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Review

# Viva la evolution: Using dual-strategies theory to explain leadership in modern organizations

Kaylene J. McClanahan

*Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, United States of America*

A B S T R A C T

Research from multiple fields suggests that throughout human history, leaders ascended the hierarchy through one of two strategies—dominance (using force or coercion to gain control) or prestige (demonstrating competence and generosity so others follow of their own volition). The dual-strategies theory of social rank suggests that these two strategies are still inherent in human psychology, and that consideration of dominance and prestige can help explain hierarchy and leadership in modern social groups. Thus far, research on dual-strategies theory has developed without significant cross-fertilization from the literature on leadership within organizational settings. In this review, I provide the first examination of dual-strategies theory within the context of broader leadership research, highlighting a) the unique contributions of dual-strategies theory, b) current workforce trends that make dual-strategies theory particularly applicable to modern organizations, and c) key limitations of dual-strategies theory that could be addressed by integrating leadership theory.

In the last two decades, evolutionary social psychologists have proposed a new framework for classifying and thinking about individuals' approaches to social hierarchy. This framework—the dual-strategies theory of social rank—suggests that attempts to gain and maintain positions of high social rank can be categorized as one of two strategies: dominance or prestige (Maner & Case, 2016). A dominant style is characterized by the use of force or coercion to claim social power. In contrast, a prestige-based approach typically involves demonstrating valued traits such as competence and generosity so others follow the leader of their own volition. This theory is gaining traction in social and evolutionary psychology, as evidenced by the number of papers in this area published in top psychology journals over the past decade (e.g., Case, Bae, & Maner, 2018; Case & Maner, 2014; Cheng & Tracy, 2013; Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Halevy, Chou, Cohen, & Livingston, 2012; Maner & Mead, 2010; Witkower, Tracy, Cheng, & Henrich, in press; see Case & Maner, 2016 and Maner, 2017 for reviews).

Despite asking similar questions, research on dual-strategies theory has thus far developed without significant cross-fertilization from the larger body of research on leadership in organizations. In the following, I address the divide between these two literatures by providing the first examination of the dual-strategies theory of social rank within the context of broader leadership theory. The aim of this review is to introduce dual-strategies theory to leadership researchers who may be unfamiliar with it, clarify the unique contributions of the dual-strategies theory of social rank, and describe the potential benefits of cross-fertilization from these two literatures. Finally, I argue that although dual-strategies theory has not been extensively studied in organizational settings, it is a particularly useful theory for understanding many modern employment contexts.

In order to situate the dual-strategies theory of social rank within the context of the broader leadership theory and research, I first define social rank, power, status, and leadership. Next, I briefly introduce the dual-strategies theory of social rank, including the intellectual traditions that gave birth to the theory. With this introduction complete, I take three steps to position this theory within the context of the organizational behavior literature on leadership. First, I describe a few of the most prominent leadership theories and compare and contrast these theories with dual-strategies theory. Second, I describe the unique focus and contributions of dual-strategies theory relative to organizational behavior literature on leadership and argue that this theory offers unique explanatory value that is increasingly pertinent to the modern workforce. Third, to demonstrate how principles from the broader research on literature can provide fertile theoretical ground for future research within dual-strategies theory, I take a few select concepts from the literature on leadership and describe how they can be applied to dual-strategies theory to generate and answer important empirical questions.

## Defining key terms

Definitions of leadership, social rank, power, and status are plentiful, varied, and seldom agreed upon (Bass & Bass, 2008; Blader & Chen, 2014; Northouse, 2018). Given that this review draws from literature in organizational behavior, social psychology, and evolutionary anthropology, all of whom use these terms differently, defining each of

*E-mail address:* k-mcclanahan@kellogg.northwestern.edu.

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these key terms is a crucial first step in exploring how these two bodies of literature relate to each other.

### Social rank

The concept of social rank is central to dual-strategies theory and is defined as one's position within a hierarchy, where hierarchy is a "rank order of individuals or groups on a valued social dimension" (Magee & Galinsky, 2008, p. 354). A person with high social rank is a person with a position near the top of the hierarchy.

There are a few points worth clarifying about this conception of social rank. First, a person's social rank is relative: it depends on their immediate reference group. For example, in formal organizational hierarchies, many employees serve as both managers and subordinates—a manager might be in a position of high social rank when interfacing with her subordinates, but might have average or even low social rank when interacting with other managers in firm. Second, hierarchies can be either formal or informal: a job title conveys an individual's position within the organization's formal hierarchy, but certain individuals might also be informally deferred to more than others with the same job title, giving them a higher position within the informal hierarchy. Similarly, even in social groups where there is no formal hierarchy—for example, a book club—informal hierarchies often emerge: a book club member who makes insightful contributions to the discussion and has an outsized influence on book selection might be considered to have high social rank despite his/her lack of formal title. Third, within a given social group, multiple hierarchies can, and generally do, exist (Greer & van Kleef, 2010). In other words, individuals may be ranked on different dimensions. For example, one member of a work team might be considered a leader in technical expertise, while another is considered a leader in client engagement. Social rank can refer to one's location on one of these specific dimensions or the aggregate of all possible hierarchies. Finally, hierarchies can be characterized by power or status (Hays & Bendersky, 2015), a distinction described in more detail below.

### Power and status

Theory and empirical research suggest that power and status represent distinct types of social rank and therefore are related but distinct constructs (Anicich, Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2016; Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2012). This distinction is important to understanding dual-strategies theory (Case, Bae, & Maner, 2018; Maner & Case, 2016).

Power is the asymmetric control of valued resources in social relationships (Galinsky, Rucker, & Magee, 2015; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). A key feature of power is the asymmetry between group members: because the powerful control important resources, group members with less power are dependent upon them (Galinsky et al., 2015). In contrast, the powerful remain less dependent on others to get what they want. Additionally, individuals can hold power by either controlling resources that are desirable (i.e., an individual has a resource that group members want access to) or that are undesirable (i.e., an individual controls negative outcomes, such as punishment or cost-inflicting tasks, that group members seek to avoid; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Both of these reflect the asymmetric dependence and resource control that characterize power-based hierarchies.

In contrast to the control focus of power, status refers to "the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference an individual is afforded by others" (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015, p. 575). Crucially, status is in the eye of the perceivers: one cannot "seize" status the way one could "seize" power, as it is only granted by other members of the group (Blader & Chen, 2014). Some organizational behavior research designates *status* as formal positions of power and *esteem* as the admiration and respect of others (cf. Bass & Bass, 2008), but this is inconsistent with how the term "status" is used in social psychology (and this review). Rather, research on social rank defines status as to something closer to what these researchers would call "esteem."

The distinction between power and status is important because there is significant evidence that power and status are conferred separately (Fast et al., 2012; Galinsky et al., 2015), that power and status hierarchies function differently (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Hays & Bendersky, 2015), and that the experience of having power has fundamentally different psychological and behavioral consequences than having status (e.g., Anicich et al., 2016; Blader & Chen, 2012; Fast et al., 2012). This distinction is also important to dual-strategies theory, as several researchers have linked dominance with power and prestige with status (cf. Case et al., 2018; Maner & Case, 2016; Ronay, Maddux, & von Hippel, 2018). Nevertheless, power and status frequently co-occur (Blader & Chen, 2014). Unless specified, the term "social rank" is agnostic to the type of hierarchy: a person with high social rank can have power, status, or both.

### Leadership

While definitions of leadership are plentiful (Northouse, 2018), one consistently agreed upon theme is that leadership represents a complex, multi-faceted group process by which an individual influences the group toward their goals (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Bass & Bass, 2008; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Kantner, 2010; Lord, Day, Zaccaro, Avolio, & Eagly, 2017; Northouse, 2018). It is important to note that leadership does not refer to a position of high social rank: an individual with high social rank may be in a position to lead others, but that does not necessarily mean he or she will do so (Blader & Chen, 2014).

### Dual strategies (not leadership styles)

The dual-strategies theory of social rank focuses on the psychological and behavioral strategies that individuals employ to attain and maintain a position of high social rank, as well as the implications of these strategies for the group. In this way, the theory focuses on approaches to hierarchy, and not necessarily the complex, multifaceted, and reciprocal processes of leadership. For this reason, dominance and prestige are not leadership styles, but rather reflect strategies by which individuals attempt to gain and maintain positions of social rank. Some might assume from the word "strategy" that these behaviors are intentional, premediated, and/or Machiavellian, but this is not necessarily the case: individuals might engage in either of these strategies without even consciously considering their position within the hierarchy.

Although dual-strategies theory is not a theory of leadership per se, understanding how social hierarchies are formed, maintained, or disrupted is an important component of understanding leadership in organizations. Thus, dual-strategies theory can be used in conjunction with extant leadership theories to better explain leadership, followership, and hierarchies in modern organizations or social groups broadly. (I explore the potential integration of dual-strategies theory and leadership theory in more detail in the section entitled "Dual-strategies theory and classic leadership theories.") Additionally, many phenomena investigated by leadership researchers (for example, leadership emergence or how leaders and followers navigate compliance) are squarely within the domain of dual-strategies theory. Because of this, an integration of leadership research and dual-strategies theory is likely to enrich both lines of research and prevent unnecessary duplication of research efforts.

Finally, although "leadership" refers to a complex, multiparty process, in the social psychological and anthropological research on hierarchy, it is typical to use the word "leader" to mean a person with high social rank. Throughout this paper, I use the term leader to this effect (and do not intend to evoke or comment on the complexity of the process of *leadership* when using this term).

## Introduction to the dual-strategies theory of social rank

The dual-strategies theory of social rank is a theoretical perspective on hierarchy based in evolutionary psychology and anthropology.[1] Evolutionary psychology is a scientific line of inquiry that suggests that human psychology is (at least in part) a reflection of our ancestral history (Buss, 2005; Cosmides & Tooby, 1992). One key tenet of evolutionary psychology is that a comprehensive understanding of human psychology requires an investigation into the conditions and selection pressures to which humans evolved: by understanding the social environments to which our brains adapted, we gain additional insights into human psychology and behavior. An evolutionary approach to hierarchy and leadership specifically means considering the selective pressures and adaptive problems solved by groups and leaders during human evolution. Thus, insights into modern hierarchies can be gained by considering the groups and hierarchies of the human Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness, or EEA.

The human EEA refers to the conditions to which we are humans evolved. While it is impossible to pinpoint a singular environment or time period that could reflect the complexity of human evolution, the EEA represents the "composite of environment properties" (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990, p. 388) that were present when humans evolved to their current form. It is hypothesized that most uniquely human traits evolved during the Pleistocene era, which spanned from approximately 2.5 million years ago to approximately 12,000 years ago (Symons, 1992). During this time period, human social groups were quite different from our modern context—they tended to be small, kin-based, and relatively egalitarian (van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). Hierarchy tended to be informal, domain-specific, and marked by constant shifts (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; van Vugt et al., 2008). An investigation into these groups, as well as human selection pressures and ancestral environments that evoked them, provides a variety of fascinating questions and potential insights for leadership research (see Garfield, von Rueden, & Hagen, 2019 or van Vugt et al., 2008 for reviews).

The dual-strategies theory of social rank, however, focuses on one interesting dichotomy that has been noted by the ethologists, biologists, and evolutionary anthropologists who study these groups. Specifically, they noted that, "leaders sometimes engage in dominant behaviors that often benefit themselves at the expense of the group, and sometimes provide information- and skill-based services that benefit both themselves and the group" (Garfield et al., 2019, p. 74). Dual-strategies theory suggests that this dichotomy between the use of force at the expense of the group (termed a dominant strategy) and the use of knowledge and skill to benefit the group (termed a prestige strategy) is at the core to understanding how individuals attain and maintain positions of influence in social groups.

### *Dominance*

Hierarchies characterized by dominance typically feature individuals who try to force and manipulate their way to positions at the top of the hierarchy (not unlike the hierarchies of most great apes; Maner, 2017; Tiger & Fox, 1972). The dominance approach is characterized by intimidation, coercion, and manipulation of group resources. Dominant individuals are primarily interested in acquiring and retaining positions of power (vs. status; Maner & Case, 2016), and often prioritize this interest above the interests of the group (Maner & Mead, 2010). Additionally, dominant leaders' preoccupation with their own standing within the group means they tend to be hyper-vigilant to other group members who might pose a threat to their aspirations of power (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Case, 2016). Dominant leaders are also more likely to subjugate their group members in order to increase the power differential between them and their followers. In other words, dominance is a hierarchy-enhancing strategy (Maner & Case, 2016).

Why might individuals allow a dominant individual to lead the group despite his/her selfish behavior? Scholars have identified at least four reasons why dominance hierarchies might emerge. First, a dominance hierarchy can prevent constant conflict over resources: a widely known and accepted pecking order provides clear rules and expectations for how resources will be distributed among group members (Drews, 1993). This can prevent constant in-fighting every time group resources need to be distributed. While being at the bottom of a dominance hierarchy may bear some cost, it can provide benefits to the group as a whole by preventing chaos.

Second, dominance can provide increased coordination among group members, making dominance particularly valuable in situations in which a high degree of coordination is necessary for the group to survive or flourish—one such context being times of intergroup conflict (King, Johnson, & van Vugt, 2009). Indeed, during times of intergroup conflict, dominant leaders subjugate their own interests for the good of the group (Fortunato & Gavrilets, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010) and aggressively defend the group's welfare (Laustsen & Petersen, 2017). In these ways (or in these contexts), dominant leaders can provide important benefits to the group (Garfield et al., 2019).

Third, another function that leaders serve is keeping group members in line and punishing free-riders (those who fail to complete their duty to the group; De Cremer & van Vugt, 2002). That is, a leader is responsible for punishing potentially exploitative group members (Lukaszewski, Simmons, Anderson, & Roney, 2016), discouraging defection (von Rueden, 2014), and arbitrating conflict between group members (von Rueden & Gurven, 2012). Group members may see dominant leaders' willingness to use force as an asset in this regard: they may be seen as more capable of protecting the group from those who would undermine or exploit group cooperation.

A final explanation for the emergence of dominant leader is more pessimistic about the benefits of dominant leaders, but rather suggests that dominant leader is more likely to attain and retain a position of high social rank when group members have limited outside alternatives to the dominant leader (Hirschman, 1970; Price & van Vugt, 2014). That is, dominant leadership might flourish when group members are highly dependent on their leader, do not have good outside alternatives, or lack the ability to revolt (Ronay, Oostrom, & Maner, under review). In these contexts, the leader may have more leeway to engage in coercive, selfish behavior (Price & van Vugt, 2014) that would typically cause group members to reject the leader (Boehm, 1993).

### *Prestige*

In contrast to force-based dominance hierarchies, hierarchies can also be based on prestige—in our ancestral past, talented hunters or other skilled group members were deferred to because of their valued experience, skills, and ability to mentor and help others (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Thus, a prestige-based strategy typically involves attaining social rank by amassing the respect, admiration, and "freely conferred deference" of one's subordinates rather than through active subjugation of others (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001, p. 165). Prestige-oriented individuals tend to demonstrate competence and expertise, which other group members value and admire (Anderson & Kilduff,

[1] While dual-strategies theory has been championed by evolutionary psychologists in the last decade, it is important to note that this work has drawn heavily on the work of anthropologists, biologists, primatologists, and ethologists more broadly. Indeed, researchers in these areas had been discussing the evolutionary origins of human hierarchies for decades prior to the adoption of these ideas by evolutionary social psychologists. Anthropological research specifically spoke of dominance hierarchies in humans (Tiger & Fox, 1972), prestige as a form of hierarchy (Barkow, 1989) and/or a distinction between force-based and persuasion-based attempts at social rank (Kracke, 1978). Given this, the work on dual-strategies theory lead by evolutionary psychologists does not necessarily represent an innovative new idea, but rather a conciliation and advancement of ideas from several different intellectual domains.

2009). Importantly, however, demonstrating competence alone is generally not enough to elicit respect and deference—group members must also feel confident that the potential leader will use his or her skills to benefit the group (Anderson et al., 2015; Hardy & van Vugt, 2006). Thus, a prestige strategy is thought to involve demonstration of expertise *and* magnanimity, so that other group members willingly defer to the potential leader (Maner, 2017; Maner & Case, 2016; Willer, 2009). While dominant leaders tend to assert themselves and their will on other group members, prestige oriented leaders tend to display both prosocial behavior and knowledge and expertise in specific topic areas, increasing their trustworthiness and value in the eyes of others (Chudek & Henrich, 2011; Maner & Case, 2016). One other reason that followers might defer to prestige-oriented leaders is that prestige-based leaders tend to be relatively egalitarian (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001), which is thought to be preferable for most followers (Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, & Lester, 2017; van Vugt et al., 2008).

Patterns of prestige-based deference generally benefitted both the leader and follower (Price & van Vugt, 2014). Followers were able to learn valuable information from successful individuals and also benefited from having a competent leader make group decisions (Hagen & Garfield, 2019). In turn, followers tended to offer deference and prestige to these successful individuals. Although a prestige-based strategy often required the leader to sacrifice for the good of the group (Price & van Vugt, 2014; Willer, 2009), the leader was generally repaid with high social rank, which translated into an increased ability to attain personal goals, control resources, and influence others (Maner & Case, 2016).

Although some scholars debate the precise mechanism by which dominance and prestige strategies were transmitted from generation to generation (be it psychological adaptation, cultural group selection, or a combination of both; see Chudek & Henrich, 2011; Maner, 2017; Richerson et al., 2016; Richerson & Henrich, 2012), there is abundant evidence that both strategies exists across a variety of contexts and cultures (Garfield et al., 2019; Kracke, 1978)[2] which is typically considered to be a major calling card of evolved human adaptations (Schmitt & Pilcher, 2004). Furthermore, it is clear that (at least in some contexts) both of these strategies provided benefits to both leaders and followers. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that when social interactions provide a net fitness benefit to the individuals within a group (in this case, both leaders and followers), these patterns of interaction are likely to persist and evolve (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). At a high level, this explains how dominance and prestige-based hierarchies came to be widespread.

In short, the dual-strategies theory of social rank suggests that due to the pervasiveness of dominance and prestige in our evolutionary past, the proclivity toward these strategies is still inherent in our psychology. Consequently, the dual-strategies theory of social rank suggests that even today, attempts to both attain and maintain positions of high social rank can be categorized into one of two distinct strategies: dominance or prestige (Cheng & Tracy, 2014; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Maner, 2017; Maner & Case, 2016). Furthermore, while dominance and prestige are very different approaches to gaining and maintaining high social rank, dual-strategies theory suggests that both strategies are *effective* ways of attaining social rank, representing "two ways to the top" (Cheng et al., 2013).[3]

### *Dominance and prestige as individual tendencies*

Dual-strategies theory suggests that while dominance and prestige are *strategies* for obtaining social rank, they can also reflect individual differences between individuals (Maner & Case, 2016). That is, while it would be feasible for a person to enact a dominant strategy at one time and a prestige-based strategy at another time, it is hypothesized that people tend to gravitate toward one strategy over the other. In this way, the terms "dominant" and "prestige-oriented" can also be applied to a person who consistently deploys one of the strategies.

Research on dominance and prestige from an evolutionary psychology perspective suggests that this individual difference can also be conceptualized as a difference in motives in addition to a difference in behavior (Maner & Case, 2016). Specifically, Maner and Case (2016) suggest that dominance is a reflection of the motivation for power, and prestige-orientation reflects a motivation for status.[4] This difference in motivation could explain a key difference in the psychology of dominance- and prestige-oriented individuals. Status is inherently other-focused—gaining status necessitates that you consider the needs of others, as you depend on them to give you status (Anderson et al., 2015). In contrast, power is something that can be taken—other group members can be managed or manipulated in pursuit of resources or control (Barkow, 1989). Given this, it follows that dominant leaders would be inherently less focused on how others view them.

[2] One common and related debate in the study of human evolution is whether a given characteristic is uniquely human. There is a myriad of evidence that dominance hierarchies predate humans and are found across a myriad of species and genera, so there is no doubt that dominance is not uniquely human. Researchers *have* debated whether *prestige* hierarchies are uniquely human. While this question does not significantly impact the application of dual-strategies theory to modern organizations, it may be of interest to note that some researchers argue that prestige-based hierarchies are present in non-human primates, because chimpanzees demonstrate social learning from higher ranking chimpanzees (Horner, Proctor, Bonnie, Whiten, & de Waal, 2010; Kendal et al., 2015). Indeed, many species rely on more informed group members to make decisions for the group, including elephants (Payne, 2003), whales (Brent et al., 2015), and birds (Flack et al., 2018). However, other researchers argue that prestige hierarchies in humans are distinct from the knowledge-based hierarchies of non-human animals. This argument is relies on the notion that a) prestige-based social learning in humans is far more complex than the basic info-copying seen in other mammals (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001) and b) prestige includes the learning of norms and culture passed down through generations (with culture transmission considered by many to be a uniquely human trait; Henrich et al., 2015), that prestige hierarchies in humans are distinct from the knowledge-based hierarchies of non-human animals.

[3] Yet another debate in this area revolves around how distinct dominance and prestige are. Despite early anthropological work noting the dichotomy of strategies in obtaining positions of social rank (Kracke, 1978), other anthropologists such as Sahlins (1963) did not differentiate between the strategies, suggesting that social rank in small-scale societies was attained through a combination of both of cunning aggression and prestige. Furthermore, Chapais (2015) argues that all social rank is attained through competence, and that dominance and prestige simply reflect competence in different domains. Chapais also argues that because chimpanzee hierarchies include both forced-based coercion and competence-based attraction to high-ranking individuals, the two strategies may have more overlap in terms of evolutionary origins than previously thought. Despite these claims, there is considerable evidence that dominance and prestige hierarchies result in distinct group processes (e.g., Garfield, Hubbard, & Hagen, 2019; Hays & Bendersky, 2015), and that dominant and prestige-based leaders have distinct psychologies and behavior (see Maner & Case, 2016 for a review). Despite this, it is worth noting that in at least some samples, self-reported dominance and prestige motivations are positively correlated (e.g., Case & Maner, 2014), though peer-reported prestige and dominance strategies tend not to be (Cheng et al., 2013). See the section on "Dominance and Prestige as Individual Tendencies" below for further discussion on this distinction.

[4] While motivation for power/status has been theorized to drive a tendency toward a dominance or prestige influence strategy, other work from evolutionary anthropology and evolutionary psychology points out that the strategy an individual employs is likely a reflection of their inherent resources and capabilities as well. (Lukaszewski et al., 2016; von Rueden, 2014, 2016). For example, if an individual does not have the resources to use force or control others, a dominant strategy is likely to be ineffective. If an individual does not possess relevant or valued skills or knowledge, a prestige strategy is unlikely to be effective (Brand & Mesoudi, 2019). Thus, in addition to underlying motives for status vs. power, individuals likely employ strategies that are more likely to be efficacious for them.

It should be noted, however, that the other-oriented focus of prestige leaders could be, but is not necessarily, a sign of prosocial *motives*—it is possible that prestige-oriented leaders are preoccupied with their own self-interest (gaining status), but are required to think about others and act prosocially in order to obtain this status. Indeed, there is much evidence that in many human contexts prosociality (or as least a lack of self-interest) is rewarded with social status (Bai, Ching, Ho, & Yan, 2019; Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006; Hardy & van Vugt, 2006; Willer, 2009; Willer, Youngreen, Troyer, & Lovaglia, 2012). Those who violate cooperative norms by displaying selfishness are punished (Peterson, 1993), ostracized (Feinberg, Willer, & Schultz, 2014), or suffer damaged reputations after being the target of gossip (Hess & Hagen, 2019; Wu, Balliet, & Van Lange, 2016). (This, of course, assumes that group members have the resources to overthrow a selfish leader; Woodburn, 2011.) Thus, prestige-focused individuals may (correctly) assume that they must focus on the needs of others in order to get what they want: status.

Consistent with this idea, there is some evidence that prestige-oriented leaders have a tendency to pander to the desires of other group members. When faced with making a popular choice which is not ideal for the group or an unpopular choice that would be good for the group, prestige- (but not dominance-) oriented leaders are likely to make a popular choice, even if it will negatively impact group performance (Case et al., 2018). It is not clear if this pandering is a reflection of prestige-oriented leaders' concerns about their own status or their desire to maintain positive relationships with others, but this does suggest that a) prosocial individuals care about what others think of them and b) that they sometimes let their own motives take precedence over what is best for the group (Case, Bae, & Maner, 2019). It is important to note that while dominance and prestige may seem like incompatible strategies, self-reports on dominance and prestige motivations are often positively correlated, though peer-ratings and objectively-coded measures of dominance and prestige tend not to be positively correlated in (Cheng et al., 2013). This is somewhat unsurprising, given that observers often rely on inaccurate markers of prestige (Jiménez & Mesoudi, 2019). However, it does indicate that while the same individual might be motivated by both dominance and prestige, others perceive their behavioral strategies to follow just one of the two strategies (at least at a given time). Adding to the complexity, the style an individual adopts (and how other group members respond to this style) is likely to be driven by contextual factors, including intergroup conflict (Laustsen & Petersen, 2015, 2017; Spisak, Blaker, Lefevre, Moore, & Krebbers, 2014), resource inequality (Ronay et al., 2018), or economic uncertainty (Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017).

## Dual-strategies theory and classic leadership theories

While research on leadership is vast, much of it has revolved around common themes. How does a leader exact compliance from her subordinates? How important is a leader's socio-emotional intelligence? How can a leader balance task and relational concerns? Many of these questions are also at the heart of the dual-strategies theory of social rank. For this reason, it is important to consider the dual-strategies theory of social rank within the context of the leadership research. However, to this point, there have not been any systematic attempts to integrate the two bodies of research. Below, I conduct the first review of dual-strategies theory in the context of major theories about leadership with the aim of further elucidating what exactly dual-strategies theory is and how it differs from leadership research and theory. Defining the theory in terms of what it is *not* will hopefully shed more light on what precisely it adds to the literature.

I specifically examine how the dual-strategies theory relates to the following five leadership frameworks: a) Blake and Mouton's managerial grid, b) Leader-Member Exchange, c) transformational versus transactional leadership, d) servant leadership, and e) authoritarianism versus democratic leadership. While these five frameworks certainly do not represent the entirety of relevant leadership theory, they were selected because they represent some of the most prominent and studied theories in the leadership literature (Bass & Bass, 2008) and/or because of their thematic similarity to dominance or prestige. I briefly describe each of these theories, and then note some key ways in which they are similar to or different from dual-strategies theory. It should be noted that this review is intentionally brief—while it is possible to write at length about how the dual-strategies theory of social rank relates to each of these theories, I refrain from such an extensive comparison, as the goal is to provide a high-level picture of how dual-strategies theory of social rank relates to the field of leadership as a whole (rather than provide extensive integration with any specific theories).

### *Blake and Mouton's managerial grid*

In one of the landmark theories of leadership, Blake and Mouton (1964) conceptualized leadership styles in terms of a managerial grid. This grid classified leaders on two dimensions—their concern for the people they lead (relational orientation) and their concern for completing group goals (task orientation). Blake and Mouton specified that these concepts were orthogonal, and leaders could be high on one, both, or neither dimension. Thus, the managerial grid provides a convenient way of classifying leadership approaches.

Dual-strategies theory bears some important similarity to the work of Blake and Mouton. One reasonable integration of these theories is that relational orientation is one distinction between dominance and prestige-oriented strategies. That is, dominant individuals tend to demonstrate relatively low concern for others as they tend to be more preoccupied with their own desire to maintain or retain power (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Case, 2016; Maner & Mead, 2010). In contrast, prestige-based individuals tend to be more concerned about their relationships with group members than are dominant individuals (Case et al., 2018; Case & Maner, 2014; (Case, Bae, & Maner, 2018, 2019; Maner, 2017)). In fact, this is one of the key distinctions between the strategies.

The link between dominance/prestige and task orientation is less clear. Dominant individuals might be considered high on task orientation because they are more concerned with pushing their own agenda rather than being diplomatic (van Vugt et al., 2008) or because they may be seen as willing to punish those who do not pull their weight on accomplishing group goals (Lukaszewski et al., 2016; von Rueden, 2014). However, it is not clear if this agentic tendency translates to a focus on accomplishing broader group goals. There is some limited (unpublished) evidence that dominant leaders are, on average, more effective at coordinating tasks than prestige-oriented leaders, leading to better group performance when there is a need for a high degree of coordination (Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, in prep). This out-performance might be a reflection of dominant leaders' focus on the completion of group tasks, but the mechanism and motives for augmented performance is mere speculation at this point. Additionally, tyrannical and authoritarian leadership (which share some similarity with dominance) have repeatedly been conceptually linked to a task orientation (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Harms et al., 2017; Tepper, 2000), but empirical evidence confirming this does not appear to exist.

It is also not clear if prestige-orientated leaders are high on task orientation. Given that demonstrating competence is a hallmark of the prestige strategy, it follows that prestige-oriented leaders would need to focus on task performance in order for their strategy to be effective. Indeed, there is evidence that prestige-oriented leaders tend to work harder toward group goals than their dominance-oriented counterparts (Case et al., 2018). However, it is not clear if this is a reflection of their task orientation, or their desire to help or please their group members (reflecting a relational motivation).

In short, themes of Blake and Mouton's managerial grid can be seen in dual-strategies theory. In particular, the ‘concern for others’ dimension provides a great illustration of some of the differences between

dominance and prestige as strategies. On the other hand, it is less clear how dominance and prestige might interact with task orientation, which may provide an interesting avenue for future research.

*Leader-member exchange*

Leader member exchange theorizing (Graen, 1976; LMX) suggests that leaders and their individual followers interact in patterns of exchange that both incur costs (e.g., use resources) and create value. LMX has shifted focus since its conception and early work (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). In its early days, the theory revolved around the idea that the leader-follower relationship will be formed and maintained if the benefits for both the leader and the follower outweigh the costs (Bass & Bass, 2008, Graen, 1976, Sparrowe, 2018). Interestingly, this cost-benefit analysis is very much in line with evolutionary perspectives on how humans determine whether a relationship is beneficial (Sparrowe, 2018). However, in more recent research, LMX theorizing is generally used to evoke the idea that leaders enact different leader-follower relationships with each of their followers, and that these relationships vary in quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, & Chaudhry, 2009; Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016). For example, a leader might have a higher quality relationship with one of her five followers such that the quality of the relationship is significantly different than the leader's relationship with the other followers. This differential relationship quality among different leader-follower dyads is at the heart of current LMX research. The degree to which the leader-follower relationship quality varies from follower to follower (as opposed to being rather uniform across followers) is known as differentiation (Henderson et al., 2009).

LMX differs from the dual-strategies theory in that it does not focus on the effectiveness of a leader's strategies per se, but rather focuses on whether the leader-follow relationship is beneficial (or not) for the leader and follower and whether the relationship quality varies from individual to individual. This different focus means that these theories can be used in conjunction to generate new potentially interesting research questions and a more complete picture of hierarchy and leadership. For example, what might a follower see as the costs and benefits of having a dominant versus prestige-oriented leader? What types of follower characteristics predict high-quality relationships with a dominant or prestige-oriented leader? Are dominant or prestige-oriented leaders more likely to have high differentiation? In other words, dual-strategies theory suggests that our evolved psychology is inherently attuned to leader and follower capacity in terms of both dominance and prestige. Empirically investigating how these strategies are factored into LMX processes and relationships is likely to be an interesting and generative line of work.

Additionally, LMX and dual-strategies theory share an important similarity: both theories have an explanation for leadership *emergence* in addition to be relevant to in established hierarchies. (This stands in contrast to the majority of leadership theory and research, which has focused on the effectiveness or consequences of leader traits/behavior after the hierarchy has already been established; Bass & Bass, 2008.) Early work on LMX provides a theoretical explanation for leadership emergence: it suggests that a leader emerges when such an arrangement will provide more benefits to both the group and to the leader (Graen, 1976). While the subsequent empirical research on LMX has largely examined exchange in established, formalized leadership contexts and thus has lacked integration with research on leadership emergence (Zhang, Waldman, & Wang, 2012), leadership acquisition was a core focus of seminal work on this theory and thus represents a key similarity to dual-strategies theory.

*Transformational (versus transactional) leadership*

A large body of leadership research has suggested that while many leaders adhere to a *transaction*-focused type of leadership style, some particularly inspired leaders move beyond this to a *transformational* leadership style. While a transactional leadership style is characterized by leaders attempting to maintain or increase efficiency within an existing set of processes, a transformational leader inspires and motivates followers through an improved or entirely new process (Bass, 1999; Burns, 1978). Thus, a transformational leader focuses on change (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011)—they shift the current processes and relationship into something better or more fulfilling for their employees, whereas a transactional leader's focus is on ensuring that employees are fulfilling their roles. A transformational leadership style has consistently been associated with gains in group performance (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011).

While a focus on enacting change is not specifically addressed in dual-strategies theory, one could theorize how dominance or prestige strategies might be associated with transformational leadership. There are several reasons to think that dominant leaders would not be interested in exercising transformational leadership. First, transformational leadership is other-focused and generally prosocial in nature (Bass, 1999). This is the antithesis of dominant leaders, who are more likely to view their subordinates as potential threats to their position and therefore often act in ways that actually diminish their group members' ability to grow (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010). Concerned with keeping their own position of power, dominant leaders are more likely to try to maintain the power differential between themselves and their group—inspiring and transforming their subordinates goes against this goal. However, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that dominant leaders are precluded from engaging in the "large-scale change" aspect of transformational leadership—while the prosocial elements of transformational leadership are unlikely to be positively linked with dominance, changing processes or systems is not necessarily outside the purview of dominant leadership.

There are a few reasons to think that prestige-leaders might be likely to exercise transformational leadership. First, prestige-oriented leaders tend to be more other-focused than dominant leaders (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Case, 2016), fitting with transformational leader's prosocial aims. Second, prestige-oriented leaders are thought to be interested in the respect and admiration of their followers, and they might see transformational leadership as a way to gain that respect and esteem: improving group processes might be one way to effectively demonstrate competence and selflessness, both characteristics that are likely to evoke admiration (Bai et al., 2019; Bendersky & Pai, 2018; Willer, 2009). This is particularly likely to be the case given that transformation leadership is more difficult to enact than transactional leadership styles (Bass, 1999). Successfully implementing a difficult change would very likely garner more respect and status in the eyes of others.

At the same time, some have theorized that part of the draw of prestige-oriented leaders is that their leadership style is generally not seen as commandeering or demanding, decreasing the likelihood that prestige-oriented leaders are seen as power-hungry upstarts (Maner & Case, 2016). Thus, a prestige-oriented leader might avoid making major changes to group processes as these changes might be seen as imposing their will on the group, offending egalitarian tendencies (Maner & Case, 2016). Prestige-oriented leaders may also struggle making changes if they are concerned that such changes will upset other group members (Case et al., 2018). Thus, the question of whether prestige would be correlated with transformational leadership remains unclear. What is clear at this point is that the constructs can, in principle, be orthogonal—it is easy to imagine a prestige-oriented leader who engaged in transformational leadership and one who did not.

The integration of these theories provides for new possible research avenues. For example, does transformational leadership increase perceptions of a leader's prestige (or dominance)? It may also be worthwhile to examine the motives of transformational leaders from a dual-strategies perspective—do leaders exercise this type of leadership solely out of prosocial motives? Or is transformational leadership a reflection

of a prestige-like desire for the respect and admiration that this type of leadership might garner? Interesting questions also revolve around dominance and transformational leadership. For example, while transformational leadership refers to change orientation, this change is usually assumed to be prosocial. Yet there is some evidence that dominant leaders might be willing to implement changes to the group processes in ways that advantage themselves (relative to their group members). Could this change-orientation be viewed as a type of anti-social transformational leadership? Further exploration of this transformational vs. transactional leadership through the lens of dual strategies theory would likely be enlightening for both literatures. Finally, another opportunity for integration of these theories revolves around whether leaders change from transactional leadership to transformational leadership (or vice versa) over time or depending on the contexts. If such changes occur, perhaps dual-strategies theory could explain when and why a leader might employ one of these styles.

### *Servant leadership*

Servant leadership is a leadership style in which leaders "combine their motivation to lead with a need to serve" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1228). Servant leaders are thought to focus less on the benefits of their position, but instead on benefitting their group members (Greenleaf, 2004). As such, servant leaders are characterized by humility, empathy, and stewardship (Avolio et al., 2009) and the needs of followers are more likely to be at the forefront of their mind (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Although the concept of servant leadership was introduced by Greenleaf in 1977, serious empirical study of servant leadership has just commenced recently (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Even the most cursory of comparisons between dominance and servant leadership would likely elicit the conclusion that dominant leaders are not likely to enact servant leadership—in general, dominance leaders are more likely to focus on their own gain rather than how they can serve their group. A prestige-based strategy, on the other hand, bears significant resemblance to the concept of servant leadership. Like servant leaders, prestige-based leaders are more likely to make significant sacrifices for the welfare of their groups and work hard to benefit other group members (Case et al., 2018; Price & van Vugt, 2014).

However, the theorizing on prestige diverges from theorizing on servant leadership in at least two key ways. First, servant leadership does not speak to competence, and demonstrating competence is likely to be one of the key ways in which prestige-oriented leaders gain status in social groups (Cheng & Tracy, 2014; Henrich, Chudek, & Boyd, 2015; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Second, the *motivation* proscribed for self-sacrifice is differs between these theories. Servant leadership theories suggest that servant leaderships sacrifice for their group members due to compassionate love (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015) and a focus on their followers (Stone et al., 2004). Servant leaders are attributed truly selfless motives: 'the needs of others…[are their]…highest priority" (Bass, 2000, p. 33). While prestige leaders are thought to be focused on the needs of their group members, the reason for this may ultimately be self-interested. Prestige leaders may make personal sacrifices for the group, but in return, they typically receive status (Halevy, Chou, & Livingston, 2012; Price & van Vugt, 2014; Willer, 2009). Status is inherently valuable as it brings them preferential treatment, increased influence, and a heightened ability to accomplish their goals (Price & van Vugt, 2014). In this way, the sacrificial nature of prestige-based leaders may be (at least in part) designed for their own benefit (i.e., garnering respect for themselves) rather than for truly selfless reasons. Supporting the idea that differing motives may be at play, servant leadership is negatively correlated with narcissism (Galvin, Lange, & Peterson, 2012), while prestige leadership is actually positively correlated with narcissism (though prestige leaders likely actively work to suppress this narcissism to retain the esteem of their followers; Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010).

This offers opportunities for empirical investigation. The first revolves around whether servant leadership actually reflects true altruism, or whether servant leadership is often prestige leadership in disguise—i.e., leaders reporting selfless motives because they know that doing so will grant them respect and admiration. Another avenue revolves around group members' abilities to distinguish between these two types of leadership. If truly altruistic servant leaders do exist, can group members differentiate between self-sacrificing leaders who are truly interested in the development of group members and those who are sacrificing to garner personal benefit or prestige? The ability to differentiate between these motives could be an important ability for followers, but at this point it is unclear whether people have the capacity to differentiate (or whether this capacity varies from individual to individual).

### *Authoritarianism versus democratic leadership*

The degree to which leaders use force to induce compliance from their followers has long been a theme of leadership research (Bass & Bass, 2008). Specifically, authoritarian (or autocratic) leaders—who use strength and force to ensure the group accomplishes their goals—are often contrasted with democratic leaders who distribute the power to make decisions among group members and include other group members in their responsibilities(Harms et al., 2017). (This distinction is also referred to as directive versus participative leadership, with directive leaders commanding their subordinates and participative leaders inviting subordinates to participate in the decision-making process; Bass & Bass, 2008). Although authoritarianism has been neglected by the research in recent decades, recent political events have provoked a renewed interest in the topic (Harms et al., 2017).

Authoritarianism, with its emphasis on coercion and control, maps well onto the concept of dominance. However, although many scholars treat dominance as synonymous with having an orientation toward power (or the desire for power; Bass & Bass, 2008), it is not clear whether this "desire for power" is truly a motivation for power (i.e., control over valued resources) or whether it is a motivation for a position of high social rank more broadly. This distinction is important from the perspective of dual-strategies theory because the theory suggests that prestige-oriented leaders might be just as motivated as dominant individuals are for a position of social rank, but they may focus more on status hierarchies (whereas dominant individuals may be more focused on power; Maner & Case, 2016). Thus, it is unclear how prestige-oriented leaders who strongly desire high *status* might fit into this framework.

While prestige-oriented leaders tend to be more democratic in their leadership style (Maner, 2017; Maner & Case, 2016), a prestige strategy is not synonymous with democratic leadership. For one, competence is an important facet of a prestige-based approach, but it is not a key factor in the democratic leadership style. Furthermore, democratic leadership tends to be a description of how a leader behaves or a group interacts, whereas prestige provides an additional element: the leader's *motivation* when engaging in power sharing (the personal desire for status). Finally, democratic leadership generally refers to a leadership style employed after being put into a position of high social rank (rather than a strategy for attaining or maintaining social rank).

## The unique focus of dual-strategies theory

Although the dual-strategies theory of social rank touches on many of the same themes of leadership research (as detailed above), its evolutionary origins and focus on social rank give it a unique focus relative to most leadership research. Dual-strategies theory is unique in that it was devised by thinking about small, cohesive, constantly shifting groups that humans populated during the time of our evolutionary history (Boehm, 1999; van Vugt et al., 2008), as opposed to the typical formal organizational context where many leadership theories

of the 20th and 21st century were conceived (von Rueden & van Vugt, 2015). This evolutionary background alone does not provide sufficient justification for the use of the theory. However, I argue that focusing on these small, informal hierarchies has given dual-strategies theory a unique and much needed perspective on leadership that would benefit the larger body of research on leadership. This new perspective is not intended to replace other leadership theories, but rather can add to their contribution to our understanding of leaders and followers in organizations. Below, I outline a few ways in which dual-strategies theory of social rank represents a departure from most research on leadership and describe why its unique foci make it particularly well-equipped to explain today's modern organizations and workforce. Specifically, I highlight how dual-strategies theory's emphasis on shifting power dynamics, its focus on informal hierarchies, and the introduction of prestige as a counterpoint to dominance is relevant to today's economy (yet are underrepresented in major leadership theory).

*Emphasis on acquiring social rank and shifts in power*

Much of the organizational behavior research on leadership focuses on a leader-follower relationship that is already in place. While research on leadership emergence is certainly still present (see Acton, Foti, Lord, & Gladfelter, 2019; Ensari, Riggio, Christian, & Carslaw, 2011; and Lakey et al., 2002 for reviews), it is somewhat removed from work examining formal leadership (Zhang et al., 2012; see Dinh et al., 2014 as a noteable excpetion). Furthermore, the research on leadership emergence has largely lacked theoretical underpinnings (again, Acton et al., 2019 and Wellman, 2017 represent notable exceptions), while leadership *theory* has primarily focused situations in which the leader has already attained their position of leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Similarly, the majority of research in the field of organizational behavior on leadership assumes hierarchies to be rather static. The focus is on how leaders and followers each enact their roles, but there is not a lot of emphasis on how these roles might change or how the power dynamics might shift within a group. In short, most of the work on leadership acknowledges the power asymmetry between leader and follower, but beyond this, ignores any power dynamics in work groups and organizations.

In contrast, dual-strategies research has investigated both the acquisition of social rank and leadership behaviors in established hierarchies (e.g., Case & Maner, 2014; Cheng et al., 2013; Maner & Mead, 2010), and the theory itself provides a conceptual framework to explain both phenomena. It also focuses on how instabilities within the hierarchy can impact a leader's goals (Case & Maner, 2014). Integrating dual-strategies theory into leadership research might help reinvigorate an interest in the leadership emergence in more traditional leadership theory and provide a way of bringing the two bodies of literature together. Furthermore, dual-strategies theory assumes a world in which no leadership position is immutable and hierarchies are constantly changing, so the emphasis is on how people take advantage of or protect against power shifts.

This focus on shifting hierarchies and the acquisition of social rank is important given demographic trends in employment. Specifically, younger employees are far less likely to stay with the same company for their entire career than workers just a generation ago (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). This means that in the future, the workforce is likely to be increasingly composed of employees who move from organization to organization more frequently than in the past (Harris, 2014). This increased mobility means that people are regularly entering and navigating new work groups and hierarchies, making the acquisition of social rank a crucially important factor in organizations. Furthermore, the decreased tenure of employees inherently makes hierarchies less stable—as employees leave, hierarchies need to be restructured to fill these gaps or accommodate external hires.

Beyond employees choosing to move organizations more frequently, there is more of a demand for temporary workers: short-term and contract work is representing an increasing proportion of work in the United States (Horowitz, 2015). In this so-called "gig economy" (Ashford, Caza, & Reid, 2018; Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2018a), the constant flow of workers in and out of organizations (or with varied clients) is likely to contribute to constantly changing hierarchies.

Thus, the typical organizational hierarchies are likely less stable than they were when many of the classic leadership theories emerged, and theory that is able to explain and predict these power and status changes will be a boon to leadership researchers. Furthermore, this focus on how hierarchies develop and change over time answers calls to make leadership research more focused on process and changing dynamics (Acton, Foti, Lord, & Gladfelter, 2018; Avolio et al., 2009; Bendersky & Pai, 2018; Castillo & Trinh, 2018).

*Emphasis on informal hierarchy*

With the exception of the work on leadership emergence, the vast majority of the research on leadership in organizational behavior examines formal hierarchies (i.e., formal supervisors in an organization). There is certainly an acknowledgement that one does not need to have formal leadership position to demonstrate leadership, but most of the empirical work has focused on the formal organizational context (Northouse, 2018).

In contrast, in the small groups of our evolutionary past, there was no such thing as formal hierarchy dictated by a larger organization. Indeed, the vast majority of human history likely took place in relatively egalitarian contexts that lacked formal hierarchy (Kelly, 2007). For this reason, there remains in dual-strategies theory an emphasis on informal hierarchies (despite the fact that dominance and prestige are tactics that could be employed by both formal managers and informal leaders). While formal hierarchies still play a huge role in today's organizations, there are a few reasons to believe that informal hierarchies are increasingly of particular importance to organizations.

First, there is an increasing segment of the population that is opting out of employment in a traditional organization in favor of freelance work (an estimated 150 million workers in North America and Western Europe, many of whom are top knowledge workers, have already made this choice; Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2018b). For these workers, formal organizational hierarchy may not be particularly relevant—rather than worrying about their interactions with their boss or their chances of getting promoted, they instead are focused on their performance in the eyes of their clientele and the way that they stack up relative to other freelance workers in their field. This employment reality, faced by an increasing number of workers, would likely be considered outside the wheelhouse of most traditional leadership theories. However, dual-strategy theory's emphasis on informal hierarchies makes it well-equipped to explain how leadership and hierarchy are relevant for gig and freelance workers.

Second, there is some evidence that egalitarianism is increasingly promoted as a management strategy (Levering, 2016; Marschan, Welch, & Welch, 1996): self-managing teams are increasingly common (Kirkman, 2001); knowledge work—which is inherently less suited to authority and hierarchy (Adler, 1999)—is representing an increasingly proportion of work (Karoly & Panis, 2004); and the majority of firms now use agile project management, which emphasizes collaborative workflows in which egalitarianism is valued (Project Management Institute, 2017). While there is likely a great deal of variation in the degree to which organizations actually adopt egalitarian ideals, decentralization of decision-making power appears to be increasingly common even among large, multi-national corporations (Marschan et al., 1996). Because humans appear to have natural tendencies toward hierarchy of some kind (van Berkel, Crandall, Eidelman, & Blanchar, 2015), a decreasing reliance on formal hierarchies is likely result in increasingly important status and informal hierarchies (Marschan et al., 1996; Tiedens, Unzueta, & Young, 2007), a focus for dual-strategies

theory. Furthermore, if egalitarianism is widely valued, group members are likely to punish "upstarts" who try to claim power through force (Boehm, 1999). Understanding how potential leaders can obtain influence in such contexts is therefore key to understanding influence in today's organizations. Dual-strategies theory articulates a strategy (prestige) that fits these parameters.

Third, it is becoming more readily apparent that even organizations with steep, formal hierarchies are shaped by the informal hierarchies of their employees. For example, there is evidence that group performance appears to be determined in part by the informal hierarchies among group members (Bendersky & Hays, 2017; Joshi & Knight, 2014; Zhang et al., 2012). Additionally, one's informal social landscape can impact promotion in the formal organization hierarchy (Podolny & Baron, 1997). Thus, even in traditionally hierarchical firms, dual-strategy theory's emphasis on informal hierarchies is worth considering.

### *Prestige as a counterpart to dominance*

One of the major contributions of the dual-strategies theory of social rank is the introduction of the prestige strategy as a counterpart to dominance. As noted above, dominance—or similar variants such as authoritarianism, autocratic, or directive leadership—have long been a subject of leadership research. Many of these theories have described alterative leadership strategies that do not use force or coercion (e.g., democratic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership). However, prestige differs from these strategies in a few key ways. First, as articulated earlier, demonstrating competence is a key element to a prestige strategy. Second, a prestige-oriented strategy may not inherently be prosocial: while prestige-oriented leaders act in extremely prosocial ways, their own personal desire for status is thought to underlie much of their group-oriented behavior. This represents a unique combination of traits, strategies, and motives that has not been reflected in the leadership literature up to this point.

There are several reasons why investigating prestige makes sense in the modern work context. First, with the dawn of the information age, having unique, complicated skillsets and competencies is increasingly important for employees (Stewart, 1998). In the past, when employees were more likely to be in menial or non-technical jobs, seniority or tenure were much larger factors in determining promotion (Rosenfeld, 2014). However, in today's knowledge economy (Adler, 1999), employee knowledge and skills are more important than ever, bringing competence to the forefront of decisions as to who will attain positions at the top of the hierarchy. Prestige's focus on demonstrating skills as a basis for deference is particularly relevant in this employment climate.

Additionally, as mentioned above, organizations are increasingly characterized by informal and shifting hierarchies. Interestingly, these hierarchies often lead to more social-rank related conflicts (Hays & Bendersky, 2015), and may make status a more valued commodity. Because prestige is thought to reflect a desire for status, it may be a particularly informative construct to investigate in this modern context.

## How leadership research can enhance dual-strategies theory

Just as introducing the dual-strategies theory of social rank into the broader leadership research can provide unique insights into the study of leadership in organizations, insights from the rich body of leadership theory and research can increase the viability and veracity of the dual-strategies theory of social rank. Below, I describe three ways in which leadership theory and research can (and should) be integrated into the work dual-strategies theory in order to provide a more robust field of inquiry. Specifically, I describe how an increased focused on the group, the impact of contextual factors on the effectiveness of dominance and prestige, and more consideration of organizational factors such as formal hierarchy, diversity, and technology are important areas in which to expand this are of research.

### *Stronger focus on the group*

A central focus of leadership research has been the leader's impact on the group. Indeed, leadership research continues to shift from a focus on leadership traits to a process and group focus (Avolio et al., 2009). Dual-strategies theory, on the other hand, has largely focused on the psychology of the leader, with relatively few studies looking at the experience of the group or the effectiveness of the group. It should be noted that this reflects a disconnect between theory and actual research—while dual-strategies *theory* has a heavy focus on the actual group context, the empirical *research* on dual-strategies theory has maintained a rather consistent focus on the individual employing the strategy. For example, up to this point, "effectiveness" from a dual-strategies perspective has referred to whether the leader is able to attain a position of social rank, not whether the group is successful in accomplishing their goals (see, for example, Cheng et al., 2013). The effects of each of these strategies on group performance is likely to be one of the primary questions with which organizations and practitioners are concerned, so this certainly represents an important area for future research.

There has also been very little research that considers the perspective of the followers, an area of research that is experiencing a revival in organizational behavior research (Avolio et al., 2009; Bastardoz & van Vugt, 2019; Robert G Lord et al., 2017; Van Vugt et al., 2008). The extant literature suggests that other group members tend to dislike dominant individuals (Cheng et al., 2013; Redhead, O'Gorman, Cheng, Driver, & Foulsham, 2019), except in instances such as economic uncertainty or intergroup conflict (Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017; Laustsen & Petersen, 2017; van Vugt & Grabo, 2015), but beyond this, dual-strategies theory cannot speak to how followers perceive dominant or prestige-oriented leaders.

There is likely a high degree of individual variation in how a subordinate may respond to dominant or prestige-based leader. Research from LMX suggests that leaders have distinct relationships with each of their followers, and that the quality of the leader-follower relationship is a function of both the leader and the follower (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Yet, leader-follower fit has not been discussed in the work on dominance and prestige, despite conjectures that follower traits are likely an important factor in understanding how controlling leaders in particular attain positions of influence (Harms et al., 2017).

Beyond follower's perceptions of or desire for dominant and prestige-oriented leadership, it is also worth considering how fellow group members influence whether an individual employs a dominance or prestige-based strategy. Leadership theory suggests that the effectiveness of a leadership style is impacted by the traits of the followers (Bass, 1960), and it is easy to imagine that leaders would shift their strategies depending on the qualities and behavior of group members. A further discussion of dominance and prestige as strategies that include input from group members would be a boon to this area of research.

### *An investigation of context*

Researchers as early as the 1940s have suggested that it is fruitless to study the effectiveness of any given leadership strategy without information about context (Stogdill, 1948). That is, a leadership strategy that might be wildly effective in a group of 14-year-old boys may not be efficacious in a team of research scientists. Thus, it is widely accepted in general leadership research that the effectiveness of leadership traits or strategies are contingent on the situation (Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008; Bass, 1960; Bass & Bass, 2008; Hersey, 1985; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979; Oc, 2018). However, to this point, dual-strategies theory has paid little attention to how contextual factors impact dominance and prestige as strategies. This represents a serious limitation to this area of research and also a great opportunity for further work.

There has been some discussion of contextual factors that impact the *behavior* of dominant or prestige-oriented leaders, including intergroup

competition, stability of the hierarchy, and the anonymity of decision making (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010). However, research on how contextual factors impact on the effectiveness of dominance and prestige as strategies for attaining social rank and leading groups has been minimal. Thus far, research has indicated that the viability of dominance as a strategy increases with economic instability, group status threat, and intergroup conflict (Fortunato & Gavrilets, 2014; Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017; Laustsen & Petersen, 2017; Van Vugt & Grabo, 2015). There is also some evidence that dominance might be more effective in short-term contexts (McClanahan, Cheng, Carswell, & Craig, 2019; Redhead et al., 2019), in situations where it is challenging for group members to revolt (Ronay et al., 2019), or in situations where a leader is expected to punish free-riders (Lukaszewski et al., 2016; von Rueden, 2014). There has been some theorizing that prestige might be a better strategy for prompting creativity, while dominance might be better effective for tasks requiring coordination (Maner, 2016), but this lacks empirical evidence. Indeed, others argue that *prestige*-based leaders might possess superior coordination abilities due to their increased knowledge and presumed ability to intelligently solve complex tasks (Hagen & Garfield, 2019). In short, our empirical understanding of how the effectiveness of dominance and prestige varies from situation to situation is extremely limited.

The lack of attention to context is a surprising oversight in dual-strategies theory, as it is hard to imagine that the efficacy of these strategies would not vary widely depending on the nature and purpose of the group or the broader organization. For example, the effectiveness of dominance or prestige is likely to be impacted by components of the group task such as domain, degree of interdependence required, time pressure, and performance pressure. Expectations of the leader's role are also worth considering: is the leader's primary responsibility coordinating tasks? Motivating subordinates? Mentoring them? Advocating for the group? These distinct purposes are likely to impact the type of leader desired. Finally, broader contextual factors such as group size, the formality and complexity of the organizational structure, organizational culture, and even firm performance are likely to impact who is promoted and which leaders are deemed successful, ultimately shaping whether a dominance or prestige strategy is effective. In short, there are likely dozens of contextual factors that impact the effectiveness of dominance and prestige (see Oc, 2018 for a comprehensive overview of important contextual factors in organizationals). A serious examination of these factors is an important next step for the application of dual-strategies theory to modern organizations.

### *More attention to modern organizational facets*

While the focus on informal authority, small groups, and shifting hierarchies is likely to shed important insights into modern organizations (as outlined above), there are some facets of modern organizations that dual-strategies theory has not yet explicitly addressed. In particular, dual-strategies theory could provide a more complete portrait for dominance and prestige in modern organizations with more explicit consideration of factors such as a) formal hierarchy, b) demographic diversity, and c) technology.

First, despite the argument above that many of today's employees work in increasingly egalitarian contexts, many people still work in large, bureaucratic organizations. Dual-strategies theory was initially devised to describe contexts in which positions of social rank were determined solely by an individual's ability to garner followers, not on his/her ability to navigate preexisting institutional hierarchies (Henrich et al., 2015). Indeed, much of the empirical research on dual-strategies theory has focused on this context. Additionally, much research on leadership emergence broadly and dual-strategies theory specifically assumes that fellow group members elect a leader. However, the reality of most organizations is that a leader is put into place by people *above* them in the organization (or by an external hiring group). How might leadership selection vary when the person selecting the leader will not be his/her subordinate? To my knowledge, this question remains unanswered.

Another area for advancement involves issues of race, gender, and diversity, which are dramatically different in a modern organization than they were in the small-scale societies of our evolutionary past. For example, in small-scale societies thought to characterize the EEA, groups typically did not have mixed-gender hierarchies (not to say that women did not have leadership roles, but rather that these leadership roles tended to be in different domains than men; Garfield et al., 2019). Similarly, it was uncommon for these groups to have contact with groups of other races (Cosmides, Tooby, & Kurzban, 2003). It is therefore unsurprising that dual-strategies theory does not explicitly theorize about how these strategies interact with gender or race in organizations. However, gender and race relations in the workplace are important and salient hierarchies in organizations (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and these hierarchies are likely navigated using dominance or prestige-based strategies (Maner & Case, 2016). Beyond this, however, gender and racial hierarchies are complicated, nuanced, and distinct from other hierarchies. For example, there is evidence that dominance is perceived differently based on the leader's gender (Williams & Tiedens, 2016), race (Livingston & Pearce, 2010), sexual orientation (Wilson, Remedios, & Rule, 2017), or intersectionality (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012). Thus, research on how demographic characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, as well as the intersection of these factors, is likely to provide important insights beyond the purview of dual-strategies theory.

In a similar vein, the pervasiveness of modern technology can dramatically change the dynamics of a work group—for example, how might dominance and/or prestige manifest themselves in work groups that primarily work remotely? Dual-strategies theory was developed with the assumption that groups were co-located and communicated face-to-face. Given that much of today's work does not follow this pattern, considering how and when technology impacts these strategies may be an important next step in the application of dual-strategies theory to the modern workplace.

## Conclusion

While most leadership theories were developed by looking at the large, stagnant, and bureaucratic organizations of the 20th Century, the dual-strategies theory of social rank focuses on the informal leader-follower dynamics that characterize most of human history (Garfield et al., 2019). Because of its evolutionary origins, the dual-strategies theory of social rank provides a unique perspective on leadership that is also surprisingly well-equipped for application to modern workplace environments. The aim of this review was to provide a guide to understanding dual-strategies theory in the context of leadership theory and research and to demonstrate the efficacy of dual-strategies theory in answering important questions about leadership and hierarchy in modern organizations. One main conclusion of this review is that future research that integrates ideas from broader leadership theory into dual-strategies theory (and/or that explores dual-strategies theory in the organizational context more explicitly) is likely to improve dual-strategies theory and provide unique insight into today's evolving organizations.

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