areas and base language as one that does not. This delineation is compatible with Weaver's characterisation of noble language as that which provides those to whom it is directed with better versions of themselves: namely, versions in which managers appear as responsible, competent and autonomous decision-makers. It is worth reiterating here that use of language is fundamental to the discharge of managerial duties. Specifically, compared with other organisational actors who have procedural-related tasks and responsibilities, the management function is essentially declarative. It cannot adequately be fulfilled without mastery of sophisticated language.

Persuasion is particularly salient for managers and their colleagues (including union representatives) since they attempt to convince each other to improve their status or reduce demands made upon them. At some point in the process, one party delivers an assessment of the current state-of-affairs and advances propositions to amend it, supported by some form of reasoning calling on evidence, moral justification and application of the principles of logic. To this assessment and proposal, the other party responds and advances its own views. Arguments are thus weighed against each other and normally result in agreements, formal or informal. These agreements are typically not definitive, however, for situations keep evolving and arrangements need to be revised at regular intervals by both parties to the management relationship. In any case, the endeavour is less about closure (which remains temporary) than it is about opening, response and counterproposal. Unsuccessful arguments rarely disappear; they often return, in one form or another, in future exchanges.

Rhetoric, then, is at the very heart of management. The persuasive element in the language of management is what qualifies it as rhetorical. In existing research, however, when not referring to the ability to speak in tongues, rhetoric is generally

understood in an Orwellian sense. Specifically, for most management authors, rhetoric is synonymous with attempts to frame the context of discussions, manipulate opinion and structure perception of reality. There is a sad irony in the negative connotation currently attached to the term 'rhetoric' given the fact that for 2500 years Rhetoric was one of the most highly regarded disciplines. More than a subject of study valued in and of itself, mastery of rhetoric was deemed essential to social life, indeed to citizenship. Nowadays, it is difficult to find academics at universities who teach rhetoric. Be that as it may, management researchers have, with few exceptions, studiously avoided the topic, preferring such anaemic concepts as 'language' and 'discourse'.

Although Weaver's analysis addressed dialogue, persuasion and moral conduct, this broad emphasis did not allow him to formulate precise, unambiguous criteria with which to delineate noble from base language in specific situations. In the context of managerialism, a more detailed exposition is possible, beginning with Popper's theory of language functions.

Karl Popper on Argumentation

Building on the work of Bühler, Popper proposes the doctrine of the four functions of language. He analyses the main purpose of language – communication – into the following: the *expressive* function – i.e., the communication serves to express the emotions and feelings of the speaker; the *signalling* or *release* function – i.e., the communication serves to stimulate or release certain reactions in the hearer; the *descriptive* function – i.e., the communication describes a certain state of affairs; and the *argumentative* function – i.e., the communication serves to present and compare arguments or explanations in connection with certain definite questions or problems.[4]

Argument is, for Popper, the basis of rationality and of critical thinking. As reasons offered by authoritative managers entail the probability that they will be exposed to alternative ones to support or resist proposed changes, argument is the vehicle for reasoned elaboration.

Popper's four language functions constitute a logical hierarchy since signalling entails expression and describing entails expression and signalling. An argument serves as an expression as it voices the stance of a person about a given matter. It is moreover a signal (or communication) because it aims to provoke a response in another. Insofar as argument is about someone or something, it is descriptive. Further, Popper argues that these functions of language correspond to human values because each of them takes one of two possible antithetical values: self-expression is

4 Popper (1972: 120 ff).

either concealing or revealing; signalling is either ineffective or effective; descriptions are either false of true; arguments are either invalid or valid.

Spillane added an *advisory* function to Popper's model. Indeed, people often resolve doubts about the truth of descriptions and the validity of arguments by an appeal to authoritative advice.[5] Insofar as authority entails advice, the advisory function crowns argumentation. Besides, since argument normally entails reasons to confirm, refute, or seek new descriptions, the advisory function requires argumentation: in providing authoritative advice, managers argue. Table 6.1 summarises the entire hierarchy.

Table 6.1: A hierarchy of language functions and values.

Level	Function	Noble Values	Base Values
5	Advisory	Authoritative	Authoritarian
4	Argumentative	Autonomy	Heteronomy
3	Descriptive	Truth	Falsity
2	Signalling	Efficiency	Inefficiency
1	Expressive	Revealing	Concealing

Expressing: The Language of Feelings

The expressive function is the lowest in the hierarchy because it is the most primitive language, one that is shared with animals. An expressive statement is the utterance of an inner state, such as emotions, feelings or moods. Expressive language is the least regulated by linguistic conventions because it includes yells and grunts which are revealing (sincere) or concealing (insincere) depending on their correspondence to the inner state of the speaker, even though listeners (whose presence is not required for expression to take place) cannot ascertain this status.

Managers who encourage and reinforce the expressive function are susceptible to Popper's criticism that fixation at this level means that the higher functions are devalued. By viewing language merely as an expression of feelings, they degrade descriptions and argument (reasoning). Popper has no time for such an approach. Considering language as mere expression amounts to neglecting the fact that through language people offer true and false descriptions and produce valid and invalid reasoning.

From Socrates onwards, argument has been generally accepted as an effective and cooperative method to stimulate critical thinking, draw out ideas and identify underlying presuppositions. Since the advent of postmodernism, however, the

5 Spillane (1987).

language of feelings has developed a positive connotation whereas argument has gained a negative connotation. By qualifying statements with 'I feel,' 'subjectively speaking,' 'it seems to me', 'in my opinion' and phrases of similar meaning, managers immunise themselves against criticism because one cannot argue about feelings. One can agree or disagree with expressive statements, but one cannot argue with them or point out errors of reasoning related thereto. Furthermore, when managers grant feelings unwarranted prominence, it is but a short step for them to become embroiled in issues of political correctness. This risk is compounded by the fact that statements about personal feelings are bound to upset the feelings of others because expressive statements cannot be judged to be true or confected. Managers are then forced into the impossible position of a referee who is called upon to make judgements about the status of statements without reference to truth or validity.

The subjective nature of expressive statements and the difficulty in deciding whether they are sincere or insincere acquire special relevance when such communications are employed in bargaining discussions. For instance, because there is no observable entity or force called 'psychological stress' managers and other parties have no choice but to rely on communications (spontaneous or collected by way of interviews and questionnaires) from employees to evaluate stressful work conditions. Moreover, while stressors typically originate in the external environment, they cannot be divorced from the concerned individuals' perception of them. While noise is stressful for most people (and is harmful at extreme levels), for some people it is a source of pleasant stimulation (the rhythm of a busy shopfloor; modern 'music'). Managers can therefore reject expressive statements, like stress reports, as resulting from employees' psychological maladaptation or incompetence rather than pertaining to work (or the workplace) itself. Similar comments apply to Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) and mental health claims.[6] In the absence of identifiable physical lesions, which are lacking in RSI and ruled out by definition in mental illness cases, such claims are vulnerable to out of hand dismissal by the party against which they are directed. More generally, when medical diagnoses cannot be based on physical (i.e., objective) signs, they are based on reported (i.e., subjective) symptoms. When they are expressed as statements of personal feeling ('I feel depressed', 'I feel stressed beyond belief', 'I have too much on my mind'), they cannot be said to be true or false. Although such utterances possibly have rhetorical value, they have no empirical value.

6 Spillane (2017).

Signalling: The Language of Efficiency

According to Popper, signalling or communicating takes place whenever an expressive communication in one person operates upon another as a signal that releases a response in the other person. Signalling is often voluntary but can also be involuntary. For example, the expression of fear tends to induce fear in other people. Not all communication is of the 'infectious' type, however, because while expressions of fear often encourage aggressors, symptoms of courage may tend to discourage them.

Since expression and signalling are necessarily present when the higher functions are operating, it is always possible to analyse linguistic exchanges in terms of the lower functions, i.e., as expressions of feelings or signals. Popper believes this approach to be disastrous. Indeed, when communication fixates at the level of signals (or stimuli), the higher functions of language are not activated, and thus cannot be analysed. Consequently, critical evaluation and reasoning cannot take place and psychological and social development become impossible. When speakers do not go beyond signalling, they are bound to view the problems they are trying to address in terms of 'poor communication', a universal (but superficial) pseudo-explanation which does not require speakers to engage in the higher and distinctively human aspects of linguistic interaction. Moreover, by failing to develop arguments, speakers are likely to address so-called 'communication problems' by way of orders: 'My way, or else.' Such a language, which seeks only obedience, does not achieve cooperation, and therefore does not belong to an integrative exchange, except insofar as it forms the basis of more sophisticated language: descriptive, argumentative and advisory functions.

Several studies have shown that managers attribute their problems with other people to 'poor communication'.[7] It is rarely clear which aspect of communication they blame, but by falling back on the convenient, catch-all explanation of 'poor communication,' managers fail to attend to the higher and distinctively human aspects of interaction. This neglect is encouraged by most human resource management textbooks which display their authors' obsession with problems of communication and little concern with argumentation.

Describing: The Language of Truth

Descriptive language conveys true or false statement about the world. Descriptions are required in management exchanges because parties need to agree about the nature of the issues they seek to address. Further, the quality of a management relationship is, to a large extent, characterised by the degree to which parties describe to each other the constraints under which they operate. Inevitably, disagreement about

7 Lansbury & Spillane (1983).

descriptions arises when parties misrepresent facts. While a divergence of descriptions strains management discussions, it also represents an opportunity to consolidate them provided that the parties agree on a method to resolve their differences. When carried out successfully, these remedial measures dissolve misunderstandings, clarify the issues at hand and build trust. Such exchanges require cooperation about relevant points and since cooperation (as opposed to manipulative managerialist control) cannot be achieved through lies, the bargaining parties' preference for truth or falsity determines whether the proceedings are integrative or adversarial.

In management discourse the issue of truth and falsity of descriptions is often difficult to settle. This difficulty arises in part from the metaphorical nature of human language generally and the language of management specifically. The ancient Greeks understood that metaphorical statements possess more suasory power than literal statements. As their intention is to control, managerialists use metaphors liberally. Hence, Gordian knots need to be cut and kites flown, while cards that are not kept close to one's chest are at risk of being shot down by negotiators playing hardball or taking the role of the Devil's advocate.

Notwithstanding their suasory effectiveness, metaphorical statements are figures of speech that are not literally true. They are, therefore, false. Consequently, when metaphors multiply, discussions become confused because speakers no longer mean what they say or say what they mean. Today, managers are interchangeably called captains, coaches, motivators, generals, mentors, educators, trainers and facilitators: contemplating such a multiplication of metaphors one is left wondering what management is, or is supposed to be, exactly.

The widespread presence of oxymorons, pleonasms, tautologies and metaphors in current management speech is typically the result of jargon-mongering, carelessness or illiteracy. From a linguistic perspective, these are elements of base language because their use creates ambiguity, confusion and unnecessary deviations from clear thinking. In terms of the hierarchy of language discussed here, when confronted with such ambiguity, managers and their colleagues either progress to argument or regress to signalling and expressive language. In the current postmodern era of 'post-truth', they are likely to regress. Ambiguous language and metaphorical statements have at least one merit, however: they point to the value and necessity of arguing about descriptions. Cross-critical evaluation of descriptions (the Socratic method) transforms acrimonious exchanges into more mature conversations in which speakers engage in constructive argument. At this stage of a discussion, the higher levels of the linguistic hierarchy come into play.

This linguistic move is crucial in the management relationship because the manager's personal preference for noble or base language determines the future nature of the relationship. Critical evaluations of descriptions transform exchanges with colleagues into a mature relationship in which speakers are prepared to engage in constructive argumentation or regress to more primitive language.

More generally, the truthfulness of descriptive statements are crucial dimensions of a communication that seeks to establish authority. Although managers sometimes

misrepresent reality to their listeners, they do not normally accept communications about specific situations unless they have empirical reference. In other words, there cannot be authority without a degree of empirical credibility, even if some listeners suspend disbelief longer than others do.

Arguing: The Language of Autonomy

Popper argues that if individuals are to develop psychologically, they need to pass from a dogmatic to a critical phase of thinking. This transition involves them in trial-and-error learning based on risk-taking (trials) and the willingness to modify principles and behaviour when they are found to be inappropriate (error elimination). For Popper, heteronomy is synonymous with dogmatism, autonomy with critical thinking. Insofar as the aim of workplace interactions is to achieve a relationship free of coercion, argument in its various forms acts as a bulwark against heteronomy. Arguing, therefore, is likely to minimise the likelihood that employees will perceive the relationship with their managers in terms of domination. Obviously, employees can use argument for base ends, i.e., to obfuscate facts and confuse colleagues. However, if argumentation is meant to help workers free themselves from coercion and control, then it is the preferred vehicle to promote autonomy.

Popper is adamant that argumentation is the basis for personal and social development. With the evolution of the argumentative function of language, criticism is the main instrument of growth. Managerialists, however, ignore or reject the argumentative function of language in their deliberations. This rejection typically takes two forms. Authoritarians reject argument in favour of orders which are, essentially, descriptions: 'Do this, or else.' More subtle managerialists fixate at the expressive level of the language hierarchy, encouraging others to express their feelings. Although venting pent-up emotions often has a cathartic effect, the workplace is inimical to psychotherapy. While therapists are paid by their clients to help them deal with personal difficulties or 'psychological' problems, managers are paid to ensure that their subordinates address professional or practical work-related problems. Besides, a neglect of the higher functions of language indirectly amounts to levelling speakers to the status of non-human animals.

Contrary to widespread postmodern belief, arguing is the language of cooperation because arguments enable people to expose justifications. Critical arguments clarify problems, expose misconceptions and reveal lies. They also unmask dogmatists and extremists and those people who try to present contentious situations as one-sided affairs. Furthermore, argument supports integrative management outcomes since it aims at enlarging the pool of value to be shared between parties. Since the critical assessment of recommendations and assumptions reveals the existence of a range of alternatives, parties who seek integrative outcomes will find in the critical review of propositions a common process from which new ideas can be generated and mutually beneficial solutions appraised.

Managers and their colleagues benefit from developing their argumentative skills. On the one hand, valid argument enables speakers to convince others of the strength of their case without having recourse to manipulation, misrepresentation or coercion. On the other hand, those individuals skilled in argumentation can see through attempts on the part of others to act in these ways. Unscrupulous managers who set the terms of debate, frame reality or confuse their counterparts by way of misleading statements, tangential or unrelated considerations and fallacious arguments find in argumentative colleagues, resolute opposition.

To argue at management meetings is to adopt a specific ethical position and to recommend it to others. As arguing rests on the implicit adoption of an ethical perspective, arguing validly is valued because it is the vehicle of reasoned elaboration and thus of authority. While such ethics are typically widely shared at work, they can never be assumed to apply to all individuals therein. Argumentative managers thus run the risk of being accused of manipulating their colleagues into adopting their values via the language of argument. Strength of argument is confused with intimidation and forcefulness in debates is identified with bullying. That is, even when such outcomes are unintentional, the language of argument can be confused with the language of power.

If might is not right, then right is not might. As such, argumentation enables managers to engage in reasoning with colleagues and challenge authoritarians who seek coercion and control. Argumentation enables speakers to evaluate and choose among the ways in which they interact with others. In this sense, argumentation is the basis for developing personal autonomy and encouraging it in others. Within organisations, arguing involves employees in the giving of reasons to support their recommendations. When managers eschew argumentation and give advice without reasons to support it, they rely on power rather than authority. In these cases, they are 'authoritarians' who obscure the nature of authority as reasoned elaboration.

Advising: The Language of Authority

Advising is the language of authority because asking for advice assumes that the adviser possesses authoritative knowledge or skills that the advice-seeker lacks. Authority is especially visible in cases where advice is accepted without decisive evidence or conclusive reason. So-called 'arguments from authority' achieve only so much, however, since recommendations normally require justification which implies that, in the linguistic hierarchy, the advisory function of language is above the argumentative function. Justification can be implicit or explicit, easily identified or in need of sustained research. For instance, the reason for workers wearing hardhats on construction sites does not require much, if any, explanation. The reason for workers wearing prescription glasses supplied with free corrective safety spectacles

does call for elaboration, which may (or may not) be effective. When advice is accepted authority has been established.

To managerialists and Marxist-leaning scholars who believe that discussions between managers and subordinates are best conducted as a power struggle, one will retort that the language of authority does not dissolve the conflict (if conflict there is) in the employment relationship. Rather, the view advanced here is that such a conflict is temporarily and partially subsumable under agreement about a specific policy or management decision. Such situations arise because, even in an adversarial outline, there are cases where policies and decisions are found reasonable (in the sense of rational, ethical, desirable and acceptable) by managers and employees alike.

The language of advice, which includes such words as 'should,' 'ought,' 'I strongly recommend' and other expressions of similar meaning is close to the language of power with which it is frequently confused. While it is apparent to most that the workplace does not permit coercion, some are nonetheless tempted to assert control via the language of the technical expert. Conversely, employees can be tempted to ask for advice to be relieved of their responsibilities. Confronted by such colleagues who persistently claim to 'need advice,' managers either revert to description to outline alternatives (i.e., sketch solutions to the practical problems with which their colleagues are grappling) or argue about their perceived 'need.' In either case, if they are noble speakers, they refrain from recommending any specific course of action. This restraint illustrates the noble role of the authority figure who avoids proscriptive communications, shares knowledge and appreciates the ethical dimension of the relationship.

Managerial authority arises from cooperative exchanges between real or alleged technical experts, that is, from the sharing of knowledge and justification. Authoritative managers shun coercion, share knowledge and justify their views. They recognise that to give advice is de facto to adopt an ethical position and to recommend it, if implicitly, to others, for it is a truism that human actions occur in a context of values. Managerialists as base speakers, on the other hand, hide their ethical perspective and use a language of power to manipulate their colleagues into adopting it without them realising that they are doing so.

Managers need to be knowledgeable in the matters upon which they seek to base their authority. Even when they are knowledgeable, however, their authority is vulnerable from two related directions. First, the psychological factors that make the working of authority possible (the assent of those to whom communication is directed) are logically prior to its establishment. Managers have, therefore, to deal with the tension between autonomy and dependency because for everyone who concedes authority, the choice between submitting to authority and preserving individual autonomy remains. Managers need to be sensitive to these tensions and that choice.

Second, as advising rests on the implicit adoption of an ethical standpoint with the expectation that others share or accept it, managers can be accused of manipu-

lating their followers into adopting their values via a language of authority. Even when manipulation is not their intention, managers' language of advice can be confused with the language of coercion. The possibility also exists that the values underpinning the manager's language become outdated within a changing moral context. Such misalignment sometimes happens with older managers whose colleagues no longer share the values embedded in the arguments of the 'old ones,' or when managers become victims of deliberate malicious gossiping meant to undermine their moral standing or the trust they previously secured from their colleagues. In such situations, managerial language loses its effectiveness and the authority of the speaker declines; power that used to be benign becomes coercive and compliance replaces cooperation.

Popper's philosophy of science is relevant to the study of managerialism because it challenges the widespread belief that decisions should be based on past successes which are accepted uncritically. As argued in a cleverly titled essay, 'Doing it Right Instead of Twice,' managers should learn from their mistakes but also, through critical argument, attempt to learn before making mistakes by seeking to eradicate errors of reasoning.[8] If managerialists persist with their unwillingness to argue with each other and rely on past successes, they participate in what Popper calls a flight from reason and intellectual responsibility.

It is worth pointing out, in passing, that Popper has been called a 'romantic rationalist' because he promotes an image of individuals imposing their hypotheses on the world and assessing the result.[9] Accordingly, Popper is 'romantic' in his insistence on the fight to be waged between competing theories, the role of risk-taking through the development of bold ideas and rigorous criticism, the willingness to engage in imaginative trials in the search for error, and the preparedness to learn from and eliminate errors.

While it is obvious to most people that truth is preferable to falsity, valid arguing to invalid arguing, authoritativeness to authoritarianism, and cooperation to coercion, such values are not universally or even widely accepted in workplaces (especially by managerialists). Indeed, belonging to the same organisation does not guarantee voluntary collaboration. In the name of effectiveness or personal power, some people engage in half-truths, gossips, lies, manipulation, or other duplicitous behaviour to advance personal agendas or vested interests. Misaligned interests of parties in business endeavours and the employment relationship are not new; they have long received the sustained attention of industrial sociologists.

Building on the work of philosopher and psychologist George Herbert Mead, Szasz contends that personal conduct is fundamentally rule-following, role-playing, strategic and meaningful.[10] In support of this analysis, Szasz advances a model of

8 Cowton & Zecha (2003); Loughlin (2004); Moss (2003); Shareef (2007); Thomas (2010).
9 Lieberson (1982).
10 Mead (1934); Szasz (2010).

human behaviour in which patterns of interpersonal relations are analysed as if they are games. As such, personal conduct is regulated to varying degrees by explicit and implicit rules. That is, games are often played within games. It is possible, for instance, to play a game (exhibiting bad behaviour) within a game (of tennis).

In honest games, players freely choose their moves which are thereby difficult to predict. Players enter games with the knowledge that they will encounter uncertainties and risks which they must master if they want to succeed. The fewer rules, the more open the range of possible moves and more uncertainty. Players who cannot tolerate uncertainty will be tempted to act dishonestly to gain some measure of control over other players and some will be tempted to lie and cheat. In the case of honest game playing, the aim is successful mastery of a task; in playing dishonestly, the aim is coercion and manipulation of the other players.

When playing the game of management, managers have two options. Although authoritarian and authoritative management can be equally effective in meeting organisational objectives (especially short-term ones), managers who seek authority speak noble language, a language that emphasises truth, sound reasoning and cooperation. They value knowledge and skills manifested in workmanship and performance. By contrast, authoritarian managers employ base language, a language conveying incomplete information, spurious reasoning and biased advising through which they try to control and manipulate their colleagues. One way they can achieve this is subtly to encourage inadequate task performance, as doing so places their colleagues in a position of inferiority and dependence, in turn highlighting their own performance and contribution to the organisation.

To the extent that the practice of management is a linguistic exercise, managers do not escape the general role of language and its effects on those to whom it is directed. Authoritarian managerialists use language to signal their intentions ambiguously, describe their situation incompletely or falsely, argue invalidly or not at all, and issue commands or threats. As base speakers they use language to increase their own power and to produce uncritical disciples. Opposing such practice, authoritative managers try to convince their colleagues of the validity of their reasoning, describe situations accurately, direct colleagues' attention to relevant matters, seek cooperation in solving problems and implementing solutions, look for remedial actions through arguments, offer relevant and credible recommendations and advise accordingly, while exposing their moral preconceptions. In short, managers reveal their personal values in their use of language.

Weeding the Managerialist Garden

Managerialism comes with its own obfuscating jargon.

> Managerialism, a name for various doctrines of business organizations, also comes with a language of its own, and to such unlikely places as politics and education. Managerialism

> came to the universities as the German army came to Poland. Now they talk about achieved learning outcomes, quality assurance mechanisms, and international benchmarking. They throw triple bottom line, customer satisfaction and world class around with the best of them.[11]

In *Social Sciences as Sorcery*, Andreski wondered why sociologists, whose writings are supposed to explain ourselves to ourselves, write in inexplicable prose. His hypothesis is that pretentious and pompous terms are often treated as evidence of the writer's profundity, whereas it is more likely to be indicative of a lack of originality. He argues that it is dismaying that not only do their writings reveal an excess of pompous bluff and a paucity of new ideas, but that even the valuable insights from illustrious ancestors are drowned in a torrent of meaningless verbiage. This obfuscation is also visible in the pretentious and nebulous rhetoric known as psychobabble which, according to Andreski, involves the interminable repetition of platitudes and disguised propaganda about psychological matters. One can only agree with Andreski 'going forward, proactively and mindfully.'

Sociologists and psychologists are not alone in the abuse and misuse of language. Managerialists happily participate in an orgy of linguistic manipulation and deceit. Managementese, or managerialist jargon, has been compared with Orwell's 'newspeak' as the language of authoritarian manipulation. It has inspired games, such as Wank Word Bingo, where brave managers count the number of weasel words in a meeting and call the speaker's bluff. A dangerous tactic, indeed, since people in positions of power do not like to be told that they are naked emperors, or that what they are saying is bullshit.

Tapping into the current *Zeitgeist*, Frankfurt penned a short essay, *On Bullshit,* in which he argues that the contemporary proliferation of bullshit developed out of the postmodern lunacy which denies facts and truth. Postmodernists are rarely bothered by rational folk who point out that when they say 'there are no facts and truths', they are stating that it is a fact that there are no facts, and it is true that there are no truths. Some postmodernists will admit the contradiction and fall back to their feelings. 'I feel that there are no facts and truths' is a proposition that is neither true nor false and is, therefore, immune to criticism, which is, of course, the postmodernists' strategy.

Bullshitters, notably postmodernists and the Twitterati, prefer expressive language to argumentative language and avoid rational debate since they reject the possibility of knowing how things truly are. By ignoring truth, they differ from liars because it is impossible for people to lie unless they think they know the truth. People who lie react to the truth. Bullshitters, according to Frankfurt, are neither on the side of truth nor on the side of falsity. They do not care whether their statements describe reality correctly; they merely make things up to suit their purpose.

11 Grey (1996: 593).

As thinking is speaking to oneself and to others, it is tempting to conclude that something has gone seriously wrong with managerialists' thinking. The alternative is that managerialists, as reasonably intelligent people, are base speakers. As rhetoric is judged by its ability to persuade, there is little evidence that managerialist rhetoric is effective. Rather, it is the cause of much hilarity on the one side and anger on the other. To be required to use managerialist jargon in job interviews or management meetings is, for some, merely an amusing game. For others, it gives rise to frustration and anger because it convinces them that their superiors are indeed naked emperors. The same arguments can be applied to the management literature and to management educators. When confronted by the tortured syntax, pleonasms, oxymorons, tautologies and dubious metaphors of management writers, one wonders whether their thinking is seriously deficient or whether they are merely participating in a cynical game of rhetorical obfuscation.[12]

The necessity of argumentation is revealed by the proliferation of pleonasms and tautologies in the descriptive language of management. Pleonasms are two-word phrases which contain a redundancy, such as 'kindly compassion', 'reverting back', 'future potential'. Pleonasms are necessarily true since they can be translated as trivial hypotheticals: 'If a product has potential, it has a future'. For example, 'strategic management' is pleonastic since 'strategic' means goal-directed, and managing is impossible without goal-direction. The same applies to 'strategic marketing management', 'strategic human resource management', and so on. The addition of the word 'strategic' presumably has strategic value in the race for managerial power, but it remains an element of pretentious rhetoric.

Tautologies are extended pleonasms expressed in subject-predicate form. As such, they are propositions which are necessarily true by virtue of the meaning of words. For example, 'Charismatics have special personal qualities' is necessarily true according to the definition of 'charismatic'. Its negation, 'Some charismatics do not have special personal qualities' is self-contradictory. Tautologies are redundant, verbal truths and provide no information about the material world of facts. For example, 'Managers are paid professionals' is necessarily true. As 'professional' entails 'paid' the latter term is redundant. That is, if managers are professionals, they are paid. It should be noted that this proposition is true even if managers are not professionals.

Readers may wonder why it is important to recognise tautologies. Bearing in mind that they convey no information about the material world, tautologies have only tautological consequences. In other words, it is impossible to deduce an empirical proposition from a tautological one. It would be possible, therefore, to write a book on management which includes only tautologies. While every proposition contained therein would be (trivially) true, the book would tell readers nothing about the facts of management, or of anything else, except the meaning of words.

12 Micklethwait & Wooldridge (1996); Rosen (1977); Watson (2004); Watson (2006).

Managerialists and their teachers readily embrace tautologies. They say or write such trivial sentences as, 'Improving staff morale is an on-going process', 'An astute manager makes shrewd decisions', 'Effective managers may eventually become leaders', 'Only organisations that are adapted to their environment survive.'

Empirical propositions are matters of fact based on experience. They are, therefore, not true by definition and when true they are contingently true: they could be false. Consequently, their negation does not lead to self-contradiction, 'All managers are aggressive' is an empirical proposition because it is either true or false and its negation is not self-contradictory. Empirical propositions describe the material world and experience is their guarantee of truth and falsity. For example, 'Management author, Peter Drucker, wrote novels', is an empirical proposition which happens to be true. 'Alfred Sloan was Chairman of General Motors between 1960 and 1980' is an empirical proposition which is false. It is widely assumed that management books are based mainly on empirical propositions. Unfortunately, this assumption is not warranted.

Nonsensical propositions are neither tautological nor empirical. Propositions of value, such as, 'Managers should be virtuous' are nonsensical since they are expressions of personal feelings about a particular issue. A distinction needs to be made therefore between statements of fact and statements of value. Managerialists move easily but incorrectly from statements about human behaviour to value judgements, i. e., from 'is' to 'ought'. Logically, however, one cannot deduce 'ought' from 'is'. From the factual statement, 'Females are under-represented on boards of directors', it does not follow logically that there *should* be more females on boards. There may be (or again there may not be) good reasons for appointing females to boards but relying on value judgements (or nonsensical propositions) is not one of them.

The managerialist literature is dominated by nonsensical propositions, such as 'Effective managers have outstanding flashes of vision', 'My manager has lower moral standards than I', 'Jack Welch was the best CEO General Electric had', 'Everything is relative', 'This organisation believes in excellence', 'My manager's mind is filled with facts', 'All sentences are metaphors'.

The current authors provided elsewhere examples of pretentious managerialist rhetoric.[13] One of them is Bolman and Deal's popular book, *Reframing Organisations*, which alerts readers to linguistic dangers from its cover on. 'Organisation' is an abstract noun and cannot therefore be framed, let alone reframed. If by framing, Bolman and Deal mean applying a perspective or theory to the study of organisations, their attempt to argue a case for the role of different perspectives and the ways in which they lead to diverse consequences is a candidate for critical evaluation. However, from the first page, readers are thrown into a world of tautologies and nonsensical gibberish.

13 Joullie & Spillane (2021).

> If an organization is overmanaged but underled, it eventually loses any sense of spirit or purpose. A poorly managed organization with a strong, charismatic leader may soar briefly only to crash shortly thereafter. Malpractice can be as damaging and unethical for managers and leaders as for physicians. Myopic managers or overzealous leaders usually harm more than just themselves.[14]

This passage should not be allowed to go without comment. First, Bolman and Deal introduce in their first sentence notions of management and leadership as if the distinction is clear to readers and the latter term unproblematic. Yet, they never make clear what they mean by 'overmanaged' and 'underled'. Do they mean that there are too many managers? Or do they mean that managers are micromanaging? Do they mean that there are few leaders (which Weber would say is a good thing)? Or do they mean that the so-called leaders among the managers are not, in fact, leading? If the latter, then they have somehow reverted to the status of mere managers.

Second, what is meant by a sense of spirit or purpose'? Assuming that 'spirit' does not refer to alcohol, to what does it refer? As a metaphor, it is probably taken from the sporting notion of 'team spirit' which is invoked when a team wins. That is, the team has spirit because it won, and it won because of its team spirit. Circular arguments of this type bedevil management textbooks. Furthermore, abstract nouns, like 'organisation', cannot have purposes: people do.

Third, it is obvious that anything can happen eventually (if it has not happened yet, it will happen, eventually, and that will be when it happens). The use of 'eventually' turns the sentence into a trivial tautology and conveys no empirical information about managers and leaders. Since *Reframing Organizations* was written for managers and management students, it is therefore surprising to find Bolman and Deal implying that banks, insurance companies or government departments have in their ranks 'strong, charismatic leaders.' Two pleonasms are at play here: charismatics are strong, and they are, by definition, leaders. To talk of a weak charismatic or a charismatic who is not a leader is self-contradictory. It would have been sufficient to write only of charismatics, but then one wonders whether Bolman and Deal truly believe that a typical workplace has charismatics roaming the corridors of power.

Fourth, any organisation may (or may not) soar, crash or turn itself into a flying saucepan. Any sentence with the verbal auxiliary 'may' is, by definition, necessarily true since it also implies the opposite of what it states. The liberal use of 'may' (or 'can') has become *the* bane of the management literature, including the most prestigious management journals whose editors appear to be oblivious to the pointless of its use.

14 Bolman & Deal (2003: xvi).

Fifth, malpractice is damaging, by definition, and myopic managers need spectacles rather than admonishment. And overzealous leaders, if they are to be found, might quibble about the inevitability of self-harm.

Sixth, when Bolman and Deal invoke oxymoronic expressions like 'objective perspective' or 'organised confusion', catch-all phrases like 'positive attitude' or empirically unverifiable value judgements and expressions of feelings, phrases like 'flashes of vision' (which do not refer to retinal disturbance), their use of metaphor threatens to move beyond the boundaries of reasonable rhetoric and descends into what Australian poet A. D. Hope called 'pretentious, illiterate verbal sludge'. Or as Wittgenstein liked to say, Bolman and Deal's language has gone on holiday.

In an analysis of the language used by management authors of the implications for practice of 198 articles published in 2015 in four prestigious management journals, Joullié and Gould found that among the propositions analysed 59% are tautological, 15% are empirical and 26% are nonsensical. 'In summary, although resorting to state-of-the-art statistical or semantic analysis, approximately seven eighth (87.4%) of contributions published in 2015 in the four [prestigious] journals retained for this study either fail to propose at least one explicit practical implication or, when they do, formulate it in a way that makes it either [tautological] or nonsensical, in either case empirically irrelevant.'[15]

Joullié and Gould note an obsessive use of the verb 'suggest' which appears in nearly 22% of the 225 propositions extracted from the articles and is found in such sentences as 'Our results suggest that...' Its frequent use by management authors concerning their research introduces subjectivity in the interpretation of data which allows for the possibility that other researchers, reviewing the same results, might interpret them differently. This is a familiar strategy which is used to protect authors from criticism. It also enables them to avoid charges of dogmatism or selective interpretation.

Joullié and Gould also found that authors overuse tautologies involving the modals 'may' or 'might', as in 'Results show that rewarding helping may be beneficial when an organisation is young.' More than 38% of all statements analysed offer advice to managers using similar wording together with use of the modal 'can' ('could', 'enable', 'help', 'allow'). Propositions like 'employees who realise their aspirations can experience a sense of fit' are trivially true and represents nearly 25% of statements analysed. Other useless formulations include sentences which mention 'potential advantages' since any management practice has a 'potential advantage' since 'potential' refers to an unspecified point in the future.

Joullié and Gould also note the tendency to reify such abstract nouns as 'companies', 'firms', and 'cultures'. The result is an anthropomorphising of abstractions and the unwarranted inference that they 'act'. Nearly 50% of the 25 empirical propositions identified in their study share this feature. The authors of journal articles

15 Joullie & Gould (in-press).

write of 'companies' and 'organisations' as if these abstractions had an autonomous existence apart from the human beings who comprise them. Authors frequently talk or 'organisational purposes' or 'the management team believes ...', or 'my company expects'. Accounting for this misuse of language, which turns an empirical proposition into a nonsensical one, the 25 empirical propositions are reduced to 5.8% of 225 analysed.

The same authors point out that reifications are pervasive in the management literature. The reason for such ubiquitous presence is intuitive: reifications point to derivative phenomena to be analysed by examining the aggregate activities of individuals. The fact remains, however, that a judicious weeding of the managerialist garden results in the dismissal of much of the corpus of organisational and management scholarship which claims to be 'scientific'. It behoves, therefore, to researchers who claim to be operating within a scientific framework to clarify their use of abstractions and discuss the entities which give rise to them. Without such clarification, most organisational research is trivial.

Joullié and Gould conclude that managers are justified in being sceptical about the research published in academic journals and the practical implications which flow therefrom. That fewer than 6% of so-called 'implications for practice' are empirical raises the question of why managers and their teachers want to read these articles. And management books are no better, dominated as they are by tautologies and nonsensical propositions.

Stove concludes his book, *The Plato Cult*, with a chapter entitled 'What is Wrong with Our Thoughts?' He provides examples of the ways in which human thinking has gone wrong, not in some superficial way, but in some way which is beyond the possibility of cure. An example of a writer of gibberish is Foucault and Stove wants to know what is wrong with his thinking. Most of Foucault's passages are simply nonsensical but that does not mean they are meaningless since he has profoundly influenced the intelligentsia in most of the Western world.

It is tempting to say, after Frankfurt, that Foucault's books are mostly composed of 'bullshit'. But this conclusion is not helpful because what is wrong with Foucault's thinking is different from what is wrong with, say, Bolman and Deal's thinking.

It is to their credit that the logical positivists attempted to answer Stove's question by means of Hume's Fork, or what is known professionally as the analytic-synthetic distinction. That is, the logical positivists acknowledged three ways in which thinking can go wrong: contingent falsity, self-contradiction and meaninglessness. But they refused to accept that nonsensical propositions are meaningful for many people. Had they, or their followers, been more explicit, they might have said that although nonsensical propositions are not truth-bearing and thus not *scientifically* meaningful, they are nonetheless meaningful (albeit in a different sense) for many, indeed for most people. But this admission would have diverted them from their overarching project, which was to secure language on a scientific footing.

As Western universities embraced diverse forms of irrationality, generally imported from France by way of Foucault and his ilk, even the notions of contingent

falsity and self-contradiction lost their power. As noted, postmodernists declared war on facts, objectivity, rationality and truth and are not bothered with issues of contingent, or even necessary, falsity. Similarly, authoritarians can seriously entertain contradictory ideas without realising they are doing so, or not caring in any case.

It is generally accepted that logical positivism as a philosophical movement has run its course. However, without their restraint on the proliferation of gibberish, the field is open to writers, like Foucault, who push language to and beyond the pale. A return to the glory days of logical positivism is unlikely since it consigned to the dustbin statements that are illogical or unempirical, yet meaningful for large numbers of people. As such, because people will give their lives for abstractions or believe in everything from gods and ghosts to communism and spiritual intelligence, it is almost impossible to avoid the conclusion that scientific facts are no panacea for psychological problems. Spillane and Martin note:

> On the larger canvas not the physical sciences, nor scientific training, nor the manipulations of counsellors can reach the jungle of invalidated beliefs for which humans seem so bent on sacrificing themselves, their families and species. Given the history of humankind, it is difficult to maintain that sanity is the norm. Far from it. The truth is that sanity is some extremely rare state (perhaps only notional) that we might not recognise if we were to encounter it. Human reasoning is obviously flawed [...] For any kind of nonsense believers can be found.[16]

Like Spillane and Martin, Stove concludes that from a positivist point of view most human beings are mad since they have lunatic beliefs to which they attach great importance. Though mostly sane in everyday activities, when they attempt any depth of thought, they go mad almost infallibly, and fall into the worship of some dangerous lunatic.

Insofar as logical positivism survives in the management literature, scholars are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, they are tempted, like any logical positivist, to weed the management garden of noxious language and allow true statements and valid reasoning to flourish. On the other hand, they find themselves restricted to empirical statements and definitions which narrow their horizon dramatically and demands of them scientific rigour in a field which does not lend itself to experiments and the development of law-like propositions.

As for managerialists, they cannot be expected so to restrict their language as to become impotent. Managerialism is an ideology as well as a practice, and an ideology is based on the use of a non-scientific language in the service of power. It is unsurprising, then, that managerialists favour the use of self-serving jargon and are relatively unconcerned about matters of truth, unless it is to their advantage to define and use it pragmatically to their own ends.

From a research perspective, Stove argues that it is still possible to carry out a neo-positivist project in particular cases. Although an answer to the general ques-

16 Spillane & Martin (2005: 249).

tion, 'What is wrong with human thinking?' is elusive, an answer to the question, 'What is wrong with Bolman and Deal's thinking in a particular paragraph?' admits of a helpful answer.

The conceptual distinctions defended in this chapter open a fertile educational agenda. Language as the object of analysis provides explicit data that are empirically verifiable and thus actionable. By studying the way managers speak, one can assess the degree to which they use active or passive voice, expressive or descriptive language, first-person singular versus first-person plural pronouns and conditional tense conjugations or present-tense verb conjugations. Similarly, there are ways to qualify language as authoritarian (base) or authoritative (noble). The former entails dogma, deception and manipulation, the latter flexibility, true descriptions, sound reasoning and justified advising. Recommendations are therefore available to those who want to be seen not as mere incumbents with the power to enforce obedience, but as authoritative managers.

As it emerges from the work of Friedrich and Popper, authoritative management requires valid reasoning and critical argument. Such initial commitments culminate in authoritative advice. This conclusion holds to the extent that there is a general preference for truth over falsity, rationality over irrationality, authoritative advice over authoritarian commands, and cooperation over coercion. In the age of postmodern managerialism, based on forceful implementation of managerial techniques, elimination of middle managers and silencing of technical expertise, such preferences cannot be taken for granted. It is, however, through the revival of these preferences that the tide of managerialism can be reversed. If managers decided to wage war against pretentious, obfuscating language, they will follow the advice of Hume and commit to the flames books which are dominated by tautologies and nonsensical language. Such an act would help to rid management of the sophistry and illusion that dominates it in the age of managerialism.

Chapter 7:
The Misuse of Psychology

In management, there are two competing approaches to psychology and its role in the workplace. The first, popular approach asserts that psychology should be studied by managers to enable them better to motivate and control employees. Psychology is thus regarded as a tool to be used by managers to maximise employee performance. The second approach, promoted by Drucker, argues that the main purpose of psychology is to enable individuals to gain insight into and mastery of themselves. Drucker criticised managers for engaging in the former, a sort of psychological manipulation which plays on individual anxieties and personal needs. Using psychology to control others, he argues, is self-destructive abuse of knowledge. It is also a particularly repugnant form of tyranny.

There are echoes here of Follett who insisted that 'personality studies', which were gaining momentum in her lifetime, ignore the law of the situation because they focus management's attention on the psychology of employees and away from actual circumstances. While cooperative work relationships rest on mutual respect and truth sharing, managers who inquire into their subordinates' psychological profiles disregard this ideal and compromise management by performance. Claiming that they are acting unselfishly in the best interests of their colleagues, such managers-turned-psychologists replace the task of doing their job competently (and helping their colleagues to do the same) with the task of doing their job 'compassionately.' While it is possible that some people at work require psychological advice, managers have neither the expertise nor the mandate to provide it. The relationships between psychotherapist and client and manager and subordinate are mutually exclusive and their goals diametrically opposed. While the integrity of psychotherapists is subordination to the client's welfare, the integrity of managers is subordination to the requirements of the organisational task. In this sense, managers who believe otherwise and act on the perceived psychological needs of their subordinates rather than the objective needs of the task engage in base rhetoric (in the sense advanced in Chapter 6) and destroy the integrity of the management relationship. As Drucker saw, even compared with old-style autocratic management, management as psychotherapy is a form of psychological despotism and a gross misuse of psychology.

In psychotherapy, therapists try to make explicit the implicit rules by which clients conduct themselves in everyday living. At work, managers try to clarify the explicit rules by which they and their colleagues are expected to conduct themselves, the roles they are supposed to embody and the goals they are to meet. Inevitably, managers face behaviour that deviates from the rules and roles of their organisation. While authoritarian managers turn to psychological testing in the hope of controlling their colleagues, their authoritative counterparts eschew psychological testing in management in favour of open discussion.

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Drucker maintained a sceptical attitude towards the human relations movement (c1930 – c1950) with its emphasis on motivation, friendly supervision and people orientation. Having flirted with psychologists, managerialists of the current HRM era now readily embrace them. Psychologists returned the favour and set their sights on the old guard, notably Drucker, who was roundly criticised by psychologists, including Maslow, for failing to appreciate and account for individual differences, especially personal needs. After all, Drucker had argued that there is only one style of management: to make strength productive and weakness irrelevant. While accepting the fact of different personalities and motives, management should be based on objective tasks. Maslow disagreed and thought there should be different management styles for different people. In *Management*, Drucker responded and criticised industrial psychologists for their simplistic accounts of workplace behaviour and their habit of pretending that descriptions of everyday behaviour are universal theories of human nature.

The personality and motivational psychologists who have impressed managerialists treat persons as objects (as opposed to subjects) for investigation which it is their task to discover, describe and manipulate. The thesis that people have personalities has been taken so far as to assume that work organisations are simply expressions of the sum of the inward nature of those who work in them. Personality psychologists, or personologists, believe that human beings 'have' personalities. Personality, in its earliest English sense, was the quality not of a thing but a person: the sum of one's qualities as manifested in behaviour generally. This meaning is not that used in present-day psychology where it is treated as a possession. Psychologists have transformed personality from a general to a specific human quality, a move which allows them to talk of 'split personality', 'personality disorder' or 'lack of a personality'. This transformation leads inexorably to the belief that personality can be dissected, measured, interpreted, modified and treated.

The trend in scientific psychological circles has been away from the idea that the concept of personality is fully explicative of human relationships. The possibility that there may be no such independent entity called personality has not deterred managerialists and management consultants for whom personality and motivational traits are central concepts. This conviction began with Freud.

Psychoanalysis

Freud's general theory is based on the principle of *unconscious psychological determinism*. The relative importance and strength of the various drives that determine adult behaviour have been shaped by the experiences, especially sexual, in infancy and childhood. Behaviour is caused by internal mental events which represent an internalisation of conflicts between person and environment, past and present.

Freud's second major assumption is that humans are dynamic beings constantly pursuing goals. Failing to achieve a goal produces tension which increases psycho-

logical energy to the point where it seeks some form of egress. While people derive pleasure from the release of tension, they also confront a social reality which actively discourages excessive gratification. The conflict between the pleasure drive (represented in the psyche by id), the demands of reality (represented by ego), the demands of morality (represented by superego) and the dictates of society, creates further tension, especially in childhood.

Freud used the term 'defence' to refer to the processes by which people unconsciously defend themselves against dangerous thoughts, feelings and impulses by transforming them into desirable ones. So, whenever anxiety is aroused the response of ego is to defend, primarily by repression of the offending material. The ability of the unconscious part of ego to channel the unacceptable impulses of id demands the existence of a censor or unconscious judge. Freud was unable to explain how this oxymoronic expression does its job since its operation requires that the censor is itself subject to unconscious judgemental forces.

Thus, the primary defence mechanism is repression, but this is only one of several mechanisms that include reaction formation (opposite impulses adopted), sublimation (dangerous impulses channelled to acceptable behaviour), projection (dangerous impulses attributed to others), identification (similar impulses of others adopted), displacement (dangerous impulses redirected), regression (to earlier life periods), denial (unconscious forgetting) and rationalisation (sour grapes). These defence mechanisms underpin Freud's system and give it an air of credibility because they are paralleled by patterns of behaviour familiar from our own experiences and recognisable in the behaviour of others. At the same time, defence mechanisms are said to be the result of unconscious processes, and it is this claim that makes them different from their recognisable parallels. Unconscious repression, for example, is paralleled by conscious suppression, which is a process of eliminating anxiety, but the two are not the same. Unconscious projection is paralleled by telling a lie to or about another person, unconscious reaction formation is paralleled by conscious hypocrisy, diplomacy or sportsmanship, and so on, through all the defence mechanisms.

The third principle of psychoanalysis concerns Freud's insistence that adult behaviour reflects, in modified form, childhood experiences. The first six years of life are crucial in the development of a relatively fixed personality, because the child's three classes of drives (self-preservative, sexual and aggressive) need to be harmonised with each other and with the tangible and moral demands of society represented by parents, teachers, siblings and others. In Freudian terms, the healthy personality is one which has successfully overcome the traumatic problems of childhood to achieve an effective balance between social demands, id impulses, ego and superego.

Freudian theory stands or falls on the question of unconscious motivation. Freud attributed behaviour to unconscious motives and refused to accept either free will or the fact that people act on premises which appear to be unconscious but are merely taken for granted. Much is learned in childhood that remains unquestioned.

However, Freud ascribed abnormal behaviour to unconscious motives and rejected the view that inappropriate behaviour is the result of operating on faulty premises waiting to be corrected by valid reasoning. This possibility attributes to human beings far more rationality than Freud is prepared to concede.

According to Freud, individuals are neither free nor responsible for their actions. Although he does assume that the arrival of repressed material in consciousness is a goal of therapy, he insists that when such material is surrendered to consciousness it is anti-social, otherwise it would not have been repressed in the first place. The aim of psychoanalysis, therefore, is to neutralise the offending material. Yet, such neutralisation is an impossible task given Freud's assumption that human beings are systems of forces and hydraulic-like mechanisms that produce predictable behaviour. This assumption is incompatible with that of an unconscious judge that 'chooses' to repress dangerous material or allow less serious material into consciousness. To appreciate this incompatibility is to destroy the coherence of the entire system.

In the UK during the heyday of psychoanalysis – the 1950s and 1960s – Freud's ideas were adopted and modified by members of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. When Tavistock consultants begin a relationship with a management client, they assume that the practical problems presented to them for analysis are merely surface problems since the 'real' psychological problems are unconscious. What appears on the surface as a simple management problem is treated as the manifestation of underlying deep-seated emotional conflicts which, when brought to the surface, distress the concerned managers. The consultant is obliged, therefore, to 'interpret' the observable (surface) behaviour to elicit its 'unconscious message'. Lest readers think this reading of the Tavistockian approach is an exaggeration, Miller makes it clear that just like the psychoanalyst armed with coach, pad and pen interprets surface behaviour, so the psychoanalytic management consultant interprets managers' communications to identify the real problems.[1] After having their view of the substance of their problems so invalidated, managers face a variety of bewildering 'interpretations'. Indeed, when they are tempted to fall back on apparently rational motives to support their actions, psychoanalytic consultants argue that management rationality is a myth which needs to be examined in the light of what they (the psychoanalysts) claim to know about the role of the unconscious in human behaviour. Managerial decision-making is thereby assessed as the product of deep-seated unconscious motives which it is the task of consultants to explore. This unearthing is referred to as consciousness-raising: bringing under conscious control material that was previously unconscious.

The members of the Tavistock Institute assume that the consultant-client relationship is dominated by the transference principle. This principle means that clients re-enact feelings experienced in earlier stages of life and project undesirable aspects

1 Miller (1977: 43).

of themselves to others, and frequently to consultants. Tavistock consultants therefore need to be emotionally resilient (to use a currently fashionable term) when dealing with the surface problems and latent problems directed at them by difficult, and often truculent or egomaniacal clients. Rice (a Tavistock consultant) explains that when he becomes anxious, embarrassed or hurt, he copes by asking himself why he has these feelings and attempts to sort out what comes from within himself and what comes from the consultant-client relationship. By stating how he is feeling he believes he can provide a framework in which his clients can release for discussion information that would otherwise be unavailable. 'If the data are essential for making adequate decisions, their release, however painful and embarrassing at the time, can be reassuring.'[2]

One is compelled to assume that Tavistock consultants have undergone a lengthy period of psychoanalytic therapy without which they would be unable to do the 'sorting'. Moreover, it would be unsurprising to find that some clients conclude that the consultants are multiplying problems rather than solving them. Indeed, by engaging the unconsciously motivated consultant in an unconsciously motivated game of interpretation, only part of which is recognised and even less understood, it is a miracle that the original problem is not lost in the shuffle of metaphors.[3] Whatever the case, it must come as a surprise to managers to be told that their practical problems are unconsciously motivated psychological problems which need to be interpreted by psychoanalysts. Clients are thereby sentenced to the status of naïve evaluators of human behaviour who need the skills of those who have been psychoanalysed. Indeed, the Tavistock group see this dependency relationship as inevitable, at least during the life of the client-consultant relationship.

In general terms, a dependency relationship is a relationship of authority. Such dependence develops naturally and unavoidably between client and consultant since clients hire consultants to help them solve practical problems at the workplace. Dependency, for psychoanalysts, has a different meaning because they start from the assumption that their clients have unresolved anxieties. Accordingly, clients who seek psychoanalytic assistance will, through regression, seek refuge in a dependency relationship. When such regression happens, psychoanalysts conclude that the real basis of the problem for which assistance is required is an unconscious psychological problem rather than a conscious practical problem. In this way, managerial problems are re-defined as psychological problems which necessitate the services of psychoanalysts. If clients argue against such re-definitions of their problems, they are likely to be accused of unconscious psychological resistance, thus confirming the analysts' original hypotheses.

Psychoanalysis has been used in the field of executive coaching and leadership development programmes. Some INSEAD academics use a psychoanalytic 'clinical

2 Rice (1963: 6–7).

3 Lansbury & Spillane (1983: 33).

paradigm' based on four premises: all human behaviour can be rationally explained; the unconscious mind plays a major role in determining human actions, thoughts, fantasies, hopes and fears; human emotions contribute to identity and behaviour; human development is an interpersonal and intrapersonal process.[4] The assumption about the unconscious mind is the untestable psychoanalytic proposition that the mind robs managers of freedom and responsibility for their actions. Such a proposition qualifies as base rhetoric because it seeks to persuade managers that they are victims of their unconscious mental processes, whatever these are.

The INSEAD authors acknowledge a 1995 article by the man to whom their book is dedicated: 'Abraham Zaleznick who showed the way.' A professor at the Harvard Business School for more than 40 years, Zaleznick was, in 1971, certified by the American Psychoanalytic Association to practice psychoanalysis and in later years extended his clinical practice to assisting managers with issues of organisational conflict and succession planning. He was, with Levinson, one of the founders of the movement which sought to apply psychoanalysis to organisational and management studies.

Zaleznick begins his article with a warning: 'I argue that, unlike clinical psychoanalysis, more harm than good occurs when consultants attempt to interpret unconscious material to clients in organizations.'[5] The harm that comes from interpreting unconscious conflicts and motives outside the very controlled psychoanalytic situation is, for him, twofold: first, these interpretations engender new defensive behaviour; and second, the subjects of these interpretations will not understand the consultant's' language and consequently will become emotionally confused. The result is a diminished capacity of the management client to function effectively, which has serious consequences, notably for its employees and customers.

In his widely quoted article, Zaleznick discusses critically the activities of the Tavistock group. He is concerned that when consultants convene a group and then withdraw (hence creating a leaderless group) regression follows and anxiety levels rise rapidly, activating defences. Given the inevitability of such problems, Zaleznick favours the use of psychoanalytic ego psychology when working with managers. He believes that ego psychology adds to the practice of consultation the ability to evaluate situations by understanding the forces at work and explaining the relationship between these forces and the presenting problems. But how does a psychoanalytic consultant move from observation and explanation to action, given Zaleznick's argument that acting on the interpretation of unconscious material is ineffective, if not harmful? Zaleznick's salutary conclusion is that psychoanalytic consultants do not know what unconscious forces are at work in complex organisational relationships. Intuitions and guesses are insufficient and unjustifiable in professional relationships. Even if consultants claim to know details of unconscious processes and

4 Kets De Vries & Korotov (2007).

5 Zaleznick (2007: 321–322).

their situational effects, communicating this knowledge runs the risk of triggering regressive and other defences. Finally, clients will come to enhance their power at the expense of their colleagues'.

Most of Freud's followers found it difficult to accept all his ideas, especially his theory of unconscious psychic determinism and his emphasis on childhood sexuality. One was Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, who criticised Freud's obsession with sex, in which there is a certain irony since Jung's libido was considerably stronger than Freud's. Parting from Freud, Jung concluded that psychoanalysis was a religion and psychotherapy was a new name for the cure of souls. He then proceeded to form his own religion and cure his own souls.

The personal unconscious, for Jung, contains only a small proportion of the total amount of unconscious material because it is in the collective unconscious that beliefs and myths of race are contained. He goes so far as to assert that the whole of mythology can be taken as a projection of the collective unconscious. At the deepest level of the collective unconscious lie the universal unconscious elements common to all humanity. While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious, but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness and therefore have never been individually acquired. Rather, they owe their existence exclusively to heredity.

Whereas the personal unconscious consists of complexes, the collective unconscious consists of archetypes: mythological images not unlike Platonic ideas which direct attention from the particular to the general. Behind a physical mother, for instance, lies an archetypal mother, behind an individual mind lies a group mind. The most powerful ideas in history go back to the archetypes. While this assumption of Jung's is acceptable for religious ideas, he meant to include the central concepts of science, philosophy, ethics and aesthetics. Archetypes are spiritual images and include child/God (Christ), mother (Mary), magician (Yahweh), hero (Siegfried), demon (Satan) and shadow (underground). Jung was convinced that the deposit of humankind's ancestral history of father, mother, child, husband and wife has exalted these archetypes into the supreme regulating principles of religious and political life.

Jung called persona the part of the personality that is available for public inspection. One persona may be extraverted, the other introverted, and within these categories people are seen as thinkers, intuiters, feelers or sensualists. In every person either extraversion or introversion dominates at the conscious level of existence, but the reverse is the case at the unconscious level. For example, the person who is a thinking extravert is unconsciously an emotional introvert. Corresponding to the persona, but more primitive, is the anima or animus which in a male is feminine and in a female masculine. A very masculine person is unconsciously strongly feminine, the courageous man is unconsciously cowardly, and so on.

Jung believed that males repress their feminine traits (weakness, softness) and because this repression leads to an increase in libido tension, males project these

traits onto females, especially to a female partner. The opposite is the case for females. Jung, however, upset feminists and bewildered many others by claiming that the anima produces 'moods' in males, and the animus produces 'opinions' in females.

In the 1970s, Jung eclipsed Freud in the popularity stakes. His blend of psychoanalysis, Eastern mysticism, mythology and spiritualism appealed to those who found Freud's pseudo-scientific psychology too austere. Indeed, Jung makes Freud look like a scientist. In *The Jung Cult*, Noll notes that following the wide dissemination of Jung's writings in English translation by the 1960s, Jung's obvious fascination with mythology, parapsychology, the I Ching, astrology, alchemy and mystical experiences made him a source of inspiration for the emerging neo-pagan religious movements in Europe and North America. His mystical ideas are the basis of a personal religion for thousands of people who are inspired by and united in a common belief in a collective unconscious which is supposed to manifest itself through the individual psyche and has redeeming powers.

Jung survives in management today, indirectly through the cult of personality testing and directly through a popular personality test. After reading about a personality test in a 1942 *Reader's Digest*, Myers and Briggs decided to develop a test to make people nicer. Inspired by a misreading of Jung's psychology, they developed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which has become one of the most widely used personality test in the world. The MBTI measures the extent to which individuals prefer specific behaviours and cognitive sets. Its four 'preference' scales measure extraversion-introversion, sensing-intuiting, thinking-feeling, judging-perceiving, in a forced-choice format. As scoring is based on (dubious) dichotomies, the test's psychometric qualities have been seriously questioned and its use in management heavily criticised. Several studies have failed to replicate the MBTI's factor structure and have questioned factor naming as vague and tendentious. Critics are adamant that the test should not be used for 'typing' individuals for specific jobs, although it has been widely used for that purpose. The enthusiasm for the test endures despite research showing that the sixteen types assessed by the MBTI have no scientific basis whatever. Moreover, as many as three-quarters of testees acquire a different personality when tested again after a relatively short period. The technical deficiencies of the MBTI are also well publicised. To mention only its most glaring ones, the test contradicts the original Jungian ideas on which it is ostensibly based and several studies using the test have failed to confirm the theory or validate the measure.[6]

As Paul notes in *The Cult of Personality Testing*, it is easy to understand the popularity of the MBTI. Its positive tone and content avoid the dark side of personality and blend seamlessly with the language of political correctness, such as that used by psychologists, consultants and managers who emphasise 'feeling and caring'. The

6 Spillane (2009: Ch. 4).

test's popularity with female HR managers is well known and countless managers have been marched off to training courses to be subjected to the MBTI. In some cases, they are instructed to display their personality type on their shirts throughout the course. It has even been asserted that scores on the MBTI predict managerial leadership.

Hodkinson quipped that 'the concept of leadership is an incantation for the bewitchment of the led.'[7] The fact is that throughout history, political rulers have tried to convince citizens that they should be obeyed not because they have the power to enforce obedience, but because they are 'born leaders'. The myth of the born leader was invented by Plato who exhorted potential rulers to become leaders by lying about their claim to rulership. In *The Republic*, Plato calls the story of the born leader the great lordly lie. 'Could we perhaps fabricate one of those very handy lies? With the help of one single lordly lie we may, if we are lucky, persuade even the rulers themselves.'[8] In this way rulers can become leaders and bewitch their followers.

'Leadership' is one of the most popular topics on the managerialist agenda where it has become something of a fetish. Like the personality cult, to which it is intimately related, it has a long history in management. Arguably, managerialists' fascination with leadership is grounded on an unstated desire to believe that their authority derives from subordinates' recognition of their exemplary personalities rather than from their positional power.

In *The Servants of Power*, Baritz documents the ways in which the notion of leadership has been used by psychologists and management consultants in American industry and government. He argues that early formulations insisted that leadership is an art, something vague and even mystical that could not be reduced to scientific investigation or communicated to managers. According to this view, leaders are born and not made, a view which is closely related to the popular idea that leadership is a function of personality. Leaders are supposed to have strong characters, self-confidence, sensitivity, integrity and imagination. For example, a decorated soldier and governor-general of Australia, Sir William (later Lord) Slim, argued before management audiences that leadership is a projection of personality based on will power, courage, knowledge, judgement and 'flexibility of mind'. Leadership, he argued, is 'of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision, and its practice is an art.' Management, on the other hand, is a matter of calculation of statistics, of methods, timetables and routines, and its practice is a science.[9]

Baritz argues that the Platonic view of leadership contradicted research which showed that about half of successful executives have volatile tempers and do not know, like or care about their colleagues. It was not until after the Second World

7 Hodgkinson (1983: 228).
8 Plato (2013: 414).
9 Byrt (1978: 5–6).

War that managers embraced the view that authoritarian leadership in management is likely to fail since the consent of subordinates is essential to success. Subordinates need to be persuaded rather than ordered to conduct themselves appropriately. Persuasion should be used rather than the exercise of power.

According to Baritz, the concern with leadership became an obsession in the 1950s. Conferences, books and articles were dominated by an exhortation to transform management into leadership. Out of the desire of managers to be respected and rewarded as persons rather than powers, an industry grew and flourished. To this day, leadership remains at the top of managerialists' concerns, aided and abetted by the cult of personality testing.

The Cult of Personality Testing

Baritz traces the beginnings of the psychological testing movement to the 1920s when psychologists attempted to define a personality test. The general view was that a sample of people's behaviour (captured by way of questionnaire) indexes abilities and other tendencies and permits the prediction of their future behaviour. Such a formulation, although expressed a century ago, holds sway to this day. However, it raises the vexed (and still unresolved) question of how many personality traits are needed for reliable prediction. This uncertainty opened the door to quacks and charlatans who, in the 1920s, showered management with their stereotypes and caricatures.

Given the widespread enthusiasm for personality tests, critics found it difficult to be heard. An exception was Mary Gilson who worked in personnel and wrote that it is 'incredible that certain well-known men, holding important positions in business and industry, shrewd in their competitive activities, could be so naïve in adopting charlatanry in their attempts to judge human beings.' She noted with concern that 'businessmen were paying large fees to self-styled "psychologists" who advised them, in all seriousness, concerning the choice of executives and workers on the basis of such traits as "convex" or "concave" faces.'[10]

By the late 1920s managers began to realise that they were being seriously misled. However, they did not (or could not) distinguish between frauds and bona fide psychologists. One psychologist estimated that approximately ninety per cent of the companies that used tests after the First World War concluded that they did not predict workplace behaviour and abandoned them. Another psychologist, reviewing the same period in 1947, found that personality tests had been 'discredited nearly everywhere.'[11]

10 Baritz (1960: 70 – 71).
11 Baritz (1960: 72).

Despite critics' warnings, the personality testing business continued to boom in the 1950s, as evidenced by the popularity of Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Test and the Humm-Wadsworth Temperament Scale (HWTS). Developed in the 1930s, the HWTS was known as a 'people-sorting instrument' which was designed to meet the needs of managers in large organisations, the assumption being that every job had an ideal personality to 'fit' it, like a key to a lock. 'People-sorters' were popular in the US in the 1920s when they were used to screen out political liberals and union sympathisers. According to Baritz, the HWTS was used at Lockheed to identify and remove potential troublemakers from job applicants. It allegedly detected such diverse 'temperaments' as autistic, paranoid, epileptoid, depressive, manic, hysteroid, schizoid, cycloid. Another company used personally tests to discover whether applicants' wives dominated family decisions since it was believed that such men would be easy to control.

Apart from the hundreds of definitions of personality to be found in psychology textbooks, there are thousands of personality traits to be found in a dictionary. When account is taken of synonyms, the number reduces to about a thousand traits which psychologists have attempted to measure by questionnaire. The results are analysed statistically by factor analysis which groups the results into clusters. Each cluster represents several traits which are statistically related to each other, such as 'aggressive' and 'dominant'. Personality psychologists have readily embraced factor analysts, which is surprising given how little rigour there is in interpreting its results. Factors are taken as measuring what the factor analysts say they do, and it is rare to find psychologists questioning their interpretation. Proof that a factor measures anything at all is even rarer. Moreover, factor analysts cannot agree on the number of factors to be extracted from a correlation matrix. Some personality psychologists have staked their reputations on sixteen or more personality factors while others prefer a more parsimonious solution. Hans Eysenck was the most parsimonious of them all and for many years defended just two personality types: extraversion and neuroticism.

It is widely believed in managerialist circles that personality predicts performance in management. Accordingly, managerialists employ psychologists, trainers, coaches and HR managers to delve into the personalities of their colleagues. This is a harmless enough endeavour if colleagues are at liberty to refuse to participate in testing and, if they do participate, are confident that their results are not available to a third party, notably their boss. Where the personality scores are provided to a third party, the exercise becomes one of management by personality rather than, or as well as, management by performance. If it were the case that personality test scores reliably predict management performance, there could be little objection. However, after nearly a century of personality testing it is possible confidently to assert that personality does not predict management performance.

Popper maintained that scientific hypotheses and theories are, in principle, falsifiable by empirical testing. Where a theory or hypothesis has been consistently falsified over a considerable period, rational people will see it as part of a degenerate (or

degenerating) research programme. Beyond a certain point, further testing is pointless. The hypothesis that personality test scores predict management performance has been consistently falsified over a period of more than ninety years. This research programme has, therefore, degenerated and from a scientific point of view is worthless. Consequently, it is a dispiriting experience for authors to have to rehearse repeatedly the case against personality testing. Yet, this repeated rehearsing is essential because of the never-ending stream of propaganda and self-serving declarations about new tests and their ability to overcome perennial problems.

Despite the empirical problems involved, some managerialists continue to employ psychologists to measure the personality traits of their colleagues. There appear to be three main reasons for this, only two of which are openly stated. A popular reason for subjecting people to personality tests is the belief that they predict work performance. A second reason is to do with what is called 'organisational fit'. The third unstated reason is that the possession of colleagues' personality scores represents a form of managerial power since the scores can be used to promote or demote, hire or fire. Although managerialists and HR managers roundly deny that the scores are used in this manner, it would be exceedingly naïve to deny that they can be, and indeed have been, used precisely in this manner.

It is easy to agree with Paul that the idea that an individual's personality should 'fit' a specific job is an attempt to shift responsibility from performance to a lack of harmony between employees and management. Management and employees are not to be considered bad or good. Rather, when things go wrong, it is lack of 'fit' that is the culprit. Personality functions as an escape valve which distracts managerialists from such questions as whether work is effectively managed and adequately rewarded. In this way, managerialists can (and do) claim that despite their best efforts as leaders, if there is a lack of 'fit' with the organisation such employees will fail to respond to their exemplary personalities. The argument, of course, is circular.

In 1968, Mischel published *Personality Assessment*, a book which had a devastating effect on the personality cult. In it, he argues that while 'personality' and 'behaviour' are often used interchangeably, behaviour is based on observable patterns whereas personality is inferred from those patterns. Furthermore, the use of the notion of personality 'trait' is inconsistent and confusing. For example, 'trait' is used to refer to the differences between the observed behaviour patterns of two or more individuals. However, the same expression is also used to refer to a theoretical construct invented for its convenient explanatory power, but which is not meant to exist as a 'thing' or 'process' within a person. 'Traits' have also been treated as *causes* of behaviour even though they are theoretical constructs which cannot been shown to have any power. Personologists are rarely bothered by such admissions and frequently retreat to the claim that because people respond differently to similar environments, personality traits, some of which are supposed to be inherited, should be invoked as explanations. This argument has been consis-

tently prosecuted for decades in the face of countless research studies, too many to catalogue, which invalidate the claim.

Mischel argues that the extraordinary attention to personality traits has been accompanied by a massive neglect of environmental factors. Accordingly, he argues that unless the environment changes dramatically, past behaviour rather than personality test scores is the best predictor of future behaviour in similar situations. The practice of inferring generalised behaviour patterns from self-reports and trying to predict behaviour from the inferences would be an acceptable procedure if it could be done reliably and provide predictive power. Mischel is adamant that five decades of research studies (to the late 1960s) had shown conclusively that it cannot. He concludes that personality traits are excessively crude concepts for a scientific psychology to manage.

The personality testers fought back under the banner of 'interactionism'. This move was a relatively easy matter for them since they claimed that they have never denied the impact of social forces (to do so would be silly). Their vigorous defence was helped by a major shift in psychological thinking which began in the 1960s and saw environmentalism lose ground to the biological reductionists who emerged victorious in the 1980s.

By the 1990s, the personality cult had recovered lost ground and gained even more. This revival was the result of several factors, including the progressive medicalisation of moral behaviour, as can be seen in the psychiatric profession where moral problems in living are redefined as medical conditions.[12] The popular belief that personality traits are inherited and thereby place limits on human freedom and personal responsibility also played its part in the return to grace of personality testing.[13]

The cult of personality testing gained scores of new members with the widely publicised success of the Big Five Personality Test which measures extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and emotional stability (not included in the MBTI which, according to its inventors, assesses only 'nice' characteristics). Mischel acknowledged how the revival of the Big Five generated fresh enthusiasm for the personality trait model but noted its serious deficiencies. His views have been largely ignored by management psychologists who point to the 'impressive new research' which (allegedly) establishes the long sought-after relationship between personality and work performance. Their enthusiasm is based on several meta-analyses which studied the relationship between the five magic bullets and work performance.[14]

Four meta-analyses of the relationship between work performance and the Big Five yield low correlations. The 'best' and much-quoted result is between perfor-

12 Szasz (2007).

13 Eysenck (1976).

14 Barrick & Mount (1991); Spillane (2017).

mance and conscientiousness which accounts for only 4.4 per cent of the variance. However, this result is not to be taken at face value since it is based on 'soft' performance data. Subjective ratings by managers of their subordinates are soft data; measures of objective performance are hard data. When corrected for hard data, the average correlation between the Big Five and work performance is barely above zero.

The extraordinary appeal of personality (and of inner causes of behaviour generally) together with the relative neglect of environmental forces cannot be the result of illiteracy, illogic or irresponsibility alone. Skinner, no friend of personality theorists, argues that the appeal of inner causes of behaviour has deep roots. It is the appeal of an inexplicable power in a world which seems to lie beyond the reach of reason. 'It is the appeal still enjoyed by astrology, numerology, parapsychology and psychical research.[15]

Skinner's 'Behaviorism'

Psychological determinism is the thesis that human behaviour is best understood as caused by internal and external forces over which individuals have little, or no, control. Freud's theory is one such thesis, in that it explains the whole of human behaviour through a mechanistic model. Freud, by committing to the dogma that every human action is determined by physical and mental forces thus undermined the view that humans are fundamentally purposive beings with the power to choose their actions. The mechanical and the purposive represent different forms of language that cannot be harmonised, since if one does something with purpose it makes no sense to say that one's behaviour was caused. The appeal of the idea that one's failure to achieve a particular purpose has been caused by circumstances beyond one's control is intuitive. More originally, Freud placed the interfering causes inside the individual.

The second force in psychology is known as behaviourism, or 'behaviorism' as Americans spell it. Its most vigorous proponent, B. F. Skinner, was voted by peers as the most influential psychologist of the twentieth century. Skinner rejected personal freedom and responsibility out of hand. In the early 1970s he appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine following the publication of his book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.

Skinner was the ultimate determinist since he abandoned all psychological concepts. 'Response' is linked to 'stimulus' by cause alone. Recognising that 'reward' is a psychological concept he substituted 'reinforcement', which he defined as anything that follows a response and increases the probability that it will recur. In advancing this definition, Skinner proved insensitive to circularity or argument. How do he know what reinforces? Only when it reinforces.

15 Skinner (1993: 178).

A major objection to Skinner's policy of universal determinism is that it ignores the fact that (most) people perceive themselves as having choices (especially when they succeed at a task for which they are rewarded), and this perception is self-fulfilling because it leads them to regard themselves as responsible for the results of their choices. This lends them some degree of self-control and entitles them to respect and dignity.

Skinner's reply was that such sentimental concepts, by persuading people that they control themselves, simply obstruct the process of discovering precisely what is controlling them. He argues that human behaviour is determined by a genetic endowment traceable to the evolutionary history of the species and by the environmental circumstances to which as individuals they have been exposed. Consequently, as scientists learn more about the effects of the environment, they have less reason to attribute any part of human behaviour to an autonomous agent. Autonomous individuals are not easily changed but, says Skinner, the environment can be changed, and behaviourists know how to change it for the better.

The explanation of behaviour in terms of social conditioning is extremely popular, especially with educationalists, social workers and socialists. As behaviourism relieves people of responsibility for their errors and irrationalities, it will appeal to those who find the notion of personal autonomy too challenging. But there is also a subtle appeal in that conditioning implies a power relationship; the conditioner has control over resources that the subject lacks. Talk of conditioning is, therefore, a way of talking about asymmetrical power relationships. Young people are, for instance, particularly disposed to blame society, parents, teachers, peer groups and police for their misbehaviour. In addition, there is the general comfortable belief that 'scientific' psychologists will improve matters for the benefit of all.

Behaviourism leads to a view of society from which freedom, choice, responsibility and dignity disappear. Should people accept the theory as reality, these matters would be removed from their awareness: they simply do that for which they are rewarded. Yet, it is difficult to imagine that people could be reduced to this level of autism through behaviouristic training.

In *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* Skinner argues that if human freedom is permitted to continue in an age when tools and techniques have placed immense destructive power in the hands of humankind, it will destroy itself. Therefore, individuals should yield up the ideas of freedom of choice and personal responsibility and submit themselves to operant conditioning which would make them incapable of destroying each another. While this sounds like the programme adopted by totalitarians, Skinner argues that totalitarians fail because they employ coercive methods rather than positive reinforcement. In Skinner's society people do what they want, even though they do not know what they want. The problem of social control remains, however. Skinner refuses to acknowledge that the libertarians he scorns object to totalitarianism out of respect for freedom, responsibility and dignity.

The notion that behaviour is something to be totally controlled by external means extends not only to self-appointed agents of control, like Skinnerian psychol-

ogists, but also to those who would achieve it through social sanctions. This alternative brings other 'professionals' (sociologists, political scientists, social planners, religionists) into the picture with the implied promise that a harmonious society could be designed and implemented. Strangely enough, this notion has a good deal of attraction for many people who suffer from the illusion that it requires only the sufficient application of intelligence to call utopia into existence. The history or past efforts to build societies should have a sobering effect, for modern attempts at egalitarian democracy have proved to be direct movements towards bureaucracy, from whence the next step is total regulation.

Third Force Psychology

Maslow, ever popular with managerialists and their teachers, presented himself as one of the leaders of third force psychology offered as an alternative to the psychological determinism of Freud and the environmental determinism of Skinner. By committing himself to a version of motivational theory, however, Maslow paradoxically supported psychological determinism. He wrote that Freud's 'great discoveries' can be improved upon. 'His one big mistake, which we are correcting now, is that he thought of the unconscious merely as undesirably evil.'[16] Maslow aimed to improve on Freud by replacing the notion of motive force with that of 'need'.

In everyday speech it is assumed that people select the ends to be achieved and choose what is necessary for their accomplishment according to the circumstances. Maslow converted this assumption to a fixed hierarchy and treats needs as mechanical forces. At the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy are the physiological needs which support his theory of deprivation-motivation: people are forced to pursue something (say, food) that is lacking (if they wish to continue to live). At the top end of the hierarchy is the notion of self-actualisation which supports his theory of growth-motivation: people pursue desirable states. Maslow was thus unaware that self-actualisation is a concept which is admissible only in a model which incorporates notions of choice, intention and purpose, whereas his biological need-system claims that humans are *driven* towards it after subordinate goals have been achieved.

According to Maslow, individuals do not self-consciously choose to actualise their potentialities since their decisions are based on what they need. Individuals need self-actualisation, and they choose self-actualisation because they need to. Self-actualisation shifts the meaning of need because its aim is unspecifiable. These needs include the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities. Self-actualisers submit to social regulation without losing their integrity or personal independence, although they are constantly evaluating other possibilities.

16 Maslow (1973: 180).

Maslow claims that individuals who have had their lower-level needs satisfied throughout their life will inevitably develop their higher potentialities. Consequently, individuals raised in relative luxury should become more mature and creative and individuals raised in disadvantageous conditions will become inferior products. The empirical evidence does not support this contention. Furthermore, it is simply untrue that people must attend to the lower needs before the higher ones. For example, individuals are not compelled to attend to safety needs before pursuing military glory.

Where motivational theories employ the notion of motive-force as the basis for a mechanistic model, problems of circularity, intentionality and purposiveness make it unlikely that they can explain anything at all. Because he uses self-actualisation as an escape route which opens a window to freedom and responsibility, Maslow believes he escapes the charge of determinism. In so doing, he equivocates on motive-as-cause and motive-as-reason.

It is one thing to say that people have reasons to pursue specific goals and quite another to say that they pursue goals because of an inner force. Motive-as-reason implies choice and responsibility; motive-as-cause does not. Motive-as-reason refers to that which justifies the choice of an intention to act and therefore narrows the possible choices open to individuals. People also form the intention of acting without there being any motive (reason) to warrant the choice since choice is free. In Maslow's motivational psychology, the use of motive-as-cause implies that people are forced to do what they do. This is simply not true. People can choose to beg, or they can choose to brag. The writings of motivational psychologists are often unclear on this point, and one wonders whether they can tell the difference between motive-as-cause and motive-as-reason.

The religious nature of Maslow's model is explicitly stated in his theory of meta-motivation, which is presented in the form of 28 'testable' propositions.[17] For example, Proposition I: 'Self-actualising individuals [...] by definition, already suitably gratified in their basic needs, are now motivated in other higher ways, to be called "metamotivations".' Individuals are self-actualising because they are meta-motivated; they are meta-motivated because they are self-actualising. The remaining 27 propositions follow from this circularity. Proposition II has a decidedly Calvinist tone: 'All such people are devoted to some task, call, vocation, beloved work ('outside themselves').' Proposition VI states: 'Such vocation-loving individuals tend to identify (introject, incorporate) with their "work" and to make it into a defining characteristic of the self.' Rarely was Calvin's psycho-religious doctrine more explicitly stated. Maslow claimed that his intrinsic (Calvinist) values are 'instinctoid' in nature and the illnesses resulting from deprivation of intrinsic values (meta-needs) are called meta-pathologies. If readers feel excluded from Maslow's club of self-actualisers, they should remember that they are in good company;

17 Maslow (1967).

most of humankind fails to meta-choose meta-needs and suffers from meta-pathologies, or meta-twaddle.

Why, then, is Maslow's model so popular with managers and their teachers? One explanation is that in management circles Maslow has been used as a convenient justification for emphasising social relationships and communication skills, rather than attending to employees' demands for more control over their jobs. Indeed, according to Maslow, if social needs are not satisfied (and the possibility that they cannot be satisfied in work relationships is not to be ignored) there is no point in encouraging employees to pursue personal power or self-esteem, let alone self-actualisation. Similarly, defining management problems in terms of 'poor communication,' as they frequently are, sidelines the substantive content of the communications.

Most management textbooks emphasise the importance of social needs. It is hard to quarrel with writers who profess care and concern for the social well-being of working people. Further, it is unwise in management circles to suggest that a sleight of hand is at work and that Maslow's theory has been used as an effective ploy to allow managers to direct resources to training in interpersonal skills and personality assessment rather than actively engage in job enrichment.

The best support for Maslow's theory comes from studies which show that if managers decrease hierarchical control, they obtain self-actualising behaviour. As Maslow's theory was derived from observations of behaviour in social organisation, studies which appear to support Maslow's theory involve circularity of reasoning. His studies are based on the observation of people in social organisations and the ways in which they build social structures to provide for their needs. As hierarchical status predicts satisfaction of needs, studies which confirm Maslow's theory by correlating satisfaction of needs with social status are engaged in the circular process of demonstrating that a theory formulated on social observation is supported by observation of the forms of social organisation. Maslow implies that he had discovered a hierarchy of motive-forces which interacts with the social situation in which people find themselves. Yet his hierarchy of needs, which purports to be based in biological structures, is derived solely from a social context; the needs themselves are only known from what other people are seen to do, so the explanation is circular.

Circularity is a feature of all motivational theories in which psychological needs are treated as unseen mechanical forces that cause human behaviour. Indeed, if motives are inferred from actions, they cannot, on the pain of circularity, be used as explanations for these actions. Further, when psychologists treat motives as reasons, they end up with as many motives as there are reasons. To have a motive for every action raises an odd question. If we can describe specific actions, and then add an inferred motive, we are faced with the problem of circularity of explanation. Why, then, employ the motive construct at all?

Motivation remains a popular, if confused, topic in managerial psychology. Its popularity is the product, in part, of the never-ending human quest to discover the keys to the inner kingdom of the psyche. Its confusion derives from the ambiguity

of the term and the way it can be used to describe mechanical or purposive behaviour. Maslow shifts from one meaning to the other as it suits him.

As Maslow wanted to present himself to the psychological community as a 'third-force', he had to abandon, or pretend to reject, psychological determinism. It is unsurprising, therefore, that he flirted with existentialism, or that peculiar American version of existentialism which turns a blind eye to the tragic side of human existence.

Although it was a popular philosophy in the middle of the twentieth century, existentialism is rarely taught to students of psychology. As existentialists argue that human existence cannot be studied scientifically, psychologists have been wary of allowing existentialism into curricula. Be that as it may, existential philosophers and psychologists have interesting things to say about human freedom and personal responsibility. By today's standards, their language is politically incorrect, and they are for this reason worthy of close study.

In *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre criticises people who reject their personal freedom and present themselves as victims of their biological and social conditioning. Sartre calls this denial of freedom 'bad faith' of which there are two representatives. Those who reject their freedom with deterministic excuses he calls cowards (*les lâches*); those who deny their own freedom and that of others he calls bastards (*les salauds*). Those psychologists who assume their own freedom while denying it to others qualify as hypocrites or logically defective.

Sartre's existentialism is expressed in terms that are today uncongenial to politically correct postmodernists. In the present culture of hurt feelings and compulsive complaint it is unsurprising to find perpetually aggrieved moralists quick to wield metaphorical machetes against existential individuals who treat others as free human beings and hold them responsible for their actions, including criminal behaviour and manifestations of so-called mental illnesses.

Existentialism was never as popular in the US as it was in Continental Europe during and after the Second World War. Sartre's message was pronounced gloomy and insufficiently optimistic for Americans. Maslow claimed that existentialism is vague, tragic, too difficult to understand and unscientific. Such criticism betrays Maslow's ignorance of existentialism which rejects science as the method by which psychologists understand human existence. Frankl is no better, in fact far worse than Maslow in his sheer insensitivity to human existence. Presenting himself as an existentialist, Frankl boasted of having authorised and performed lobotomies on people against their will, justifying his torture on the grounds that what matters is the 'spirit' with which the torture is administered.[18]

Maslow wrote in an oddly ill-informed way about European existentialists who are too difficult to understand from a scientific point of view. He seems to be unaware that existentialists replace the scientific with a phenomenological method

18 Frankl (1969: 56).

which sets itself against the 'natural attitude' of scientific mechanical models. Maslow thereby fails to appreciate the difference between scientific psychology and existential phenomenology. However, what follows is, from a scholarly point of view, simply embarrassing. After applauding existentialists for their studies of authentic living, he strips existentialism of its tragic element. Existentialism, he explains, helps to throw inauthenticity (living by illusions) into a clear light which reveals it as sickness. However, he does not think that Americans, endowed with the power of positive thinking, need take too seriously the pessimism of the European existentialists.

> I don't think we need to take too seriously the European existentialists' exclusive harping on dread, on anguish, on despair and the like, for which their only remedy seems to be to keep a stiff upper lip [...] Sartre and others speak of the 'self as project', which is wholly created by the continued (and arbitrary) choices of the person himself, almost as if he could make himself into anything he decided to be. Of course, in so extreme a form, this is almost certainly an overstatement, which is directly contradicted by the facts of genetics and of constitutional psychology. As a matter of fact, it is just plain silly.[19]

Maslow's position was far removed from European existentialism because his notion of freedom was severely compromised by motive forces. Furthermore, the claim that Sartre and other existentialists believe that individuals can turn themselves into anything they want to be is unwarranted. It is 'just plain silly' to summarise European existentialism in this way, ignoring everything that Sartre had to say about individuals' facticity which limits their freedom to act in particular ways, even though it does not remove their capacity to choose. Furthermore, Maslow's assertion that genetics and constitutional psychology somehow remove an individual's capacity to choose, and thereby inhibit one's recognition of *possibilities* in their lives, is misleading or mendacious, or both.

Maslow prefers the yea-saying 'existentialists' since the naysayers are too gloomy and 'just don't experience joy'. If existentialism means anything, it means that while they recognise human finitude as limited by birth, death, time, space and freedom, yea-saying existentialists view the problem of existence as the problem of the *possibility* of existence. Existence is thus structured by its possibilities. Maslow, however, is concerned with actualities and potentialities, but is oblivious that since potentiality signifies pre-determination of the actual, the potential excludes the possible. Indeed, while it is true that not all potentialities will be realised, given that potential means 'is destined to occur', potentiality makes no room for possibility. In the last analysis, because he failed to embrace the modal concept of possibility Maslow was, despite his concessions to human freedom, a (confused) determinist in disguise. He wrote as if individuals are free to choose their actions but his 'choices' are responses to biological needs. Compounding the confusion and demonstrating

19 Maslow (1968: 9 – 17).

once again his inability to grasp the meaning of basic psychological concepts, he even insisted that if individuals do not choose to push themselves toward self-actualisation, mental illness will overtake them.

The Myth of Mental Illness

Unlike Maslow, Szasz maintains that personal conduct is always rule-following, purposive and meaningful. Accordingly, interpersonal relations are analysed as if they are games where the behaviour of players is governed by explicit and tacit game rules. In contrast to heteronomous games, autonomous ones can be played only by relatively mature individuals who have learned that since games are socially constructed, they can be deconstructed. This applies especially to the game of psychiatry, which he defines as the 'science of lies'.[20]

Szasz has been associated with the antipsychiatry movement, created in the 1960s by Cooper and Laing who sought to replace conventional psychiatry with their own brand. Szasz criticised antipsychiatrists as egregious self-promoters who use their psychiatric authority to coerce their clients. Antipsychiatry is thus still a form of psychiatry. Szasz's therefore rejects psychiatry and antipsychiatry with equal vigour. Antipsychiatry is, for him, quackery squared.[21]

Although it is widely accepted by the general population that mental illness is a major topic of concern, there is little agreement among psychologists about the facts of mental illness. Managers are routinely reminded by government officials of their duty of care and responsibility for those working people 'suffering from mental illnesses'. Government websites inform citizens that one in four people in the developed countries suffer from a mental illness each year. Yet, mental illness remains a contested issue since mental health professionals cannot validly distinguish the mentally ill from the mentally healthy. For example, a recent attempt by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to define mental illness was described by Allen Frances, architect of the psychiatric bible known as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), as bullshit.[22]

Psychiatrists working on DSM-5 conceded that the clinically significant DSM criteria for mental disorders generally are tautological and that 'boundaries between normal and pathological are contentious.'[23] Piling farce upon farce, a recent review concluded that no biological sign has ever been discovered for any mental disorder.[24] The DSM-5 Task Force accepted this sober conclusion and admitted that psychiatrists do not have a biological marker or genetic test that can validly be used for diagnostic

20 Szasz (2008).
21 Szasz (2009).
22 Cohen (2016).
23 Kirk et al. (2015: 66).
24 Burstow (2015).

purposes.[25] The Chairman of the DSM-5 Task Force, David Kupfer, stated that psychiatrists' hope to identify mental disorders using biological and genetic markers remains disappointingly distant. 'We've been telling patients for several decades that we are waiting for biomarkers. We're still waiting.'[26]

Undaunted, the APA continues to assert that DSM is a medical classification of disorders. According to Kirk et al. the assertion that irrational and banal human behaviours are medical illnesses is a momentous scientific conceit which reflects the DSM's political success in medicalising everyday life. It is a conceit since it states as fact that which has not been validated scientifically, namely that the behaviours defined as symptoms of mental illnesses are caused by biological dysfunction. 'The justification that "the DSM at least provides a common vocabulary" ignores (or exploits) the power of language to conquer rhetorically what cannot be validated empirically'.[27]

Szasz was even more emphatic, referring to DSM as a catalogue of misbehaviours which are erroneously called mental disorders. 'Modern psychiatry – with its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals* of non-existing diseases and their coercive cures – is a monument to quackery on a scale undreamed of in the annals of medicine.'[28]

Psychiatry has a long history of quackery. In the 1850s, a 'mental illness' – *drapetomania* – was invented to classify and punish slaves who ran away from their masters. In the 1930s, masturbation was called 'masturbatory insanity', while today internet gaming is a mental disorder. When the APA proposed 'rapism' as a new mental illness, feminists opposed it since rapists might be treated more sympathetically. Similarly, the APA abandoned the label 'masochism' when applied to women who stay in abusive relationships.[29] Despite the obvious political nature of these medical 'diagnoses', psychiatrists, psychologists and government bureaucrats continue to publicise the myth that 'mental illnesses are just like other illnesses.'

Szasz declared war on orthodox psychiatry in 1961 with *The Myth of Mental Illness* which challenged the theory, language and practice of psychiatry and clinical psychology. This subversive book, which nearly lost him his chair in psychiatry, contains a disarmingly simple thesis.

As illness affects only the body (according to books of pathology), and as the 'mind' is not a bodily organ (either because it does not exist or it is non-material), it follows logically that the 'mind' cannot be ill, except in a metaphorical sense. Mental illness, therefore, is metaphorical illness (minds can be sick only in the sense that jokes can be sick.). To those people who believe that the mind is really the brain, it follows that mental illnesses are (undiagnosed) brain illnesses which should be treated by neurologists, not psychiatrists. Furthermore, since brain

25 Whitaker & Cosgrove (2015).
26 Kupfer (2013).
27 Kirk et al. (2015: 65); Kirk & Kutchins (1992).
28 Szasz (2008: 18 – 19).
29 Szasz (1987: 79 – 80).

illnesses are diagnosed by medical signs (which are objective), and no mental illness has ever been diagnosed by medical signs, mental illnesses are not legitimate illnesses. Further, mental illnesses are diagnosed by symptoms (which are subjective); they are thus based on communications (often complaints) which frequently refer to moral dilemmas. Yet, moral dilemmas are routinely re-defined by psychiatrists as medical conditions, and most people accept and promote this re-definition. Hence, mental illness is a social fact but not an empirical fact. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that mental illness is a myth.

Brain illnesses are discovered; mental illnesses are invented. If there are no mental illnesses, there can be no treatment or cure for them. Furthermore, the introduction of psychiatric issues into the criminal law, notably the insanity plea and verdict and diagnoses of mental incompetence to stand trial, corrupt the law and victimise the persons on whose behalf they are employed. All considered, since there is no medical, moral or legal justification for involuntary psychiatric interventions they are, for Szasz, crimes against humanity.[30]

When Szasz asserts that mental illness is a myth, he is not saying that personal unhappiness and socially deviant behaviour do not exist. Rather, he is saying that they are incorrectly categorised as illnesses. Consequently, 'mental illness' has become a semantic strategy for medicalising economic, moral, personal, political and social problems. Szasz has also been criticised on the grounds that a mentally ill person is clearly 'suffering' from some disability and so the concept of mental illness can be promoted because of that suffering. Szasz disagrees, arguing that most people seen by psychiatrists do not suffer; they make others suffer. Furthermore, the only way to know that such people suffer is when they say so.

In *The Meaning of Mind,* Szasz argues that the mind is also a myth. 'Brain' is a concrete noun; 'mind' is an abstract noun. Abstract nouns do not refer to entities and should not be treated as if they do. The abstract noun 'mind' is a product of the verb 'to mind', which means to attend and adjust to one's environment. Treated as a noun, 'mind' refers to the linguistic abilities that people require to talk with others and with themselves about minding shops or steps. In this sense, 'mind' is the ability to talk with oneself. Accordingly, mind(edness) is a moral and psychological concept and not a thing to be studied by biologists, neuroscientists or psychiatrists. It is psychological because it is concerned with people talking with others and especially with themselves about personal issues; it is moral because issues of right and wrong, good and evil, are only expressible through a language which presupposes community. One cannot be evil alone.

The problem people face, according to Szasz, is deciding when to attribute 'mentality' to individuals, treat their behaviour as an intentional act (say, winking), and hold them responsible for it and when to attribute 'materiality' to them, treat their behaviour as a manifestation of physical processes in their bodies (say,

30 Szasz (2010: 267–268).

blinking), and hold them not responsible for it. Speakers face the same dilemma: when should they treat themselves as responsible agents, and when as non-responsible victims (of mental illnesses or some other cause)? It is a delusion to hold that this choice can be avoided.

The word 'responsible' comes from the Latin *respondere*, which means to respond or answer. Responsibility is, therefore, not something people possess; it is something they are said to be. Personal responsibility is an attribute of persons, even though 'mind' is often used in lieu of 'person'. The consequence of this misuse of words is to attribute responsibility or its absence to 'mind'.

In ethics and law, people are regarded as moral agents if they are answerable for their conduct. Being responsible is, therefore, a type of 'minding' and assumes that people can communicate to others and to themselves. When they are in a moral relationship with others, people talk of responsibility; when they are in a relationship with themselves, they talk of conscience. Szasz thus sees conscience as a particular kind of self-conversation, the person's inner dialogue concerning the goodness or badness of its own conduct. Since talking to others and to oneself is a voluntary act, responsibility can be seen as the paradigmatic self-conversation.

If there is no such thing as a mind, it follows that there can be no illnesses of the mind. If there is no mental illness, there is no mental health either. Although mental health professionals and government publications criticise and hector people for their confusion about the 'facts' of mental illness, Szasz argues that there are no facts about mental illness except that it is a myth based on the myth of the mind.

Mindedness is thus not the substratum of a condition waiting to develop but an achievement. The myth of mental illness allows people to avoid facing their problems, believing that mental health ensures the making of right choices in the conduct of life. But the logic goes the other way: it is the making of wise choices in life that people regard, retrospectively, as evidence of good mental health.

Chapter 8:
Machiavellian Ingenuity or Moral Intelligence?

Although Machiavelli wrote for politicians and princes in the sixteenth century, his maxims have been applied liberally to the fields of psychology and management.[1] This application is possible because Machiavelli's stark realism acts as an antidote to authors who apply Christian principles to management under the name of moral intelligence.

Shakespeare called him the 'murderous Machiavel' and his name is still associated with murder, machismo and mendacity in political affairs. He has been characterised for posterity as a malicious, power-hungry cynic who encouraged tyrants to murder and mayhem. A prince, as Machiavelli portrays him, is a pragmatist with respect to means but an idealist with respect to ends. Machiavelli's ideal is the power and glory of the State, and his philosophy is one of power rather than of authority. When authority is mentioned, it is merely regarded as a property of the prince and his office.

Despite his infamous reputation, Machiavelli is not without defenders.[2] Russell stated that Machiavelli wrote honestly about political dishonesty and so was bound to offend those who engage in it. Accordingly, much of the negativity that attaches to Machiavelli's name stems from the indignation of hypocrites who hate the frank discussion of evil doing. Consequently, his name is associated with shrewd, expedient, evasive, deceitful and cunning behaviour, or in Burckhardt's less moralistic terms, with *ingenuity*.

Entrepreneurship scholars who argue that the emergence of radical ideas requires elements of the 'dark triad' implicitly endorse Burckhardt's view of Machiavellianism as ingenuity. As it is an intentional concept, ingenuity involves goal-directed action and has, therefore, normative implications. Intelligence, by contrast, is generally characterised as a disposition which, unlike action and intention, lacks normative force. That is, insofar as 'normative' means adopting an authoritative standard by which actions can be judged, intelligence (as a series of abilities) lacks a normative dimension. Of course, intelligence takes on an apparent normative property when it is subjected to moral judgement, an appearance which has led to the development of the notion of moral intelligence.

In recent years, several scholars have applied the notion of moral intelligence to management. This chapter relies on *Moral Intelligence* by Lennick and Kiel, a book that reveals all too clearly its authors' Christian assumptions about human behaviour and ideals. Specifically, Lennick and Kiel argue that there is a kind of moral compass

1 Buskirk (1975); Butterey & Richter (2003); Demarck (2002); Flanagan (1972); Galie & Bopst (2006); Grace & Jackson (2018); Griffin (1991); Jay (1968); McAlpine (1997); Scott (2018); Swain (2002); Tholen (2016).

2 Russell (1946: 491); Skinner (2000); Viroli (1998; 2013); White (2004); Zuckert (2014).

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at the heart of business success. They define moral intelligence as the mental capacity to determine how *universal* moral principles should be applied to individuals' values, goals and actions. In other words, moral intelligence for these authors is the ability to differentiate right from wrong as defined by universal principles, conceived of as beliefs about human conduct common to all cultures, religions, ethnicity and both sexes. As will be argued, such universalism is severely compromised by Lennick and Kiel's adherence to Christian ideals.

Lennick and Kiel assert that the best managers are neither charismatic nor heroic types. Rather, the best managers are 'quiet leaders' who accomplish great things modestly, all sharing a common trait: humility. That is, the best managers 'are, quite simply, good people who consistently tap into their inborn disposition to be moral [...] They believe in honesty, [...] show compassion for their fellow humans and know how to forgive others'.[3] The authors go so far as asserting that there is a 'powerful correlation' (which remains undisclosed in their book) between strong moral principles and business success, which may be true, and that the moral principles which 'guarantee' success are integrity, responsibility, compassion and forgiveness, which is not true. Indeed, the claim that integrity, compassion and forgiveness *guarantee* business success is patently false. Further, Lennick and Kiel do not clarify whether executives need to believe and act upon the moral principles they identify or, in Machiavellian fashion, merely give the appearance to others that they believe them when in fact they do not. In either case and since Machiavelli recommends deceit when it is required, if Lennick and Kiel are right, Machiavellians have *low* moral intelligence. Equally patent is that Lennick and Kiel's position amounts to confounding ability and value judgements.

This chapter pursues five related arguments. First, agreement with and commitment to a moral perspective is not indicative of intelligence (moral or otherwise). Second, Machiavellian ingenuity cannot be reduced to a disposition without contradiction. Third, there is no logical or empirical justification for deeming moral intelligence superior to Machiavellian ingenuity in management. Fourth, the moral intelligence movement represents the tender-minded alternative to tough-minded Machiavellian management. Fifth, Machiavelli's tough-minded philosophy accounts for the tender-minded qualities of human relationships while the moral intelligence movement dismisses Machiavellian ingenuity as unworthy of respect. Before the case for these arguments can be made, a contextual exposition of Machiavelli's recommendations for rulers is necessary.

3 Lennick & Kiel (2005: 19 – 20).

Princes and Power

Machiavelli's reputation as the devil incarnate derives largely from his little book *The Prince* which was published five years after his death in 1527. Banned by the Catholic Church in 1557, it remained on the *Papal Index of Forbidden Books* until 1890. His more scholarly book, *The Discourses*, contains a theory of the conditions for republican rule based on the Roman model. Machiavelli agreed with Aristotle that the three forms of government, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, have irresistible tendencies to tyranny, oligarchy and anarchy, respectively. Prudent legislators, he thinks, choose one that shares in them all. The best form of government, therefore, is one that combines all three forms and so minimises the chances that rulers will become demagogues in one form or another. However, in times of crisis republics need a prince who aggressively confronts and challenges 'necessity' and 'fortune'. This necessity is the main theme of *The Prince* which is a practical manual for those individuals who want to gain and retain power.

As all discussions of society involve assumptions about human nature, it is necessary to appreciate Machiavelli's attitude to human beings. He does not follow Plato and Aristotle in referring to man as *Homo sapiens:* man is not primarily a knower or truth-seeker. Rather, man is *Homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man). Human beings are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers who support others when they are successful and turn against them when danger beckons. They have less hesitation in injuring people who make themselves loved than those who makes themselves feared, because love is usually rejected for personal profit whereas fear is held by a dread of punishment. Consequently, human beings must be protected from themselves. But this is impossible in the ideal society of Plato's philosopher-kings or Aristotle's noble men. Rather, the ideal society is one in which people are safe and prosperous, governed by a state that is feared internally and externally. Such a state is embodied by either a strong prince (*The Prince*) or a strong republic (*The Discourses*).

Before Machiavelli, the conventional view of rulers was that they had to be moderate, wise and just. Plato thought that the philosophers seeking truth should be the rulers. Aristotle held that virtues are middle paths between opposing vices. Cicero insisted that princes had to be trustworthy, generous and unpretentiousness, and that force and fraud were unworthy of people. Seneca argued that princes should cultivate clemency. To these humanistic virtues, Christians added compassion, love and forgiveness and taught that one's fate in heaven depends exclusively on one's intentions, not on their practical consequences.

Machiavelli has no patience with his predecessors' views, which he finds sentimental but ill-founded. He combines a brutally realistic view of human nature with a critical political view of Christianity which, on his reading, has glorified weak men and set up as the greatest good humility and contempt for the material world. In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli insists that Christianity has placed no value in strength of body or in any of the pagan virtues and by imposing an other-worldly image of

human excellence, it has not merely failed to promote civil glory but has helped to bring about the decline and fall of great nations. He is one of the first writers to attribute the fall of the Roman Empire to Constantine's adoption, in 313, of Christianity as the State religion. Christian virtues are, for Machiavelli, inconsistent with the pagan virtues that secured for Rome its pre-eminent position in world affairs. He thinks that the price the Romans paid for the traditional interpretations of Christianity, based on humility, compassion and brotherly love, was too great since it made Rome weak. If political rulers insist on making it their business to be good among so many who are not, they will not only fail to achieve great things but will surely be destroyed. Nonetheless, Machiavelli is not opposed to religion as such. Rather, he exhorts his compatriots to interpret Christianity in a more muscular fashion.

Machiavelli never doubted that humans are by nature more prone to evil than to good. They are ambitious, suspicious and unable to gauge the limits of their own fortune. Greed blinds them to danger; they constantly desire what they cannot obtain and are discontented with what they have obtained. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli insists that it is prudent to assume the worst of people and act upon that assumption, even in the face of apparent evidence to the contrary. Consequently, Machiavelli has been vilified as an anti-Christian writer and a preacher of evil.

Fortuna and Virtù

Like the pagans, Machiavelli believes that the most important concept in political life is power. According to the classical heritage that Machiavelli admired, power is a combination of *virtù* (personal power) and *fortuna* (spiritual, natural and social power). *Fortuna* derives from the Latin root *ferre* (to bring). The Greek equivalent is *tyche* and is derived from a root meaning 'to succeed' or 'to achieve'. The meaning in both cases is not 'chance' or events which seem to occur randomly. Rather, the connotation is that of unintended consequences which are brought about by a power which works in inscrutable ways. Theologically, *fortuna* concerns deities and divine will; naturalistically, it is described by Machiavelli anthropomorphically as a destructive river which, when angry, floods the plain; socially, we might call it social power: the production of unintended effects.

Fortuna, being unpredictable and incomprehensible sounds, for Machiavelli, like a woman. *Fortuna*, then, is she who brings forth. As a goddess she is attracted to the *vir:* true manliness and courage. Christianity rejected the idea of a goddess and made fortune a blind power: fate. With the recovery of the classical values in the Renaissance, however, fortune was linked to social power and contrasted with fate (which is beyond human control). When uncertainty reigns, virile individuals seize the day.

There is a fundamental ambiguity in Machiavelli's *fortuna* because he combines naturalism with mythology. Specifically, Machiavelli employs *fortuna* to designate

the unexpected and unintended consequences of social power, but he also applies it to mythical forces which superintend these consequences. It is possible, however, to strip Machiavelli's *fortuna* of its mythical elements and to view it as a rational reference to large-scale social causes and their unintended consequences. As argued in Chapter 3, the social sciences should seek explanations for unintended effects. Indeed, as far as intended effects are concerned, how to produce them is already known and therefore does not call for scientific discovery. Unfortunately, Machiavelli's analysis of *fortuna* is weakened considerably by his metaphorical and semi-mythical language. Machiavelli's reluctance to provide definitions or theories is also visible in his use of *virtù* of which he offers no coherent doctrine. The word derives form *vir* which means manliness and is associated with strength of will or personal power which is applicable to both males and females.

Today, the use of 'manliness' is problematic because sex and gender are routinely conflated. Sex is reflected in the number of females in the workforce which has risen significantly in the past fifty years. Gender is reflected in the degree to which feminine behaviour and values have influenced workplace behaviour. By ignoring the distinction between sex and gender, people have naively assumed that feminine behaviour and values are necessarily embraced by females. Yet everyone knows of females who are as masculine as any of their male counterparts, and males have shown themselves capable of adopting feminine qualities when it suits them. There is no inconsistency, then, in talking of masculine and feminine males, masculine and feminine females. Hence, when people, notably feminists, criticise Machiavelli for promoting an ethic exclusively for males, they miss Machiavelli's point: manliness refers to gender, not to sex. He did not confuse sex and gender and considered the former a biological contingency and the latter adopted behaviour. Gender equality is, therefore, a delusion: a rather bad joke. If Machiavelli is right, effeminate males and females will find the going tough in organisations where positions of power are few and candidates many. *Virtù* is what matters: feminine females and feminine males will find it difficult to survive and thrive among their masculine colleagues.

Lions and Foxes

Machiavelli explains that princes who acquire new principalities through their own skill, rather than chance, retain them with relative ease. The challenges they face are owed mainly to the difficulty in introducing and maintaining a new order in the face of determined opposition from those who have done well under the old regime. Besides, those who do well under the new regime are disinclined to offer full-blooded defence because they fear adversaries who have the law on their side. New princes, therefore, find themselves in a precarious position and face the dilemma of acting alone or seeking the help of others. Machiavelli is convinced that if a new prince depends on others and seeks help from them, he will surely

fail. If, however, he relies on his own skill and can use force, then he will rarely be in harm's way. This is the reason why unarmed prophets come to grief.

A prince's behaviour must be tempered by humanity and prudence so that overconfidence does not result in being rash or paranoid. From this arises the question: whether it is better to be loved than feared. Having negotiated with and studied Cesare Borgia and Caterina Sforza, among others, Machiavelli is in no doubt that it is safer for princes to be feared than loved, if they cannot be both. However, a prince must make himself feared in such a way that, if he is not loved, at least he avoids being hated. Men will walk across hot coals to settle accounts with people they hate, and princes must therefore ensure that they, and their inner circle, are not hated. Although princes are generally praised for keeping their promises, nonetheless, experience shows that the successful ones promise rarely and know how to control people with trickery.

Machiavelli believes that human beings are sophisticated animals with all the passions and desires that render rational living difficult. To that end, princes need to know how to use the power and nature of animals to their advantage, especially the qualities of the lion and the fox. Princes must emulate both the fox and the lion, because lions cannot defy snares, while foxes cannot defy packs of wolves. Princes must therefore be foxes to spot the snares and lions to overwhelm the wolves. Those who rely on the lion alone are not perceptive. Rulers cannot keep their word when to do so works against them and when the reasons that made them promise are annulled. Never has a shrewd prince lacked good reasons to make their promise-breaking appear honourable. Those who know best how to play the fox come out best, but they must understand well how to become a great simulator and dissimulator.

Ideally, princes should be compassionate, faithful to their word, kind and guileless. However, insists Machiavelli, their disposition should be such that, if they need to be the opposite, they know how to adapt. Typically, Machiavelli adds that although princes need not have all these admirable qualities, it is necessary for them to *appear* to have them. Indeed, he believes that it does princes harm to possess these good qualities and always observe them. Above all else, a prince must be prepared to act contrary to truth, charity and religion when necessity commands.

Burckhardt insists that readers take the Renaissance's political context into account when pondering Machiavelli's writings. Specifically, he notes that Machiavelli wrote in an age that encouraged individuality in men and women of *vir*. These people needed to mobilise their intellectual resources, and especially their ingenuity, to maximise their personal power in a life that was usually brutal and brief. Burckhardt gives a superb example of Renaissance ingenuity and its brutality.[4] The citizens of Siena were liberated from foreign attack by a military officer of

4 Burckhardt (1990: 31).

considerable bravery and intelligence. After lengthy deliberation, the citizens concluded that no reward in their power was great enough for their saviour, except to revere him as their city's patron saint. However, to worship their saviour thus, he had to be dead. So, they killed him and worshipped him as a saint.

If Burckhardt is correct and ingenuity is the key element in Machiavellian policies and practices, it is difficult to see how 'Machiavellianism' can be reduced to a personality trait. Yet, a cursory inspection of the literature on Machiavellianism shows that it is this aspect of the Florentine's work that has captured the imagination of psychologists and management writers. Furthermore, the problem of reducing ingenuity to a personality trait is compounded by the problematic use of the notion of 'intelligence' to describe adherence to specific moral values.

From Cognitive to Multiple Intelligences

In recent years, management scholars have shown interest in multiple intelligences, a topic familiar to researchers in the fields of education and child psychology.[5] For example, Gardner offers a dispositional analysis of seven intelligences, including interpersonal and intrapersonal forms. 'An intelligence is the ability to solve problems, or create products, that are *valued* within one or more cultural settings'[6] (italics added). This extension of cognitive intelligence to interpersonal issues (including the moral evaluation of their solution) conflates dispositions and intentions and renders the notion of moral intelligence unintelligible. Unlike cognitive intelligence, which is based on objective criteria of problem-solving ability, moral intelligence includes the additional dimension of social evaluation. For example, Borba insists that moral intelligence is the capacity to understand right from wrong, and to act in an honourable way. Adding to the confusion, it is widely assumed by psychologists that moral intelligence can be measured as a personality trait with the following components: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. These value-laden traits, which are measured in countless personality inventories, can scarcely be said to be based on the objective criteria of problem-solving.

Cognitive intelligence represents an ability, or series of abilities. Further, it is associated with versatility and adaptability.[7] Cognitive intelligence can be defined and measured by tests which were intended to be quick measures of problem-solving ability. The same cannot be said for moral intelligence which is not an ability but agreement with specific values.

The concept of intelligence has had a controversial history in psychology. The construction of the first IQ tests relied on the use of statistical techniques of correla-

5 Bradshaw (2009); Lennick & Kiel (2005).
6 Gardner (1983: xiv).
7 Spillane & Martin (2005).

tion where different problems are selected for their power to assess a similar ability and graduate them according to degree of difficulty. This resulted in the development of separate tests, such as vocabulary, comprehension, numeracy, mechanical reasoning, their scores added, and the total converted by standardising them against age norms. Psychologists then discovered that scores on the separate scales always correlated positively with one another. Although the correlations were not high, they suggested that a general factor of cognitive intelligence existed. Intrigued by this finding, Spearman used factor analysis for extracting what was common to these separate tests. His analysis revealed a large common factor which he named *g* for general intelligence and a smaller specific factor for each separate test. Spearman, thereafter, defended a two-factor theory of intelligence, based on general intelligence and a task-specific element (e. g., verbal intelligence).

However, when researchers, notably Thurstone, used a different form of factor analysis they found five 'primary mental abilities' that represented cognitive ability. In opposition to the English view, American psychologists argued vigorously for a multi-factor definition of intelligence. They agreed, however, with the English view that intelligence is based on abilities.

The conventional view that intelligence is a measure of cognitive abilities was challenged by Gardner who, as noted, argued for seven separate 'intelligences', including interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. This set has been expanded to embrace 'naturalistic' and 'existential' intelligences. More generally, by the 1990s, it was frequently argued that intelligence tests are incomplete measures of the 'total personality' because they ignore emotional and moral skills. It was widely believed, without empirical evidence, that Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is twice as important as IQ. However, a critical evaluation of such claims resulted in researchers concluding that EQ is little else than a set of familiar personality and motivational traits which lacks theoretical sophistication and empirical support.[8]

Once the idea of multiple intelligences is accepted there is no limit to the number of specific types that can be defined: cognitive, emotional, social, political, organisational, leadership, business, money-making, criminal, musical, spiritual and moral. In this sense, the fashion in management circles of speaking of one's moral assertions and value judgements as evidence for 'intelligence' is another attempt by psychologists and managerialists to enlarge the personality perspective by asserting that moral intelligence is a personality trait. That this strategy has stimulated psychologists and managerialists is illustrated and supported by moral competency tests which purport to measure one's 'hard-wired moral compass'.

8 Ciarrochi, Forgas & Mayer (2001); Hedlund & Steinberg (2000); Olson (2006).

The Machiavellian 'Personality'

As noted, Lennick and Kiel assert that morally intelligent individuals value integrity, responsibility, compassion and forgiveness. In their words, 'integrity is authenticity. It is saying what you stand for and standing for what you say'. Further, 'the hallmark of personal responsibility is our willingness to accept that we are accountable for the results of the choices we make'. Compassion means caring 'about others' goals as much as they do.' Accordingly, moral intelligence is *knowing* what to do and moral competence is the skill of *doing* the right thing. To be morally intelligent thus means: telling the truth, standing up for what is right, keeping promises, taking responsibility for personal choices, admitting mistakes and failures, embracing responsibility for serving others, actively caring about others, and forgiving one's own and others' mistakes.[9]

Lennick and Kiel hold the requirement to forgive others' mistakes to be especially relevant to leadership. They assert that effective leaders form a relationship with followers with forgiveness at its core. Whether leader or follower, behaving in agreement with these principles reveals one's high moral intelligence. It follows that those managers who apply Machiavelli's maxims to their work are of low moral intelligence. However, Lennick and Kiel do not discuss the difference between publicly professing (Christian) values and appearing to do so. Indeed, while Machiavellians can pretend to profess Christian values, it is hard to see how Lennick and Kiel's managers can pretend to profess ruthless pagan values. The asymmetry involved in this matter has encouraged scholars to treat moral (and emotional) intelligence as a disposition which can be measured in the manner of Lennick and Kiel's test of moral compass. Similarly, they have reduced Machiavellian policies and practices to a personality trait which is relatively fixed, predictable, and not subject to the vagaries of personal (ingenious) choice.

In the 1960s, psychologists began to think in terms of a Machiavellian 'personality' and constructed questionnaires composed of maxims taken from *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. There now exist several 'Mach' scales and although psychologists have raised doubts about the viability of reducing Machiavellian maxims to the status of a personality trait, these scales have generated more than 2000 research articles.[10] In any case, it is one thing to say that certain individuals agree with Machiavelli's assessments of human nature and suggestions for political success, but quite another matter to assume that there is a Machiavellian personality.

Psychologists are in general agreement that personality is known through the observation of relatively consistent tendencies in people's behaviour. These are referred to internal forces which are conceived of as exerting control over their conduct and thereby constituting an explanation of it. However, consistency in

9 Lennick & Kiel (2005: 80, 95, 106, 65, 227).

10 Grace & Jackson (2014; 2018); Jackson & Grace (2015).

behaviour can be explained, in large part, by the adoption of roles and habit. When people adopt roles or act habitually, personality is not invoked as an explanation because what is observed in role and habitual behaviour is the application of learned skills. Accordingly, role-playing and habit are not attributed to personality traits because the behaviour is effective in achieving goals. However, if the behaviour is ineffective, personality traits, such as anxiety, are often invoked to explain the failure to display appropriate skills.

If role-playing and habit are not attributed to personality traits, it follows that consistency of behaviour is not a sufficient condition for the inference of personality traits. Where people are ignorant of the behaviour needed to achieve goals, say in an unfamiliar culture, their ineffective behaviour is likewise not a sufficient condition for the inference of personality traits. Personality traits are thus invoked when behaviour is consistent over situations in which it is ineffective but is not due to ignorance. Consequently, the only behaviour that requires personality traits is that which implies a *lack of adaptability*. This is in accord with the relatively fixed character of personality traits. Personality traits, therefore, constitute whatever it is that *reduces flexibility* of behaviour and makes people unable to act intelligently.[11] The view that Machiavelli's maxims can be used as the basis for a personality trait has therefore to be rejected, since Machiavelli valued versatility, adaptability and, above all else, ingenuity.

Despite Machiavelli's insistence on flexibility and expediency, psychologists have preferred to treat Machiavellianism as a fixed personality trait. For example, researchers have identified three themes in Machiavelli's books: manipulative behaviour (including the use of flattery and deceit), cynicism about human nature (viewing others as weak, untrustworthy, dishonest and egoistic), and unconventional moral views.[12] They then constructed scales to measure a Machiavellian disposition and correlated scores with other personality scales. Later researchers have reviewed more than two decades of this research and concluded that endorsement of Machiavellian maxims correlates with attitudinal measures of personal control, dominance, cynicism and psychopathy.[13] Machiavellians endorse manipulative tactics, are persuasive, reveal little about themselves, are emotionally detached, and task- rather than people-orientated.

Eysenck and Wilson created a 'manipulation' scale and found that high scorers are detached, calculating, shrewd, worldly, expedient and self-interested in their dealings with people. Low scorers are warm-hearted, trusting, empathetic, altruistic, naive and gullible. Questionnaire items (with answers denoting Machiavellian traits indicated in brackets) include: Do you think honesty is always the best policy? (N); Does a sense of fair play restrict your business acumen? (N); Do you feel a great deal

11 Spillane & Martin (2005).

12 Christie & Geis (1970).

13 Fehr, Samson & Paulhus (1992).

of sympathy for the underdog? (N); Do you think that most people are basically good and kind? (N); Do you occasionally have to hurt other people to get what you want? (Y); Do you normally tell the truth even though you would be better off lying? (N); Do you regard yourself as a skilled organiser and manipulator of other people (Y). On such bases, the psychologists argue that the Machiavellian trait correlates positively with aggressiveness, assertiveness, achievement motivation, sensation-seeking, dogmatism and masculinity. With other authors, they have concluded that the Machiavellian trait forms part of a personality type which they call tough-mindedness.[14]

More recently, psychologists have referred to Machiavellianism as a personality trait which represents one third of a 'dark triad' with narcissism and psychopathy. Machiavellians are characterised by their relative emotional detachment (alexithymia), lack of compassion and forgiveness, and tough-mindedness. The correlation with measures of psychopathy (or psychoticism) is well established although the relationship with narcissism seems less straightforward.[15]

Despite their promoters' confidence, the validity of the various Mach scales is debatable. Jackson and Grace have shown that there is nothing in Machiavelli which corresponds to such items as: 'P. T. Barnum was wrong when he said that there's a sucker born every minute' or 'People suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death'. Jackson and Grace conclude that fewer than half of the twenty items in the popular Mach IV scale have some tenuous link to Machiavelli (the others are far removed from him although his name is linked to all). Furthermore, there are passages in *The Prince* which reveal a different, less negative, side to Machiavelli. For example: 'To betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious, these are not glory'; 'It would be splendid to have a reputation for generosity'. These maxims are not constituents of the Mach scales and, if included, would pose numerous psychometric problems for psychologists. Such issues led Jackson and Grace to conclude that the distorted Machiavelli depicted in psychology is but a shadow of the insightful Machiavelli of *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. Consequently, the psychology of Machiavellianism and the innumerable psychometric studies of its properties present a distorted view of Machiavelli's entire corpus.

By way of contrast to the extensive literature on Machiavellianism, Lennick and Kiel developed a Moral Competence Inventory based on ten skills which are measured as attitudes, rather than problem-solving ability. Unlike IQ, which seeks to capture analytical ability, conceptualising moral intelligence as a personality trait condemns it to suffer the same fate as other personality traits about which defini-

14 Allsopp, Eysenck & Eysenck (1991).

15 Furnham, Richards & Paulhus (2013); Grace & Jackson (2014); Jones (2016); Jones & Paulhus (2009); Kajonius, Persson & Jonason (2015); McHoskey (1995); Mudrack & Mason (1995); Paulhus (2014); Trahair et al. (2020); Wastell & Booth (2003).

tional problems, issues of unreliability and invalidity abound.[16] Items in Lennick and Kiel's scale include: 'I own up to my own mistakes and failures'; 'I am able to 'forgive and forget', even when someone has made a serious mistake'; 'If I knew my company was engaging in unethical or illegal behaviour, I would report it, even if it could have an adverse effect on my career'; 'When someone asks me to keep a confidence, I do so'; 'Because I care about my co-workers, I actively support their efforts to accomplish important personal goals'; 'Even when people make mistakes, I continue to trust them'.[17]

Scores on Machiavellian and Moral Competency scales are interpretable as measures of positive or negative responses to some of Machiavelli's maxims which have been carefully selected to represent Shakespeare's 'evil Machiavel' or specific Christian values, respectively. At face value, scores on these scales can be expected to be strongly negatively correlated. However, the psychometric deficiencies of the Lennick and Kiel scale, and the inadequate selection of items in the Machiavellian scales, render this research otiose. Indeed, high scorers on Machiavellian scales cannot be expected to admit to conventionally undesirable behaviour, such as manipulating, cheating, lying and dominating others. Being manipulative entails rejecting accusations that one is so. Machiavellians do not admit they are Machiavellian.

Lennick and Kiel argue for a form of moral intelligence that they consider opposite and superior to Machiavellian ingenuity. However, intelligence as a disposition has no normative force or aspect, since it entails problem-solving ability, versatility and adaptability. To grant dispositional intelligence moral force it is necessary to add moral judgements to the conventional notion of cognitive intelligence. Gardner was an early contributor to this popular trend when he wrote: 'a prerequisite for a theory of multiple intelligences, as a whole, is that it captures a reasonably complete gamut of the kinds of abilities *valued by human cultures*' (italics added).[18] One is left wondering which abilities fail and which pass the test. Among failures, Gardner includes those used by a scientist, a religious leader and a politician. His selection reveals that an ability needs to be valued within cultures or societies to be accepted as an intelligence. This assumption enables Lennick and Kiel to extol tender-minded Christian values and indict tough-minded pagan values.

Machiavellian Executives

As noted, Weber argued that both management and leadership relationships are based on authority: role-based in the case of the former, personality-based in the case of the latter. 'Natural' (personality-based) leaders acquire a following because

16 Kaliska (2014); Martin & Austin (2010).
17 Lennick & Kiel (2005: 251–258).
18 Gardner (1983: 62).

of an extraordinary devotion of followers to the heroism, sacredness or exemplariness of special individuals and the solutions to recalcitrant problems revealed by them. In *The Art of War*, Machiavelli expresses his reservations about the emergence of such leaders because they represent a threat to the power of a prince. To ensure that leaders do not cause trouble, their authority and power over their people must be restricted. Machiavelli says that such restriction is achieved either through nature or circumstances. As to nature, princes must ensure that a leader who is born in a particular place is not given power over the people enrolled there but should be made a leader in places where he has no natural connections. As to circumstances, Machiavelli recommends that each year the leaders are changed from district to district, because continuous authority over the same people produces among them such a close union that it easily can be changed into something damaging to the prince.

Machiavelli saw that leadership works against effective organisation because leadership is self-determined and sets its own limits. It is, therefore, naturally unstable because the mere fact of recognising the personal mission and extraordinary power of natural leaders establishes their status. They must offer convincing solutions to difficult problems and should they cease to do so, their status and power evaporate. According to this reasoning, effective managers would qualify as leaders when they set themselves against the organisational status quo. But if they do so, it is difficult to see how they could be regarded as effective since their success depends on the respect and support of others. At this point, the notion of 'leader' becomes problematic in the context of the Weberian connotation of personality-based followership. Indeed, if the words 'leader' and 'executive' are to be taken as referring to relationships with followers and subordinates respectively, Weber's distinction between role-based and personality-based 'followership' is crucial. Insofar as executives' authority adheres to their role, if another word for an effective senior manager is needed, 'executive' makes more sense logically, if not rhetorically, than 'leader'.

Machiavelli is adamant that executives should judge their managers on their work *performance*, of which there are three types. First are those managers who think for themselves; second are those who are competent, loyal and respond well to instructions; third are those who are unable to think for themselves or comprehend instructions. The first type of performer is the best but Machiavelli cautions that individuals who think mainly of themselves and purse their own profit cannot be trusted. The challenge for executives, therefore, is to support and encourage the strengths of independent thinkers while retaining a degree of control over them.

Machiavelli advises executives to be wise, just, courageous and shrewd. They should create obligations, confer benefits gradually, and protect themselves from those who are dangerously independent. They should never appear indecisive, irresolute, cowardly, frivolous or effeminate. With respect to their staff, they must insist on competence and loyalty, get others to do unpleasant tasks, shun flatterers, seek advice on their terms and adhere to their decisions forthrightly.

In forming an opinion about choosing managers, Machiavellian executives look at those around them. When these managers are competent and loyal, executives can be themselves considered prudent because they have been able to recognise those who are competent and keep them loyal. To keep managers loyal, Machiavellian executives remember to honour and reward them for their achievements, give them challenging responsibilities and leave them with the impression that they are indispensable. However, the same executives will be prudent enough to ensure that such honours do not lead managers to desire even greater wealth, nor that their new responsibilities make them fear change. Machiavelli concludes that if executives are of this kind, they can have confidence in one another. If they are not, things will end badly for one or the other.

Machiavelli's is a performance-orientated philosophy. While executive failure is often attributed to irresolution, procrastination or lack of courage, much is forgiven in retrospect to those who succeed. John Pierpont Morgan, Thomas Watson, Alfred Sloan, Jack Welch and Steve Jobs are widely considered to be among the most successful business executives of the last century. Yet, none of them is remembered as a boss with whom it was easy to work.[19] Conversely, it is difficult to find evidence for Lennick and Kiel's claim that the best executives are humble, compassionate, caring and forgiving.

Machiavellian executives are pragmatists with respect to means but idealists with respect to ends. Their ideal is the power and glory of the organisation. It is a serious misreading of Machiavelli to interpret his 'Machiavellians' as psychopaths. His political philosophy is based on personal and social power and the inevitable tension between them. In management, this tension emerges as the conflict between person and organisation. For every executive there is a choice between power (ability to act) and authority (right and duty to act). Machiavelli does not have much to say about authority since he considers it to be co-extensive with the power of office. Yet, as a staunch republican, he insisted that to be at liberty individuals must not be dependent on the will of others. To avoid tyranny, the rule of law must be accepted and revered. Such acceptance requires of political rulers (and by extension executives) an ability to engage in Friedrich's persuasive reasoned elaboration which is dependent on the interests and values of those to whom it is directed.

If there is an argument for leadership in management, it cannot be based on the naive idea that every second manager can become a leader. However, where competent executives develop a philosophy which they are prepared to articulate publicly, where they present a view of business or government as positive achievements, where they educate people rather than subordinate them to platitudes, they are candidates for leadership.

Machiavelli endorsed the Greek's and Romans' emphasis on the power of rhetoric through which individuals earn the right to educate others. As such, he was

19 Joullié & Spillane (2021: 63).

not the founder of political science that he is often made to be, but the restorer of the Roman conception of politics as civil wisdom. That is, he saw politics as a rhetorical practice and wrote as a rhetorician to persuade his readers of the contribution of long-forgotten ancient political principles.

Ingenuity of Intelligence?

Proponents of multiple intelligences define them in terms of abilities that are *valued* by the community. If certain abilities are not valued, therefore, they are not intelligences. Consequently, managers who have special abilities in interpersonal relationships that are not valued in the community cannot be called morally intelligent. This logic renders the notion of moral intelligence relative to alleged values both within and between communities. When such moral value judgements are imposed on executives, moralising is in danger of becoming moralism.

Executives inevitably engage in moralising because they cannot avoid value judgements in decision-taking. Further, there are executives who believe that they know precisely how their colleagues should behave morally. Their belief in their own ability to assess appropriate behaviour is strong enough that they direct others to their version of right belief. Executive behaviour of this kind demonstrates moralism, not intelligence.

The normative dimension of executive behaviour acquires a central role in management theory because managers' actions are subject to rules, regulations, norms and laws. Managers possess competencies insofar as they combine authority and accountability for effective performance for which they are rewarded. Psychological dispositions, as causes of behaviour, are thus granted normative status. Yet, as has been shown, Gardner and Lennick and Kiel attempt to combine notions of dispositional intelligence with normative standards and egregious value judgements. Such attempts distort the meaning of intelligence which is a collection of abilities that manifests itself in interactions between individuals and the environment.

Some management authors have asserted that to be intelligent, individuals need to be knowledgeable of and versatile with respect to moral issues.[20] Such abilities cannot include a dogmatic commitment, personally or collectively, to a specific moral position. Indeed, the idea that there is, or should be, only one moral perspective for any society is not an example of versatility. Rather, it exemplifies authoritarianism or even totalitarianism. Besides, moral versatility cannot be compared to the ability to solve arithmetical problems or comprehend a passage of philosophy. Moreover, if intelligence is synonymous with versatility, a serious logical error is committed when moral versatility is treated as a fixed personality trait. Yet this identification is exactly the position promoted by the moral intelligence movement.

20 Cosans & Reina (2018); Harris (2010).

Machiavellian ingenuity cannot be reduced to a personality or motivational trait without contradiction since the dispositional nature of traits reduces versatility and thereby inhibits ingenuity. If moral intelligence is to be preferred to Machiavellian ingenuity, the reasons are themselves moral, rather than logical or empirical. From observations of individuals' problem-solving behaviour inferences are made about their 'intelligence', which is then used as an inner cause of the observed behaviour. Invalid circular reasoning of this sort has dominated personality theories for decades and condemned them to sterility.

Where Machiavellianism and moral intelligence are treated motivationally, similar problems emerge since the term 'motivation' carries different meanings. In managerial psychology, it refers to a motive force as in physics, whereas in popular psychology it is used as a synonym for ambition or greed. Its function as a motive force is problematic since it turns out to be either circular or a metaphor for intention or purpose. If the latter, motivation cannot be a disposition. In summary, neither moral intelligence nor Machiavellianism can be treated as a personality or motivational disposition without encountering serious logical problems, notably circularity.

As Machiavelli accepted that ethical debates are decided ethically, he described what political rulers do, but also told them what they should do in the light of his generalisations about human nature gleaned from personal political experiences and his reading of the pagan literature. Machiavelli is thus not a philosopher in the rationalistic tradition. Rather, he combines and applies to the study of politics, observation, historical knowledge, rules of thumb, practical suggestions, broad-based reflections, cool political realism and a realist psychology. That his social psychology is today described as cynical reveals again the value judgements that threaten empirical research on his maxims.

Applied to management, moral intelligence is the tender-minded alternative to tough-minded Machiavellian ingenuity, where the terms tough- and tender-minded are not intended to be normative expressions. Against objectives of individual and collective work performance maximisation, however, a normative evaluation can be offered. Specifically, as managers with high moral intelligence allegedly reject and invert the values and practices espoused by Machiavelli, those with low moral intelligence are those who do not support or sincerely promote compassion, forgiveness and brotherly love. That is, managers of high moral intelligence support the Christian proverb 'honesty is the best policy' whereas managers of low moral intelligence probably agree with the Hungarian proverb that 'those who tell the truth get their heads bashed in.' By emphasising the importance of integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion, the advocates of moral intelligence set themselves against the pagan values of personal and political power. As a philosopher of power, Machiavelli earns the label 'tough-minded' and his followers would therefore be expected to engage in the tough-minded behaviour revealed by empirical studies.

Machiavelli believed that religion, like the law, acts as an ethical cement and thus reinforces social cohesion. If he opposed Christian virtue to pagan *virtù*, it was to emphasise that the former seeks the psychological safety of salvation at

the risk of being crushed by people who are unconstrained by such idealistic concerns. Further, strict adherence to Christian religious beliefs reduces personal versatility and burdens people with heavy moral baggage. To rule a principality, one needs to be willing and able to 'enter into evil when necessity commands.' To this end, Machiavelli advocates a dual political ethic: a pagan ethic for rulers and a Christian ethic for the rest.[21]

Machiavelli is committed to the view that a dual ethic is required for a strong society. His reading of history convinced him that a society based on a dual ethic, such as the Roman Republic, requires extraordinarily strong rulership to ameliorate the tensions between the rulers and the ruled. Ironically, therefore, the man who is widely regarded as the devil incarnate, was not an advocate of totalitarian rule. He sincerely believed in the personal liberty that is possible for people in a strong, republican society and was not bothered by the moral duality that underpins it. He accepted the inevitability of tough-minded rulers and tender-minded followers and the necessity of both. Any attempt, he argued, to enforce a monolithic morality must end in totalitarianism and is doomed to failure. Despite his fearsome reputation as a preacher of evil, Machiavelli aimed to revive the Roman conception of political theory as a rhetorical practice in the service of liberty. Although this vision is not necessarily a tender minded one, at least it sublimates the tough mindedness for which Machiavelli is remembered.

Machiavelli's Legacy

Machiavelli's dialectic of power set the agenda for the political philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke, where the intertwining of authority and power is well demonstrated.

The question of whether authority is imposed upon citizens or whether it is conceded by them to a person or office needs to be carefully considered. Machiavelli's analysis, at least in *The Prince*, implies that authority is imposed as a fait accompli by a combination of coercion, tradition, religion and law. An alternative view is that authority should be defined as a relational term which emphasises its concessional basis. The idea of a process of authorisation points to an evaluative basis which is subject to periodic monitoring. This view is not necessarily incompatible with Machiavelli's since to be able to impose authority one must have had it conceded by some group to whose views the persons on which it is imposed do not subscribe. But this imposition is likely to be by way of the exercise of power.

Machiavelli's method is eclectic and although he studied history intensively and read ancient authors carefully, he uses them selectively and extracts from his sources examples that support his general position. His method is not inductive in the sense

21 Berlin (1991).

that his aim is merely to observe political relationships and describe how rulers conduct their affairs. He constantly criticises the contemporary world and tells his readers how politicians 'ought' to act. He is, in this sense, more rhetorician than scientist.

Machiavelli's 'political science' cannot be evaluated against the rigorous standards of the natural sciences. If one's critical criterion for science is the generation of falsifiable propositions, then Machiavelli's political philosophy is not a science. Further, if one means by 'science' the formulation of hypotheses based on detailed observations and deductions therefrom, Machiavelli also fails as a scientist. To take a typical example, after pointing out some of the mistakes of the French in their invasion of Italy, Machiavelli concludes that from this anecdote may be drawn a general rule which rarely fails: that the man who enables another to become powerful brings upon himself his own ruin. But, of course, this rule does fail in many cases.

Machiavelli's dramatic generalisations about human nature, Christianity, political tactics and society are not intended to be statements of empirical fact but assumptions which wise princes would be well advised to act upon. He does not claim rigorous empirical support for his view that human beings are without exception *Homo homini lupus*. Nonetheless, a wise prince acts on the assumption that this is so.

Machiavelli believes that human beings are fundamentally good or fundamentally evil. He never doubts that human beings are by nature more prone to evil than to good: they are ambitious, suspicious, and unable to gauge the limits of their own fortune, blinded by greed to danger, constantly desire what they cannot obtain and are discontented with what they have obtained. It is prudent, therefore, to assume the worst of human beings and act upon that assumption, even in the face of apparent evidence to the contrary.

It is difficult to exaggerate the insightfulness of the great Florentine. We can do no better than conclude this discussion with the following quotation from Meinecke:

> Machiavelli's theory was a sword which was plunged into the flank of the body politic of Western humanity, causing it to shriek and rear up. This was bound to happen; for not only had genuine moral feeling been seriously wounded, but death had also been threatened to the Christian views of all churches and sects, and therefore to the strongest bond uniting men and nations, the highest spiritual power that reigned over them.[22]

22 Meinecke (1957: 49).

Chapter 9:
Purposive Ethics for Managers

The problem of how managers can justify ethical values is an aspect of more general discussions of business ethics. As 'business ethics' is usually taken to refer to standards by which working people and other stakeholders regulate their behaviour by distinguishing what is acceptable for their purposes from what is not, a fundamental question is: how may any ethical value be justified? This problem is particularly acute given the ethical relativism in postmodern workplaces and the general pessimism in management circles about the possibility of being rational about ethics.[1]

Ethical relativists believe that ethical obligation arises from the need to conform to social prescriptions and proscriptions which vary according to time, place and local power relationships. Consequently, managerial problems develop when stakeholders can see no good reason why they should regulate their behaviour according to what they see as arbitrary and variable rules. This difficulty is accentuated in younger people who have been shown to be relatively more individualistic, narcissistic and materialistic than their parents and grandparents.[2] There is also strong evidence that many of the problems of apathy and aggression at the workplace emerge because people no longer share the common understanding that is a necessary basis for cooperative action.[3]

In recent years there has been considerable interest in revisiting the notion of purpose in an endeavour to treat ethical statements objectively and thus provide them with firm foundations. Purpose is associated with mission and vision and is widely considered as that which underpins and unites these constructs. Purpose is a relational concept; it is relevant to organisations and management and is the underlying reason for their existence. Purpose also operates at the individual level and provides a way of relating personal aspirations to organisational goals.[4] More generally, purpose is the basis of business ethics because without purposes there can be no ethics. To say of an action that it is right is equivalent to saying that it coincides with a purpose. The purpose behind a series of actions is typically the goal toward which that action tends.

The aim of this chapter is to offer a theory of ethics for managers based on common human purposes and free of metaphysical, religious or a priori foundations. Such an undertaking, if it generates demonstrably useful guidelines, will achieve a secular status capable of facilitating communication, even with ethical relativists

1 Abend (2014); Joullié & Spillane (2021)

2 Greenfield (2013).

3 Doran (2016); Ward (2011).

4 Birkinshaw, Foss & Lindenberg (2014); Bronk et al. (2009); Cardona & Rey (2008); Craig & Snook (2014); Grant (2017); Hill & Turiano (2014); Hollensbe et al. (2014); Laloux (2014); Maclagan (2007); Rey, Velasco & Almandoz (2019); Spillane & Martin (2005); White et al. (2017).

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and fundamentalists. This outcome will be achieved only if the framework arrived at offers a method by which managers increase their effectiveness in assisting stakeholders to live in a more self-directed and effective manner.

Justifying Ethical Values in Management

The problem of how managers justify ethical values is particularly acute given the ethical relativism in postmodern business and the general pessimism in managerialist circles about the possibility of being rational about ethics. Nietzsche stands at the head of this trend owing to his virulent criticisms of Christian ethics and his prediction that nihilism, which entails ethical as well as other forms of relativism, would dominate European consciousness in the twentieth century and beyond. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche appears to deny status to all standards and institutions. However, despite his protestations, Nietzsche is not in fact unethical since he bases his criticism of Western ethics on premises which are of an ethical kind, even if unconventional. For example, Nietzsche indicts reactive slave morality (based on fear and resentment) and extols active master morality (based on vitality and aristocratic self-assertion). He concludes that the way forward in ethics demands a radical kind of thinking – a 're-evaluation of all values' – that will not be justifiable in a manner which is acceptable to adherents of the old Christian paradigm.

Managers typically seek to justify an ethical position by referring to some higher value which is either held in common or is advanced as being self-evidently true. For example, when asked why she refused to work in a nuclear power plant, a manager said that she opposes nuclear power because it might annihilate humanity. When pressed as to why she considered that the interests of humanity placed her under an obligation to act, she replied that there is no need to justify the value of human life: it is self-evident. While most people agree with her as to the value of human life, how does one *justify* that view? The horror of human cruelty, mass corruption and homicidal despotism is not confined to the past. What possible justification is there for a species that has caused so much damage and devastation to itself and the planet? How can its survival be a fundamental ethical value?

Philosophers from Aristotle to Kant have argued that ethical propositions are justified by an appeal to intuitive knowledge of right and wrong supported by empirical facts. In both cases the philosophical arguments advanced purport to provide some rational support for the ethical propositions in question. Typically, an ethical position is expressed in injunctive form (thou shalt ...) and viewed as implying an obligation for people to behave in the manner it prescribes. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of an ethical system, religious, utilitarian, deontological or virtue, which does not depend on the feeling of obligation. Christians, for example, regard 'obligation' as the essential element of ethics and so any value system which does not create a cosmic onus or transcendental demand is deemed as non-ethical. Descriptions of this 'obligatory' perspective are generally in terms of feelings of obli-

gation or habits of obedience. These feelings are projected into ethical reasoning in the form of transcendental demands.

Kant's famous attempt to justify ethics by means of deductive logic yielded an analysis of obligation as the fabric of ethical reality and disclosed the nature of the individual's relationship to ethics to be that of 'duty'. However, his deductive logic is only as sound as its premises. To accept as real the existence of transcendental ethical obligation, and thus duty, before arriving at a satisfactory justification of transcendental ethical concepts is simply to beg the question.

Kant's critical admirer, Schopenhauer, was not taken in by his predecessor's reasoning. In *The Basis of Morality*, he confidently concluded that he had succeeded in establishing the basis of ethics, which he located in the cognitive process of 'empathy'. In effect, Schopenhauer located the origin of ethics in human nature and dispensed with the idea of obligation or duty altogether.

Yet, if the idea of transcendental obligation is merely a projection of a biologically based tendency to a feeling of obligation, there is no reason to believe that any form of transcendental obligation exists. Does that mean that there is no sense in which an ethical proposition has validity?

Even though a concept of transcendental obligation cannot be logically validated, it is possible to speak of an ethical proposition having objective validity. The form that such objectivity takes will involve a factual proposition, logical reasoning as to the implications of those facts, and a third element which will mark the specifically ethical character of the proposition. If ethical debate is undertaken in terms of propositions of that kind, ethics will be elevated from mere feelings and brought into the realm of reason. In other words, if it is possible to reach an understanding of the rationality of ethical justification, it will be possible for managers to communicate on ethical issues in an effective and convincing manner. It should then be possible to develop objective standards for applications in critical enquiries and business debates. This outcome is achievable only if the understanding arrived at provides a method by which philosophy and the behavioural sciences increase their effectiveness in assisting people to live in a more self-directed manner.

One reason for thinking that there can be no objective ethics is the widespread belief that evaluative judgements are merely expressions of personal feelings. This objection to the possibility of a rational approach to ethics is based on the old-fashioned 'faculty' view of consciousness which began with Plato and claims that there is an irreducible difference between reason and emotion. Consequently, debates about ethical systems have often turned on the traditional distinction between cognitive and affective states of consciousness.

Cognitive states include perceiving and reasoning, both of which play an essential part in the processes of science. Reasoning plays a significant role in the integration of observation but is not the authoritative foundation of scientific knowledge. Perceiving, especially of replicable causal sequences, is the foundation of science and carries the final authority for the justification of any scientific claim. Reasoning

is the authoritative process in questions of logic, and it is not possible to impugn the logic of a proposition on the strength of an empirical observation (and vice-versa: it is not possible to dismiss a corroborated observation through logical reasoning). Reasoning and perceiving cooperate to extend knowledge but, in the final analysis, in any question of proof or justification each is restricted to a distinct and limited field of competence.

The affective side of consciousness – the passions – embraces emoting, feeling and willing. Most people believe that affective experience is essentially irrational. This conviction springs from an ancient belief that passions are constantly at war with reasoning: a reflection of the difficulty people find in conforming to their own best judgement. Hume thought that the affective faculties had won the war: he saw reason as a slave of the passions. The legacy of this now dated 'faculty' view of consciousness is the widespread belief that emotion and reason are fundamentally of a distinct nature and that the cognitive faculties govern reasoning. This conception is especially dominant in debates about ethical responsibility.

There is a large body of practical understanding about the nature of ethical responsibility because it is the yardstick by which guilt and liability are measured in a legal sense. For example, there are situations in which people are found to have a causal responsibility for an event without being regarded as having an ethical responsibility. The distinction centres on the question of whether the event was a true expression of the agent's willing. If an accident outside an individual's control intervenes to change the outcome of a course of action, then this individual's ethical and legal responsibility is limited. Similarly, when sensibilities are clouded by drugs, responsibility is usually said to be diminished. Anything one does which is under full control is described by philosophers and lawyers as 'one's action'. Actions attract ethical responsibility; reactive bodily movements do not.

Unlike reactive behaviour, every action has a purposive structure. The difference between stealing and accidentally taking an object is the difference of purpose. Accordingly, situations are perceived in such a way that certain of their features become reasons for trying to create a new situation with which the original one is contrasted. For example, organisations are said to have a purpose applied to them by managers, whereas individual managers have intentions which support (or not) the overriding purpose. Consequently, managerial situations requiring action can be analysed so that their structure reproduces that of a practical syllogism in which factual propositions are related to purposive propositions.

Ethics and Reason

The concepts 'ethics' and 'reason' are often used in two distinct contexts. 'Ethics' refers to rules, community judgements, a sense of 'rightness' and 'wrongness', reward and punishment and the feelings of 'guilt' and 'self-righteousness'. By way

of contrast, 'reason' is linked to ideas of reasonableness, relative costs and benefits and success or failure.

Differences between ethics and reason are accountable in terms of an 'obligatory' view of ethics, and in terms of the appropriation to ethics of altruistic behaviour. The dichotomy between reason and ethics has inclined people to view reason in terms of self-interest with the result that altruistic actions are frequently viewed as unreasonable. This view shows itself in a subtle way, for example, in the flashes of self-righteous indignation displayed by managerialists when their patience is tried by an argumentative subordinate.

Ideally, individuals who ground ethics on reason would not experience the tension that is engendered in ethicists who undertake altruism as a sacrifice to principle, or a Kierkegaardian 'leap of faith'. Indeed, the former would not act on altruistic principles unless they genuinely identified the altruistic purpose as their own. They would only favour the interests of 'the other' if those interests were also their own concern. In that case, they assess the risks, costs and benefits according to their own genuine purposes and do not accrue the resentment that develops in people for whom ethics is a handicap imposed upon them.

Conflicts in individuals between reason and ethics are a sign of the false dichotomy of those concepts. The phenomenon is symptomatic of the 'bad faith' described by Sartre. 'Bad faith' is a form of ethical cowardice displayed by individuals who have been intimidated by the 'obligatory' conception of ethics and who act out a role to which they are not committed.

The appropriation to ethics of altruistic behaviour leads to mistaken ascriptions of motivation and to the denial of the possible reasonableness of altruism. For example, in the face of extreme provocation from a rude colleague, a manager keeps her feelings under control and explains to witnesses later what her feelings really were. It is possible to see her behaviour as motivated by the ethical precept that one should 'turn the other cheek' and it is probable that her colleagues will see it that way. But this interpretation ignores the wealth of reasons which could explain the behaviour. The manager may be determined to provide her colleagues with a model of dignity, to instil in them the importance of politeness and to ensure as far as possible for her own part, by affirmative action, that she works in the kind of organisation in which people act courteously. These justifications point to coherent, reasonable objectives. Insofar as it is reasonably conceived as serving some identifiable purpose, any precept generally regarded as ethical is thus also reasonable.

'Reasonableness' is an ideal defined in the law of liberal democracies in terms of what a competent, caring and self-disciplined person is expected to do.[5] The concept is also associated with standards of information and logic. As such, it is an expression of social interest as distinct from the self-interest of the individual. That is, if

5 Miller & Perry (2011).

reasonableness means being competent, caring and self-disciplined, then it implies some degree of social definition and denotes some quality of social interaction. Such a quality could be justified by self-interest, but no such demonstration is necessary to the legal concept of reasonableness. The law views reasonableness as a standard or expectation the community imposes on its members regardless of their individual concerns. There is, therefore, no need to regard reason as primarily a self-centred ideal. In this case, genuinely altruistic purposes are reasonable, conceived from the individual's perspective, provided only that they are conceived by individuals as springing from their own free purposes and choices (these being socially framed) rather than from some external source with which they do not identify.

In sum, the intrication of reason within ethics is such that an ethical proposition can only be justified through reasoning. Managers who expect a different justification in what they perceive to be rational behaviour than they expect in what they believe is ethical behaviour only exhibit the travails of the 'obligatory' view of ethics. There is no reason why what has typically been regarded as an ethical kind of motivation in management cannot now be regarded as a reasonable kind of behaviour and vice versa. For example, managers can judge ethical behaviour according to whether it takes reasonable account of the relevant information available which has some bearing on whether their actions will fulfil their explicit purposes. They should also take account of whether the logic used to explicate their purposes is valid. Similarly, if they are judging an action in relation to business goals, they should take account of whether the action was consistent with the kind of action a reasonable person would take.

Purpose, Choice and Responsibility

In psychology, purposive behaviour is usually associated with the 'behaviorism' of Tolman who claimed that behaviour is modified by learning, patterned and directed towards producing some premeditated effect. Unlike other behaviourists who eschewed cognitive concepts, Tolman postulated that humans develop 'cognitive maps' that enable them to find their way in the world. However, he was not willing to admit consciousness in his theory, which is rather strange for someone who does admit purpose. Rather, he asserted that purposes are determined entities. Unsurprisingly, Tolman was criticised for his teleological tendencies which conflict with the determinism of orthodox behaviourist theories. His critics were concerned that his 'teleology' opened the door to free will and was therefore just another deficient version of mind/body dualism. Tolman's theory is rarely quoted nowadays, although he has a distant and influential relative in Lewin who produced a quasi-purposive theory which generated influential experiments in social psychology.

Purposive psychology was revived by Spillane and Martin who sought an alternative to the deterministic theories which dominate psychology. Their theory is based on three axioms. First, people are spontaneous movers and are always in motion.

Consequently, there is no need to explain why people behave. Rather, the problem is to show why activity takes the direction it does. Second, people are pattern-perceivers and can perceive a total pattern when perceiving only part of it. When the pattern (or some fragment of it) occurs over time, people can anticipate or predict by reference to its recalled culmination. Furthermore, people are perceivers of cause and effect (a particular kind of pattern); they use knowledge of causes to control effects and to avoid being affected themselves if that is their wish. Third, people perceive pleasure and pain and the difference between them, and they use this perception as a basis of choice. This capacity results in the creation of a hierarchy of values which is based on trial-and-error experiments which people conduct on their physical and social environments.

Spillane and Martin's theory invokes an array of hypothetical psychological constructs such as purpose, choice and responsibility which indicate the special types of pattern perception that are hypothesised under different conditions. Although Spillane and Martin use the term 'personality', they reject the view, popular in management, that the total personality is the sum of relatively stable traits or motives, and that people are therefore moved into action by them. Rather, they use the term 'personality' existentially to indicate that people are aware that they are the authors of their actions and the owners of the strategies and values which guide the choice of these actions. The same authors postulate that some degree of coherence arises in this personality from the logic of action, the cultural tradition in which it was formed and its hierarchy of values. But as the value hierarchy lacks a final form, personality remains a quasi-pattern which is always subject to modification while experience continues.

Scholars working in the field of management studies have frequently sought to adopt the methods and language of science, which thereby commits them to determinism in some form of another. However, they are confronted with the fact that human beings have consistently demonstrated that they use determinism only with reference to the causes that they themselves manipulate for their own purposes. Wherever possible, people position themselves on the causal side of cause-effect sequences to be the causer rather than the affected party. This fact suffices to assert that determinism is a misguided policy to apply to the psychology of human beings.

In the field of ethics, the challenge is to refine 'managerial consciousness' to make accessible as great a range of rational choice as possible to those who can appreciate extensive vistas of the pattern taken by events. This endeavour implies a magnification of the differences between managers in terms of their abilities in perceiving and pursuing complex patterns. Such magnification has desirable aspects in that it offers the prospect of the withering away of the necessity for external controls and so advances civilised management. Such a perspective has notable ethical implications since it rejects egalitarian values in favour of management being led forward by its own creativity. It is also returns managers to fundamental questions about the purpose of management, organisations and the intricate problems of their own purposive behaviour.

The Nature of Ethical Justification

Ethics, then, is concerned with purposes. The matter is complicated by the fact that the purpose is the goal that is desired by people who believe it is attainable by their actions. If this belief is false, the purpose will not be fulfilled or, if it is, it will be owing to good fortune. Offering a bribe to a manager, for example, may be the crucial factor in losing one's job even though the bribe was intended to impress him.

To hold that ethics is fundamentally concerned with purpose is to hold that an ethical value is justified only by demonstrating that it is one which serves to advance some purpose. Accordingly ethical conclusions are deductively derived because reason is authoritative in all questions of deductive logic. Hence, all reasoned ethical justifications comprise conclusions which are purposive propositions, and since a reasoned conclusion cannot logically include an element which is not present in or implied by the premises from which that conclusion is drawn, it follows that the premises must contain or imply a purposive proposition.

The argument that ethical premises contain a purposive element implies that purposive propositions are necessary premises in ethical justifications. Even if the argument is valid, it may still be argued that a necessary premise need not be a sufficient one, that an element other than a purposive proposition needs to be present before recognising the conclusion as an ethical justification. Managers might, for example, claim that the proposition 'it is wrong to cheat people' is a valid ethical proposition which implies a universal obligation. They might also recognise that it is not possible to justify anything like universal obligation by reference only to purposive propositions. In reply, it can be said that it makes no sense to talk of a universal ethical obligation except to describe a feeling a person has, such as a sense of obligation. The conclusion that ethical justification is purposive stands.

A starting point for an example of ethical justification for managers is the widely accepted contention that the ultimate test of management is the achievement of actual results. Drucker, for example, insisted that the ultimate test of management is objective performance without which organisational survival is not possible. Yet, he also argued that business ethical values cannot be justified while quoting approvingly Norris's succinct ethical statement that the purpose of business is to do well by doing good.[6] As scholars have noted, Drucker believed that there should not be suprapersonal ethical values which apply to business specifically.[7] He argued that performance and contribution are essential purposes for management, but this requirement does not entail a suprapersonal, (or metaphysical) perspective.[8] Drucker acknowledged a long tradition in ethics, from Aristotle on, which asserts that ethics originates with the individual: one ethics, one set of rules, one code, that of indi-

6 Drucker (1982).

7 Bardy & Rubens (2010); Malcolm & Hartley (2009).

8 Drucker (1981: 19).

vidual behaviour in which the same rules apply to everyone. Rather, the performance requirement provides a foundation for a managerial purposive ethic based on the ongoing survival and growth of business organisations. A manager who begins with that purpose proceeds as follows:

(a) *Purposive proposition:* 'In this company, our purpose is to manage by objective work performance.'
(b) *Empirical premise:* 'Personality test scores do not predict objective work performance.'
(c) *Logical conclusion:* 'In this company, our purpose is to manage by objective work performance without the use of personality tests.[9]

This reasoning is valid in the sense that its conclusion is true in relation to the explicit purpose on every occasion on which the empirical premise is true. There may, of course, be managers or consultants with a vested interest in the use of personality tests who claim that the empirical premise is not true. This doubt will create confusion among managers when they discover that their ability to draw ethical conclusions from the use of personality tests is thereby frustrated.

Statement (c) is a purposive proposition. But is it an assertion of ethical value? To say that 'our purpose is to manage in a certain way' is to say that it is a preferred way of managing for this company. An ethical position on this subject can therefore be justified by demonstrating that it is a position which serves to satisfy some preference (e. g., achievement, effectiveness). In effect, any purpose is a candidate for judgement from the perspective of any other relevant purpose. Purposes are relevant to each other if the frustration or fulfilment of one has some consequences bearing on the frustration of fulfilment of the other.

The idea that functionality is the sole dimension of ethical evaluation will encounter objections. Functionality has frequently been abused as a justification for oppression and outrage. Hitler, it might be objected, could easily have justified extermination of the Jews on the sole ground that it was his preference that the economic power of European Jews be broken. To these objections, the reply is that any purpose may be judged for functionality from the perspective of any other relevant purpose. What this rejoinder implies is that the most complete judgement of functionality will attempt to take account of other relevant purposes. There is, therefore, no reason why managers cannot generate a continually expanding body of propositions of the form of the one concerning personality tests and the importance of objective work performance.

9 Spillane & Joullié (2015: 41).

Purposive Ethics for Managers

A purposive view of ethics is necessarily relative rather than absolute, but it is not thereby wholly idiosyncratic. The most common version of relativism in management proposes that ethical justification arises from social expectations and that one's duty is to conform to the behavioural expectations of one's organisation. The relativists who rely on organisational (or community) expectations as an authoritative basis for the assessment of ethical issues do so because they require some rules which can sharpen the process of ethical discussion, giving it a degree of precision. This requirement, they hope, eliminates the idiosyncratic tendencies of relativism.

There are more effective strategies for the refinement of ethical judgement than the one offered by relativists. Indeed, a thorough judgement of one specific purpose requires consideration of related purposes. To a fair extent, managers judge a purpose according to their knowledge of a consensus of human purposes and business purposes and quickly reach an appreciation of the significant issues involved. In the final analysis, though, they each determine their overall response to the purpose in question only by deciding which purposes are most significant.

Purposive ethics assumes that humans are free, responsible beings. This assumption for the refinement of ethical justification is neither mainly conceptual nor empirical. It is existential and agrees with those writers, like Sartre, who assume that human beings are ontologically free. Its basis is described simply: individuals choose. The act of choosing is an expression of purpose. It follows that if the construct of choice is stressed in social action, that of purpose cannot be avoided. There is no valid reason why the fact of deliberate choice in justification of an ethical value cannot be advanced.

Critics will hold that 'choice' is not a satisfying foundation for ethical justification. First, they will object that the statement (A) 'I hold x value because I choose to' is tautological and therefore trivial. Yet A is not empty because it conveys a psychological fact, my resolution. It is probable that the fact of my resolution is not without history and that my choice is a crystallisation of a history of beliefs about the issue at hand. Second, critics will press that choice is not a satisfactory kind of ethical justification on the grounds that it is an idiosyncratic event and, as such, encourages irresponsible, indiscriminate egoism. While some such choices are indeed idiosyncratic, there are instances in history where a resolution has been the impetus to a distinguished career. In these days of 'moral leadership', the potential power of a seminal choice of value is hard to miss.[10]

Purposes are related insofar as the fulfilment or frustration of one purpose has implications for the fulfilment of another purpose. Managers embrace multitudinous and often conflicting purposes but the fact that one purpose impinges on another provides a functional basis for assessing convergence or divergence of purposes.

10 Solinger, Jansen & Cornelissen (2020).

This type of comparison can be extended because it is usually the case that a specific purpose relates directly (i.e., in a functional manner) to a prior purpose. When examining a specific purpose, managers will take account of the prior purposes that are being served. Only in rare instances do they find that an action arises from some unitary purpose, such as compelling hunger. In almost all cases they will find that an action is undertaken to fulfil a harmonious range of different purposes. The inter-relationship of purposes, both individual and social, makes an action reasonable and justified on a multiplicity of different counts. The integration of purposes in this manner is the hallmark of what is commonly called reasonable behaviour.

A convergence of purposes can never justify an action in an absolute sense, but it provides additional ethical weight to it. Further, when an ethical justification is offered, it implicitly carries the weight of social sanction. Besides, noting that such purposes as physical comfort, safety and nourishment are universal does not turn an inference into a universal ethical obligation. Drawing such a conclusion would commit the error of arguing from the fact of their universality to the value of obligation. Instead, managers take account of fundamental human purposes when they assess whether those purposes are furthered or frustrated by another purpose that they are evaluating. An ethical or reasonable justification based on fundamental purposes will always be of the form followed by every other valid ethical justification, namely:

(a) x purpose does/does not further/frustrate the satisfaction of a need.
(b) It is preferred that y need be/be not furthered/frustrated.
(c) Therefore, (and for the purpose of y need only) x purpose is/is not desirable.

Although such reasoning does not allow managers to justify a universal ethical obligation, the fact that there are universal human purposes does allow them to advance their understanding of what kinds of ethical justification will presumably be acceptable to other people.

Applying Purposive Ethics

Maslow is relevant to the idea of fundamental purposes on the condition that his influential theory of a hierarchy of needs is stripped of the notion of 'motive-force' and given a purposive interpretation. As noted, Maslow's individuals make choices according to what is satisfying to their bodies and sense of well-being. They do not employ reason to choose to actualise their potentialities because their decisions are based on what they need. In other words, by appealing to needs Maslow fell into the 'purposive' trap. In everyday language a need is something that is necessary for a specified goal, which is rarely made explicit because it is taken for granted. 'I need x' means 'I need x *in order to* y'. In ordinary speech having a need is also to have a purpose and so one cannot have a need for its own sake, even if certain needs (food) are more persistent than others (tickets to a football match). From the fact

of this general persistence, it is tempting to conclude that a strict order of importance operates for human beings, as Maslow claimed. This temptation should be resisted, however, for things are necessary to the accomplishment of ends strictly in relation to specific situations. For example, food is essential for the maintenance of life, but sometimes antibiotic drugs (which are not food) are more important. Consequently, no fixed hierarchy can be applied to necessity independent of the ends in view.

Maslow abandoned the view that a need implies a purpose and invested his needs with the power of 'motive-force'. If the notion of motive-force is rejected and if it is assumed that individuals make choices on the grounds of reason, the motive hierarchy becomes a set of priorities for personal and social action. For example, reason indicates that political rulers should secure their citizens against the necessities of food, shelter and competitors before securing procreation and child-rearing. Rulers should then attempt to provide for the civilised amenities of science, art and philosophy.

Similarly, Maslow's hierarchy, stripped of the 'motive-force' component, amounts to the general statement that work organisations should be directed towards emancipating individuals from the primary levels of need, leaving them to work towards higher levels of achievement. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the notion of a hierarchy of needs seems familiar and useful. Received in this light, Maslow's theory supports the cause of purposive, rather than motive-force, ethics.

Maslow's theory is popular because managers will continue to require some systematisation of behavioural expectations to help in the decision-making process. New managers, for example, need guidelines if they are to become competent and managers generally need some means of expressing their common purposes. More generally, if something as simple as 'purpose' is central to all ethical issues, it is possible to re-examine the large body of traditional ethical wisdom in relation to the concept of purpose and to restate it in a consistent manner.

Relevance for Managers

The traditional distinctions between ethical and non-ethical issues, which are arbitrary when they depended on arbitrarily promulgated ethical rules, dissolve in traditional ethics. For example, utilitarians defined the ultimate good in terms of 'the greatest good for the greatest number'. This definition implies that every question which has a bearing on the happiness of the greatest number is necessarily an ethical question and that no question which has no such bearing is an ethical question. Purposive ethics sees no distinction of kind between 'ethical rules' and 'policies' or between 'functional' and 'good'. It opens all fields of choice to some degree of ethical enquiry.

The view of purposive ethics espoused here is relevant to all aspects of managerial behaviour. Questions such as 'Should I become a manager?' 'Should I promote

'hard- or soft-skill' management?' 'Should I tell the truth?' are all candidates for analysis. For researchers, matters to be investigated include:

(a) Which purposes typify work experience? Which are most important to managers specifically and working people generally?
(b) Which of those purposes can be attained and at what costs in relation to other typical purposes?
(c) How can managers maximise individual effectiveness in fulfilling their purposes?

Theories are formulated to explain and predict phenomena and to challenge and extend human knowledge. Furthermore, a theoretical framework gives rise to research programmes. In the social sciences most theories are deterministic (e. g., Marxism, behaviourism) and those that are not insist on the fact of human intentions and meanings (e. g., Weberian sociology, existentialism). Scientific theory differs from everyday knowledge because it is directed at discovering how to do things that cannot be done at the time the theory is conceived. It is unnecessary to advance a theory about what is commonly and reliably done. In this case, the relevant question is why this specific method is chosen, i. e., what body of knowledge dictates the choice of action. Only when no reliable method is known to do something is it appropriate to turn to theory. Discovering such a theory is dependent on discovering the cause of the event the occurrence of which is not yet under control. Scientific theory is thus deterministic by construction. Consequently, social scientists have thrown a cloud of obfuscation around the question of purpose, understood as the conscious planning of an act. In most cases, social scientists have even abolished the idea of purpose by asserting a species of universal determinism which holds that all human action is caused. But is determinism, in any form, an appropriate basis for a theory of ethics?

The theory offered here agrees with the existentialists' insistence on the importance of choice and purpose as a basis for human action. The difference is that existentialists show little or no interest in formal deductive logic and prefer to encourage individuals to develop their own theories of personal existence. Existentialists have an ambivalent attitude to authority which, for them, cannot be other than confidence trick, but one they must accept (reluctantly) if they are to act with justification. Therefore, the choice is between the very best confidence trick and a void.

Humanity's privileged perspective on its own experience reveals that humans are purposive beings. A study of relevant and effective purposes is therefore called for in management studies. Such a study requires coming to grips with what managers want and elucidating the conflicts of purposes that exist. It will indicate situations where the convergence of purposes that exists challenge other purposes which enjoy established privilege. To this extent, purposive management will necessarily be revolutionary in the sense of imposing a regime of change. However, this observation does not imply that the most effective strategies for maximising the fulfilment of purposes will be combative. Purposive managers are orientated towards concilia-

tion and conflict resolution as tools to harness the synergistic properties of cooperation. They will choose to study those purposes with which they sympathise in preference to those they oppose.

With the rise of managerialism, the problem of how ethical values in business are justified is magnified since (as is argued in Chapter 10) management based on rational argumentation has been transformed into managerialism based on authoritarian practices. Consequently, new business problems have arisen under managerialist regimes because many middle managers, professional non-managers and other employees see no good reason why they should regulate their behaviour according to what they see as arbitrary use of power.

In the extreme case, the problem of justification does not arise for authoritarian managerialists because they enforce their decisions without justification. It does not arise, either, when managers are concerned with the means required rationally to achieve a desired goal. Rather, the problem of justification arises when managers communicate such rationality in terms of the needs of the situation and encounter conflicting ethical convictions. When transcendental obligations are forsaken, it is tempting to retreat to an unrelieved relativistic view of ethics. There is, however, an alternative strategy based on rationality. Adopting it widely will ameliorate the excesses of authoritarian managerialism.

A purposive ethics differs from traditional ethics at the experiential level. The traditional conception of ethics involves ideas of guilt, obligation, blind obedience, punishment and self-righteousness. These ideas need not play any part whatsoever in a purposive ethics. By contrast, the theory offered here is consistent with the view that managerial authority is based on rational argumentation. When managers move beyond first-person singular statements of ethical value to second and third-person statements, they have power and authority at their disposal. Where they rely on power, they inevitably fall back on the 'obligatory' approach to ethics which they attempt to achieve through demands and commands. Authoritative managers face the challenge of marshalling arguments for accepting purposive propositions, relevant facts and purposive conclusions. After all, if the absence of rationality is what characterises faith, the opposite is also true. Where one has no faith in anything, then there is only rationality left to answer to.[11]

11 Kerr (1996: 357).

Chapter 10:
From Managerialism to Heroic Management

Books on the history of management generally acknowledge that, although there have been 'managers' for thousands of years, management and its academic study developed apace in the early years of the twentieth century. Authors are at one in drawing up a list of notable contributors to the rise of management. It has even been said that management is the most important innovation of the twentieth century.

> Rarely, if ever, has a new basic institution, a new leading group, a new central function, emerged as fast as has management since the turn of the century. Rarely in human history has a new institution proven indispensable so quickly. Even less often has a new institution arrived with so little opposition, so little disturbance, so little controversy.[1]

These words were written in the late 1960s by Peter Drucker, one of America's foremost management writers and consultants. In the 1990s he admitted that the first two sentences remain valid, but one can no longer claim that management encounters little opposition or causes little disturbance. Rather, management has become highly controversial.

The Rise of Managerialism

In his study of the history of industrial relations and its socio-economic consequences, Godard identifies five perspectives on management which he defines as the stewardship of capital. On the left of the political spectrum, he places radical Marxism, then liberal reformism, orthodox pluralism, managerialism and finally neoliberalism on the right. What differentiates orthodox pluralists from managerialist scholars, according to Godard, is the way they conceive of conflict in the employment relationship. While orthodox pluralist scholars consider conflict to be legitimate and requires governance mechanisms, their managerialist counterparts hold it to be illegitimate. Specifically, managerialists regard overt manifestations of conflict in the employment relationship as the result of misunderstanding on the part of employees or other organisational dysfunctions, including suboptimal management practices. According to Godard, the former position characterises the ideology of industrial relations scholarship, the latter that of the human resources management literature. The success of human resources management, as a body of ideas and practices, and the progressive adoption by managers of the manageri-

1 Drucker (1980: 219).

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alist perspective throughout the second half of the twentieth century is compatible with Godard's analysis.

Notwithstanding its prevalence, managerialism is rarely promoted as such. To those who endorse it, managerialism is an effective and efficient approach for the reform and running of workplaces based on the principle that firms pursue goals defined by managers on behalf of all corporate stakeholders. Further, managers are equipped with the sort of specialised knowledge that enables them to devise and implement value-free means for achieving relevant objectives.

To critics, the self-referential aspect of a definition, according to which managers know best how to achieve the goals they define, reveals managerialism as a self-promoting ideology. To illustrate their criticism, scholars point to the way managerialists have entrenched themselves in all corners of the power structure of firms, museums, government bodies, universities, hospitals and other public administrations. Further, commentators have noted that although managers are purportedly working in a post-growth era (in a context of saturated markets, at least in developed economies), they continue to add layers of technocracy to their organisations, thereby consolidating managerialism.[2]

Beyond sprawling technocracy, one of the most notable manifestations of managerialism has been a progressive concentration of power in the hands of professional managers who move between industry sectors. As executives have secured ever more power and income, middle management has diminished in its relative size and power base. Simultaneously, the authority of experts and non-management professionals has eroded.[3]

Although authority is a concept central to organisational life, the management and organisational literature is uninformative. When authors purport to analyse authority, they typically analyse power which has resulted in a paucity of empirical studies of authority in the management literature. Kiechel concurs, commenting that the question of the nature and source of authority, although typically present in the background of management theory, has not received much attention from researchers. Two exceptions to this statement are McMahon, whose work has received little attention from management scholars, and the present authors who emphasise 'the power of authority' in their study of the philosophy of leadership.

As Chapter 1 argued, authority has two faces: a form of power (as in 'the authorities have decided to close borders') and a source of power (as in 'I do as she says because she is an authority in her field'). This dual nature of authority has remained largely unrecognised in the literature, even in the works of noted authors who have in their majority conceived authority as legitimate power.

2 Abbott (2015); Baddeley (2013); Barberis (2013); Blühdorn (2017); Fenton-O'Creevy (2001); Gordon & Whitchurch (2010); Klikauer (2013; 2015; 2019); Locke & Spender (2011); Meyer (2020); Stolz (2017).
3 Ehrenreich (2006); Lynch (2014); Shepherd (2018); Smith & Hussey (2010); Thomas & Dunkerley (1999); Vincent (2011); Ward (2011); Wheatley (1992).

In workplaces, a consequence of treating authority exclusively as a form of power is to confine its attribution to managers, as if only managers could have authority. Further, the neglect of authority as a source of power leads to the view that non-managerial technical experts are not authorities in their fields. However, while managerial power is concerned with the ability to rule, the recognition of individuals as authoritative owing to their special knowledge or skill does not imply a claim or ability to rule. A distinction needs to be made, therefore, between managers as formal authorities and (non-managerial) employees, experts and other professionals as informal authorities.

The basis of professional authority is technical knowledge and competence. As such, authoritative professionals act as a source of innovation by providing managers with effective ways of achieving organisational goals. As a matter of orthodoxy, managers are supposed to uphold the correct ways of doing things while also (paradoxically) scanning the environment for better ways. In these circumstances, the contributions of professionals, provided they accord with organisational aims, should receive managerial support. Such context sets the scene for a delicate act of managerial balancing. On the one hand, the expertise of professionals and the way it contributes to organisational performance consolidates managerial power. On the other hand, as an independent source of power professional authority weakens managerial power. One way to eliminate such tension is to claim both expertise and ability to rule, that is, to claim both authority and power through resort to the notion of hierarchical position. Managerialism, the perspective of management which is grounded on the principle that managers simultaneously have the ability and right to rule owing to their role and superior knowledge, rests precisely on such claims.

In the early 1980s, authors referred to that concern to resist challenges to managerial prerogatives and preserve the existing system of power relations as 'managerialism'.[4] Managerialism, then, was regarded as a 'view from the top' which incorporates an ideology consistent with the maintenance and promotion of the legitimacy of managers. Although it is drawn from diverse sources, several core concepts were said to summarise the managerialist perspective. First, humans are primarily motivated by economic goals. Second, organisations are mechanistic systems which can be planned and controlled by managers. Third, the primary task of managers is to increase efficiency through 'correct' organisational structure and close supervision of workers. Fourth, since the divorce of ownership from control of enterprises occurred, managers have become largely non-propertied. Thus, the authority of managerial control has been transferred from a traditional basis in property ownership to a basis in technical expertise. Fifth, as the authority of management is based on technical expertise, it is therefore legitimate. Managerialism, therefore, represents

4 Lansbury & Spillane (1983: 87).

an ideology based on a particular theory of authority. However, the theory of authority on which managerialists rely is seriously flawed.

Managerialists argue that managerial authority is concerned with the rights of those elevated to offices and positions of 'leadership' to issue commands and control others through demonstrations of personal and technical competence. Managerial control is thus legitimised by the expertise of administrators and the legal system itself. Consequently, it is widely believed that organisations are technical hierarchies controlled by those most fitted in terms of natural and acquired abilities.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre argues that managerial authority based on technical expertise is a fiction because, as opposed to engineering knowledge, there is no genuine managerial knowledge. The widespread belief that managerial power and authority are justified because managerialists possess the ability to put knowledge to work effectively presupposes claims to knowledge which cannot be made good. Managerialists justify themselves and their claims to authority, power and rewards by invoking their own competence as managers of social change. This justification, MacIntyre argues, is based on the appeal to their ability to deploy a body of social scientific knowledge understood as comprising a set of universal law-like generalisations. But these law-like generalisations are myths. If true, organisations are managed by a bureaucratic illusion and their employees are oppressed by ignorance rather than expertise.

MacIntyre notes that managerialists have a vested interest in concealing or euphemising institutional conflict. Furthermore, they avoid rational argumentation and debate because they are by nature unpredictable and unmanageable. As such, debates can damage the carefully crafted image of the managerialist as an expert in human affairs, technical expert in business, social scientist and 'leader'. However, managerialists do not possess the keys to an imaginary kingdom. They do not have access to specialised knowledge and their attempts to present themselves as morally neutral guardians of efficiency and effectiveness are jejune. Although managerialists typically claim moral neutrality in their pursuit of 'effectiveness', this claim is patently false since the effectiveness of decisions or policy is relative to specific goals. Further, the emphasis on managerial effectiveness selects and promotes a certain, and not necessarily desirable, form of human existence.

MacIntyre argues that whether managers are effective or not is a different question from that of the morality of the ends which their effectiveness serves or fails to serve. Nonetheless, he argues, there are solid grounds for rejecting the claim that effectiveness is a morally neutral value. Indeed, the concept of effectiveness is inseparable from a mode of human existence in which the contrivance of means is in the main the manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behaviour, and it is by appeal to their effectiveness in this respect that managers claim the right to do so. But what if effectiveness is a masquerade of social control rather than a reality? What if effectiveness were a quality widely imputed to managers and bureaucrats both by themselves and others, but in fact a quality which rarely exists apart from this imputation? MacIntyre answers his own questions in the affirmative. The

moral neutrality of managers is a moral fiction and their claim to special expertise qua managers is an empirical fiction.

Several researchers have applied MacIntyre's critique to managerialism in public administration and universities.[5] These authors offer trenchant criticisms of managerialists' abuse of power and the deleterious effect of their behaviour. In the case of universities, they argue that they are (or should be) places of constrained disagreement which can best be achieved through rational argumentation and a commitment to truth. Instead, universities have succumbed to managerialism, academics have been marginalised, bureaucratised and supervised by administrators and layers of managers with job titles of breath-taking ambiguity. Academic autonomy has disappeared, replaced with accountability for unimportant bureaucratic tasks. This has gone hand in hand with a dramatic change from academics' role as educators to trainers and associated demands from students that their material be practical and 'relevant'. Management academics, who in the 1970s, fought their way out of large faculties and created semi-autonomous, profitable business schools, have been unceremoniously returned to the womb. In several cases, these business schools were rated as the best in their country, only to be re-absorbed into large faculties and their profits appropriated and distributed elsewhere.

As often happens in business under managerialism, when decentralised units are successful their profits are re-distributed to expand management, subsidise cost centres and prop up underperforming profit centres. As this redistribution of power and decline of authority proceeds, managerialists pay themselves exorbitant salaries. Finally, the tradition of tenured employment has been sacrificed in the name of profit maximisation so that academics have lost the job security which acted as protection against managers and others who disagreed with their views. Long-serving academics who have taught controversial topics find themselves today under attack, not only from social media but also, and worryingly, from other academics with support from their managers in the bureaucracy. That bureaucrats have so much power and interfere daily in the working lives of respected and high-performing academics is hard to believe unless one understands the rise of managerialism and its authoritarian underpinning and consequences.

Scholars are generally agreed that the main features of the practice of managerialism include an expansion in the number, power and remuneration of senior executives with a corresponding downgrading of the role and influence of skilled workers. Furthermore, there has been a greater separation of professional work and management activity and greater control over the decision-making powers of professionals. As the power of professionals has decreased, the power of senior managers has increased, and more and more work has been outsourced. Employees have thereby been reduced to mere human resources, or human remains.

5 Overeem & Tholen (2011); Stolz (2017).

In addition to overt, if unsophisticated, assertions of power, insidious avenues exist for managerialists to control their colleagues. One such avenue obtains from the growing emphasis on emotive language and the corresponding decline of argumentation that have characterised the last decades. The opportunity therefore exists for managerialists to conduct meetings which eschew decision-making in favour of sharing one's feelings, opinions and values with each other. However, since feelings are private and inscrutable, managerialists who encourage their expression prevent argument and debate in favour of what amounts to psychotherapy, in that emotional catharsis coexists with and sometimes takes priority over more conventional deliberation. However, emotion-venting meetings of such kind are condemned to sterility. Rational decision-making, based on statements of feeling which are neither true nor false, cannot be an effective challenge to managerialist power. Further, 'expressive' meetings facilitate the pursuit of manipulative goals. Specifically, they are liable to being interpreted as evidence of the caring attentions of managerialists, or a sleight of hand in which employees are given the false impression that they are being consulted on consequential issues. By way of contrast, authoritative managers (in Friedrich's and Popper's sense) actively encourage and promote argument for including employees' perspectives on mission-relevant matters and rational decision-making related thereto.

To establish their authority, managerialists could be expected at least to engage in reasoned elaboration and argumentation rather than seek to maximise their (coercive) power. That is, they could be expected to strive to be authoritative managers rather than authoritarian managerialists. However, reasoning and debating with colleagues exposes them to criticism and runs the risk of undermining the view that they are competent managers, or even leaders. To appreciate how remote managerialism is from traditional management and to outline a way to overcome managerialism, a critical exposition of traditional philosophies of management, and particularly that promoted by Drucker, is necessary.

Drucker on Management

Most of the theories of management which developed alongside Taylor's scientific management in the early years of the twentieth century developed models of efficiency based on a military model. Understandably so, military organisations manage people efficiently and develop a discipline in the ranks which has a secure foundation in legitimacy. Not only do military officers have considerable power they also have the right to use it ruthlessly against truculent subordinates. These principles were embraced by and remain popular with managers.

Fayol believed there are universal principles for management, as there are for military organisations. These are: division of work; authority commensurate with accountability; discipline; unity of command (orders from one superior only); unity of direction; subordination of individual to general interest; fair remuneration

of personnel; balance between centralisation and decentralisation; scalar chain of authority and communication (from highest to lowest positions); order; equity; stability of tenure; initiative; and esprit de corps.[6]

The next step was taken in the 1920s by Alfred Sloan at General Motors. Sloan believed the major problem facing managers of large multi-purpose organisations was decentralisation of authority. At GM, he created decentralised divisions on Fayol's principles, but he organised the corporation on the principle of federal decentralisation. The five divisions of GM were established as semi-autonomous businesses, each with its own management and with full profit and loss accountability. Atop the structure, a management team kept central control over policies and cash flow. By the end of the 1940s, GM had become the managerial model for large organisations around the world.

In the early 1940s, Drucker attempted to gain access to the workings of a large corporation to learn about management from the inside. He had already published *The Future of Industrial Man* in which he raised questions about the management of large organisations, the role of big business in society and the foundations of industrial order. He concluded that business enterprise had become the fundamental institution of industrial society within which principles of governance were embodied and the individual's status and function realised. Management is, for him, the crucial element in every business. As the two world wars had disabused people of the view that politicians and military officers should be society's leaders, Drucker saw managers as filling the power vacuum. In this sense, Drucker's managers were to be the new cultural heroes.

As he admitted, Drucker had neither practical knowledge of management nor exposure to managers at the workplace. Fortunately, General Motors came to his aid and in 1943 he began working with GM's top executives as a consultant and researcher. He was immediately impressed by Sloan's method of managing which had received theoretical expression in a 1927 article by Donaldson Brown entitled 'Decentralized Operations and Responsibilities with Coordinated Control'.

When Sloan took over control of GM in the early 1920s, he was faced with a large organisation comprised of separate automobile companies competing against each other in the marketplace. His solution was to centralise financial control and policy development and decentralise operational authority. This 'staff and line' structure resulted in a central marketing strategy including pricing, several semi-autonomous operating divisions, and a central staff to provide advice and coordinate work. Sloan argued that such 'federalist' system combined the initiative, responsibility, development of personnel and flexibility of decentralisation with the advantages of centralisation.

One of GM's senior executives told Drucker that it was the Jeffersonian federalists who provided the blueprint for big business with their emphasis on the need to

6 Fayol (1949).

foster citizenship and community. Drucker now had the outline of a management model which attempted to address the issues of managerial power and authority without mentioning those words. Working with Harold Smiddy, a GM vice-president, Drucker argued that the best way to minimise the deleterious effects of managerial power is to encourage workers to practice self-control and managers to exemplify it. This ideal is best achieved if goals and standards are jointly defined and agreed upon. What became known as 'management by objectives and self-control' (MBO) became part of GM's policy in 1952. Its purposes were to redirect managerial authority away from 'legitimate power' to reasoned elaboration and debate, fulfil personal aspirations of managers and employees and encourage entrepreneurship within organisations (what was later to be called 'intrapreneurship'). Managers should, therefore, see their task as managing the behaviour which, when judged against work objectives, is called performance.

Drucker maintained that to manage by performance is to aim to produce personal responsibility for work by encouraging employees to develop objectives and standards for themselves. To maximise their authority at work, managers control their own performance, an endeavour which requires self-discipline. Even if management by objectives is not necessary to give the organisation unity of direction, it is necessary to realise management by self-control. If the element of self-control is replaced with control by others, authoritative management gives way to authoritarian practices.

According to Drucker, senior managers have three jobs: to make economic resources productive (the entrepreneurial job); to make human resources productive (the administrative job); to help make public resources productive (the political job). To do these three jobs well, managers are to think through and define the specific purpose of the organisation, to make work productive and the worker achieving, and to manage social contacts and social responsibilities. The specific purpose of business is economic performance: to create customers. Accordingly, managers need to administer to the present and the future; they need to be entrepreneurs, risk-takers and innovators.

According to Sloan and his executives at GM, the function of an organisation is to make strength productive and weakness irrelevant. This principle was to guide Drucker's work for the rest of life. He was neither diverted from this principle by human relations advocates who tried to impress upon him the importance of job satisfaction, nor was he convinced by psychologists who claimed that one of the major management problems is ineffective communication. He maintained a sceptical attitude towards the human relations advocates and their emphasis on friendly supervision and people orientation, claiming that the human relations movement grew out of attempts to subvert the growth of trade unions by pretending that managers cared about the psychological needs of their employees. In 1950, he wrote:

> The human relations policies which American management had been buying wholesale in the past ten years have been a conspicuous waste and failure in my opinion [...] Most of us in

> management [...] have instituted them as a means of busting the unions. That has been the main theme of these programs. They are based on the belief that if you have good employee relations the union will wither on the vine.[7]

Drucker argued that there are three main forces of misdirection which create organisational conflicts. These forces are the specialised work of managers, the existence of hierarchy, and the differences in vision that exist in organisational life. MBO is a way of overcoming these deficiencies by relating the task of each manager to the overarching goals of the organisation. By this technique, management can become a cohesive group activity rather than a loose-knit collection of individuals. The business enterprise needs a principle of management that gives full scope to individual strength and a common direction to effort which is achieved by MBO because it substitutes ineffective external control for effective control from the inside. In other words, MBO substitutes authoritarianism for authoritative management.

Drucker was forced to admit that the external control associated with managerialism appears to have won the day. Managers have, as a rule, failed to take the initiative, failed to take advantage of the strengths of people. In 1980 he wrote that employees in most companies and public service institutions are mostly 'underemployed'. They are held accountable for diverse objectives set by managers but they are not given the power and authority to achieve them. Drucker insisted instead that employees are held responsible for the constant improvement of the entire operation, or what the Japanese call 'continuous learning'.

> This [employee responsibility] is not democracy, it is citizenship. It is not being permissive. It is also not 'participative management – which is often only a futile attempt to disguise the reality of employee impotence through psychological manipulation. Actually imposing responsibility on the employees – for plant community affairs, for their own goals and objectives; for continuous improvement in the performance of their own work and job – immeasurably strengthens management in the same way in which 'decentralisation' in the multinational company strengthens management. It creates a better understanding of management decisions and managerial attitudes throughout the workforce.[8]

Often misunderstood as a proponent of managerialism, Drucker advanced views on management which are compatible with those of Friedrich (exposed in Chapter 1). For example, Drucker predicted that professional experts (or 'knowledge workers') would become major contributors to organisational effectiveness and that managers would need to recognise and reward their authority. Further, he warned against the expanding power of cost centres relative to profit centres, the dangers of bureaucratic management and the centralisation of managerial power. He also urged managers to replace external control with internal control arguing that managers need to promote freedom and personal responsibility at work. He agreed indirectly with Friedrich and

7 Drucker (1950: 7).

8 Drucker (1980: 188 – 189).

Popper that authoritative management requires a language that emphasises valid reasoning and culminates in authoritative advice.

Drucker insisted that employees should be empowered according to their abilities so that their freedom and responsibility are maximised. He was in tune with the various work reform movements in Scandinavia which preceded the rise of managerialism and were eliminated by it. Towards the end of his long life, he expressed disappointment at the failure of American managers to speak beyond the level of self-interest and lamented the fact that managers, as managerialists, had become a self-serving, paranoid minority who sought to increase their power at the expense of other employees.

Drucker's MBO has been widely criticised. By the 1970s it had become management by objectives and the boss's control and in the 1980s, with the growth of HR departments, MBO became a bureaucratic nightmare. Moreover, Drucker's promotion of intrapreneurship, in which managers combined private profits with community service, has become mere fashionable lip-service. 'Rather, managers had become ivory-tower number crunchers and bureaucratic parasites who preyed on producers and the public and feasted on short-term profits.'[9]

Drucker tirelessly promoted corporate life and his deepest belief was that people wanted to perform at work and see their organisations prosper. He passionately defended management's right to direct the collective power of others and to accept responsibility for the achievement of actual results. When one of the present authors asked his widow, Doris, why Peter did not write about power, she said that he did but he called it responsibility. Regrettably, however, Drucker uses the word 'responsibility' in two ways: to denote accountability to others and to acknowledge that employees are the authors of their actions. It is not always clear to which he refers when he says that managers and their colleagues must accept responsibility for their actions. If he means accountability to others, then authority must enter the picture as a correlative term. It is axiomatic in management, as elsewhere, that authority and accountability are correlative concepts. Where accountability exceeds authority, as is the case under managerialism, the result is tyranny.

Drucker never faced up to the issue of authority, viewing it as 'legitimate power' based not on 'submission to force' but on 'the right of right over might.' But, as he acknowledged, legitimacy remained a problem for him. He even went so far as saying that management was the second most illegitimate profession and the first one is fast becoming legitimate. The problem for him was the tension between a managerial elite that manages for organisational survival and profit and the needs of employees for security, satisfaction and continuous learning. In short, he did not see how managerial authority can be based on anything more than employee acquiescence to despotic bureaucracy. He sought, therefore, a form of work contract in which

9 Waring (1992: 228).

employees accepted managers as their 'governors' but which also allowed a degree of self-government.

Of all his work on management, Drucker regarded his arguments for self-governing plant communities as the most original and important. He was frustrated by the unwillingness of managerialists to empower working people beyond the bare minimum. During the Second World War, he saw firsthand at GM the possibilities of what would become the Scandinavian semi-autonomous work group movement in the 1970s. In both cases, the hopes for worker empowerment of this sort have faded.

Drucker was one of management's greatest supporters, but he was also prepared to be its vehement critic when it attempted to centralise power to itself. Readers were surprised to find him writing that management is making it difficult for people to work. He noted wistfully that although job enrichment has been around for decades and has been universally successful, managerialists are not interested. What they are interested in, if not obsessed by, is leadership.

It is understandable that practicing managers become impatient with conceptual analyses of management and leadership. It is equally understandable that managers see leadership as a goal to which they should aspire. There is no doubt that leadership has a positive connotation and, in an era when management as managerialism has come under public attack because of its authoritarian proclivities, leadership is clearly the topic de jour. But do managers, even effective ones, deserve to be called leaders?

Drucker was ambivalent, if not downright sceptical, about management's obsession with leadership. Indeed, in *Management*, 'leadership' does not appear in his glossary or index. Readers need to return to his 1954 book, *The Practice of Management*, to see that he devoted two out of 466 pages to leadership. Having defined the purpose of an organisation as making common people do uncommon things, he points out that he has not written about turning common people into uncommon people. That is, he has not written about leadership.

With an eye to management, Drucker claimed that leadership cannot be created or promoted, taught or learned. He insisted that management cannot create leaders. Rather, management can only create the conditions under which potential leadership qualities become effective or can stifle those qualities. There is no need to follow him in his discussion of the 'spirit' of an organisation and the ways in which leaders allegedly create an appropriate spirit. In fact, Drucker soon dropped such spiritual language and turned his attention to the obsession with charisma that HR managers were demonstrating in the late 1980s. He was amused by one manager who asked him to run a seminar on how to acquire charisma. He informed the naïve manager that leaders think through, define and establish their organisation's mission, set goals, priorities and maintain standards. Leaders, he said, see leadership as responsibility rather than as power and privilege. They strive to earn trust without which there will be no followers. When Drucker concluded, the manager claimed that what he said is no different from what has been known for years as effective manage-

ment. In short, there is no need to talk of leadership, except for rhetorical purposes. And that was precisely Drucker's conclusion.

According to managerialists, there are effective managers, ineffective managers and leaders. Long lists of qualities can be found in management books which purport to reveal the difference between managers and leaders. In all cases, the words that are allegedly characteristic of leaders are more positive and virtuous than those that characterise managers. Apart from the obvious fact that leaders require followers and managers do not, there is no attempt made by these authors to analyse the difference between effective managers and leaders. The qualities attached to putative leaders in management can be, and should be, equally attached to effective managers. It is thus difficult to resist the conclusion that the current rage for leadership, as Drucker described it in 1988, is yet just another example of management-speak and propaganda. There is no need to add another tendentious and self-serving concept to a 'profession' over-burdened with jargon.

During the 1970s, one of the longest periods of growth in recent economic history ended. In the 1980s an age of increasing turbulence began. According to Drucker, a time of turbulence is a dangerous time because of the widespread temptation to deny reality. Writing in the early 1980s, he argued that the new realties fit neither the assumptions of the Right nor those of the Left. 'The greatest and most dangerous turbulence today results from the collision between the delusions of the decision-makers, whether they be in governments, in the top managements of business, or in union leadership, and the realties.'[10] A time of turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand and exploit the new realties.

The gurus of the 1960s and 1970s who achieved fame with motivational theories offer few, if any, insights that had not been developed before the Great Depression of the 1930s. Most of the advocates of worker participation of the mid-1970s merely restated arguments that reach back to the early years of the twentieth century. For example, the much-publicised achievements of the Volvo and Saab plants in Sweden were, in large part, the result of ideas and practices adopted in General Motors and other companies in the Second World War, when shortages of supervisors and engineers forced radical changes to managerial assumptions about work design.

Drucker was convinced that post-1980 management gurus would have to address a new set of problems and develop radically different approaches to management and organisation. He also insisted that managers must learn how to manage without dependence on gurus. The demands of well-educated people for challenging professional work increase pressures on managers to modify hierarchical structures and to introduce labour-saving technology. Bureaucratic structures cannot operate effectively when decisions about new technology need to be taken quickly and with expert advice to support them. As such, decision-making power which is buried in

10 Drucker (1981: 10).

over-burdened management hierarchies and committees is not constructive power. Rather, it is a negative force which ruins many organisations.

Drucker admitted that management in the 1980s was suffering a crisis of legitimacy. Managers were blamed for poor productivity, for general incompetence, for their conduct of industrial relations and their indifference to the plight of weaker employees. Drucker wrestled long and hard with the notion of management legitimacy and criticised managers generally for their unwillingness or inability to speak and act for the wider community. In particular, he held against them that they retired behind the protection of managerial prerogatives, government protection and bailouts to become another self-serving group without over-inflated salaries.

Drucker concluded that the managers of the twenty-first century will be effective only if they cease to view themselves as representing a 'special interest'. In a social arena overcrowded by true believers in special causes, managers must establish themselves as representatives of the common good. They can no longer depend on politicians to be the integrating force but need to become integrators themselves. That is, managers need to become educators and advocates. 'The manager, in other words, will have to learn to create the "issues" to identify both the social concern and the solution to it, and to speak for the producer interest in society as a whole rather than for the special interest of "business"'[11]

However, the problem of preventing the rise of managerialism will persist under the 'new manager'. This problem will require continued vigilance by community interest groups who seek to restrict the overweening power of business and government. Management itself will need to be 'de-bureaucratised' so that employees regain a degree of control over decisions which affect their working lives.

Drucker's Heroic Managers

Although Drucker's ideal of a society in which managers are the new cultural heroes has not come to pass, there is in his philosophy a heroic element which stands apart from his social idealism. This aspect of his thought is a result of his commitment to the heroic maxim that 'one is what one does', a view that spans the centuries from Homer to Sartre.

The present authors have argued elsewhere that Drucker's philosophy of management can be analysed, in part, through the lens of the oldest Western worldview: ancient heroism. Unlike modern heroism which exaggerates and glorifies everyday performances, ancient heroism was based on the highest standards of warlike achievement. Ancient heroism is a philosophy of action in which people are judged, not by intentions, but by performance based on successful endeavour. In a nutshell, ancient heroism is a philosophy of power.

11 Drucker (1981: 199).

In heroic society, individuals are what they do. There are no hidden depths to use as excuses for failure. Indeed, in Homer's *Iliad*, there is no psychological language: no unconscious motives, no personality traits, no motivational needs. Homer is innocent of a language of mind. His heroes associated certain behaviours with bodily changes, a habit which persists today, as when people say, 'I have a job, but my heart is not in it', or 'I lack the guts to resign.' Homer had no words for inner psychological forces which allegedly interfere with and thus compromise action. In Homeric society individuals and their actions are identical: there is no actor behind the actions, just as there is no lightning behind the flash. Today's speakers are inclined to believe in an actor which pulls the strings of action. They have many words for this actor: soul, psyche, mind, ego, self, character, personality. Not so in Homer whose language is naturalistic. For example, 'psyche' for Homer means breath which leaves the body at death and 'soma' means a corpse. 'Psychosomatic', therefore, means the interaction of breath and corpse which is absurd. Today's use of 'psychosomatic' to refer to the interaction of mind and body is equally absurd, insofar as 'mind' is conceived as a non-bodily entity.

If Homer's characters have neither minds nor psychological language, one is justified to wonder why they behave at all. The answer to that question is captured in three Rs: roles, rules and rewards. Every individual has a given role in a well-defined hierarchical system which is held together by rules and rewards. People are defined by their role which tells them what they owe others and what others owe them. Their role tells them how to act in the face of enemies and how to relate to friends. To use the language of Follett and Drucker, all individuals have a function which determines their status and duties. Consequently, they are judged according to their performance in their roles. As MacIntyre noted: 'By performing actions of a particular kind in a particular situation a man is given warrant for judgement upon his virtues and vices; for the virtues just are those qualities which sustain a free man in his role and which manifest themselves in those actions which his role requires.'[12]

If Homeric people know what they are to do, they also know how to evaluate the actions of others. And since they judge performance and ignore intentions, they use objective criteria expressed in factual statements. In heroic societies, moral behaviour is assessed empirically. Actual performances are either praised or blamed and one cannot deflect one's peers' judgement by pointing to factors beyond one's control.

In summary, there is in ancient heroism no psychological language by which objective performance can be compromised. Aspects of ancient heroism survive in the exploits of successful military commanders, such as US General George S. Patton, and in the sporting arena where, at least in principle, one is judged on objective per-

12 MacIntyre (1985: 122).

formance and rewarded or penalised accordingly. In these examples, roles are clearly defined, rules are in the main not negotiable and rewards go to achievers.

That psychologists are now part of professional sporting teams and management, points to a watering down, or even a rejection, of the heroic view. Management by performance based on objective criteria is in danger of giving way to management by personality based on subjective criteria.

The relationship between ancient heroism and Drucker's management philosophy rests on the emphasis on task achievement and contribution to an organisation. As he rejects the need for a managerial psychology, Drucker can emphasise without contradiction the importance of responsibilities, by which he means that the synthesis of personal responsibility and organisational accountability is achieved. Those who perform to a high standard should be well rewarded. Homer's heroes were prepared to die in battle; Drucker's managers are prepared to be fired in their own battles. Homer's warriors were supported by camp-followers who had no power over them. Drucker was adamant that cost centres should not have power over profit centres. These similarities illustrate how far postmodern corporations have deviated from a basic heroic principle since camp followers frequently control warriors rather than provide a service for them.

Although the leading warriors of the *Iliad* frequently disagree vigorously with each other's views, they are generally able to resolve important issues. Drucker encouraged disagreement and debate and believed that consensus and harmony are dangerous ideals. Ancient heroes knew what they had to achieve and were not distracted by irrelevant idealistic discussions. Drucker argued that the cascading of clear objectives is management's core activity in the absence of which organisational survival and success are impossible. Indeed, to the reader of Homer, the managers who dominate *The Practice of Management* and its sequels remind one of the characters that populate the *Iliad*. One could say that Drucker's MBO is ancient heroism transposed to management, or that 'ancient heroism is the Ariadne's thread with which Drucker's management writings are amenable to coherent analysis.'[13]

The relationship between ancient heroism and Drucker's management philosophy can be pushed only so far, however. Drucker was, after all, a Christian and a devotee of Kierkegaard, an existential writer who emphasised the importance of freedom, responsibility and the need to leap into some form of faith to achieve a life beyond everyday pragmatism. Then again, Drucker's Christian existentialism (like other versions of existentialism) incorporates heroic elements, especially the view that individuals are what they do and what they do betrays their values.[14]

13 Joullié & Spillane (2015: 104); Kanter (1985).

14 Drucker (1971).

Existentialism and Management

In recent years there has been sporadic interest in the application of existentialist philosophy to management.[15] This interest in existentialism follows the pioneering work of Ordione, Rice and Richter but neither depends on nor develops their general commentaries. Interestingly, Drucker is rarely, if ever, mentioned in this literature.

The early contributors saw existentialism as a philosophy for the management outsider and an alternative to conventional management and the 'organisation man' so well described by Whyte. In contrast to Homer, they emphasised hostility to role-playing and encouraged managers to take a stand against institutional conformity and its associated demand to act in bad faith by committing themselves to practices in which they do not believe. For example, Rice argues that despite its reputation as a clandestine wedding of Nordic melancholy and Parisian pornography, existentialism assists managers in building a philosophy which does not make them dependent on organisational roles and rules but offers them relative freedom and a personal type of responsibility. Rice further observes that managers are frequently placed in compromising situations in the name of organisational progress. Consequently, they excuse their actions by blaming those who order them to act unethically. Existentialists, however, do not understand managers as role-players who slavishly obey others. Rather, existentialists emphasise individual managers and their reactions to their organisational roles and rules. Individuals who believe that what they are doing is wrong are not excused by their situation because they are contributors to, and responsible for, their actions.

Ordione applies existentialist theory to the 'jungle warfare of management theory'. Quantitative models, he argues, contribute obscure tautologies to a small part of management and ignore what is human at the workplace. Behaviourists adopt ponderous principles which, when generalised, trivialise human behaviour while other forms of psychology reduce humans to the status of sub-humans. Instead of psychology, Ordione turns to ontology to provide a realistic base from which to develop existential managers. Such managers experience themselves as alone in an economic world that is remote from theories about their personality and motivational traits, organisational roles and rules. Existential managers are self-conscious choosers of actions in situations which are governed by power and authority relations which attempt to submerge them in authoritarian relationships.

Richter claims a pervasive relevance of existentialism for public administration. For him, the key concepts for existential administrators are the freedom to choose, intentionality and purposiveness, risk-taking and authenticity. He points out that existentialism is neither a prescriptive philosophy nor a social doctrine. Existential-

15 Asham (2007); Asham & Lawler (2008); Jackson (2005); Joullié & Spillane (2021); Lawler (2005); MacMillan, Yue & Mills (2012); Spillane & Martin (2005; 2018); Spillane & Joullié (2015); Waugh (2004); West (2008).

ists are not dedicated to conversion; they seek liberation for individuals by showing them their essential freedom and eliminating moralism. For example, the concept of the Moral Law is inimical to existentialism, for that way lies coercion and dictatorship. Richter also argues that if individuals are aware of their fundamental purposiveness, they tend to stand against social conformity, which is a false mode of self-esteem. Above all, existentialism is valuable for managers because it is a philosophy of freedom and personal responsibility which is attentive to the freedom and responsibility of others.

It is noteworthy that in Rice's, Ordione's and Richter's early contributions the emphasis is on standing against conformity in management, risk-taking, and an unresolvable tension between personal autonomy on the one side and organisational roles and rules on the other. However, the tension between autonomy and formal authority is decided in favour of autonomy.

It is a truism to state that the 1950s' and 1960s' emphasis on existential freedom and responsibility was a 'sign of the times.' Nonetheless, this emphasis bears comparison with more recent attempts to apply and accommodate existentialism to the managerialism of the past thirty years. There is no doubt that existentialism fell out of favour with management writers between 1970 and 2000 and it is tempting to see this oversight as a reaction to the potential incompatibility of existentialism's ideas with the growing authoritarianism of managerialism.

After two decades of relative neglect, existentialism was revived in the early years of this century by several management scholars. Waugh outlined in broad terms the philosophies of Heidegger, Sartre and Camus and applied their ideas to public administration. Jackson emphasised authenticity as a key aspect of Sartre's philosophy and applied it to business ethics. Articles by Lawler and Asham returned to prominence Sartre's existentialism and its applicability to the study of managerial 'leadership'. Asham's critique and extension of Lawler's interpretation of Sartre's existentialism ended in a happy association and joint declaration in their 2008 article. The two authors expanded their discussion of existentialism and introduced readers to Jaspers and Buber's dialogic existentialism and their relevance for leader-follower communication. West also adopted a sanguine approach to the possibilities of applying Sartrean existentialist ideas to ethical decision-making in business. In these cases, the assumption is that existential executives can navigate the difficult path between radical freedom, personal responsibility and the power and authority relations that underpin management. In this sense, the outsider has become an insider.

Spillane and Martin argue that existentialism is a collection of philosophies based on the doctrine that humans, as conscious beings, have no essence: they are paradoxically 'essentially free'. In Sartre's language, human beings are essentially nothing, alone in the world with themselves to create. Authority, then, cannot be other than a confidence trick, but one that cannot be dispensed with if human society is to be possible. For existentialists, the choice is thus between the best confidence trick available or chaos. 'This fits in with a number of observed psychological

phenomena: the fear of freedom, the relief at becoming a true believer, and the post-modern belief in the destruction of selfhood as a necessary condition for deliverance from the illusion of autonomy to the world of sliding discourse.[16]

The fact that many managers have authoritarian tendencies reflects, in part, the fact that management would be impossible unless there were some readiness to accept uncritically apparently arbitrary managerial decisions. Consequently, any management philosophy can only be based on different forms of authority and arbitrary assumptions about what is to be taken as true. The study of management, then, is a study of different ideologies, why they are adopted and with what consequences. The view that existentialism is a philosophy for the outsider is difficult to rebuke.

Drucker's heroic managers combine the qualities of Homer's warriors and Kierkegaard's 'knight of faith'. In an article on Kierkegaard, initially buried in an obscure journal, Drucker agrees with the Dane that the crucial question for managers is to decide who they are before submitting themselves to organisational rules and roles. The task of management is to integrate the personal and the social by reconciling the interests of employees with those of employers. The profit motive must not be allowed to dominate if society is to remain harmonious. As such, there is not, nor can there be, business ethics: there is only existential ethics.

As noted, the argument that Drucker's work is grounded on a form of heroism, according to which managers are assessed against and accountable for the highest standards of workmanship, is compatible with existentialism's fundamental view that individuals are what they do. Drucker qualifies this position, in the manner of the Sartre of *Existentialism and Humanism*, by adding that managers' actions are commitments they make before and to their community. Received in this light, Drucker's work can be read as an extension of the 'heroic individualist' tradition inaugurated by Nietzsche and continued by Sartre and Camus. This tradition attempts to combine solidarity with freedom, society with individuals and heroism of the group with individual heroism.

Contrary to the views of those management writers who accuse Drucker of being a proto-managerialist, it should be emphasised that he was critical of authoritarian managers because they strive for power over people. Drucker's managers strive for autonomy and responsibility. The language of these managers is authoritative: they are the authors of their existence and readily disseminate their creative products to their colleagues. The language of authoritarian leaders is based not on individual authoring but on a rationalised power, even cruelty, which is created to protect and preserve employees, in their own interest as it were. An 'external tyranny of authority' leads to the adoption of roles which are grounded on externally imposed values.

A return to Drucker's heroic model would confront the layers of bureaucratic managerialists who have effectively muted the power and influence of technical

16 Spillane & Martin (2005: 94; 2018 :88).

experts and other non-managerial professionals. Moreover, the managerialist obsession with the centralisation of managerial power to the disadvantage of line units and technical experts has essentially destroyed the work reform movements of the 1970s with their emphasis on semi-autonomous work units. Consequently, overcoming managerialism requires a management philosophy according to which the layers of bureaucratic managerialists are either removed in favour of a return to active line management or subjected to severe tests of competence. What is required to overcome managerialism is a philosophy of management which can withstand the power of entrenched managerial privilege. Meeting this challenge is no easy task given the self-protective barriers which managerialists employ to insulate themselves from direct engagement with actual and potential competitors.

It is too simplistic to argue that Drucker was a friend of management and an enemy of managerialism. There are many examples in Drucker's numerous books of his belief that, after the horrors of two world wars and the ensuing distrust of politicians, managers would fill the power vacuum and speak for the commonweal. This never happened as American managers withdrew into their self-serving enclaves and rewarded themselves handsomely for their efforts. Drucker was horrified at the explosion of executive salaries and bonuses and turned to Japan (a country still marked by its heroic, Bushido-style past) as the exemplar of the type of managerial restraint he admired. On balance, when the transformation of management, as Drucker understood and promoted it, into managerialism is considered, Drucker argued against managerialism's salient features.

Authoritarian and Authoritative Managers

For every individual there is a choice between authoritarianism and authoritativeness. For those who value the latter, the authority of managers, when it is not based on technical expertise, is problematic because it is either authoritarian or ill-deserved. If it is ill-deserved, because the manager in question occupies a position without power or personal expertise, the stage is set for setting subordinates against the manager either through countervailing power or authoritative argumentation. If subordinates are confronting authoritarian managerialism, they are not necessarily disposed to reject all forms of management since they are not inclined to reject authoritative communications as a matter of principle. Their fight is with authoritarians who are disinclined to engage in constructive discussion and argue their case in a relatively unprejudiced fashion.

The challenge, therefore, is to find ways to promote, rather than deny, the tension between management and managerialism. This means that authoritative managers need literally to fight the organisation. The fight, however, need not be based on aggression for that is self-destructive. Fighting the organisation does not have to be a belligerent of selfish act. Rather, the fight is waged through a process of attacking arguments rather than people.

Managers face a simple choice between automatic adherence to the will of others, or a rebellious willingness to run arguments rather than people into the ground. Authoritarian managers say yes when they do not think for themselves, and they say no to saying no openly: they say yes and no at the same time.[17] Authoritative managers say no: but they say yes when they think for themselves. Authoritarians are the quintessential pragmatists who fawningly acquiesce to superiors and treat subordinates harshly. Authoritative managers, on the other hand, argue about facts and values and insist that we cannot avoid arguing because the very denial would itself be an argument. Authoritarians assert that we should not argue.

The minimum condition for the effectiveness of managerial authority is that issues of importance can be weighed by the individuals to whom they are directed. Managerialists fail to see authority in this light. Rather, they believe that their authority is final and leaves no room for debate. Consequently, authoritarians are dangerous because they rely on coercion to enforce their 'authority'.

Managerialism is oligarchical since the managerialist teams that dominate organisational hierarches are *not* regarded as 'the best', which they are required to be in aristocratic regimes. In our era, however, it is likely that an argument for aristocratic management would be met with derision. And given discussions of the problems of managerial legitimacy, it is unlikely that such a view will be offered. Rather, the management literature is saturated with anodyne theories of leadership which are weak attempts to make managerialism appear more acceptable and worthwhile. Moreover, it is difficult even to begin to understand what aristocratic management would look like. There are, to be sure, aristocratic political theories (e. g., Nietzsche's) but obstacles await those who attempt to extrapolate from the practice of democratic politics to the practice of management which is in no way democratic.

Managerialism has transformed management into the very iron cage of bureaucracy that Weber feared, with the added problem of a personality cult which attempts to transform mediocre managers into leaders. This has happened because theories of leadership, cast within the safe assumptions of the human resources approach to management, have been promoted by managerialists and their servants of power and accepted by a gullible, submissive public.

Managerialism can be overcome by: (a) ameliorating its negative aspects with anodyne theories of management and leadership in which the relationship between authoritarian managers and their colleagues is muted and rendered benign; or (b) overcoming authoritarian managerialism with authoritative management. The previous chapters make it clear that the present authors favour the second solution.

A notable consequence of managerialism is that aspect of authoritarianism which reveals itself as brutality toward subordinates and fawning acquiescence

17 Spillane & Joullié (2015: 201).

to superiors. Consequently, subordinates find that their performance and personalities are under constant evaluation while managerialists manage to avoid such scrutiny. After all, it is relatively easy to assess the performance of employees working in profit centres and difficult to assess that of those sitting in the camp of HR, training and development, market research, strategic planning and the myriad other cost-centres. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the performance of managerialist bureaucrats in the protected upper reaches of the ever-expanding organisational hierarchies. Not that those who work in the many layers of managerialist jobs are safe from attack by their superiors. On the contrary, they are easily disposed of when they fall out of favour with the authoritarians at the top since there are few, if any, objective criteria by which they can be reliably assessed. The matter is further complicated nowadays by the deft use of diversity and inclusion criteria to side-step issues of objective performance. Such vindictive practices are evident in recent retrenchments at universities where older, white, male academics with strong performance records have been 'let go' after decades of service.

An authoritative model of management would insist on legitimising management by objective performance, self-control and personal responsibility, rather than management by personality, self-identification and external control. The rationale for that position is not that such managers would necessarily have higher morality or display less selfishness than other groups. Rather, the rationale is that authoritative managers oppose performance management to authoritarian rule.

An authoritative model would provide a structure to check the worst excesses of managerialism which are occurring because great power has been accrued but little or no framework for responsibility, above fiscal, is in place for its use. Similarly, the power of managerialists needs to be sustained by technical and moral authority. In this context, the managerial role involves more than ruling employees and balancing the budget: managers must be creators within their own field of expertise. They will need to be strong enough of character not to engage in petty tyranny, and capable enough to build organisations that can provide support for their surrounding communities.

This transformation of management will appeal to those who want to be judged by their performance and contribution to the organisation. Indeed, an authoritative model will quickly sort out those individuals who deserve to be in positions of real power and those who should act as assistants to line managers. Drucker noted that one of the most difficult jobs to fill is that of HR manager because its occupant needs to be prepared to be an assistant to senior and line managers. That HR departments have acquired considerable power, including the right to overrule line managers, is testimony to the success and omnipresence of managerialism.

The defence of authoritative management offered here is not a naïve or thinly disguised endorsement of a pro-management position, itself stemming from an uncritical adherence to a unitarist perspective of the employment relationship. Indeed, promoting authority does not imply, as managerialists have it, that managers

can be trusted to make decisions benefiting the entire workplace on the assumption that no fundamental divergence of interests exists within it. Rather, establishing authority as a bulwark against managerialism amounts to saying that whatever workplace conflicts arise can be temporarily and partially overcome through argumentation and the finding of common ground.

Summary: Ten Contentions

The principal arguments advanced in this book and their implications for management can be expressed as ten contentions. While some scholars might prefer the notion of hypothesis, 'contention' is used here to emphasise points advanced for argument which do not entail the need or possibility of empirical testing. This strategy violates academic manners, but it has the advantage of focusing attention on the main theoretical issues rather than relying on dubious empirical support.

Taken as a whole, the ten contentions can be called a theory of the foundation of management.

The Status of Contentions

Popper was struck by the ease with which confirmatory evidence is found for contentions in the social sciences. He had in mind the diverse contentions of Freud and Jung which allow human behaviour to be interpreted in terms of their theories, so that anything can be taken as confirmatory evidence. In management, the same can be said of all contentions about motivation, cognition and personality – in fact any contention which depends on inductive inferences about mental events – because no fixed relationships between mental events (or hypothetical constructs) and human behaviour can be established. Such abundance of confirmatory evidence leaves theorists free to combine their contentions in any way necessary to explain anything at all. Popper therefore proposed that the essence of a contention that aspires to scientific status lies in is testability, and notably, its quality of being falsifiable in principle. That a contention can be confirmed or supported by evidence is not good enough. Popper's criterion for scientific status is today widely accepted. It does, however, lead to a peculiar difficulty. Theoretical scientific contentions are generalisations and there does not seem to be any generalisation which is exceptionless. All generalisations are, therefore, falsifiable in principle: what Popper is recommending is a contention which, if testable and tested, will inevitably be falsified. What, then, will be left to call a contention specifically or a scientific theory generally?

It is useful to consider what follows if it is assumed that a generalisation which is falsified by the discovery of an exception must be superseded by a better one, as Popper recommends. Accordingly, when a generalisation is falsified, the next step is to seek one wide enough in scope to subsume both the import of the original and allow for the exceptions which falsified it. If further exceptions are found, a still broader generalisation must be sought so that the process ends in the unattainable exceptionless generalisation which explains everything, and thus nothing in particular. Because Popper's principle leads to this impossible position, discarding

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generalisations that have been falsified by the discovery of exceptions must be recognised as a mistaken policy.

The appropriate addition to what Popper has to say about scientific conjectures is that the fundamental contention from which a science stems is a generalisation which is in principle falsifiable, *but which is not to be discarded on that account alone*. Asserting the universal occurrence of a specific event amounts to asserting that any case on which this event occurs requires no further explanation, while also asserting that all discoverable exceptions *do* require further explanation. This principle thereby serves to limit the range of events which the science is obliged to explain, thus relieving scientists of the obligation to explain everything. A fundamental contention is therefore one which is not to be discarded although it has been refuted as a generalisation by the appearance of exceptions.

A case in point is Russell's contention that the fundamental concept in the social sciences is power, in the same sense that energy is the fundamental concept in physics. The laws of social dynamics, he argued, can only be stated in terms of power and it should be the business of the social sciences to study the ways power passes from one form into another.

Russell's contention is obviously falsifiable. The laws of social dynamics are laws which can be stated in terms other than power. Nonetheless, it is a valuable contention since it demarcates what is to be explained, with what concepts and indicates cases which do not accord with it. It generates innumerable contentions, including those that assert something about the relationship between power and other concepts, such as authority, influence, conformity and obedience. It also provides a starting point for the explanation of managerial behaviour and values.

If Russell's contention that power is the fundamental concept in the social sciences (and in society) is accepted, it follows that power is the fundamental concept in management, since management is a social relationship and can be studied as a social science.

First contention: *The foundation of the management relationship is the distribution of social power.*

Weber argued that power must be the starting point for the social sciences, but that only. He regarded power as too protean a concept to be useful and turned his attention to more specific relationships, notably rulership. However, he agreed that human life is carried out in a power field and that the social sciences should be concerned with the unintended consequences of social power.

It follows from the first contention that management is carried on in a power field. Personal power consists, as Russell maintained, in the production of intended effects. Social power consists, as Weber maintained, in the production of unintended effects. In the latter case, managers produce power by joining with themselves and with others in directed effort. As it is collectively produced, managerial power is

often divorced from its producers as individual managers. Consequently, the first contention assumes that managers are actors who individually produce intentional results and collectively produce unintended results.

On one hand, if an event occurs because of a managers' intentions, then they know what causes it. On the other hand, if an event is not intended by any manager, it is probable that its causes are not known, and it is appropriate to try to discover them. Such a discovery will increase managers' power to control events. As management (and science) is directed at extending human powers through knowledge, this contention adumbrates a scientific research programme as envisaged, but not pursued, by Russell.

Weber's argument, that power is too protean a concept to be useful in the social sciences, can be rejected since science aims not to describe something about which scientists are well informed, but to discover something new about phenomena which are familiar, although not under human control. Unlike personal power, managerial power need not be defined because a definition would be an admission that it is already an object of knowledge. This absence of definition runs the risk of deceiving researchers who perform investigations bounded by their pre-set definition and are thus unable to discover anything at variance with it. Furthermore, the history of science indicates that whatever 'reasonable' notions which are expressed in a definition are often discarded during scientific investigations.

Second contention: ***Managerial power centralises.***

That managerial power moves centripetally is not an empirical generalisation but a conceptual foundation which asserts something that demarcates what it is not proposed to explain. Indeed, if any empirical case is found in which managerial power centralises, then this case is already covered by this contention and calls for no further explanation. Other cases do, however, call for explanation and it is the purpose of the remaining contentions to point towards such explanations.

Managerial power excludes the abilities and potentialities of individual managers which are their personal powers. All managerial power is generated through an organisation of individual powers but is marked by its alienation from its producers as individuals.

The second contention demarcates cases which do not accord with it and generates innumerable ancillary contentions arising from the myriad management situations to which it is applicable. It offers a foundation for the explanation of those unintended events which are described by managers as 'communication problems', 'personality clashes' or 'poor employee morale'.

Third contention: ***Authority acts as a contrary force to the centralisation of managerial power.***

Managerial authority resists the centralisation of power because it directs power to colleagues and other parties and therefore limits the power of managers. Authority is associated with access to managerial power and the right to direct it which is granted by stakeholders to managers acting as their agents.

Managers demonstrate their power through executive action without having the authority to do so. Although they often believe in the desirability of the exercise of their power, they cannot grant to themselves the authority to employ it because authority introduces considerations of relevance of the use of power to others. This observation highlights both the distinction between and the inseparability of the notions of power and authority and their centrality in management.

As participants in a bureaucracy, managers are obliged to obey authoritative rules. The formal authority to give orders required for the execution of their duties includes rules for delimiting coercion. Formal managerial authority is attached to a position, not a person. When managers exceed their positional authority, they face the prospect of sanctions, or in extreme cases, mutiny: a challenge to those managers who exceed their authorised power.

Fourth contention: ***The effectiveness of the authority that underpins management is based on reasoned elaboration.***

Unlike power, authority requires assent, and its effects are cancelled by dissent. Authority contains a transpersonal, moral element whereas power is morally neutral, although specific uses of power are judged morally as supported by or bereft of authority. A use of power that is not authorised may induce assent, but assent does not create authority.

The minimum condition for the acceptance of authority is reasoned elaboration and critical argumentation so that reasons can be weighed and debated by relevant colleagues. Friedrich notes that 'authority' derives from *auctoritas* which supplements an act of will by adding reasons to it. Managerial authority, then, is based on communications which are supported by reasons why proposed actions are desirable ones. In this sense, authority is a *source* of power, not a *form* of power. As Friedrich notes, managers who have ceased to engage in reasoned elaboration or whose values are no longer shared by the concerned parties have 'lost their authority' and thus some of their power.

Fifth contention: ***The vehicle for reasoned elaboration is argumentation.***

Support for the fifth contention comes from Popper whose hierarchy of language functions is crowned by argument. Argument is the basis for personal and social development and Popper was understandably critical of people in positions of power who reject the argumentative function of language. For example, managers who reject argument and embrace the command function of language are justly called authoritarians. Other managers who reject argument descend to the most primitive level of language: the expression of feelings. These tactics are, for Popper, disastrous because they neglect the fact that managers are in the business of providing true descriptions and valid arguments. Expressions of feelings are neither truth-bearing nor debatable.

Sixth contention: ***Managers who engage in reasoned elaboration and critical argumentation will be granted credit by colleagues for their contribution to group goals.***

Managers are regarded as authoritative when they demonstrate special knowledge and skills. Authoritative non-managers will, on occasions, act as a source of innovation by providing managers with effective ways of achieving organisational goals. As management is designed to invent better ways to achieve organisational goals, the contribution of technical experts should receive managerial approval provided it accords with organisational aims. Therefore, a theory of management effectiveness needs to account for the way the potential benefits of technical experts are utilised.

The offerings of non-managerial technical experts, when viewed as consistent with organisational goals, will normally lead to an increase in the prestige of managers. The presence of experts enhances the authority of managers even when the latter lack commensurate expertise. If true, the sixth contention involves the assumption that managers are viewed as the preservers of the rational solutions of important problems once these have been achieved. This conclusion is consistent with Weber's view that bureaucracies are structures in which control is dependent on the accumulation of knowledge. It is also in line with Friedrich's view that that interaction between authority figures sets up the process of reasoned elaboration and enhances managerial authority because it is monitored by all parties.

Seventh contention: ***The distaste for reasoned elaboration and the contempt for critical argument are the marks of the authoritarian manager and managerialist.***

The true nature of authority as authoritativeness has been obscured by the pejorative term 'authoritarian' which refers to managers who pretend to act authoritatively while rejecting reasoned elaboration in favour of command.

Friedrich refers to this pretence as 'false authority' and it occurs when managers issue communications which are believed to allow for reasoned elaboration and argument but in fact do not. Fromm considered false authority to be irrational and contrasts it with rational authority. Rational authority has its source in knowledge and competence; irrational authority is always power over people where criticism is forbidden. Fromm likens rational authority to the teacher-pupil relationship and irrational authority to the master-slave relationship. The essential difference is the meaning attached to the relationship and the basis on which it rests. If Fromm is correct in holding (against Friedrich who asserts the fundamental rational nature of all authority) that power is a manifestation of irrational authority, management theorists who define authority as a form of power are likely to employ such terms as domination, control, force and obedience, while those who insist that authority is a source of power will use such terms as persuasion, recognition, respect, competence and expertise. Anecdotal evidence (i.e., unsystematic parsing of the management literature) supports this prediction and confirms the widespread conflation of authority and power.

Eighth contention: ***The persuasive element in the management relationship is what qualifies it as rhetorical.***

Since managerial authority is reflected in cooperative exchanges between managers and technical experts, authoritative management requires a language that emphasises valid reasoning which culminates in authoritative advice. However, the ability to engage in critical debate needs to be supplemented by the ability to persuade others of the right course of action. Managers, therefore, need to study the art and practice of rhetoric.

As rhetoric is the study of persuasive speech and writing, one would think it would be one of the more important subjects in the management curriculum. For centuries students who aspired to rulership, like Machiavelli, studied the work of the ancient rhetoricians, beginning with Aristotle. A hundred years ago, rhetoric was still regarded as *the* humanistic discipline. Today, it has but disappeared from academic curricula. While managers are exposed to and taught nonsensical jargon, they are not taught the basic principles of speaking to themselves and to others. Weaver maintained that the twentieth century witnessed the decline of a number of subjects that once enjoyed prestige, but no subject suffered more amazingly in this respect than rhetoric.

Ninth contention: ***Since rhetoric can be used for noble or ignoble purposes, managers are judged according to the quality of their rhetoric and the values associated with it.***

The ancient Greeks emphasised the difference between noble and base rhetoric. When used by managers, noble rhetoric seeks to provide all employees with better versions of themselves. To paraphrase Weaver, base rhetoric attempts to keep people from the support which personal courage, noble associations and rational philosophy provide them. Although Weaver's examples of base rhetoricians are journalists and political propagandists, his analysis applies equally to authoritarian managers. Nothing is more feared by the base rhetorician than argument and debate.

Tenth contention: ***If there is a road back from managerialism to management and from management to leadership, noble rhetoric is the vehicle to create the necessary authority.***

Noble rhetoric points people towards ideals which lie beyond the everyday pragmatic world of management. It is that form of language that moves people toward what is desirable in contrast to those forms of language that move people toward what is undesirable or fail to move people at all.

Generally, managers are obeyed because of the role they occupy and the technical skills they possess. Employees follow managers because it is rational to do so. However, when faced with emergencies, leadership is called forth. Those rare individuals who come forward and are followed are rhetoricians who convince their potential followers that they can solve recalcitrant problems with which the group is bedevilled. This undertaking requires considerable persuasive skills. Further, since management is fundamentally concerned with the solving of difficult problems, an individual manager who claims an almost supernatural ability can be expected to be treated with disdain. Yet, a few managers have been able to convince their community that they do possess the special skills which elevate them above the normal run of executives and qualify them for leadership. Executive leaders need to persuade potential followers that it is in their interests to accept the former's claim to an extraordinary ability to solve important problems and improve the status of all employees. Noble rhetoric will be the vehicle for the necessary authority without which executive leadership is impossible.

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Index

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