

INTRODUCTION—CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP: NEO-WEBERIAN PERSPECTIVES

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...charisma is not only the name of a perfume and the title of a pop tune, the name of a laundry, and a shirt brand, but also widely applied to virtually every situation in which the popularity of a political or public personality is involved.

—Bensman & Givant (1975, p. 570)

For those living now in the English-speaking world, charisma is a term that is difficult to avoid. It is frequently drawn from the stock of everyday knowledge and used with little restraint. Often, it is used simply to describe an individual during or after a charming encounter. Other times, it is applied to media-inflated, popular-culture figures as a synonym for presence or managed celebrity. It is also central to lay discourse about complex, mysterious situations where someone seems to command extreme loyalty and obedience from followers to the point of cultic demise. Once the term is applied, as in the recent case in Waco, Texas where charismatic David Koresh and his followers met a tragic end in an enigmatic firestorm, analysts seem to confess to a lack of understanding of the situation.

As much as living in the present requires wrestling with the mysteries of charisma, it is equally difficult to avoid the concept when contemplating human history from a lay perspective. Images of the past are often replete with superhuman heroes—the risk-takers, newsmakers, and culture-breakers who seemingly shook the world profoundly and left it much better or much worse than when they first engaged it. In popular discourse, the weight of human history falls on the shoulders of high priests and priestesses, warrior kings and queens, genius intellects, grand humanitarians, and other

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men and women who have attained the mystic status of charismatic hero or heroine.¹ Everyday knowledge of human civilizations is a patchwork of references to individual charismatics (cf. Gerth & Mills, 1946/1976). It includes narratives that praise and celebrate those whose adventures seem worthy of worship, and narratives that condemn and criticize those who used their gifts for personal gain and not to serve humanity. But, again, personal understandings of history, grounded in the deeds and misdeeds of charismatic figures, reveal that there is much left unanswered about such people and their worlds.

Theoretical knowledge of charismatic processes is sometimes no more sophisticated than everyday knowledge and no more complete. There is a minor tendency to theorize charisma as a constellation of individual qualities possessed by a superhuman or otherwise special person. It is proposed that through sheer willfulness, the individual transforms followers and circumstances in radical ways. Seductive as it might be to reduce history to the agency of special, willful individuals, many charisma theorists seem uneasy with explanations that rely too heavily on the individual qualities of superhuman heroes and heroines. Contemporary theorists, even those who deliberately take a psychological approach (e.g., House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991), usually do not limit analysis to personality or other individualizing concepts such as physical appearance. They place equal or greater emphasis on sociological categories.

Scholarly thinking about charisma that emphasizes sociological themes inevitably reflects the influence of Max Weber's writings (see Weber 1922/1978; Gerth & Mills, 1946/1976; Henderson & Parsons, 1947/1964; Runciman, 1978). Weber introduced the concept to the social sciences and his formulation has remained singularly influential throughout the years as interest in analyzing social change using cultural frameworks has grown. The scope of Weber's analysis of charisma and social change has served to distance scholars' conceptions from reductive and otherwise oversimplified lay conceptions.

This is not to imply that Weber's theory of charisma is clearcut and definitive. Interpreters have found misleading passages and irreconcilable contradictions throughout Weber's work on the subject that have led them to recommend major revisions or rejection of some of his ideas (e.g., Blau, 1963; Berger, 1963; Friedland, 1964; Tucker, 1968; Wolpe, 1968; Bensman & Givant, 1975; Dow, 1978; Rhodes, 1988; Couch, 1989). Of course, even in the most sophisticated theoretical discussions of charisma, there are significant points of misunderstanding, debates about definitions, knowledge gaps, and a lack of supporting empirical data, leaving the door open for further analysis (cf. Lindholm, 1990). This is the case with Weberian approaches to charisma.

However, the purpose of this special issue of *Leadership Quarterly* is not to eliminate the confusion about the concept of charisma by resolving all misunderstandings and debates. Nor is it to fill in all the knowledge gaps and empirical voids with new research data. Both agendas would be unrealistic, even for a double issue of a journal. More to the point, although charisma is a vague concept that has not been researched very extensively, I do not think this is the time to insist on theoretical closure or empirical conclusions. In my view, there is still a need for additional imaginative new theories, critical reconceptualizations, and exploratory research to supplement other more integrative projects (cf. Bass, 1990; Bryman, 1992; Shamir, 1991; Graham, 1991; House & Shamir, 1993).

Accordingly, the primary purpose of this issue is to stimulate further critical thought about the notion of charisma by re-examining aspects of Weber's theory and by

considering new developments in Weberian scholarship on charisma and charismatic leadership. Thus, contributions to the issue include a wide variety of articles and reviews that probably will not provide much comfort to those who are hoping to harness wisdom received from Weber in order to nail down charisma once and for all or otherwise shut down certain approaches. I think the selections included offer distinct perspectives on charisma, in composite serving roughly as a counterpoint to approaches that emphasize psychological attributes of heroic individuals (cf. Friedland, 1964), but they are intended to provide and provoke new directions of thought more than to remove existing ones.

I chose the phrase “Charismatic Leadership” in titling this issue with some reservations. On the positive side, there is a growing body of exciting, multidisciplinary research on leadership phenomena that can be integrated using this phrase (see House & Shamir, 1993). This research is familiar to *LQ* readers and has wide circulation in organization studies. On the other hand, the following definition of charisma from the *American Heritage Dictionary* (1971, p. 227) makes it clear that leadership is intrinsic to and inseparable from charisma: “A rare quality or power attributed to those persons who have demonstrated an exceptional ability for leadership and for securing the devotion of large numbers of people.” In this sense, there is a redundancy in the phrase that is somewhat misleading because whenever there is a charismatic relationship in effect, there is leadership. Given this understanding, I prefer terms such as charismatic episodes, charismatic phenomena, charismatic relationships, charismatic processes, or just plain charisma. Also, pairing the term charisma with leadership may unintentionally distract from the rich history of the idea in the broader social science literature. If this were to lead to managerialist or other reductionist approaches that sometimes grip leadership theorists who become bent on simplifying ideas to promote their flashpan consulting interests, even more confusion about the concept of charisma could ensue. But, as will become more clear later, this issue should be of equal interest to those who think of themselves as charisma theorists and those who think of themselves as leadership theorists. The hybrid term symbolizes this.

In subtitled the issue, I chose the phrase “Neo-Weberian Perspectives.” I think this captures the spirit of the selections, as it implies that contributors used Weberian theory in developing their ideas and in conducting their research and that I selected their pieces to highlight various aspects of Weberian thought. It does not imply that they were straitjacketed by modal interpretations of Weber on charisma or unnecessarily limited by conceptual weaknesses in the Weberian sources. All of the authors used Weberian texts as starting points from which they critically examined existing research and creatively explored new directions. The phrase denotes a sociological emphasis but does not imply a strictly macro approach. Charisma is best understood by those sensitive to the complex interplay of human agency and meso and macro structural forces.

In the following section, I sketch four main themes that elaborate a neo-Weberian perspective on charismatic leadership and underwrite the contributions to this special issue. There is some irony in the phrase neo-Weberian because one aspect of its meaning here involves re-examination of Weber’s primary writings on charisma in order to enrich the concept. Given the controversy about Parson’s translations of Weber’s work (Cohen, Hazelrigg, & Pope, 1975) and claims of widespread misunderstanding of his views on bureaucracy (Weiss, 1983), it seems productive for charisma scholars to reconsider the ways Weber’s ideas have been used and misused in current research. Trice and Beyer

(1986) recommended a similar approach to avoid diluting the distinctive value of the concept.

Another aspect of the meaning of the phrase "neo-Weberian" is developed through attending to what Weber misconceptualized or merely left unfinished in theorizing charisma. While some of the authors in this issue examined Weber's writings to recapture lost points of emphasis, others worked on the neo-Weberian project of revising or extending his ideas on charisma.

The neo-Weberian themes below are also related to the rapidly changing economic, political, social, and cultural landscapes of contemporary societies. Further, they are related to new developments in social theory that have emerged in response to the limitations of existing classical frameworks, such as postmodernism and other critiques of modernity. Marx, Weber, Freud, and other classical social theorists of the period of modernity (the epoch following feudalism) have been re-examined and revised in light of the lack of progress in developing fully emancipatory paradigms.

Thus, a neo-Weberian approach to understanding charismatic leadership in the contemporary world combines aspects of classical social theory (including its focus on radical social change) with sensitivity to what may be historically new in the present age. I believe *LQ* readers will appreciate the impetus toward rethinking charisma that can come from working more extensively with Weberian and neo-Weberian concepts.

FOUR THEMES IN A NEO-WEBERIAN APPROACH TO CHARISMA

Rudolph Sohm, a German legal theorist, was the first to use charisma as a theoretical concept (see Haley, 1980). Sohm believed that charisma (or the gift of grace) was derived from Christian biblical doctrine and that it referred to the process whereby the Holy Spirit came to dwell in an individual believer. Once blessed with charisma, the individual had no doubt about his or her transcendental calling and set forth on a life of service, teaching people how to live for salvation. Leadership emerged based on the genuine sense of divine calling. This is undeniable to both the charismatic and his or her followers and constitutes objective or true charisma (Rhodes, 1988).

Sohm's ideas were part of Weber's intellectual world, but in developing his sociological concept of charisma, Weber purposefully included figures outside Christianity, such as Nordic berserkers, warrior heroes, and shamans (Haley, 1980). This enabled Weber to transform charisma from a religious into a secular concept. Once this step was taken, the groundwork was laid for considering charisma in terms of any qualities followers might endorse, however ridiculous or sublime those qualities might seem to others. In Weber's formulations, charisma lost its transcendental imperative and its aura of objectivity.

Friedrich (1961) was among the earliest social scientists to object to Weber's broadening of the category of charisma to include secular phenomena. He contended that Weber retarded scientific communication about charisma by applying the term to forms of inspired, but mundane, leadership. For Friedrich and many other charisma theorists (see Rhodes, 1988), Weber's mutation of the concept from one describing divine processes into one referring to everyday attributional phenomena has led to insurmountable analytical problems and opened the door to numerous unspecific and unqualified usages.

While it is true that Weber's rejection of charisma as an exclusively elitist religious phenomenon has created problems for theorists, it also has set in motion a trend toward studying *everyday charisma*. This is the first theme of the neo-Weberian approach. Many neo-Weberians tend to believe that charismatic processes are ubiquitous in contemporary societies. They contend that the experience of charisma can occur in almost any sphere of interaction (Wasielewski, 1985). In fact, given the present backlash against the glitzy and glittering lifestyles of past decades, people increasingly seem to be willing to celebrate the mundane. This sets the stage for the emergence of charisma in the humblest zones of everyday life such as work, care and maintenance, friendship, and leisure. Also, it points to the probable emergence of charisma from below.

Of course, a large literature exists on the role of executive charisma in organizations. This work is not excluded from neo-Weberian formulations. The existence of elite charisma, like all other forms of charisma, however, does not depend on the possession of special spiritual gifts.

More in the spirit of everyday charisma, several theorists have recommended and initiated studies of charisma as it manifests throughout the work organization (e.g., House, 1977; Day, 1980; Bass, 1985). This approach is now well accepted and invites fine-grained analysis of the daily lives of extraordinary people who probably never will become rich and famous. It is important to stress that in emphasizing everyday charisma, neo-Weberians do not exclude elite charisma from their analyses.

The second theme in the neo-Weberian approach to charisma involves a focus on *relationships*. Of primary interest are interactional phenomena, not the qualities of an exceptional individual or the nature of the social context considered alone (cf. Friedland, 1964; Ellis, 1991). Weber made it very clear that the response of followers is the crucial test of charisma and that a person cannot be a charismatic leader unless claims of exceptional powers are acknowledged by followers (see Tucker, 1968; Dow, 1969). Thus, charisma is a dimension of a social relationship that includes an attribution of special gifts made by the follower(s) about the leader, as well as many other characteristics.

Like all forms of power, charisma exists only as long as the participants remain joined together in a relationship. Foucault's (1980) metaphor of power relations is helpful in thinking about charisma as a pattern of interactions:

What ... should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power (p. 98).

Thus, charisma is not a thing that can be possessed by an individual. Neither does it emerge automatically from certain circumstances regardless of individual qualities and initiative. Stated more precisely, charisma is a process that exists only in social relationships. It is a product of the qualities and actions of individuals and situational factors, but the nature of the situation is its most important determinant. It is important to stress that it is a tenuous feature of a social relationship and is no more likely to

endure than it is to abate. A cycle of success exists whereby the leader's claims of charisma are validated by followers only if results are produced. Charismatic claims must constantly be reaffirmed (Bryman, 1992).

This suggests that charisma is not a one-way influence process, as often imagined. It is a reciprocal relationship that is reproduced through interactions in which each participant exercises power. Of course, the charismatic relationship is not constituted by an equal balance of power among participants. Especially in mature, well-developed charismatic relations, asymmetrical power can emerge and rapidly change into tyranny (Couch, 1989).

One of the main tasks facing neo-Weberian charisma theorists is to specify better the dynamic nature of charisma. Little has been written about the processes that create, maintain, and change charisma. There is some promising work that identifies certain behavioral and attributional phenomena involved in charismatic processes (e.g., House, 1977; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Bryman, 1992), but a comprehensive theory of the dynamic nature of charismatic relationships would include emphasis on more intangible factors. Dow's (1978) analysis of charisma and ecstasy provides an example of how linkages in Weber's original theory might be revisited to focus more attention on intangible processes. Also, Wasielewski (1985) used a symbolic interactionist framework to take a deeper look at charismatic relationships. She suggested that micro-processes of emotional interaction needed to be integrated with societal feeling rules to build a better understanding of how charisma emerges and is sustained. And, Howell (1988) called for further exploration of the emotional responses of followers. She wondered whether socialized and personalized charismatic leaders equally inspired love and hatred in followers. Studies such as these have begun to conceptualize the nexus between charismatic leaders and followers, but much more theoretical and empirical work is needed on this theme.

The third theme in the neo-Weberian approach to charisma addresses the *nature of the mission*. There has been much debate about Weber's discussion of the charismatic mission and, in particular, the relationship between the leader and the mission. The debate has centered primarily on assessing the importance of the nature of the mission compared with the qualities of the leader as determinants of charismatic authority (cf. Wolpe, 1968). Stated differently: do followers agree to carry out the mission because of the extraordinary qualities of the leader or because of the stirring content of the mission? Consistent with the second theme discussed earlier, of course, it is necessary to consider the qualities of the leader, the content of the mission, *and* follower characteristics in order to develop an understanding of charismatic processes. Since charisma is conceptualized as a property of a social relationship, content of the mission is a key source binding participants together. However, followers' needs and values must be considered throughout the charismatic process since expressions of the leader's mission will be interpreted from followers' frames of reference. Also, the manner in which the leader formulates and articulates the mission cannot be dismissed. Not everyone can capture the imagination of others by presenting an accessible moving picture linking their deeply felt hopes and fears with appealing future states. Spellbinding oratorical skill, tone of voice, and self-confidence, for example, might be crucial in changing the beliefs of followers as they interpret expressions of mission (see Bryman, 1992).

Obviously, the preceding discussion implies that missions of varying scope and splendor might serve to bind people together in charismatic relationships. Some theorists have insisted that the charismatic mission be novel and radical, stretching adherents beyond their usual limits (e.g., Trice & Beyer, 1986; Bryman, 1992). While it makes sense to argue that some charismatic missions may grip followers because of the novelty and radicalness of the message, in other situations the gifts of the leader and/or the states of deprivation of the followers may transform a rather ordinary message into a transcendent call (cf. Dow, 1969). More importantly, as argued in relation to the theme of everyday charisma, mundane messages may have charismatic potential in their own right. In fact, business history is replete with examples of sustained charisma coexisting with mundane messages. General Electric's current chairman, John F. Welch, often cited in the popular business press as charismatic and visionary, has established this profile without expressing a novel or radical mission, and without linking his mission statements to transcendent values. Perhaps Welch is not involved in charismatic processes, as Bryman (1992) implied, since his mission can hardly be considered extraordinary. The approach taken here attempts to avoid judgments of this type in favor of determining what participants in the relationship experience. For many reasons apart from mission content, Welch may be involved in charismatic relationships.

Weber's emphasis on the charismatic mission as a source of radical social change has not been abandoned by neo-Weberians. However, many current charisma theorists recognize that leaders in all walks of life can experience charismatic episodes and relationships. Some will have modest, nonrevolutionary messages; some will have small-wins philosophies, and others will champion transcendent, transformative missions.

One reason for liberalizing notions about charismatic missions is that the way followers define success, a central component of Weber's theory of charisma, may be quite modest. This might occur because followers are manipulated by a rhetorically skilled leader into accepting less demanding proofs of success (see Pondy, 1976; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Friedland's (1964) work with Tanganyikan trade unions illustrated this process as, eventually, leaders writing a demanding letter to an employer of a different race became a substitute for more material and tangible benefits (see also Trice & Beyer, 1986). Modest success criteria might also be applied by followers because of a loss of faith in all totalizing schemes and utopian values or because they simply are unwilling to take the risks involved in implementing radical missions.

Some postmodern theorists have written an obituary for macro-politics while focusing on more local forms of struggle (see Best & Kellner, 1991). Whereas there is no reason to assume that macro-politics and the grand missions entailed are dead, the missions that drive local struggles and lead to regular small wins for participants are of high interest to neo-Weberian charismatic theorists.

In summary, the content of missions is an important component of the neo-Weberian approach to charisma and is a central bond linking leaders and followers. However, it is not necessary that the mission reflect transcendent or even extraordinary values as a precondition for the emergence or maintenance of charismatic relationships. Qualities of the leader, follower characteristics, and other situational factors must be considered simultaneously with mission content in order to ascertain its role in fostering charismatic processes.

The fourth theme in the neo-Weberian approach to charisma calls attention to the *institutionalization of charisma*. This is a complex phenomenon. It includes a wide variety of practices ranging from choosing a charismatic leader's specific successor(s), to establishment of an organizational structure for routine implementation of the mission and adjustment to conditions of the economy, to codification of the core charismatic beliefs, to diffusion of the charismatic spirit throughout the membership and its symbolic practices.

Weber held a somewhat narrow view of institutionalization. He focused on the routinization of charisma, a process involving systematic attention to succession, and establishment of detailed work routines. Weber (1992/1978) emphasized the tendency for charisma to dissipate due to its inherent instability but theorized that it could be prolonged through certain types of routinization.

Problems related to succession were of crucial importance in determining the nature of subsequent relationships among members and the potential of charisma to be prolonged. Weber (1922/1978, pp. 246-249) proposed six solutions: (1) institute a search for a new charismatic leader by formulating specific criteria for the position; (2) use oracles, lots, divine judgments, and other systematic techniques that produce revelatory insight to guide selection; (3) rely on a system whereby the original charismatic leader designates the successor(s); (4) develop a procedure whereby duty-bound, charismatically qualified administrative staff (using consensual decision rules or other systematic methods) make the designation, after which it is confirmed by the community; (5) follow the principles of hereditary succession, relying on primogeniture or other clearly established rules that eliminate struggle among members of the same charismatic family; and (6) transfer the charisma of the original leader to the successor(s) by ritual acts or other well-known practices. Each solution to the problem of succession involves establishment of institutionalized mechanisms that objectify the original charisma. Although this inevitably changes the original nature of charismatic processes, at least somewhat, it increases the chances that some form of charisma can be prolonged.

Throughout Weber's writings runs the theme that charismatic relationships are prone to decay and diminishment. This occurs even prior to succession because charisma is fragile and easily contaminated by material and practical circumstances. For Weber, the de-evolution of charismatic processes into traditional and, especially, rational-legal forms of domination was the most probable outcome. As Gerth and Mills (1946/1976, p. 54) put it: "Weber sees the genuine charismatic situation quickly give way to incipient institutions, which emerge from the cooling off of extraordinary states of devotion and fervor."

This central concern Weber (1922/1978), expressed in his main work, with the transformation of charisma through bureaucratic discipline and other processes of rationalization, has exercised the minds of a number of social and political theorists (see Bryman, 1992). One of the most interesting developments to emerge from this discussion is the neo-Weberian idea that it is possible to institutionalize the original charismatic force without loss of vitality. For example, Tucker (1968), after expressing skepticism about Weber's notions of routinized and depersonalized charisma, suggested that there may be a special form of routinized charisma that endures in the cult of followers. "Not only does the cult tend to conserve the original leader's charisma and keep it in his own name; it may actually *militate against* the transmission of his [sic]

charisma to a successor" (p. 754). In her study of utopian communities, Kanter (1968) developed the concept of "institutionalized awe" to capture the process whereby charisma is dispersed throughout the entire group. She concluded not only that charisma could be maintained by distributing it among members but also that this process was crucial to survival of the communal groups.

Clark (1972) developed the concept of an organizational saga to describe processes whereby ideological missions become institutionalized not only in formal organizational practices but also in the organizations' artifacts and in the minds of a cult of faculty, students, and community members. He argued that continuity of purpose at Reed, Antioch, and Swathmore Colleges was maintained through these processes, leading to strong pride in the distinctive competency of the institutions and fulfillment of their missions. In his interpretation of the essays on "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation," Dow (1978) argued that he detected a change in Weber's views on routinized charisma. In his opinion, the process Weber had earlier discussed pessimistically as the historical routinization of charisma was later equated with a "pure type" of charisma. Although this was located in the "structures of everyday life," it reflected a "heightened passion, feeling of responsibility, and sense of proportion" (p. 90). Trice and Beyer (1986) and Bryman (1992) have presented excellent reviews of related literature and provided further discussion of the varieties of charisma and its transformation.

Thus, it appears that recent developments in neo-Weberian scholarship firmly establish a basis for considering the idea that charismatic processes can be successfully prolonged and maintained. Of course, the desirability of this depends on many factors, including but not limited to the content of the original charismatic mission and the degree of dispersion of the original charismatic force.

Summary

Before introducing the articles and reviews in this issue, I would like to make two observations. First, despite Max Weber's standing among many social scientists as *the* master social theorist [because he was "the most comprehensive and historically the most learned of any of the leaders of the discipline" and because "he asked the most profound questions, and disciplined himself against accepting easy answers" (see Collins, 1986, p. 9)], his concept of charisma lacks coherence. There is plenty of space for refinement, reinterpretation, and even reformulation of thinking about charisma while at the same time deriving considerable insight and inspiration from Weberian writings on the subject.

Second, leadership and organization theorists have contributed much to neo-Weberian scholarship on charisma and will likely play a central role in the further development of this literature. This is because they have been instrumental in introducing and advancing serious discussion about the interrelationships among charisma and organizational processes. It is difficult to imagine an adequate analysis of charisma today without full consideration of the wide range of organizational settings and practices within which forms of charisma emerge, are modified and have their effects.

NEO-WEBERIAN STUDIES OF CHARISMA

The first selection ("Charisma and Obedience: A Risk Cognition Approach), by *Stephen Turner*, addresses a major limitation in Weber's approach to charisma. According to Turner, Weber did not theorize the nature of the processes leading from follower attributions about the "extraordinariness" of the leader to their willingness to obey the commands of the leader. That is, as Turner (p. 236) states: "why should a person, however extraordinary, gain the submission of followers as a result of his or her extraordinariness?" What mechanisms in the minds of followers link attributions of extraordinariness with tendencies to obey?

Finding little in the more general charisma literature that bears on this critical theoretical issue, Turner then develops a new model. He explains obedience as a "rational" response by followers whose perceptions and evaluations of the riskiness of actions advocated by the leader are transformed. Since risk is considered by the author to be "a fundamental category of thought," changes in risk cognitions "can lead directly to changes in a person's entire view of the world and what is possible" (p. 252).

The model is illustrated with an interesting interpretation of Frank Lorenzo, president of the now-defunct Eastern Airlines, as a paradigmatic case of a charismatic business leader. This is a clever rhetorical move by Turner that drives home an important theme in his article: the entire charismatic process has an "audience-relative character" (p. 251) that enables even those regarded by others as villains and dullards to achieve the status of charismatic hero or heroine.

Nancy DiTomaso's article ("Weber's Social History and in Etzioni's Structural Theory of Charisma in Organizations: Implications for Thinking About Charismatic Leadership") provides an excellent review of the role of charisma in Weber's theory of history and in Etzioni's theory of compliance in organizations. She contends that the new leadership theorists (see Bryman, 1992) have not given sufficient attention to several aspects of Weber's work on charisma and have been equally neglectful concerning Etzioni's ideas about the emergence and maintenance of charisma in social institutions. The result has been a tendency to focus on psychological, individual-level phenomena, thus reducing charisma merely to another dimension of leadership style.

This article is important because it offers a serious sociological discussion of key issues involved in building comprehensive theories of charismatic processes in organizations. Without in any way denigrating the contributions of the new leadership theorists, DiTomaso provokes deeper thinking about differences between the new theories of charismatic leadership and classic sociological studies that addressed charisma from more macroscopic levels of analysis.

This line of analysis is continued in *Jay A. Conger's* article, "Max Weber's Conceptualization of Charismatic Authority: Its Influence on Organizational Research." His analysis is devoted specifically to examining the impact of Weber's writings on organizational researchers in the 1980s and 1990s, many of whom shared Weber's interest in charisma as a force for change and transformation. Conger identifies several parallels between Weber's views and contemporary charismatic leadership theorists, but he also points to neglected aspects of Weber's theory and to some revisions in Weber's work by charisma theorists that have not been used by the new leadership theorists. He argues that due to the predominance of a behavioral orientation among

contemporary researchers, two aspects of Weber's theory have suffered most from neglect and are especially deserving of particular attention: the routinization of charisma, and contextual factors.

Conger concludes by calling on organizational researchers to move beyond a micro-focus on the phenomena. In his view, further major progress in this area will depend on regaining some of Weber's emphasis on macro phenomena.

In "Charismatic Leadership in Business Organizations: Some Neglected Issues," *Alan Bryman* also examines recent charismatic leadership literature and concludes that it is "rather narrow in emphasis, focusing on issues with an obvious practical importance" (p. 302). He makes a persuasive case for revisiting and studying Weber's writings and those of post-Weberian scholars, arguing that issues crucial to understanding charismatic leadership will emerge. His own study of these sources led him to identify two major themes that have been neglected: routinization of charisma, and loss of charisma.

Bryman points out that routinization processes could be considered the most interesting aspect of charismatic authority for Weber since more space in *Economy and Society* was devoted to this than to charisma as such. He begins to fill a large gap in current theories of charismatic leadership by identifying key components of routinization and illustrating these processes with a series of far-reaching case examples.

Bryman also calls attention to dynamics involved in the loss of charisma, a process that has been even more neglected by charisma theorists than routinization. Again, he illustrates his points well with reference to a wide variety of empirical cases. Bryman's article provides a valuable step toward re-establishing a more comprehensive understanding of charismatic processes.

Unlike Steve Turner's article, which theorizes what was missing in Weber's conceptualization, the contributions by Nancy DiTomaso, Jay Conger, and Alan Bryman attempt to recapture points of emphasis in Weber's work that have been neglected by contemporary theorists. The selection by *Marta Calás* ("Deconstructing Charismatic Leadership: Rereading Weber from the Darker Side") features a somewhat different approach. Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida, she begins with a highly informative discussion of the method of reading deconstructively. This presentation includes an outline of the steps involved in deconstructive analysis and a foreshadowing of the silences in organizational writings on charisma that will be revealed by her rereading.

Based on a deconstructive reading of Bass's (1990) highly acclaimed review of the organizational literature, Calás begins to question the limits imposed on charisma by organizational scholars and argues that Weber's notion of charisma has much more to offer than has been heretofore recognized. In a re-analysis of Martin Luther King's role in the U.S. civil rights movement that is based on Carson's (1987) historical research, she writes: "Paying attention solely to King, the leader, excludes from view community groups and local leadership which were as instrumental, and in some cases more instrumental than King, in attaining the goals of this struggle" (p. 318). This theme of analyzing charisma as it actually resides in group processes (and not in individual charismatic leaders) is developed further with reference to Baker's (1982) case study of a lesbian-feminist organization. What is notable about Baker's research is the difficulty she had in locating charisma in the figure of a leader since several of the women

interviewed exhibited charismatic characteristics. For Calás, one of the main implications of these discussions of forms of charisma that are routinized in new organizing strategies is that "research must move away from 'charismatic leadership' and its fixation on 'the leader,' to an emphasis on the *social situation* of which the leader is only a part" (p. 320; original emphases).

Calás concludes her analysis by speculating that the narrow interpretations of Weber's writings on charisma by organizational researchers (and by most sociological writers) reflect a bias toward maintaining the status quo. While this conclusion may seem extreme to some, it invites serious critical reflection on the limits contemporary theorists are operating under in thinking about charisma, Weber's primary category for understanding radical social change.

In the first of two original empirical studies of charismatic processes that are included in this issue ("The MADD Queen: Charisma and the Founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving"), *Frank J. Weed* provides a detailed and fascinating look inside one of this century's most significant social reform movements and its organizational manifestations. Central to his analysis of the development of MADD is the Weberian proposition that "there is an inherent conflict between charismatic leadership and rational forms of organization" (p. 332) because "[as] a reform movement gains increasing legitimacy among the institutions of a community and begins gaining support and influence, an expectation will be imposed on the reform movement to be rationally organized" (p. 332). Once organized according to institutionalized norms of rational discipline, conflict will ensue between managerial agents of rational organization and the charismatic leader who is unaccustomed to being limited by such expectations. This can lead to loss of charisma, displacement of the leader, and even failure of the social movement.

The story of MADD begins with Candy Lightner, whose daughter Cari, age 13, was killed by a drunk driver while walking in a bicycle lane on her way to a church carnival near her home in Fair Oaks, California. After learning that the convicted drunk driver had served only nine months at a work camp and a halfway house prior to being released and that this was a typical outcome in drunk driving criminal proceedings, Lightner quit her job selling real estate and devoted herself to making a difference in the fight to rid roadways of drunk drivers. As an angry, bereaved parent and victimized but courageous activist, she began crusading and started MADD. Weed's multi-method case study has produced much-needed data that bear on issues of institutionalizing charisma.

In the other original empirical study of charismatic processes included in this issue ("You Don't Necessarily Have to Be Charismatic': An Interview with Anita Roddick and Reflections on Charismatic Processes in the Body Shop International"), *Jeannie Gaines* presents the first published study by an academic researcher of one of the world's most remarkable organizations. Based on an interview with Body Shop founder and charismatic leader Anita Roddick (as well as data gathered from interviews with other Body Shop employees, non-participant observations, company documents and other artifacts, and her own reflections on published newspaper and magazine articles and Roddick's book *Body and Soul*), Gaines provides an intimate look at leadership patterns and practices in this highly admired organization. The Body Shop has profoundly affected contemporary business by attaining staggering financial success from the vanguard of the corporate social responsibility movement.

Although Roddick's image as a charismatic figure is preserved in this analysis, it is also apparent that the institutionalization of charisma is well underway in the Body Shop. Gaines points to Roddick's husband, Gordon Roddick, as "the driving force behind routinization in the Body Shop, especially the development of structure" (p. 356) and refers to Anita and Gordon as "an ideal team—Gordon checking Anita's ideas to be sure they make sound business sense and Anita keeping the company energized, visible, and visionary" (p. 356). This shielding of the charismatic heroine from business and other mundane matters may be instrumental in the success of the Body Shop, or success might have more to do with the wide dispersion of a charismatic force (or spiritual link in the form of shared values) that seems to permeate the Body Shop. In either case, this study is interesting because it focuses on an organization that appears to have managed to maintain and even amplify the positive social values of a charismatic leader.

In addition to these seven articles, the issue contains four interpretations of classic works on charisma and charisma-like phenomena, a film review essay, and reviews of three recent books. *Larry D. Terry* re-examines Philip Selznick's classic *Leadership in Administration* with an eye on identifying linkages between the contemporary "excellence" theories of leadership and Selznick's differentiation of administrative management from institutional leadership. Although Selznick did not make any explicit reference to charisma, his concept of institutional leadership seems to parallel closely recent work on visionary, inspirational, intuitive, and other charisma-like processes. Thus, it seems that Selznick's contribution has been largely overlooked and deserves attention in this area of study. It seems especially relevant to processes of institutionalizing charisma.

Gary Yukl re-examines Robert House's classic article, "A 1976 Theory of Charismatic Leadership," as well as later theoretical work by House and his colleagues. Charisma was rarely considered within the literature on organizational leadership until House introduced his theory. Unlike Selznick's book, House's theory has had wide distribution and impact on charismatic leadership researchers and is frequently cited. Yukl provides a positive overall evaluation of House's initial theory but recognizes the ways revisions by House and his colleagues have led to an even stronger foundation for research on charismatic processes. Interestingly, one of the revisions, the self-concept theory of charisma, breaks with Weber's emphasis on superhuman qualities of leaders, accelerating House's earlier moves toward understanding everyday charisma.

Bernard M. Bass reflects on a book that influenced profoundly his own thinking about transformational leadership, James McGregor Burns' *Leadership*. In analyzing the "statesmen" of social and political movements, and industry and government, Burns argued that some transformed their followers to transcend their self-interests for the sake of higher missions. This book laid the groundwork for contemporary theories that attempt to explain the inner changes in followers that result from engagement in charismatic relationships. Bass points to the uniqueness of Burns' book, both in terms of how much it influenced his own path-breaking work and in terms of how much it redirected the scholarship of the field. Of course, this is intimately connected to Weber's concept of *metanoia* and the emphasis on inner transformation in his theory of charisma.

Francis J. Yammarino discusses the impact of *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, Bernard M. Bass's book that extended Burns' work (as well as that of

Robert House) in several key ways. In this book, Bass presented his theory of transformational leadership, which includes a core component of charisma, and developed a research strategy for testing aspects of the theory, including questionnaire measures. Yammarino states that this book "was the catalyst for a stream of research that is still flowing" (p. 381) and cites numerous other scholarly and practical activities that have resulted directly from this classic work.

Academic social science journals rarely make reference to popular culture sources when developing concepts, but in an issue devoted to charismatic leadership, it is hard to overlook Spike Lee's recent epic film biography, *Malcomb X*. In his review essay, *Michael Eric Dyson* provides a splendid critique of Lee's film, based on his own critical viewing, and adds a number of informative comments and observations about *X* grounded in autobiographical and other written sources. Several key neo-Weberian themes are implicit in this essay, including emphasis on the socially constructed nature of charisma, loss of charisma, and routinization processes. This film (and Dyson's review) merit discussion among charismatic leadership theorists.

Finally, the issue concludes with reviews of three highly diverse but important books. First, *Linda C. Forbes* discusses the authorized story of Ela Bhatt and India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an exclusively female organization that aids and transforms the lives of India's most oppressed working women. She strongly recommends Kalima Rose's *Where Women Are Leaders: The SEWA Movement in India* to charisma and organization theorists because of the tremendous accomplishments of this organization in preparing underclass members of Indian society to develop skills of self-sufficiency and to take control of their own lives. Equally important is SEWA's philosophy and practice of democratic self-organizing whereby new leaders often emerge from the bottom and where charisma of the founder has been successfully routinized and dispersed throughout the organization for nearly two decades. Charismatic leadership theorists interested in the moral development of followers based on an ethics of care will find this book (and Forbes' review) enlightening.

James (Jerry) G. Hunt and *Arja Ropo* provide a thorough and generally positive review of Alan Bryman's *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations*. This book has been widely publicized and seems to have a rapidly increasing readership. Hunt and Ropo credit Bryman with an excellent job in reviewing, integrating, and discussing leadership findings and raising some basic concerns about the implications of the New Leadership perspective (mainstream theories of transformational, charismatic, and related processes). At the base of Bryman's analysis of the New Leadership is a deep appreciation of the Weberian and neo-Weberian roots of the concept. Though not without a limitation or two, as identified by Hunt and Ropo, this book is probably the most comprehensive current resource available for studying charisma within a sociological frame of reference. It has raised the level of critical thinking about charismatic leadership and should have a positive impact on leadership research.

James R. Meindl, in reviewing Burt Nanus's *Visionary Leadership*, takes us on a brief, critical excursion into the world of would-be practitioners of the visionary component of charismatic leadership. This is a cookbook-style trade book that Meindl thinks romanticizes leadership to the point of being misleading. He has crafted a highly interesting review that serves as a reminder of just how far from the world of scholarly discourse ideas sometimes drift, or how far they can be propelled by commercial

interests. This book is worth examining because Nanus writes about his consulting experiences with a company in an unglamorous industry (a pet-food producer) and provides a window into the world of everyday charisma writ small but fashioned large. As Meindl points out, this book could serve as a counterpoint (though not a very persuasive one) to perspectives that advance charisma as a complex relational process embedded in specific group and organizational contexts.

REPRISE

...despite Weber's emphasis on charisma, he is not likely to focus on the "great figures of history." Napoleon, Calvin and Cromwell, Washington and Lincoln appear in his texts only in passing. He tries to grasp what is retained of their work in the institutional order and continuities of history. Not Julius Caesar, but Caesarism; not Calvin, but Calvinism is Weber's concern.

—Gerth & Mills (1946/1976, p. 55)

In developing the concept of charisma from diverse neo-Weberian perspectives, the authors in this special issue freely explore some themes that maintain "purist" connotations, others that extend or slightly modify original insights, and still others that acknowledge Weberian parameters but challenge and work to undermine them. What unites these selections, despite their diversity, is that Weber's writings serve as the foundation. They set up most of the main questions, inspiring thinking not so much about individuals as about charismatic processes and charismatic systems.

NOTE

1. Since the history of the idea of charisma emerged from the domains of religious prophets and warrior kings (see Gerth & Mills, 1946/1976), it entails substantial romancing of male privilege and male hero worship. The undesirability of perpetuating this legacy is apparent, but it is not easy to counter biases that become as deeply ingrained in everyday ways of thinking and speaking as is the case with the concept of charisma. It seems especially important that current writers on charisma take care not to reproduce gender-biased images in their texts. This leads me to try to phrase even references to popular discourse, where sexist imagery is pervasive, in more gender-neutral terms. I do this not because people in everyday discussions think and speak about charismatic women and their accomplishments without bias, but because I think they might come to do so.

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