THE ROMANTICIZATION OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP IN THE ARTS

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BIOGRAPHIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the role, significance and impact of charisma in arts and cultural leadership. By comparing empirical data from the museum and performing arts sectors with the literature on charismatic leadership, the paper investigates the under-explored role of charisma in the operation, reputation and strategic success of arts organizations. The paper highlights the importance of organizational context and reflects on the darker side of charisma, exploring the negative impacts that this can have on 'followers'.
Ultimately, the paper questions the widespread romanticization of charisma and the normative bias towards charismatic leadership by employees within arts organizations, cultural policy makers and arts audiences, as well as in the existing leadership and strategic management literature. It concludes by contending that charismatic leaders should be treated with a degree of caution and even cynicism to temper any negative impacts on followers and organizations.

KEYWORDS: Charisma, charismatic leadership, cultural leadership, arts management, strategic management.

INTRODUCTION

In the UK, it is widely acknowledged that a 'crisis' in cultural leadership emerged over the last two decades. This has been attributed to a number of factors including the precarious funding of the arts (Boyden, 2000; Metier, 2000; Selwood, 2001); the idiosyncrasies of the cultural sector and its uncomfortable relationship with management (Colbert, 2011); difficulties in recruiting senior managers to leadership positions due to a lack of skills, training and support (Holland, 1997; Metier, 2000; Resource, 2001; Hewison, 2006; Leicester, 2007) and a number of high profile leadership failures within flagship institutions (Allen, 1998; Hewison, 2004;).

These concerns led to a new cultural policy focus on leadership, which resulted in dedicated new programmes and funding streams such as the Clore Leadership Programme (2003 to present) and the Cultural Leadership Programme (2006-2010). In turn, cultural leadership has become a burgeoning area of interest within the professional and academic spheres; yet despite this attention, charismatic leadership has received remarkably little attention.

Theories on charismatic, transformational and visionary leadership share the view that "outstanding leaders have the ability to make a substantial emotional impact on their subordinates" (Javidon and Waldman, 2003, p. 229). This paper explores the notion of charisma within cultural leadership and, more specifically, its impact on 'followers'. Prior to becoming academics, the authors were both arts managers, working within museum and theatre contexts alongside highly charismatic artistic directors, casted in the role of followers. Charisma appeared to be something that was significant to the ongoing success of the organizations, from engendering loyalty within staff members to wooing funders and critics, and even selling tickets. But regardless of the seemingly central role of charisma in practice, the construct remains largely unexplored in the literature. The surprising dearth of charismatic leadership research in the arts management field is perhaps indicative of the paucity of charismatic leadership scholarship in the wider public sector (Javidon and Waldman, 2003).

The leadership and management literature has largely focussed on charismatic leaders, whilst neglecting the role of followers, as well as the process and organizational context of charisma. This exploratory study aims to redress the balance by engaging with arts workers, audiences and other external stakeholders such as policymakers and funders. Taking a grounded theory approach, it scrutinises the empirical data through a synthesis and critique of the business and academic literature, addressing the following research questions:

What impact do charismatic cultural leaders have on their followers and organizations?
What role do followers play in charismatic relationships?
To what extent does the charismatic leadership literature reflect our primary research and to what extent is it applicable to the arts?
What are the theoretical and managerial implications of charismatic leadership in the arts?

Due to the grounded theory approach, this paper begins by outlining the methodology in order to contextualise the data sets. This is followed by a discussion of charisma within the academic literature, which draws on a wide theoretical frame, stretching from Weber's conceptualisation of 'charismatic authority' to the latest leadership theory. The empirical data is then presented, taken from two distinct research projects which explored different artforms and populations and the findings are discussed in relation to the literature. The final section draws a number of conclusions, exploring the implications of the findings and setting an agenda for further research.

METHODOLOGY

The empirical element of this paper is based on a meta-analysis of two distinct data sets, derived from existing studies. The first study examined the role of cultural diplomacy within arts policy and its relationship to museum practice. The second explored audiences' motivations for theatre-going and the impact that theatre has on their lives. Both research projects were based on qualitative depth interviews. The first study was undertaken in 2009 and comprised interviews with policymakers and arts professionals (arts managers, administrators, curators, artists and museum directors). The second project was conducted in 2010 and based on interviews with theatre audiences at Melbourne Theatre Company in Australia and West Yorkshire Playhouse, UK.

Charismatic leadership strongly emerged as an underlying key theme in both projects. This was a fascinating finding from two projects that had not set out to study leadership or charisma *per se*. Following the analytical process, extensive reading was undertaken around various theories of charisma across a range of literatures including business, management, leadership, organizational behaviour and psychology. The research process therefore essentially followed a grounded theory approach.

Grounded theory is an inductive method whereby data are collected and analysed to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser refers to it as a 'sophisticated, careful method of idea manufacturing' (1978:7), involving a reflexive process of introspection, intuition and rumination (Orona, 1990). In this paper, the authors adhered to a number of the classic, defining principles of grounded theory, as established by Glaser and Strauss (1967). These tenets include: a construction of analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses; a sampling strategy based on theory construction, rather than representation; and conducting the literature review *after* developing an independent understanding of the data.

Qualitative approaches are strongly advocated in the charisma literature. For example, Murphy and Ensher (2008) discuss the ability of interviews to achieve depth and richness, whilst Conger (1998) notes that the complexity of the leadership phenomenon lends itself to qualitative methods. In qualitative research, interviews are "the universal mode of systematic enquiry" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 1) and in these two projects, semi-structured depth interviews were selected as a means of "accessing experiences" (Kvale, 2007, p. xi) and eliciting rich and "thick" descriptions (Geertz, 1973, p. 26) to capture first-hand accounts and convey these from the perspectives of participants.

In this meta-analysis, interview transcripts from a total of 57 participants were coded into key themes using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis tool NVivo. This process facilitated an iterative process of conceptual mapping and enabled the authors to distance themselves from the original data, which in turn supported reflexivity and the emergence of an "etic voice" (Wallendorf and Brucks 1993, p. 352).

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The etymology of charisma lies in the Ancient Greek word for 'divinely inspired gift' (Yukl 1993). The concept was adopted by the early Christian church to describe these gifts or 'charismata', which enabled recipients to carry out extraordinary feats (Conger et al., 1997). The pioneering work of the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) forms the kernel for any research into charismatic leadership. Weber's interests lay primarily in the processes of social domination, human freedom and personal responsibility. As a sociologist, he sought to understand the circumstances that enabled certain individuals to dominate others. Weber theorised three concepts of authority: 'traditional' (e.g. monarchy); 'rational-legal' (e.g. democratic bureaucratic systems such as parliament); and 'charismatic'. For Weber, charisma essentially represented the means by which traditional authority was challenged, positing charisma as the mechanism for social revolution (Weber, 1978). Weber thus regarded charisma as a disruptive, precarious and unstable force that occurred in moments of crisis.

Weber interpreted charisma as a belief in the extraordinariness of individuals who were endowed with a divine gift that set them apart from ordinary men (Weber, 1947). He did not elaborate on the nature of charisma or on the personality traits of charismatic leaders. Rather, he proposed that such leaders were heroic, possessing the ability to command respect, love, trust, devotion and compliance (House and Howell, 1992). Whilst there is some confluence between Weber's conceptualisation and recent leadership theory, critics of the latter have accused scholars of reducing Weber's notion of charisma from "the embodiment of a social movement" to a mere "management style" (DiTomaso, 1993, p. 269). Beyer is a seminal proponent of this view, arguing that Weber's framework has been 'tamed', 'domesticated' and "diluted [in] its richness and distinctiveness" (1999, p. 308). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to pursue this debate, it is acknowledged that within leadership and management studies, the new genre of work on charisma that emerged throughout the 1970s and 80s signalled a break with earlier Weberian conceptualisations of charismatic authority. However, critics who lament the loss of Weber's "divine connotations" (Nur, 1998, p. 25) overlook the theoretical development that has occurred over the last forty years across the management sciences, which has inevitably resulted in a broader conception and attribution of leadership.

LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

The 1970s theories on leadership primarily focussed on the traits and behaviour of charismatic leaders. House's (1977) speculative formulation of charismatic leadership proposed a multi-dimensional theory, which explored the personality traits and behaviours of leaders and followers together with the processes of influence and their contexts (Yukl, 1993). House's theory presented leaders as highly confident, power-hungry individuals who arouse followers' motivations by appealing to their shared values. A significant proportion of the theories espoused in the so-called "neo-charismatic" literature incorporate notions of vision, inspiration, role-modelling, empowerment, expectation and collective identity (Conger, 1999).

In the late 1970s, theories of transformational and transactional leadership emerged. At the positive end of this dichotomy, transformational leaders are presented as ethical, graced with the ability to inspire and motivate their followers to achieve outcomes that transcend self-interest, focus on the good of the collective and create mutual stimulation and elevation (Burns, 1978). These transformational leaders are described as the ultimate change agents and charisma is posited as a core component of their style (Conger et al., 1997).

Charismatic leaders are generally credited with the ability to "communicate in vivid and emotional ways that federate collective action around a vision" (Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti, 2011, p. 376). This demands "a unique connection between a leader and her or his followers" (Yammarino et al., 1997, cited by Ehrhart and Klein, 2001, p. 153). Howell (1988) makes the distinction between 'socialized' and 'personalized' leadership. Socialized leaders act in the interests of the collective, empowering and developing their followers through egalitarian and non-exploitative methods. Brown and Trevino emphasize ethics in their adoption of the term, to describe leaders who "convey ethical values", are "other-centred" and "role model ethical conduct" (2006, p. 955). Conversely, personalized leaders are authoritarian and narcissistic, demanding obedience from followers and setting goals which are based on their own self-interest. Whilst socialized leaders may attain new heights of collective achievement (Sosik, 2005) and a reduction in 'deviant' behaviour (Brown and Trevino, 2006), personalized leaders' methods may result in individual and/or collective ruin (Howell, 1988). Such a dichotomy does not allow for any blurring between these two extremes, although it is clear that most leaders will not fit neatly into one category or the other.

These leadership classifications are reliant on the behaviour and personalities of followers. However, the role of followers in the charismatic leadership paradigm remains seriously under-researched. As a result, there is scant empirical evidence regarding the personalities, behaviours and predispositions of the followers of charismatic leaders. Of the existing research in this area, polarised conceptualisations have prevailed. Early research in the 1980s came from political science and psychoanalysis and depicted followers as submissive, vulnerable, passive and dependent (e.g. Kets de Vries, 1988). Later work developed to portray followers as those who enjoyed challenge and risk-taking and shared the vision and style of the leader in a quest for personal challenge and growth. Followers were therefore seen as highly active and confident (e.g. Bass, 1985; Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993). Ehrhart and Klein (2001) found that followers with strong participation values are most likely to be drawn to charismatic leaders, while scholars such as Bass (1988) and Klein and House (1995) saw charisma as a mutually dependent relationship: as reliant on the 'magnetizability' of the follower as on the magnetism of the leader.

Boerner and Freiherr von Streit's study of the relationship between orchestral conductors and musicians recognise the latter as "well trained professionals with a high degree of intrinsic motivation" (2005, p. 33). This point undoubtedly translates across artforms and is relevant to those working within the arts more generally, where it is widely recognised that even those employees in junior positions are highly qualified, frequently possessing postgraduate degrees and a wealth of professional experience. Boerner and Freiherr von Streit discuss the connection between intrinsic motivation and the need for autonomy, arguing that:

"*a directive leadership style would endanger the followers' intrinsic motivation, and thus the quality of performance [...] a delegative or participative leadership style is therefore recommended. Empirical results show that in fields where creativity is crucial [...] generally a non-directive style of leadership is considered functional to success*" (2005, p. 33).

This provides an indication of the relationship between leaders and followers in the arts, which may well be at odds with other sectors.

Fanelli and Misangyi (2006) attempt to broaden the understanding of follower behaviour. They note that literature which explores followership almost exclusively focuses on the effects of charisma upon employees, arguing that this constrains understanding of the charismatic relationship. Their perspective acknowledges that followers can be 'distant', existing outside organizations. This is particularly apposite in the arts context, where audiences have a strong connection to cultural institutions, alongside other key stakeholders such as external funders, policymakers and the media. This signals a challenge for cultural leaders to cultivate their relationships with staff as well as with multiple external stakeholders.

A GIFT OR A RELATIONSHIP?

Several studies attempt to go beyond the binary categorisations of leaders and followers, focusing instead on the conceptualisation of charisma itself. These scholars argue that charisma is "not a thing that can be possessed by an individual" (Jermier, 1993, p. 221) but rather that it exists *in the relationship* between the leader and the follower, which Steyrer refers to as "charismatic interaction" (1998, p. 810). Some scholars (e.g. Bass, 1988) regard the charismatic relationship as dyadic (existing between one leader and one follower), whereas others see the relationship as collective, played out between one leader and many followers (e.g. Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993). Although the influence of leaders on group processes is woefully under-researched (Samnani and Singh, 2013), there has been some effort to explore this through a networks effects model (e.g. Pastor, Meindl and Mayo, 2002) and by analysing social exchange relationships (e.g. Galvin, Balkundi and Waldman, 2010). Gardner and Avolio (1998) propose a dramaturgical perspective of the charismatic relationship, arguing that leaders and followers *jointly construct* the leader's charismatic image through 'impression management' strategies. Ultimately, if charisma lies in the relationship between leaders and followers, or resides in the followers, then the Weberian notion of the 'gift' of charisma being endowed on exceptional individuals is challenged.

The notion of 'surrogate leaders' is pertinent here. Bass and Stogdill (1990) note that in instances where there is a lack of positive information about a leader, subordinates may struggle to develop charismatic perceptions. Galvin, Balkundi and Waldman (2010) suggest that such vacuums are generally filled by 'surrogates', who provide second-hand facts and stories to defend and/or promote the leader, which can be even more influential than first-hand interactions with leaders themselves. This can be especially useful in informal networks, which may be based on discretionary relationships (Ibarra, 1993) and populated by 'distant followers' (Goffman, 1959). This notion of surrogate leaders further negates Weber's concept of extraordinary and heroic individuals. In this model, authority is replaced by circumscribed roles within group dynamics, as both leaders and followers obtain (or are assigned) roles, which they act out in order for charisma to be formed. This reflects both Goffman's theories on 'idealization' and "impression management" (1959, p.208) and Gardner and Avolio's theory of social actors and charismatic "contagion processes" (1998, p. 51).

A proportion of the modern leadership scholars correspondingly perceive charisma as a tool that can be taught (Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti, 2011). If the findings of their research are valid, it is not too great a leap to regard charisma as a conceit, or even an *illusion*, that exists only in the minds of followers. Indeed Meindl (1990) has argued that charisma is simply a state of mind that is highly romanticized and contagious. This perspective casts charisma as an act of social construction which resides within followers (Meindl and Thompson, 2005; Schyns, Felfe and Blank, 2007). This conception of charisma is also supported by Keyes (2002), who claims that: "Charisma's consequences are only evident in the perceptions of followers, who "validate" the leader's charisma. Only when followers have accepted the leader as a symbol of their moral unity can the leader have charisma (cited in Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti, 2011, p. 375). Yet again, such theorisations undermine Weber's notion of the singular divine being.

DATA AND FINDINGS

By revisiting the empirical data captured across the two studies, the authors observed the dramatic effect that charisma can have on the primary stakeholders of arts organizations. The meta-analysis of the original interviews with policy-makers, civil servants, artists, arts managers and audience members revealed both a dependency on and a distorted interest in charismatic leaders. Within both theatre and museum contexts, participants appeared to be captivated and seduced by the charm and vision of charismatic leaders, who can have a significant impact on their behaviour and degree of organizational loyalty. In line with the literature, the cases presented here indicate that charismatic cultural leaders hold a considerable degree of power and influence over their 'followers', who range from government officials and the media to employees and audiences. As the following analysis highlights, this complex psychological dynamic comprises attention, attraction, commitment, compliance and admiration.

Participants in the first study revealed a huge sense of admiration for charismatic leaders. For example, of the fifteen interviewees questioned about cultural diplomacy, seven referred directly to Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, despite the interviewer mentioning neither the individual nor the organization. Indeed "Neil" was mentioned 55 times in the interviews and "MacGregor" 19 times, and in a 45 minute interview with a government advisor, Neil MacGregor was mentioned no fewer than 14 times. Participants referred to him as "erudite", "brilliant", "charming", "persuasive" and "a cultured force for good". When questioned about a new policy for cultural diplomacy and its £3m funding stream, participants shared a perception that the fund was conceptualised, initiated, established, implemented and even controlled by MacGregor. Even civil servants reported that the idea emanated from "the likes of Neil MacGregor", which suggests the existence of the kind of informal leadership network referred to in the literature. A former employee of the British Museum spontaneously discussed his virtues as follows:
"*What Neil has done particularly well with this museum [...] is to look at what actually is the core purpose of this place [...]. If you listen to a lot of what Neil has said or if you read a lot about what he's written, he refers back to our founding principles from 1753 [...]. That is Neil's purpose and I think as soon as you've got the security of knowing what the purpose is and this ambition [...] that just opens up all sorts of possibilities [...].*

As emphasized in the literature, this employee is clearly inspired by her leader's vision. She finds this vision both exciting and reassuring. She evokes the sense of an avid 'follower' behaviour by noting how she listens to what MacGregor says and reads 'a lot' of what he writes. When a government special advisor was questioned about cultural diplomacy and how cultural policy was devised, the respondent replied frankly: "*It really was sitting on aeroplanes going around America going 'look, we've got the Comprehensive Spending Review [...] what shall we do? What shall we do for Neil?'*"

This admission indicates the power and impact that charismatic arts leaders can exert on their networks. It also begs the question of where this might leave those leaders who are both less charismatic and less well networked. A strong theme running through all the interviews in this study was the power of the individual *per se* and the particular importance of a small elite of cultural leaders who are instrumental in making key policy decisions. This point was articulated eloquently by a gallery director, who opined:
"*Very often it has to do with an individual [...] somebody who is the director, who is going to fight for that organization, get more money when it comes to that bidding time and they've got an idea that's going to inspire somebody in some Foreign Office or other department.*"
This primordial importance of individual leaders was echoed by a senior policymaker, who revealed an entrenched bias towards the individual over the organization:
"*As with so many things, these things come down to individuals [...]. If you've got a high performing individual in a dysfunctional organization, you can still get some really good stuff out of it.*"
These insights combine to paint a picture of a sector where charismatic leaders are extolled and where policy is manipulated to realise the personal agendas of a highly networked cultural elite. In contrast to the theory on charismatic relationships, they support Weber's original concept of charisma as residing in extraordinary individuals and exemplify Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti's depiction of charismatic leaders as those who can "federate collective action around a vision" (2011, p. 376).

In a similar way, the participants in the second project consistently made reference to artistic directors, despite the research questions not focusing remotely on leadership. When asked to discuss their relationship to their respective theatres, interviewees repeatedly discussed artistic directors instead of focussing on the artistic

programme or the theatre themselves. Figures such as Simon Phillips from Melbourne Theatre Company were eulogised with an abundance of positive epithets such as "clever", "charming" and "charismatic". Interviewees appeared to be personally excited by chance encounters with such individuals, emphasising any sort of exchange or interaction with the artistic directors – from meeting in the foyer after a production to observing what colour socks a particular director wore.

Despite being 'distant followers' who had little direct or personal contact with any cultural leader, participants seemed to communicate a pseudo intimacy, observing and scrutinising the actions of the directors and referring to them on first name terms. They praised popular directors for their perceived skills in entrepreneurship or diplomacy and/or their respect for audiences. Many interviewees revealed an extreme sense of loyalty towards these distant leaders. For example, one participant admitted to subscribing to a season programme through a sense of loyalty to an artistic director, despite no longer enjoying the theatre's productions. Participants also discussed previous directors with nostalgic affection, speaking about them sentimentally and reflecting on their tenure with a romanticized sense of fondness. This is surprising considering the interviewees did not know the directors personally and enjoyed little, if any, personal interaction with them. Participants shared and emphasized fleeting (but clearly significant) moments, such as when particular directors personally introduced performances or post-show discussions: "I could sit and listen to him every night; he has such charm, enthusiasm and charisma; he knows how to work a crowd [...]. I love it when he's in charge at the forum."

Participants' overall relationship to an organization and its work seemed to be largely dictated by their attitude towards the director. For example, one interviewee felt that her theatre's artistic programme had lost its experimental edge and explained how the move towards a more commercial business model had resulted in less flexibility in buying tickets. However, she did not attribute this to the artistic director, instead praising him for having "revolutionised" the company. She continued to subscribe, to ensure that she did not miss a production, but due to the inflexibility around purchasing tickets, she now works her "calendar around the theatre dates". So paradoxically, despite enjoying the performances less, her loyalty increased, and this was largely dependent on how she felt about the organization's leader. Conversely, interviewees did not spontaneously discuss artistic directors who would conventionally be regarded as less charismatic. If they were mentioned at all, it was generally to state that they had no opinion or impression of them, or to even compare them unfavourably with more charismatic leaders.

DISCUSSION

The meta-analysis of both data sets has served to highlight the participants' overriding focus on the individual. From distant audience members and employees through to policymakers and government officials, stakeholders in arts organizations appear to value charismatic leaders extremely highly and this can directly influence a range of follower behaviour, from purchasing theatre tickets to bestowing a significant amount of funding. Meindl and Thompson define charisma as "a publicly created persona" and "a simplified archetypical image that results from the celebration and romance of leadership" (2005, p. 18). The accounts of charismatic leaders provided by participants in these studies suggest that the arts world enjoys celebrating and romanticizing its leaders as much as (if not perhaps even more than) any other sector.

There were some revealing synergies between the two unrelated studies. One theatre-goer described Simon Phillips as "clever, charismatic and naughty", with a "sense of fun", while the media have revelled in Neil MacGregor's "delightfully irreverent giggle" (Campbell-Johnston, 2008, p. 33), naming him 'Briton of the Year' in 2008. This confluence of charisma and irreverence is evocative of the cultural leadership theory, which extols the transgressional leader:

"*While political leaders primarily make rules and administrative leaders primarily enforce rules, cultural leaders [...] find principled and imaginative ways to transgress those rules that inhibit the emergence of cultural sovereignty and creativity.*" (Omer, 2005, cited in Leicester 2007, p. 18)

Whilst this suggests that there may be some specificity around charisma within an arts context, Conger and Kanungo (1988) emphasize that charismatic leaders engage in behaviours that are novel, unconventional and counter-normative. They argue that such figures use unconventional behaviours to transcend the existing social or organizational order. This view not only highlights the "attributions of special talents and special powers to

the leader" (Shamir, 1991, p. 90) but foregrounds a distinctly Weberian conceptualization of charisma. Moreover, this raises the question of whether creative-minded followers might prefer (and perhaps even expect) an artistic leader to break the rules. The literature is limited here, since the role of context or organizational environment is under explored (Beyer, 1999), which may partially explain the dearth of charismatic leadership research devoted to arts and cultural organizations.

THE DARK SIDE OF CHARISMA

Although the vast majority of studies into charismatic leadership emphasize its positive traits and outcomes, there is some research that questions this "normative bias" (Hunt and Conger, 1999, p. 341), pointing out, for example, that charisma can be predicated on vanity and egotism. Charisma can therefore impact negatively on organizational performance because of its frequent association with dysfunctional narcissism (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Conger and Kanungo, 1998; Agle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld and Srinivasan, 2006; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2012). Indeed, according to Galvin, Waldman and Balthazard (2010), the combination of charisma and narcissism has been associated with fear, cruelty, manipulation and the abuse of power.

A number of scholars have explored this 'dark side' of charisma. Gardner and Avolio (1998) argue that charismatic leaders appear prone to exaggeration and their claims can mislead their followers. Sankowsky (1995) criticizes narcissistic leaders for attracting followers to grandiose visions whilst often lacking the means to achieve their objectives. For Sosik (2005), a key concern relates to the underlying motivations of charismatic leaders (which may well relate to the ego), such as the need for wealth, material possessions, personal pleasure and the desire to influence others, rather than more collective intentions. Conger (1990) contends that in the mission to secure personal gain, the behaviour of the leader can become dictatorial and controlling. Likewise, Samnani and Singh draw upon the work of Kets de Vries (1993) to discuss the dangers of personalized leadership styles, whereby the need to accumulate personal power may result in "victimizing behaviours" given the potential of such leaders "to exploit and manipulate followers" (2013, p. 190). This can lead to alienation and subsequently cause stress and anxiety, reducing the wellbeing of followers. Conger also warns against the unstable relationships that can be created between charismatic leaders and their followers. Due to the self-worth of the followers being defined by their relationship to the leader, a "precarious dependence" can result, whereby without their leader's affirmation, employees can feel as though they are failing (1999, p. 163).

According to Tourish and Pinnington (2002), negative tactics such as exploitation and manipulation can appear simultaneously alongside supportive behaviour, which can be a particularly destructive combination. Due to the reverence paid to leaders by their followers, the latter may even begin to imitate this behaviour, in line with social learning theory and role modelling (Samnani and Singh, 2013), which may propagate and sustain dysfunctional working practices and cultures. This reflects Weber's claim that "leaders are constantly tempted to ignore the limits of their power thereby jeopardising the beliefs which command their subjects' obedience" (Callan, 2003, p. 6).

CONCLUSIONS

The neo-charismatic literature reveals that whilst there is much overlap in terms of how charisma is conceptualized, there is a lack of consensus on how it is manifested in practice. There is also a lack of agreement as to whether charisma resides in leaders, followers or within the relationship between the two. Furthermore, the theory seems to have developed reductively around somewhat crude dichotomies: charisma is generally understood as 'transformational' or 'transactional'; or 'personalized' or 'socialized'. This indicates that a more sophisticated rendering of charisma is required.

In our analysis, charisma was clearly depicted as a romanticized social illusion. Arts workers displayed a strong attraction towards, and even sometimes a misplaced idolisation of, popular arts leaders. Perhaps more surprisingly, even audiences or 'distant followers' also bought into the ideal of charisma and used it to personify (and therefore romanticize) cultural organizations despite their personal interaction with cultural leaders being minimal or even non-existent. This reveals the potentially insidious dangers of charisma, which, as the literature suggests, can supplant ethics, strategy and reason. To echo the words of Gardner and Avolio, it seems clear that charisma can be a "potent force" within the arts (1998, p. 55).

When charisma is extolled as a uniquely beneficial leadership virtue, more important leadership qualities such as trust can become neglected; and according to Michaelis, Stegmaier and Sonntag, trust in senior management has a stronger impact on commitment than charismatic leadership" (2009, p. 411). Boerner and Freiherr von Streit's research (2005) demonstrated that charisma itself involves trust and competence, and that this ultimately leads to credibility, something that is highly prized within the arts. The literature also emphasizes the importance of 'vision' and 'inspiration' to the charismatic toolkit, virtues which again enjoy a particular significance within the arts context.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that charismatic leaders cause followers "to become highly committed to the leader's mission, to make significant personal sacrifices in the interest of the mission, and to perform above and beyond the call of duty" (Fiol, Harris and House 1999, p. 451). In the academic and business literatures, this process is ubiquitously presented as one of the charismatic leader's greatest assets. There are clear ethical implications of employee manipulation, not to mention the dangers of group-think and the organizational repercussions of work-related stress from the Human Resource Management perspective. If charisma can indeed be taught, idealized and learnt (Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti, 2011), then surely some ethical prudence and responsibility must be exercised. This is especially important in light of the signs that charisma is essentially a performance (Goffman, 1959); and if it is, artists are arguably uniquely placed to excel in leadership roles.

Despite the empirical evidence that charismatic leaders thrive within the arts, this exploratory analysis remains inconclusive on the importance of context in governing culture, expectation, behaviour, communication and values. However, a hypothesis has begun to emerge that suggests that the arts context is both important and unique. For example, the value of trust, vision and credibility within the arts (and their connections with charisma) have already been sketched out. Additionally, Bass and Stogdill (1990) point out that in conditions of uncertainty and crisis, followers feel the need for greater direction and guidance. In the current arts context, where cultural labour is notoriously precarious and budgets continue to decline, this point is particularly resonant and the current instability may actually provide fertile ground for charismatic relationships to flourish. Furthermore, arts workers tend to be motivated intrinsically and according to Pastor, Meindl and Mayo (2002), during the transformational leadership process, leaders and followers transcend their own personal interests for the benefit of higher-order values and principles. These strong, shared values may mean that those in the arts may be particularly susceptible to charismatic leadership, which in turn suggests that context is key to any comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Weber's notion of the extraordinary divine gifts of charismatic individuals presupposes that such figures are rare; yet within the cultural sector, charismatic figures are commonplace. Since charismatic leadership is rife within the arts, it would be fruitful for future studies to focus on gaining a better understanding of the conditions that create and cultivate charisma. Furthermore, this study has exposed a widespread belief within the arts that charisma is vital for effective leadership. This 'mainstreaming' of charisma strongly contests Weberian notions of exceptionalism. Within this, another productive avenue of further study would be to explore followers, especially since the literature explicates the dangers of charismatic leadership,

Although charisma has traditionally been overstated and overrated in the neo-charismatic paradigm, in the arts context at least, it has clearly not lost its Weberian ability to challenge authority and upset the status quo – as manifest in the depiction of transgressional leaders who were described and portrayed as "naughty" and "irreverent". This emerging and ambivalent evidence demonstrates that there is much more work to be done if academics are to truly understand the phenomenon of charisma, its application within the cultural sector and its genuine long-term implications for arts management and cultural leadership.

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