ON FIRE: CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

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Charisma is a fire that ignites followers' energy, commitment, and performance. Charisma resides not in a leader, nor in a follower, but in the **relationship** between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment. When a leader shares charismatic relationships with all of his or her subordinates, charisma is homogeneous—a raging fire. When a leader shares charismatic relationships with one or a limited number of his or her subordinates, charisma is not homogeneous but variable—pockets of fire. We explore the determinants and consequences of the extent of homogeneity of charisma within a group of followers, discuss the practical implications of our theoretical propositions, and pose new questions for research.

INTRODUCTION

Charisma is a fire, a fire that ignites followers' energy and commitment, producing results above and beyond the call of duty. Charisma is the product of three elements: (1) a spark—a leader who has charismatic qualities, (2) flammable material—followers who are open or susceptible to charisma, and (3) oxygen—an environment conducive to charisma. Charisma is not the spark. It is not the flammable material. And it is not the oxygen. Charisma is the product of their union. Charisma resides in the **relationship** between a leader who has charismatic qualities and those of his or her followers who are open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment.

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Leadership Quarterly, 6(2), 183-198.

ISSN: 1048-9843

We use this fire metaphor as the starting point for our analysis of the extent, determinants, and consequences of the homogeneity of charisma within subordinate groups. We begin by considering the nature and levels of the spark, the flammable material, and the oxygen (the leader, followers, and environment) who together produce charisma. The opening section of the article thus provides a brief review of existing theory and research on charismatic leadership.

We then turn to the more complex and challenging question of the nature and level of charisma itself. Building on the fire metaphor, we suggest that, in some cases, the fire of charisma rages; a leader shares charismatic relationships with all of his or her followers. In other cases, only pockets of fire burn; a leader shares charismatic relationships with only a select few of his or her followers. Finally, in still other cases, the fire of charisma is absent; a leader's relationships with all of his or her followers are not charismatic.

In the third section of the article, we consider the determinants of such homogeneity or variability of charisma among the followers of a group of subordinates. We identify new determinants not of the presence or absence of charisma but of its uniformity—its homogeneity—among the followers of a leader.

In the fourth section, we explore answers to the questions: What are the consequences of a raging fire of charisma? Of pockets of fire? We suggest consequences of charisma previously unmentioned in the literature.

Finally, in the fifth and sixth sections of the article, we pose new questions for charismatic leadership research and consider the practical implications of our analysis.

THE SPARK, THE FLAMMABLE MATERIAL, AND THE OXYGEN: THE NATURE AND LEVELS OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF CHARISMA

The Spark: The Leader Who Has Charismatic Qualities

Charismatic leadership theory and research have identified a number of personal characteristics and behaviors that distinguish leaders who have the potential to ignite a fire of charisma within their subordinates. These personal characteristics include, for example, prosocial assertiveness, self-confidence, need for social influence, moral conviction, and concern for the moral exercise of power (e.g., Bass, 1988; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; House et al., 1991; House et al., 1994). The charismatic behaviors include articulation of distal ideological goals, communication of high expectations and confidence in followers, emphasis on symbolic and expressive aspects of the task, articulation of a visionary mission that is discrepant from the status quo, references to the collective and collective identity (rather than to follower self-interest), and assumption of personal risks and sacrifices (e.g., Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; House et al., 1994; Shamir et al., 1993).

It is common, within the literature on charismatic leadership, to suggest that the personal characteristics and behaviors listed above "make a leader charismatic" or "distinguish charismatic leaders." But it is more precise to say, as we have suggested, that charisma resides not in the leader but in the **relationship** of some leaders and subordinates. Accordingly, we suggest only that these characteristics and behaviors give a leader the potential to form charismatic relationships with his or her subordinates. The leader characteristics and behaviors above are necessary but not sufficient to ignite

charisma within subordinates. As Jermier (1993) has suggested, "charisma is not a thing that can be possessed by an individual" (p. 221).

In sum, the level of the spark is the individual leader, but the level of the fire is the relationship of leader and subordinate(s). This conceptualization is not new (see, for example, Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Bass, 1988; Jermier, 1993; Yammarino & Bass, 1990), but its precise articulation lays the groundwork for analysis of the determinants and consequences of the homogeneity of charisma within subordinate groups.

The Flammable Material: Followers Who Are Open or Susceptible to Charisma

What characteristics distinguish followers who are most open or susceptible to charisma? Three different answers to this question appear within the literature on charismatic leadership. The first suggests that the followers who are most open or susceptible to charisma are vulnerable and/or looking for direction or psychological meaning in life. For example, in summarizing the chapters in their edited volume, Conger and Kanungo (1988, p. 328) report that "it is believed that charismatic leaders have followers who tend to be submissive and dependent. Low self-confidence and strong feelings of uncertainty are thought to characterize such followers." Tacit within this first view is the assumption that leaders in charismatic relationships are powerful at least in part because their followers are weak.

The second answer suggests that the followers in charismatic relationships are not weak but are instead compatible and comfortable with their leader's vision and style. Thus, for example, Shamir and his colleagues (1993) posited that the values and identities of the followers within charismatic relationships are congruent with their leaders' vision. Further, they proposed that followers with expressive (rather than instrumental) orientations to work and with principled (rather than pragmatic) orientations in social relations were most likely to enter into charismatic relationships. Here, the tacit assumption appears to be that leaders in charismatic relationships are powerful at least in part because their followers agree with them, in large measure, from the outset.

The third answer suggests, implicitly, that followers in charismatic relationships do not differ significantly from followers involved in other, non-charismatic relationships. This answer is rarely articulated explicitly, but it is evident in the failure of many authors to note any defining characteristics whatsoever of followers within charismatic relationships (e.g., Weber, 1947; Etzioni, 1961; Trice & Beyer, 1986). The tacit assumption appears to be that leaders with charismatic qualities are so compelling and persuasive that all followers, regardless of their personal characteristics, readily fall under these leaders' influence.

The level of follower characteristics is clearly the individual follower. Unfortunately, the characteristics of followers within charismatic relationships have not, to our knowledge, been investigated empirically. Thus, the topic of follower characteristics is ripe for empirical study.

Oxygen: The Charisma-Conducive Environment

Crises breed charisma. This thesis pervades charismatic leadership writings (e.g., Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; House, 1977; House, Spangler, & Woycke, 199l; Weber, 1947). In crises, individuals are uncertain and stressed and, thus, open to

the influence of persuasive leaders who offer a hopeful, inspiring vision of the crisis resolved. Crises are relatively rare events, however, and charismatic leadership scholars suggest that a variety of environmental conditions, which simply arouse uncertainty but do not constitute real crises, may also engender the development of charismatic leadership. Shamir and his colleagues (1993, p. 590), for example, argued that the emergence of charismatic relationships is facilitated in work settings in which (1) performance goals cannot be easily specified and measured, (2) extrinsic rewards cannot be made clearly contingent on individual performance, and/or (3) there are few situational cues, constraints, and reinforcers to guide behavior and provide incentives for specific performance.

Charismatic leadership scholars have also suggested that settings that arouse members' desire or demand for moral leadership are conducive to the development of charisma. For example, Shamir and his colleagues (1993) posited that charismatic relationships are likely to develop in settings that provide an opportunity for substantial moral involvement on the part of the leader and the followers and where exceptional effort, behavior, and sacrifices are required on the part of both the leader and followers. Providing an example of such a setting, Bass (1985, p. 159) suggested:

> To the degree that military combat units, in contrast to military combat support units, can be faced with more turbulent environments, greater stress, more life-and-death emergency situations, with greater demand for the individual initiative, risk and commitment to unit goals, there is greater need for charismatic leadership to promote performance stimulation and transcendence of self-interest.

The level of these environmental conditions is "the environment"—the group, organization, industry, community, society, country, or time that provides a potential context for the development of charismatic relationships. The environmental conditions conducive to charisma have received more theoretical attention than the follower characteristics conducive to charisma, but no greater empirical attention. Research addressing several of the questions posed at the end of this article would begin to fill the gap.

Summarizing the discussion in this section, Figure 1 suggests that the charismatic relationship is the product of a leader with charismatic qualities and one or more

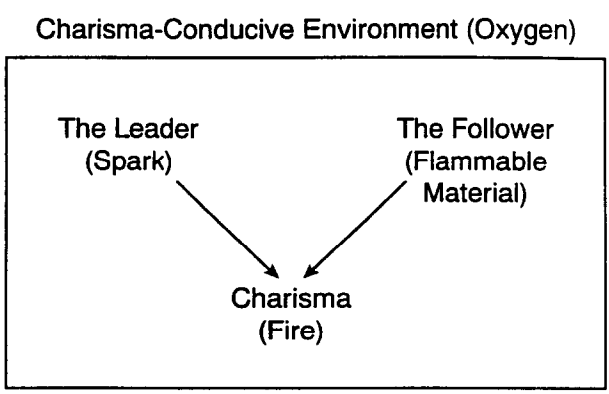

Figure 1. The Antecedents of Charisma

followers who are open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment. We turn now to a more detailed discussion of the nature and level of charisma itself, the fire.

THE FIRE: THE NATURE AND LEVELS OF CHARISMA

When a leader and his or her followers share a charismatic relationship, the followers are more than simply satisfied with the supervision and guidance they receive. The available literature suggests that followers within charismatic relationships are highly motivated and willing to make personal sacrifices to achieve the vision the leader has defined (e.g., Bass, 1988; House et al., 1994). They feel a strong sense of efficacy and identity with the leader and other followers (House et al., 1994). Moreover, they perform beyond expectations both in carrying out their tasks or mission and as organizational citizens (Bass, 1985; House et al., 1991; House et al., 1994; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

The theoretical and analytic level of charisma is, as suggested above, the relationship between a leader with charismatic qualities and followers who feel and behave in the way described above. Accordingly, some leaders who have charismatic qualities may share charismatic relationships with only a small number of their respective subordinates. Bass (1988, p. 45) suggests, for example:

> The charismatic leader may inspire opposition or even hatred in those who strongly favor the old order of things (Tucker, 1970). This argues strongly for dyadic rather than group analyses of charismatic leader-follower relationships. One can see the subordinates of a single charismatic supervisor divided in the extent to which they love, fear, or hate him or her.

The extent to which the fire of charisma characterizes the relationships between a single leader and all of his or her subordinates may vary considerably from leader to leader. Charisma may be high and homogeneous—a raging fire—within one leader's group of subordinates. Charisma may be variable or uneven—pockets of fire—within a second leader's group of subordinates. And charisma may, of course, be low and homogeneous—the absence of fire—within a third leader's group of subordinates. When the level of charisma is homogeneous among the followers of a leader, charisma typifies the group as a whole and, thus, it appears meaningful to characterize charisma as a group-level phenomenon (cf. Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984; Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994; Rousseau, 1985). When the level of charisma varies among the followers of a leader, charisma instead appears to be a dyad-level phenomenon.

Our first proposition summarizes this point:

> **Proposition 1:** A leader may share charismatic relationships with: (a) all of his or her followers (high group-level charisma); (b) some of his or her followers (variable, dyad-level charisma); or (c) none of his or her followers (low group-level charisma).

What predicts the homogeneity of charisma within a leader's group of subordinates? In the next section, we explore possible answers to this question.

THE DETERMINANTS OF THE HOMOGENEITY OF CHARISMA: LEADER, FOLLOWER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS

When group members' relationships with their leader are homogeneous, each group member's relationships with the leader is, as suggested above, very similar to every other group member's relationship with the leader. Thus, homogeneity of charisma may be high when the average level of charisma in followers' relationships with their leader is high, low, or moderate. When group members' relationships with their leader instead vary from member to member, some members' relationships with the leader are high in charisma, some low, and some moderate. Thus, when homogeneity of charisma is low, the average level of charisma in followers' relationships with their leader is typically moderate.

We are interested in the factors that distinguish these two conditions, that is: (a) high homogeneity of charisma (regardless of the average level of charisma among the followers of a leader), and (b) high variability of charisma (in which, by definition, the average level of charisma characterizing followers' relationships with their leader is typically moderate). While others (e.g., Bass, 1985; House et al., 1991; Shamir et al., 1993) have identified predictors of high or low charisma among a leader's followers, our intent is expressly different: to identify possible predictors of the homogeneity, not the level, of charisma among a leader's followers. In this section, we propose leader, follower, and environmental characteristics that may predict the homogeneity of charisma among a leader's followers.

Leader Characteristics: The Nature of the Spark

Within the leadership literature, some scholars (House, 1971; Graen & Cashman, 1975) have conceptualized leadership as a dyadic phenomenon, arguing that leaders typically treat each of their followers quite differently. Others have conceptualized leadership as a group-level phenomenon, arguing that leaders typically treat each of their followers quite similarly.

Charismatic leadership theorists have participated little in this debate. Nevertheless, both points of view are evident within writings on charismatic leadership. As we have noted, our suggestion that charisma resides in the leader-follower dyad is by no means unique to us (e.g., Bass, 1985; Jermier, 1993). Sociologically oriented theorists and researchers, however, discuss (and conduct research on) charismatic leaders as if they treated all of their followers in the same, charismatic fashion (e.g., Weber, 1947; Etzioni, 1961; Trice & Beyer, 1986).

We argue that some leaders with charismatic qualities treat all their followers in much the same fashion, while others treat each of their followers differently. For example, some of these leaders may express confidence in and high expectations for all their subordinates while others express confidence in and high expectations only for a select few of their followers. The difference in these leaders' charismatic styles may reflect characteristics of the leader (e.g., the strength of the leaders' convictions), characteristics of the followers (e.g., variability in followers' skills), or characteristics of the situation (e.g., differences in the nature of the followers' tasks). We suggest that:

Proposition 2: The more a leader treats all of his or her followers in a consistent fashion, the more homogeneous the level of charisma characterizing each of the follower's relationship with the leader.

Follower Characteristics: The Nature of the Flammable Material

The subordinates of a common leader may, as noted above, vary in their levels of self-confidence and certainty. Their values and orientations to work and to social relationships may vary as well. The greater subordinate homogeneity on these characteristics, the greater the homogeneity of charisma within the group. More specifically, we would expect charisma to be **high, on average, and homogeneous** when all of a leader's subordinates have: (a) values compatible with the leader's; (b) an expressive orientation to work; and (c) a principled orientation to social relationships. Under these circumstances, subordinates may well act as "cinders" igniting passion for the group's identity and mission in fellow subordinates. "Cinder" subordinates may even serve as substitutes for the leader (Kerr & Jermier, 1975), escalating the sense (and homogeneity) of missionary zeal, dedication, and charisma among the followers of a leader.

Conversely, we would expect charisma to be **low, on average, and homogeneous** when all of a leader's subordinates (a) hold values that differ from their leader's and (b) have an instrumental orientation to work and a pragmatic orientation to social relationships. The material of the subordinates would appear so "flame-resistant" as to mitigate the power and attractiveness of even a leader with strong charismatic qualities.

Finally, we would expect charisma to be **moderate, on average, and variable** when a leader's subordinates vary in their values and in their orientations to work and social relationships, as well. That is, some followers may share a charismatic relationship with their leader, while others do not. In sum:

Proposition 3: The greater the homogeneity in the nature of subordinates' values and orientations to work and to social relations, the greater the homogeneity of the charisma shared by each subordinate and the leader.

Environmental Characteristics: The Provision of Oxygen

Two aspects of a leader and followers' environment seem likely to influence the homogeneity of charisma within a leader's relationships with his or her subordinates: (a) Attraction-selection-attrition processes, and (b) subordinate interdependence and interaction.

Attraction-Selection-Attrition Processes

Homogeneity of charisma seems most likely when the attraction, selection, attrition cycle (Schneider, 1987) is in full operation. If the followers of a leader: (a) personally sought membership among the leader's followers; (b) were selected by the leader to join his or her followers; (c) could have been expelled by the leader and were not; and (d) had the option of leaving the leader but chose not to do so, then these followers are likely to be highly similar in values and orientations both to each other and to their leader. Accordingly, the leader's relationships to his or her followers are likely to be homogeneous.

This description fits elite community and business groups well. Membership in such groups is both volitional and exclusive, and thus conducive to homogeneity.

Attraction and selection to, and attrition from, a leader would seem, in most instances, to breed not only homogeneity of charisma but high charisma as well. One can readily imagine the charismatic leader who attracts, selects, and retains a group of enthusiastic followers with whom he or she has much in common. It is, however, possible to imagine subordinates who are not comfortable with charismatic leadership attracted to a leader who lacks charismatic qualities, selected by this leader, and remaining with this leader over time. Under these circumstances, followers would report homogeneous relationships of low charisma to their leader.

Charisma is likely to be relatively uneven among the followers of a charismatic leader when the attraction-selection-attrition cycle is inactive. When followers and leaders are stuck with each other, regardless of their preferences, followers and leaders are likely to have far less in common. Charisma is likely to be sporadic—a pocket of fire amidst generally cooler relationships. Consider a leader selected from outside an organization to head an existing group within the organization, particularly an existing group whose members have little job mobility; such a leader is likely to ignite pockets of fire at best.

In sum, we hypothesize that:

Proposition 4: Charisma among the followers of a leader with charismatic qualities is likely to be homogeneous when: (a) followers have sought membership in the leader's following; (b) followers were selected by the leader; and (c) both the leader and the followers have opted to keep the followers within the group.

Subordinate Interdependence and Interaction

The nature of followers' tasks may also influence the extent of homogeneity of charisma among the followers of a leader with charismatic qualities. We posit that if followers' tasks require joint, interdependent work, charisma is likely to be relatively homogeneous. When followers work closely together, they are likely—through a process of social influence and contagion (Meindl, 1990; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Thomas & Griffin, 1989)—to fan or extinguish the fire of charisma each follower shares with the leader. Followers in one group may ask each other: "Don't you think the boss is terrific?" Followers in a second group may ask each other: "Don't you think the boss is a fool?" This kind of social-influence process is likely to foster homogeneity in the level of charisma that followers share with their leader.

When, conversely, followers do not share a common task, each follower's relationship with the leader is relatively independent. Followers are less influenced by each other's views and experiences. Further, the leader's interactions with each follower may be more differentiated. Thus, under conditions of task interdependence, charisma is likely to vary among the followers of a common leader.

In sum, we posit:

Proposition 5: The greater followers' task interdependence and interaction, the more homogeneous the charisma that characterizes each follower's relationship with their common leader.

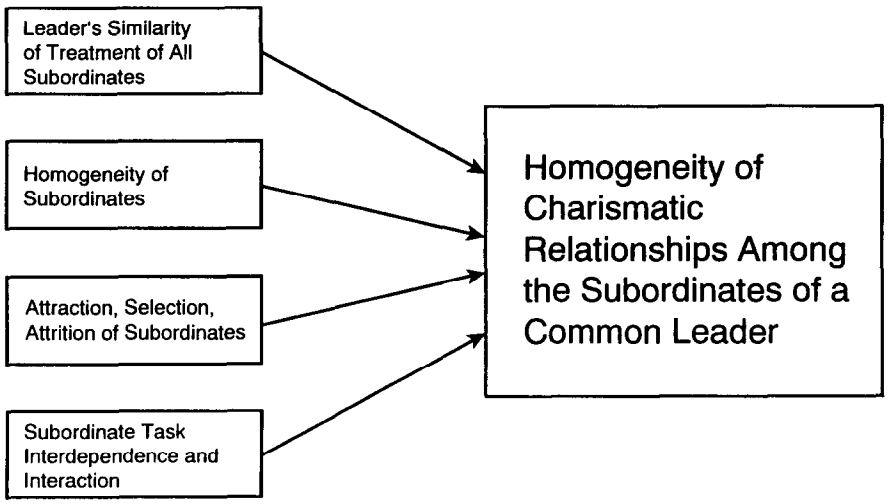

Figure 2. The Determinants of the Homogeneity of Charisma

Summarizing the discussion in this section, Figure 2 suggests that the extent to which charisma is homogeneous within a group of subordinates is determined by the extent to which: (a) the leader treats all of his or her subordinates in a similar fashion; (b) subordinates hold similar values and orientations to work and social relationships; (c) subordinates were attracted to the leader, selected and retained by the leader, and have freely chosen to remain in the leader's group; and (d) subordinates' tasks are interdependent and require interaction.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE HOMOGENEITY OF CHARISMA

A Raging Fire: High Homogeneity, High Average Charisma

Charisma is likely to be strong and homogeneous within a group of subordinates when leader, follower, and environmental characteristics are not only conducive to charisma but also conducive to homogeneity. Charisma is fostered by: a leader with charismatic qualities; followers who seek, or are compatible with, a leader with charismatic qualities; and a crisis or uncertain environment. Homogeneity of charisma is fostered by: a leader who treats all of his or her followers in a similar fashion; followers who are themselves homogeneous and who were attracted to, selected by, and retained by the leader; and follower work tasks that yield interdependence and interaction.

When both sets of predictors are in place, charisma matches the descriptions most common in the charismatic leadership literature, we believe. Under these circumstances, followers are uniformly excited, motivated, and dedicated. The leader is widely regarded as visionary, motivating, and compelling. And performance is exemplary. Moreover, intragroup relations, we posit, show the benefits of homogeneity. The leader treats everyone the same; jealousies are unlikely. Subordinates are homogeneous; differences

of opinion are likely to be rare. Followers not only actively sought out the leader, they were in turn sought out and selected by the leader; followers are likely to support the leader and feel united in their common characteristics. Followers work together; they have a sense of a common mission and they have many opportunities to reinforce each other's commitment to their common cause. In sum, when charisma is homogeneous, the benefits of charisma are augmented and intensified. Thus:

Proposition 6: The higher the average level of charisma **and** the greater the homogeneity of charismatic relations between a leader and his or her followers, the higher the morale and performance of the group.

However, under conditions of strong, homogeneous charisma, the risk of groupthink (Janis, 1982) is high. The missionary zeal and sense of community that such charisma inspires may also inspire subordinates to censor themselves and others from voicing doubts about the leader's vision. Accordingly:

Proposition 7: The higher the average level of charisma **and** the greater the homogeneity of charismatic relations between a leader and his or her followers, the higher the risk of groupthink among the group.

Pockets of Fire: Low Homogeneity, Variable Charisma

When charisma varies from dyad to dyad within a leader's group of followers, some of the leader's followers are highly motivated and dedicated supporters of the leader. Others are not. Based on the discussion above, we predict that this is most likely to occur when conditions favor charisma (e.g., a leader with charismatic qualities is present) but do not favor homogeneity. That is, charisma would be expected to vary from dyad to dyad within a leader's group when: (a) the leader treats specific followers differently; (b) followers differ in their skills, self-confidence, values, and orientations; (c) followers were neither originally attracted to the leader nor originally selected by the leader but followers do not feel free to leave the leader; and/or (d) followers' tasks are independent and do not require interaction.

If followers' tasks are truly independent, variable charisma among the followers of a common leader, although not ideal, need not be detrimental to group performance or morale. Assuming followers do in fact interact relatively little, followers who have no special relationship with the leader are relatively unlikely to resent those followers who share a charismatic relationship with the leader. This scenario might occur, for example, among salespersons who share a common leader but have separate territories, or among the managers of decentralized divisions who report to a common executive.

If, however, followers' tasks **are** interdependent, the consequences of variable charisma within a subordinate group are potentially damaging. A leader may, for example, express great confidence in only half of his or her followers; although the followers are required to work closely with other, clearly some are second-class followers. Or the leader may articulate a common vision for the group—a vision that attracts half of his or her subordinates while repelling the others. When followers are divided in their loyalty and enthusiasm for a common leader but must work closely together, intragroup conflict

and resentment appear likely. In sum, varying levels of charisma within a group of followers may prove divisive if followers perform their tasks in close interaction.

Thus, we posit:

Proposition 8: Task interdependence and social interaction moderate the consequences of low homogeneity of charisma among the followers of a leader. When task interdependence and interaction are low, low homogeneity of charisma yields independent, dyadic relations with the leader. When task interdependence and interaction are high, high homogeneity of charisma yields intergroup conflict.

High Homogeneity, Low Charisma: No Fire This Time

When conditions fostering homogeneity are present but conditions fostering charisma are not, followers' relations with their leader are likely to be highly similar but not charismatic. If followers are united in their disdain for their leader, then performance, organizational citizenship, and morale will surely suffer. However, the simple absence of charisma is not necessarily a negative. Followers may form highly satisfactory relations with their leader and perform well in the absence of charisma. Thus, in subordinate groups characterized by high homogeneity **and** low charisma, group performance and morale are a function not of low charisma per se but of characteristics of the leader (e.g., his or her consideration), the followers (e.g., their professionalism), their relationship (e.g., the quality of leader-follower exchange), and their context (e.g., the organizational reward system).

Figure 3 summarizes the propositions in this section.

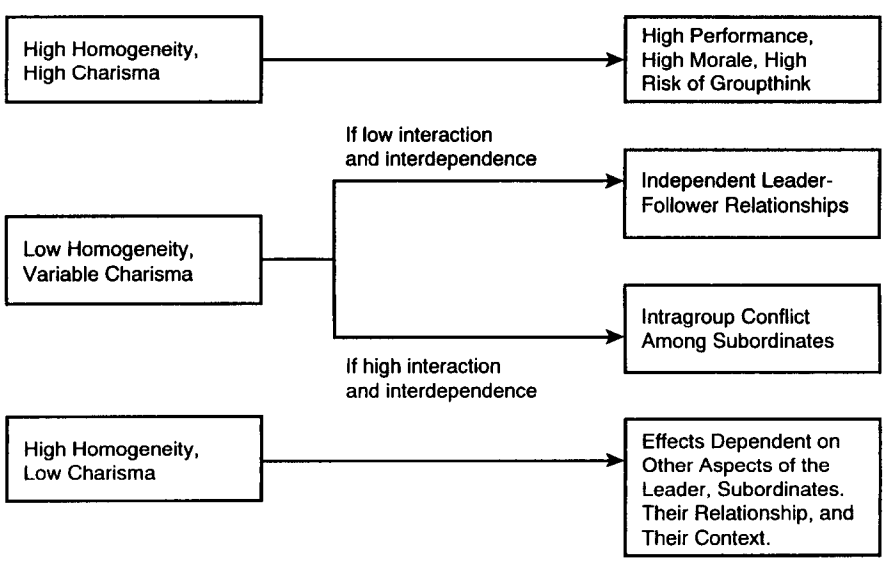

Figure 3. The Consequences of the Homogeneity of Charisma

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Precise specification of the level(s) of a theory enhances the depth and comprehensiveness of the theory and may suggest new avenues for research (Klein et al., 1994). We hope that we have illustrated these benefits. Building on the statement that charisma resides in the relationship of a leader and follower, we have contrasted homogeneous group-level charisma (a raging fire or the absence of fire) and variable dyad-level charisma (pockets of fire), their determinants and consequences. The result is an embellishment of charismatic leadership theory that touches on a variety of new constructs (attraction-selection-attrition, intragroup conflict, groupthink) and suggests new questions for empirical research. Below, we explore some new questions regarding leaders, followers, environmental conditions, and charisma itself.

New Research Questions: Leaders

When do leaders with charismatic qualities have no charismatic consequences? In exploring the levels of charisma, we have suggested that leaders who have charismatic qualities may or may not in fact share charismatic relations with their followers. To better understand both the antecedents of charisma and the limitations of personal charismatic qualities, research is needed to explore the factors that differentiate (a) leaders with charismatic qualities who do share charismatic relations with their followers from (b) leaders with charismatic qualities who do **not** share charismatic relations with their followers. Roberts and Bradley's (1988) intriguing case study demonstrates that two sets of followers in two different circumstances may respond quite differently to the same ostensibly charismatic leader. Quantitative research is needed to shed additional light on the sources of such variability. One potential source, for example, is follower incompatibility with the leader's vision coupled with follower inability to leave the leader's subordinate group.

If follower attraction, selection, and attrition build homogeneity of charisma, do leaders with charismatic qualities actively recruit, select, and if need be, dismiss followers so as to ensure a homogeneous team? In exploring the levels of charismatic leadership, we have also suggested that a variety of factors may influence the homogeneity of charisma within a leader's group of followers. Charisma is strongest—a raging fire—when charisma is both high, on average, within leader-follower dyads and homogeneous. Several of the determinants of the level and homogeneity of charisma are potentially susceptible to leader influence. Accordingly, research is needed to explore the extent to which leaders manipulate these factors. Perhaps, for example, the stronger a leader's self-confidence and the more revolutionary his or her vision for the group or organization, the more likely he or she is to actively recruit, select, and dismiss followers to achieve homogeneity of charisma.

New Research Questions: Followers

What are the follower characteristics that predict membership in a leader-follower charismatic dyad? The subject of some theoretical speculation, the defining characteristics of the "charismatic" followers have been largely neglected in empirical research. We encourage researchers to study the extent to which followers' individual

characteristics explain variability in their responses to a common leader with charismatic qualities. Are followers particularly vulnerable and dependent, or merely compatible with their leader's style and views?

What role do interactions among followers play in shaping the nature and consequences of charisma? In exploring the levels of charismatic leadership, we were struck by the role that followers may play in shaping each others' reactions to and perceptions of a common leader. When the fire of charisma is raging, followers may keep the fire going with their words of encouragement. When the fire of charisma is homogeneous but weak, followers may douse any member's enthusiasm for the leader. And when charisma is variable, conflict may arise among followers. The role that followers play in building, sustaining, and/or diminishing each other's charismatic relations with a leader offers an exciting new topic for research on charismatic leadership.

New Research Questions: Environmental Conditions

How do environmental conditions influence the level and the homogeneity of charisma within a charismatic leader's group of followers? Research on the environmental conditions that foster or inhibit the development of charisma is very rare. Building on the discussion above, we advocate research not only on factors predicted to foster high or low levels of charisma but also on the factors predicted to foster high or low homogeneity. Is charismatic leadership possible in the absence of follower attraction, leader selection, and follower attrition? How do task characteristics influence the emergence, nature, and consequences of charismatic leadership?

New Research Questions: Charisma Itself

To what extent is charisma in fact homogeneous or variable among the followers of leaders with charismatic qualities? What are the consequences of differing levels of homogeneity of charisma? We have argued that the level of charisma is the follower-leader relationship and that charisma may be accordingly homogeneous or variable among the followers of a common leader. Research is needed to test these ideas and, thus, to clarify the nature of charisma. We have also suggested that high variability of charisma may lead to differing consequences: independent, dyadic leader-follower relations when task interdependence is low, and intergroup conflict when task interdependence is high. These hypotheses, too, await empirical investigation.

What is the base rate of charisma? A raging fire of charisma, we have argued, is likely to occur within follower groups only under seemingly rare conditions fostering both high charisma and high homogeneity. This raises the question of the frequency of homogeneous charismatic relations among follower groups. In a random sample of managers across diverse companies and industries, what percentage of managers are distinguished by their homogeneous charismatic relations with their followers?

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, we consider three practical implications of our discusion.

Raging Fire of Charisma: Rare, Difficult to Train, Unlikely to Transfer

Our explorations of the homogeneity of charisma suggest, first, that true, group-level charisma is a rare event in organizational settings and likely to remain so. Charisma rages, we have suggested, when leader, follower, and environmental characteristics foster both charisma and homogeneity. Such a confluence of events is surely infrequent. Homogeneous, group-level charisma is the exception, not the norm.

Further, given the variety of factors that appear essential for the formation of charismatic relationships, charismatic leadership training programs appear unlikely to ignite true, group-level charisma among trainees and their subordinates. To train a leader to display charismatic leadership qualities is surely difficult. To then place the leader in a charisma-conducive environment and match the leader to like-minded subordinates through a process of subordinate attraction, selection, and attrition seems a large and daunting task. The likely outcome of charisma training is improved subordinate relations, not a raging fire of charisma.

In a similar vein, high, homogeneous, group-level charisma, when it does occur, is unlikely to transfer from one setting to another. The leader who forms homogeneous charismatic relations with his or her subordinates in one setting may, despite personal charismatic qualities, find it difficult to form such relations in a new setting in which subordinate and contextual characteristics foster neither charisma nor homogeneity. Promote or transfer a leader with charismatic relationships with his or her subordinates to a new setting, and the leader's relationships with the new subordinates are likely to be good, but not universally charismatic.

Pockets of Fire: More Feasible and Beneficial When Managed Effectively

The second practical implication sounds a more optimistic note: Although homogeneous charisma is rare, a leader may still share charismatic relationships with some of his or her subordinates. The power and consequences of charismatic relationships—pockets of fire—are not to be downplayed. Participation in a charismatic relationship may inspire a subordinate to new goals, new values, and new levels of performance. The leader, in turn, may experience a heady sense of influence, power, and vitality. The leader's challenge, however, is to manage such pockets of fire effectively so as not to evoke resentment among the subordinates who do not share in the charismatic relationship(s). This is most easy, we have suggested, when subordinates' tasks are independent and when their work requires limited interaction.

Fostering Charisma: The Benefits of Attraction, Selection, and Attrition of Followers Working on Interdependent, Interactive Tasks

What can a leader do to create charismatic relationships with his or her followers? The discussion above suggests one final practical implication: Leaders wishing to create charismatic relationships with their subordinates should not only demonstrate charisma-inspiring behaviors toward subordinates (e.g., communication of high expectations and confidence in followers, articulation of a visionary message) but they

should also take advantage of the attraction-selection-attrition cycle. That is, leaders wishing to form charismatic relationships with their subordinates should facilitate the attraction and selection of subordinates who are not only skilled and talented but who also share the leader's vision and hold charisma-compatible values. Further, leaders should facilitate, with caution and tact, the attrition of subordinates who do not fit this profile. In attracting and selecting such subordinates (and encouraging other subordinates who do not fit the profile to leave the group), a leader gradually builds a group of subordinates who are open to charisma. Further, such a homogeneous group of subordinates increases the likelihood that a leader will indeed behave toward all the subordinates in a consistent and charisma-inducing fashion. Finally, when subordinates have been selected and retained for their openness to charisma and their compatibility with the leader's vision, they are likely to be highly supportive of the leader and to serve as "charisma-cinders," fostering the creation and maintenance of charismatic relationships between their fellow subordinates and the leader.

CONCLUSION

In examining the levels of charismatic leadership theory, we have reaffirmed the extent to which this theory is truly a meso theory, a theory that cuts across organizational levels (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995). We have emphasized that charisma resides in the relationship of a follower and a leader and is the product of the leader, the follower, and the situation. We have used this conceptualization as a stepping stone to new insights regarding the determinants and consequences of the homogeneity or variability of charisma among a leader's subordinates. Consideration of the homogeneity of charisma refines and clarifies the charisma construct and suggests new topics for charismatic leadership research.

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