

New Directions in Leadership Research



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Erasmus Centre for Leadership Studies

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List of Abstracts

Russ Johnson

WHAT ABOUT THE LEADER, EH? CONSEQUENCES OF EXHIBITING FAIRNESS AND LEADER BEHAVIORS FOR ACTORS

Much is known about the positive impact that fairness and transformational leader behaviors have on subordinates. What is less clear, though, are the consequences of exhibiting these behaviors for actors (i.e., the leaders themselves), which we examined across two studies using experience sampling methodology. In the first study, we examined the effects of engaging in daily justice behaviors on changes in leaders' self-regulatory resources. Results indicated that procedural justice behaviors are depleting whereas interpersonal justice behaviors are replenishing. Changes in regulatory resources, in turn, impacted leaders' subsequent citizenship behavior. Thus, in the case of procedural justice, there is a cost to actors who exhibit this type of fairness. In the second study, we examined the effects of engaging in daily transformational leader behaviors on changes in leaders' affective states. We found that such behavior led to improvements in leaders' positive affect, and that daily need fulfillment mediated this effect. Other types of leader behaviors (e.g., initiating structure, consideration, transactional) were unrelated to leaders' affective states, which suggests there is something unique about exhibiting transformational behavior. In both studies, two traits that impact self-regulatory skills – extraversion and neuroticism – moderated the observed actor-based relations.

Brent Scott

DOES VARIABILITY IN FAIRNESS MATTER BEYOND THE MEAN?

AN UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO JUSTICE VARIABILITY

Research on organizational justice has predominantly focused on the examination of between-individual differences in mean levels of fair treatment experienced by employees. Recently, researchers have also demonstrated the importance of considering dynamic, within-individual fluctuations in fair treatment experienced by employees over time. We merge these two streams of research and introduce the concept of justice variability, which captures between-person differences in the stability of fairness over time. In a multi-level field study of 97 employees who provided 995 daily surveys over a three-week period, as well as those employees' supervisors, we found that daily perceptions of general uncertainty were positively associated with stress, and these within-person effects were stronger when the justice variability of those employees was high. Moreover, both justice variability and mean levels of justice were directly associated with daily stress, albeit in opposing directions. Finally, supervisors' levels of self-control were associated with both justice variability and mean levels of justice, again in opposing directions. Overall, our findings not only extend theory on organizational justice broadly and uncertainty management specifically, but they also inform practical suggestions on how to promote fairness in the workplace by demonstrating the importance of considering parameters beyond the mean.

Huiwen Lian

WHEN DO SUPERVISORS LASH OUT AT POOR PERFORMERS? THE ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL

We examine when and why supervisors lash out at poor performers by engaging in abusive supervision. By developing a self-control model, we suggest that supervisory abusive responses to poor performers can be understood as unfolding across two phases: an initial phase when supervisors experience impulses to aggress against a provocative subordinate, and a later phase when supervisors exhibit mindless behavioral response triggered by experienced impulses. In the initial phase, if supervisors have tendencies to interpret others' behaviors as hostile (i.e., hostile attribution biases), their aggressive impulses are likely to be intensified. In the later phase, if supervisors are mindful and have conscious awareness and acceptance of their aggressive impulses, they are less likely to translate impulses into hostile behaviors in the form of abusive supervision. In a multilevel field study with data collected from supervisor-subordinate teams at two time points, we found support for our self-control model of abusive supervision.

John Schaubroeck

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT BY ABUSIVE SUPERVISION

Although a surfeit of studies have established that employees' perceptions of abusive supervision may encourage them to engage in deviant behaviors, reduce their cooperative behaviors, and lead to other outcomes for them as victims (e.g., psychological strain), there has been comparatively little attention to how employees respond to abusive supervision experienced by their coworkers. Extant research concerning deontic justice and supervisor social undermining suggest very different ways that employees may respond to others' experience of abusive supervision. I present three studies that examined the interactive influences of own and coworker abusive supervision on different employee behaviors and attitudinal states. Whereas the focal mediating states reflect different conceptual processes relating to different outcomes, there is convergence in the overall pattern of interactions that supports viewing abusive supervision from a broader social perspective in which harms derive not only from direct victimization but also from unit level processes that arise from differentiated supervisory abuse.

Hannes Leroy

BEING ONESELF OR PRESENTING ONESELF: AUTHENTICITY, SELF-PRESENTATION, BEHAVIORAL INTEGRITY, AND TRUST

While research has argued that being oneself versus presenting oneself seem incompatible, there are reasons to believe that both authenticity and self-presentation are needed to foster trust. This paper uses theory on private and public self to clarify that authenticity and self-presentation can co-exist but affect trust differently when conceptualized as either an inclination or ability. In a first experimental study we asked 86 managers to rate one of four vignettes describing job applicants and showed that an inclination to be authentic positively predicted trust when applicants were not inclined to self-present and negatively when applicants were so inclined. In a second survey study of 306 members of 55 teams we replicated the above interaction effect between inclination to be authentic and self-present on peer-rated trust measured six weeks later. A third study of 147 followers and 35 leaders replicated the above interaction effect but also showed that ability to self-present strengthened the effect of leader authenticity on follower trust. Study three further showed that behavioral integrity mediated both interaction effects on trust. We discuss the implications for theory on authenticity, self-presentation, and behavioral integrity and offer practical advice on fostering trust by combining authenticity and self-presentation.

Drew Carton

SHOOTING FOR THE MOON: MEANINGFULNESS, MANAGEABILITY, AND GOAL COUPLING
AT NASA, 1958 - 1969

A key challenge in the workplace is the tradeoff between meaningfulness and manageability: actions that make work more meaningful are likely to make work less manageable, and actions that make work more manageable are likely to make work less meaningful. Leadership scholars have suggested that this tradeoff can be rectified when leaders set both low-order goals (e.g., productivity quotas) and high-order goals (e.g., vision statements) so that employees perceive that their everyday work is in service of a higher purpose. In practice, this approach has seen mixed results. To identify one possible reason for inconsistent findings, I present an inductive analysis of NASA's journey to the moon during the 1960s in the United States. My analysis suggests that the assumption that employees will be able to see the connection between high-order and low-order goals is often unfounded. Instead, there is substantial variation in goal coupling, which relates to whether a high-order goal (e.g., "lunar exploration") is perceived as a credible higher purpose of a low-order goal (e.g., "clean an engine valve"), or merely as abstract rhetoric. I explain why goal coupling is critical for eliminating the meaningfulness/manageability tradeoff as well as which leader actions trigger goal coupling. Implications for theory on leadership are discussed.

Dan Cable

BEING YOUR BEST SELF MORE OFTEN

Everyone has extraordinary moments when they are at their personal best – moments when they are essential, challenged and authentic. This research presents evidence that helping individuals identify their best self can lead to changes in the energy they invest in their work and in their teams. In a first study of socialization to a new company, we examine the impact of focusing newcomers on the organization’s culture versus focusing newcomers on their best selves. In a second study, we examined how focusing people on their best selves affects physiological and behavioural responses. In a third study, we examine how focusing team members on their best selves affects their reactions to the team and their ultimate performance.

Ashleigh Rosette

RACIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY LEADERS IN THE WORKPLACE

The racial dynamics between Whites and Blacks in the United States have improved substantially over the last few decades. Once defined by hostility, prejudice, and fear, contemporary relationships between members of the two racial groups are now marked by friendships, tolerance, and inclusiveness. Nonetheless, the historical context in which current interracial relationships are embedded still conjures up a great deal of anxiety and discomfort amongst Blacks and Whites in organizational settings when contemporary racial issues and tensions arise. A more elaborate examination of how racial minority leaders successfully manage these distressing experiences may improve our understanding of differing social perceptions in order to capitalize on the espoused benefits of diversity. Previous research has shown that when subordinated or stigmatized groups acknowledge their apparent distinguishing features, such as obesity or physical disability, evaluators are more at ease and become more receptive to disseminated information. Building upon this existing paradigm, we investigate the extent to which racial minority leaders acknowledge their race in mixed-race environments when discussing racial topics and issues and the extent to which their racial acknowledgement influences interpersonal interactions amongst members from differing racial groups.

Chen Guoli

FEMALE BOARD REPRESENTATION AND CORPORATE MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS
ACTIVITY

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the impact of female board representation on firm-level strategic behavior. Focusing on the domain of mergers and acquisitions (M&A), we build theory based on psychological, social, and cognitive mechanisms to predict that greater female representation on a firm's board will be associated with more cautious, less aggressive M&A behavior. In particular, we hypothesize and find evidence that firms with greater female representation tend to engage in acquisitions that are fewer in number, smaller in size, and more diversified. In supplementary analyses, we find that female board representation is positively related to firm performance persistence and performance conformity. However, we find no significant positive or negative impact on short-term market reaction to acquisitions (cumulative abnormal returns) or long-term financial performance. We demonstrate the robustness of our findings through the use of a difference-in-difference analysis of a sub-sample of firms that experienced exogenous changes in board gender composition as a result of director deaths.

Ena Inesi

WHEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU: THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF COMPETENCE SIGNALS ON WOMEN'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

This research explores the possibility that the very accomplishments that are critical to success during the hiring process (e.g., educational attainment, promotion history) can lead to a drop in future performance evaluations for women. We theorized that evaluators may see such competence signals as a threat to the traditional gender hierarchy, which leads to a negative bias when evaluating women's on-the-job performance. In Study 1, we examined this hypothesis among commanding officers in the United States military, who gave lower performance ratings to female subordinates whose pay-grade approached their own. The same was not true for male subordinates. Studies 2, 3a and 3b experimentally tested the boundary conditions of this effect using two additional competence signals (educational attainment and past career successes) and two different populations. Across these studies, we replicated the negative relationship between competence signal strength and performance evaluations for female subordinates, but only under conditions in which the evaluator would be particularly likely to experience gender hierarchy threat. Specifically, it emerged when the evaluator was male and high social-dominance-oriented, and when the female subordinate's objective on-the-job performance was high. Finally, Study 3a demonstrated how organizations can mitigate this negative bias by using objective (rather than subjective) performance evaluations.

Roderick Swaab & Jeanne Brett

WHEN BRINGING NEGOTIATORS FACE-TO-FACE BACKFIRES: IMPLICATIONS FOR THIRD PARTY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Third parties are advised to start the dispute resolution process by bringing the disputants together for a “joint session”, a face-to-face meeting that allows for direct communication. Based on the Communications Orientations Model (Swaab, Galinsky, Medvec, & Diermeier, 2012), which proposes that the impact of face-to-face contact is shaped by communicators’ orientations to cooperate or compete, we argue that this practice can be less effective than meeting with each disputant separately in a pre-caucus prior to the joint session because disputants arrive at these joint sessions angry, emotional, and defensive, which is likely to shift their attention away from finding resolution. Qualitative interviews with mediators underscored the importance of systematically studying pre-caucuses, as they revealed uncertainty about the effects of pre-caucuses on dispute resolution process and outcomes and strong reluctance on the part of some mediators to use them. However, evidence from field studies and experimental studies in the context of intra-organizational disputes showed that disputes are more likely to get resolved when pre-caucuses are used for (a) relationship-building purposes when future interdependence between disputants is high because they reduce disputants’ negative emotional states and (b) substantive purposes when future interdependence is low because they alleviate disputants’ concerns with losing face.

Peter Edelman

EMOTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Currently we are conducting a series of researches on the topic of emotions and leadership. In our first study we addressed two of the major questions in the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness: does emotional intelligence conceptualized and assessed as an ability influence leadership effectiveness when controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits? Ability test data for emotional intelligence in an assessment center predicted observations of leader responses to subordinate's emotions in a role play, and the quality of these responses mediated relationships with ratings of leadership effectiveness. In a second study we integrated leadership and emotional labor theory. We tested whether we could train the regulation of affective display of leaders in terms of the emotion regulation strategy of deep acting (displaying feelings one also experiences) and display of positive affect. We also tested whether this resulted in improved leadership effectiveness. The training had positive effects on deep acting, positive affective displays, and leadership effectiveness. At the moment a third study, to address the long term effects of emotional intelligence and the regulation of affective displays by assessing leaders' career development is conducted.

Dave Harrison

STRUCTURE AND CONFLICT IN LEADING TEAMS: (RE-)ALIGNMENTS OF FAULTLINES WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE NETWORK TIES

Relationship conflict is perhaps the strongest detrimental influence on team performance. We propose that the patterning of informal social connections between members -- their positioning and not merely their accumulation or density -- can create conditions that further fuel relationship conflict or help to extinguish it. Recognition and re-configuration of this patterning can be crucial to effective leadership. Specifically, we introduce a structural perspective on relationship conflict that addresses three questions. First, can social network theory help to identify what kinds of faultlines more or less forceful in inducing conflict? Second, how can a joint or alignment consideration of networks and faultlines advance our understanding of relationship conflict in teams? Third, are the effects of positive and negative ties similar (but opposite in sign), or do their configurations also matter? Finally, we ask a fourth (set of) questions that address leader's role in this social structure: Can these social structures be anticipated and re-aligned through leader brokerage in positive and negative ties?

Andrew Knight

WHO DEFERS TO WHOM AND WHY? IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES AND DYADIC DEFERENCE FOR TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

We examine dyadic deference between team members as a focal mechanism that links demographic differences in teams to team effectiveness. That is, we develop and test predictions about how demographic attributes influence deference in multidisciplinary work teams and how differential patterns of dyadic deference emerge to shape team-level effectiveness. Based on a social relations modeling (SRM) approach and drawing on longitudinal data from a sample of 55 multidisciplinary research teams comprising 619 scientists, we found that the interaction between an actor's and a partner's demographic attributes influenced deference through two different interpersonal mechanisms – through perceptions of task contributions and social affinity ties. At the team level, different patterns of deference compiled to shape team effectiveness in different ways, with deference based on social affinity negatively impacting and deference based on perceptions of task contributions positively impacting research team productivity.

THE LEADERSHIP OF DIVERSE TEAMS: STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN COMPLEMENTARY FORCES

In recent years, many scholars have examined the conditions under which and the processes through which demographic and informational diversity has more or less positive effects on team outcomes. Surprisingly, however, little more than a handful of studies have examined how leadership affects the balance between the positive and the negative effects that diversity typically entails. Moreover, the few studies that have examined interactive effects between diversity and leadership have for the most part focused on different diversity types and different aspects of leadership. In an effort to integrate this literature, we present a model of leadership in diverse teams. Drawing on Sheremata's (2000) metaphor of centrifugal and centripetal forces, we posit that team leaders must simultaneously foster seemingly opposing forces that actually are complementary. Just as, together, centrifugal and centripetal forces keep the earth in its orbit around the sun, we argue that, together, centrifugal and centripetal forces keep a diverse team on track to high levels of performance. By fostering centrifugal forces (that pull away from the center), leaders promote individuality and divergence, which can result in a broader range of ideas, options, and preferences. However, this divergence can also lead to negative effects such as confusion, chaos, and a lack of coordination. By facilitating centripetal forces (that pull toward the center), leaders promote team unity and convergence, which can result in coordinated collective action, consensus, and alignment. Nevertheless, this convergence can also yield negative effects such as conformity, redundancies, a lack of creativity, and stagnation. Our model posits that it is the combination of each force with its complementary opposite force that enables its positive effects to come to fruition and at the same time curtails its negative effects. We discuss how, by striking a balance between complementary forces, leaders can help turn diversity into an asset and prevent it from becoming a liability.

David Rast III

LEADERS BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING A MEASURE OF INTERGROUP RELATIONAL IDENTITY

In their theory of intergroup leadership, Hogg, van Knippenberg, and Rast (2012) posited the novel concept of intergroup relational identity. An intergroup relational identity refers to a form of social identity that is defined in terms of the cooperative and mutually promotive relationship between subgroups. In this presentation I will discuss the development of a 5-item measure of intergroup relational identity. We establish and demonstrate the reliability and validity of this across several studies and using diverse American and European samples. The unidimensional factor structure of our 5-item scale replicated across each study, while the latter studies provide evidence of construct (convergent and discriminant) and criterion-related validity. This valid and reliable measure of intergroup relational identity has clear and direct uses in both basic and applied research assessing leadership and intergroup relations in organizations—an often overlooked aspect of organizational behavior and management research (van Knippenberg, 2003).

Steve Kozlowski

THE EMERGENCE AND DYNAMICS OF TEAM PROCESSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Over a half century of research on team “processes” – team members’ collective cognition, motivation / affect, and behavior – has demonstrated that they are strong contributors to team effectiveness (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Moreover, research has also identified key intervention “levers” that shape team processes – team design, training & development, and, importantly, leadership – and, hence, provide potentially useful tools for enhancing the effectiveness of work teams. Unfortunately, there are two major limitations with this extensive research foundation and, in particular, with the utility of leadership as a lever. First, processes by definition are emergent and dynamic, but the research is largely cross-sectional and static. Thus, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the emergence and dynamics of team processes. Second, leadership research has been largely (until the last decade or so) agnostic about its target level and context; it has been generic. An exception is a small body of theory focused on team leadership, where the emphasis is on what leaders can do to shape team processes and effectiveness. Such theories, which incorporate process dynamics, have been difficult to evaluate. Resolving these limitations necessitates innovative research methods that can better capture and unpack team process dynamics and approaches that examine the role of leaders in context shaping processes in real time. I will present promising methods for capturing team process dynamics and studying team leadership. I will illustrate selected methods by describing their application in ongoing research. The purpose is to advance understanding of the dynamics of team phenomena.

Brad Kirkman

TOWARD A NEW THEORETICAL MODEL OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

Despite the ever-growing popularity and use of teams in organizations worldwide, a true theory of team leadership has remained elusive. When examining team leadership empirically, most researchers apply dyadic leadership models (e.g., transformational, LMX, initiating structure, consideration) to teams without a clear theoretical rationale for doing so. As a result, there is still no: (a) true theory of team leadership that incorporates both individual-focused and team-focused-behaviors simultaneously; (b) empirically supported contingency model of team leadership; (c) inclusion of the role of task interdependence in determining when a leader should do what in teams; and (d) attention to how leaders should go about managing relationships between team members in a team.

In light of these limitations, we develop a more theoretically power model of team leadership that attempts to: (a) bridge the gap between functional leadership theory and other traditional views (i.e., marry breadth and specificity; (b) introduce the concept of team leader focus (i.e., team leadership is not dyadic, but it is not all collective, either; and (c) incorporate situational contingencies (i.e., task interdependence).

We test our new theoretical model of team leadership using a sample of firefighter teams in the U.S. Our results show that: (a) different entities are critical in team leadership; (b) flexible team leaders perform better than inflexible ones; and (c) the situation matters.