

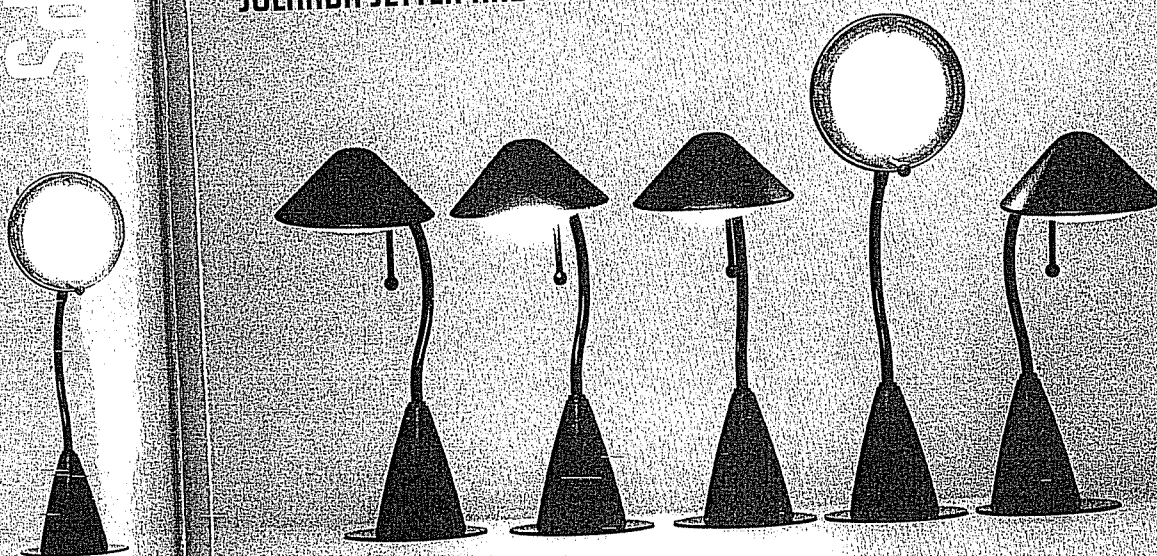
EDITED BY
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MATTHEW J. HORNSEY

REBELS IN GROUPS

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DISSENT, DEVIANCE,
DIFFERENCE AND DEFIANCE

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Rogues and Heroes: Finding Value in Dissent

Charlan J. Nemeth and Jack A. Goncalo

The late 1960s was a period of debate and conflict. Especially in 1968, minority voices were raised against the Vietnam War and various civil rights issues. And the ensuing 'debate' was often angry, even violent. Though these minority voices did not have the advantages of power or even numbers, they stood up and told the truth as they saw it. And many of those ideas prevailed and changed the nature of the discourse. Yet, at the same time, social psychology portrayed influence as synonymous with attitude change and we were taught that influence flowed from the strong to the weak. It was the highly credible or high-status individual that influenced the lower-status person. It was the majority that influenced the minority. The people holding a minority viewpoint were viewed as vulnerable and lacking in the ability to influence.

The power of the majority was well documented by the conformity studies which showed that people, when faced with a unanimous majority, would abdicate information from their own senses and agree with the majority even when the majority was wrong. In the classic study by Asch (1956), people judged which of three lines was equivalent to a standard line. Alone, people had no difficulty. They chose the correct line 99 per cent of the time. However, when a majority of three or more individuals unanimously judged a different line to be correct, nearly 35 per cent of responses were in agreement with that majority even though the majority was incorrect. This phenomenon – and even this paradigm – has been replicated in many different countries (Bond & Smith, 1996). However, the same portrait of the minority remained. They were recipients rather than sources of influence and they had two choices: they could conform or

remain independent. In part, this was due to the dependence on the Asch paradigm where the majority consisted of confederates and the minority was the participant population whose responses were confined to agreement with or resistance to the majority.

Of interest is that, in those days, conformity was viewed with concern. Were people sheep? And independence from that majority was seen as desirable. As time has gone on, we often see conformity portrayed as desirable. Instead of being sheep they are 'team players' while resistance is often viewed as an obstacle. This is especially true in writings on organisational behaviour where the emphasis is often on cooperation and harmony because managers assume that aligning employees with the vision of the company will improve firm performance (Collins & Porras, 1994).

In trying to understand why people conform to majority views, even when they are in error, two reasons have stood the test of time. First, people assume that truth lies in numbers and so they believe that the majority is probably correct. Second, they worry about 'sticking out like a sore thumb' because, should they maintain a differing point of view, they may be on the receiving end of ridicule and rejection. In the classic study of whether or not such fears are warranted, Schachter (1951) looked at the reactions to a persistent minority. When one person differed, communication was directed towards him in an attempt to change his mind. When these attempts proved unsuccessful, he was ignored but he was also rejected. What is interesting is that the author did not study the possible influence of that minority on the majority. It was assumed that the minority was the recipient, not the source of influence. It was the minority that was vulnerable and this study demonstrated just how vulnerable he was. Ironically, we were yet to learn that those holding minority views can be active and that such behaviour could well have influenced the majority to his position.

Minorities as Sources of Influence

The notion that minority views could be active rather than passive – that they could be the source rather than the target of influence – was first theorised by Moscovici and Faucheux (1972; Faucheux & Moscovici, 1967) and demonstrated experimentally by Moscovici, Lage and Naffrechoux (1969). In that study, a minority of two individuals repeatedly

called blue slides 'green' and managed to get the majority of four individuals to say 'green' nearly 9 per cent of the time. Further, there was evidence of greater attitude change on a subsequent task. When categorising blue-green stimuli as 'blue' or 'green', those exposed to a consistent minority called these slides 'green' when a control would call them 'blue'. That study and those that followed (see Moscovici & Nemeth, 1974; Wood *et al.*, 1994) both replicated and developed the findings of the early study.

In contrast to a field that emphasised strength, whether that was power, status or numbers, this line of work showed the potential power of those without such benefits. As such, the question was raised as to why and how minorities exert influence. A major contribution, in our judgement, was the emphasis on behavioural style, the orchestration and patterning of the minority's views to understand attitude change. Prior to that, studies of influence tended not to look at the persuasive attempts over time; you could get adoption of the majority position (or the position of a high-status person) very quickly. Majorities benefited from an assumption that they were correct, and minorities were motivated to assume that majorities were correct because it permitted them to move from 'deviant' to 'belonging'.

A number of studies investigated the styles of persuasion by a minority over time. Perhaps the most significant findings demonstrated the importance of consistency. For a minority view to persuade, a necessary (if not sufficient) condition was that they were consistent both over time and with one another. So now we had a very different view of influence, one that emphasised persuasive styles over time. Minorities did not have the luxury of both 'winning friends' *and* influencing people. If they persisted, that is, remained consistent in their position, they would be disliked. If they were inconsistent or capitulated, they would be liked but would exercise no influence. There were also subtleties in being consistent. If their consistency was viewed as rigid rather than consistent, they were not effective (Moscovici *et al.*, 1969; Mugny, 1982; Nemeth, Swedlund & Kanki, 1974).

It was perhaps the fact that minorities exercise their influence primarily at the private or latent level that has changed our conceptions of influence. A number of researchers have found influence by the minority to be greater when asked privately or on new but related issues (Mugny & Papastamou, 1980; Mugny & Perez, 1991; Nemeth & Wachtler, 1974).

The Reaction: Dissenters are still 'Rogues' and 'Obstacles'

Though a good deal of evidence had demonstrated differential types of influence exerted by minorities relative to majorities, it is interesting to note the field's response to this body of evidence. Many researchers, rather than recognising the differential processes and effects, offered what is called a 'single process' theory. Influence is influence, regardless of the majority or minority status of the source except that minorities are weaker or less able to exert influence. For example, Latane (1981) theorised that influence was determined by 'social impact', that is, a multiplicative function of strength, immediacy and number of people who are the sources of influence. In that framework, minority influence is a weak version of majority influence but the same processes occur. To us diehards who were there in the early days, minority influence was always different. For a minority, influence is an uphill battle heavily governed by the ways in which they argue their position. They continually have to confront the fact that people are reluctant to accept or adopt a minority position even if it is correct. Thus, for a minority, consistency is required to exert influence but this tends to evoke dislike, even anger. The choice then was which the minority wanted: influence or being liked.

In addition to viewing minority influence as a weak version of majority influence, many researchers in social psychology still had pejorative views of the minority. They were 'obstacles' to group goals and some portrayed dissenters as persons seeking attention (Maslach, Stapp & Santee, 1985) or 'distinctiveness' (if they wanted to be kind). Many of us, on the contrary, viewed dissenters who maintained their position as courageous; it was the stuff of 'heroes' and of people with conviction.

The Shift to Cognition: Attitude Change

The demonstration of differential processes of influence became more evident with a shift to the cognitive activity induced by majorities or minorities. In the attitude change realm, this was exemplified in Moscovici's (1980) conversion theory which posited different types of attitude change. Majorities induced *compliance*. People would adopt the majority position publicly but not privately. By contrast, minorities induced a *conversion* process. People often showed little or no public movement but were influenced privately. The theory hypothesised that majorities create a

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conflict of 'responses' whereas minorities create a conflict of 'perceptions'. The former conforms without much scrutiny; the latter requires a validation process where the minority's position is scrutinised.

Studies testing this approach often used the distinctions between central (or systematic) versus peripheral (or heuristic) processing (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). These theories, while different in substantial ways, both distinguish between a careful scrutiny of the message versus a more superficial or heuristic basis for adopting the message. Using these distinctions, there arose a sizeable literature showing that there is more careful scrutiny of the minority's message and therefore 'conversion' or private attitude change though there is also evidence of systematic processing in response to a majority (Baker & Petty, 1994; Erb *et al.*, 2002; Mackie, 1987). In a review of this work, Hewstone and Martin (2008) argue that, on balance, the research supports Moscovici's (1980) conversion theory that there is message processing only for a minority. Processing of the majority's message seems to occur when there is a motivation 'to pay closer attention to the content of the majority's arguments' (Hewstone & Martin, 2008). These approaches have helped us to understand a great deal more about when and why attitudes will change in response to a majority versus a minority. However, the general emphasis is still on influence in terms of attitude change and adoption of the source's position.

The Shift to Cognition: Quality of Performance and Decision Making

Our own work took a different focus that even further differentiated between minority and majority influence. Inspired by some work on jury decision making (Nemeth, 1977), we formulated a model suggesting that majorities and minorities induce very different thinking about the issue – not just a differential processing of the message (Nemeth, 1976, 1986; Nemeth & Nemeth-Brown, 2003). Majorities, it was hypothesised, stimulate thinking about the issue *from the perspective they pose*. We know that people are stressed and very uncomfortable when they are faced with a disagreeing majority and this, in general, is related to a narrowing of focus, a convergence of thought. However, majorities don't induce just any convergent thought. They stimulate thinking from the majority perspective. Partly this is due to the fact that people assume that truth lies in numbers; partly it is due to a motivation to find the majority to be correct since that

would permit movement to the majority. The minority asks questions such as 'What are they seeing? They must be correct'; 'What am I missing'?

Minorities, on the other hand, stimulate thinking that is divergent; people consider multiple perspectives. Majorities start with an assumption that the minority is not correct but the persistence on the part of that minority suggests a complexity. 'How can they be so sure and yet so wrong?' We theorise that it stimulates a reappraisal of the situation and, in the process, people evidence divergent thinking, a consideration of multiple sources of information and ways of thinking about the issue. On balance, this aids the quality of decision making and the finding of creative solutions to problems (Nemeth, 1986, 1995).

There is now considerable evidence for these propositions. Our own experimental studies have found that minorities stimulate a search for information on all sides of the issue while majorities stimulate a search for information that corroborates the majority view (Nemeth & Rogers, 1996); minorities stimulate the use of multiple strategies in problem solving whereas majorities stimulate the use of the majority strategy (Nemeth & Kwan, 1987); minorities stimulate the detection of solutions that otherwise would have gone undetected whereas majorities stimulate adoption of the majority solution, right or wrong (Nemeth & Wachtler, 1983). Further, minorities stimulate more originality while majorities stimulate more conventionality of thought (Nemeth & Kwan, 1985). As a consequence, those exposed to minority views come up with more creative solutions to problems (Nemeth, Brown & Rogers, 2001).

This type of research has moved the discourse from minority as passive to active and perhaps more importantly, from obstacle to facilitator of quality thought, decision and performance. The minority is no longer a 'deviant' worthy of derision; it is an individual or small group of individuals who have the courage to maintain a position in the face of sizeable opposition, in spite of the likely negative consequences for themselves. And they provide value in the thought that they stimulate.

As an illustration of the importance of 'courage', Nemeth and Chiles (1988) conducted a study where individuals were exposed to a minority who consistently called blue slides 'green'. As demonstrated before, people thought little of the minority; they were seen to be incorrect and as having bad eyesight. However, subsequent to this situation, they were put in a typical conformity setting where three of four individuals called red slides 'orange'. Compared to a control group who had no exposure to a minority viewpoint in the first setting, those exposed to a

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consistent (though erroneous) minority had a dramatic decrease in conformity. They had less than 30 per cent conformity – compared to 70-per cent conformity by those with no prior exposure to a minority view. We believe that the minority 'influenced' individuals, not so much on the perception of colour but, rather, on the importance of saying what you believe. Individuals did not like the minority but they perceived them as 'having courage'. Here, we underscore that those who maintain a dissenting view can often be respected; they are seen as courageous though not especially likeable. But this is the stuff of heroes and such individuals are not easily relegated to those who seek attention and 'distinctiveness'.

Application to Social Issues Part I: Juries and 'Truth'

In applying this research to jury decision making, we have often argued for protection of minority views, not because they may be correct but because *even when they are wrong* they stimulate thinking that on balance leads to better decisions. It stops the rush to judgement by providing a counter to the majority view. But more importantly, there is evidence that people search for more information on all sides of the issue; they utilise more ways of looking at facts (Nemeth, 1981; Nemeth & Goncalo, 2005).

Unanimity becomes one way to protect minority views as, under that condition, the minority tends to maintain its position longer; the deliberation is more 'robust'; and participants feel that justice has been better served (Nemeth, 1977). In spite of these advantages and their importance for justice, however, many countries have attempted to change the requirement of unanimity to some form of majority rule for jury decision making. The reason is often efficiency but it often includes a pejorative view of the minority holder, the 'deviant'.

In 1970, these issues came before the US Supreme Court (*Apodaca, Cooper & Madder v. Oregon; Johnson v. Louisiana*) because Oregon and Louisiana did not require unanimity and those convicted by less than a unanimous vote appealed their convictions. The Court ruled that their rights had not been violated and the basic reasoning was that the majority would have won anyway plus they assumed that the minority views would only be outvoted after the minority 'ceased to have persuasive reasons in support of its position'. In other words, the minority position was without merit; they were just taking up time; and they wouldn't win anyway.

Much more recently in Sydney, Australia (Nemeth, 2003), there was a conference about the reform movements in both Australia and New Zealand to move to some form of majority rule in juries. The comments by the participants – judges, academics and practitioners – were notable for their language as well as their content. The minority holder, the ‘deviant’, was continually referred to as the ‘rogue’ juror. Images of an attention-seeking, rigid obstacle to an important decision reared its head. It was rewarding to see the discussion turn to the possibility of courage, to the importance of rigorous debate, to a decision-making process that considered more facts and more ways to view those facts – to a consideration of justice. However, the issue remains, usually under the phrasings of expediting and reducing expenses of the criminal justice system. It is perhaps a powerful reminder of the desire for consensus and that those who dissent, who persist in their minority views, are often punished. They are at least disliked and often ridiculed.

Application to Social Issues Part II: Innovation in Organisations

The research that dissent, even when wrong, can stimulate creativity has practical applications, especially for organisations who recognise that innovation is highly profitable. In fact, organisational scholars and management practitioners have become increasingly aware that creative ideas are the lifeblood of the most admired organisations (Amabile, 1996; Collins & Porras, 1994). It is not enough to stick with what works; there must be a continuous effort to stay at the forefront of the industry. Creative ideas are the raw material necessary for innovation, and a strong competitive advantage is conferred upon organisations that are adept at eliciting creative solutions from their employees (Kanter, 1988).

Under the right circumstances, a single creative idea may be hugely profitable. Take, for example, one employee’s idea for a ‘failed’ adhesive that gave rise to the ubiquitous Post-it Note by the 3M Corporation (Collins & Porras, 1994). One insight gave rise to three new product lines and a complete change in the company’s strategic approach to innovation, not to mention untold millions of dollars to the bottom line (Von Hippel, Thomke & Sonnack, 1999). Yet despite the best of intentions, many potentially creative ideas are rejected outright either because they are too risky or because they threaten business as usual (Staw, 1995). Many organisations,

whether they choose to reward conformity or not, often discourage dissent.

The research on dissent in group settings has an array of settings, and despite these differences, there are points to keep in mind (e.g. De Dreu & Baumeister, 2002). The idea that dissent is a thread that ties together positive and negative outcomes is difficult and requires further research. Despite these considerations, a number of practical implications for creativity and innovation are evident.

Dis-

There is now considerable evidence (Nemeth, 1986) that dissent in groups and organisations is an ongoing, interactive process. In a 10-week period, mental groups in the role of dissenters produced original products. A novel Q-sort technique (Nemeth *et al.* (1998) for decision-making analysis of the thoughts of those who were highly creative. They found that dissent in private groups of people who are highly creative.

Despite these findings, it may also be evident that dissent is potentially num-

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whether they choose to recognise this fact or not, desire creativity but reward conformity, cohesion and commitment (Nemeth, 1997).

The research on dissent that has been conducted in organisational settings has an advantage in that the participants are people from a wide range of settings, working in jobs that are ongoing and meaningful to them. Despite these differences from experiments, there are two interesting points to keep in mind. The first is that the basic phenomenon replicates (e.g. De Dreu & West, 2001; Gruenfeld, 1995; Simons & Peterson, 2000). The idea that dissenting opinions stimulate creative thought is a common thread that ties this work together. The second point is that harnessing the positive and inhibiting the negative consequences of dissent may be difficult and requires a complex set of tradeoffs (Nemeth & Staw, 1989). Despite these complexities, however, this line of research has highlighted a number of practical suggestions for capitalising on dissent to manage creativity and innovation.

Dissent conflict and innovation in organisations

There is now considerable evidence that the model of minority influence (Nemeth, 1986) is robust and well replicated in field settings. For instance, Van Dyne and Saavedra (1996) conducted a field study of natural work groups and utilised confederates (who were also permanent members of the ongoing, interacting groups) to serve as dissenters over the course of a 10-week period. As we would expect based on past research, the experimental groups in which one person was privately instructed to take on the role of dissenter engaged in more divergent thinking and came up with more original product ideas than did the control groups. Likewise, utilising a novel Q-sort methodology for studying historical cases, Peterson *et al.* (1998) found that dissent also had stimulating properties in elite decision-making groups. Using archival data, they conducted an in-depth analysis of the top management teams of seven 'Fortune 500' companies who were highly successful or unsuccessful at a particular point in time. They found that the most successful top management teams encouraged dissent in private meetings. Again, we see that even elite decision makers – people who are experts at what they do – can still profit from dissenting opinions.

Despite these benefits, the relationship between dissent and creativity may also be elusive and depend on whether groups can mitigate the potentially numerous and unintended negative consequences of conflict

and controversy. As we would expect based on experimental research, the role of dissenter is stressful even when it is assigned and the group has a history together (Van Dyne & Saavedra, 1996). This is probably because dissenters are targeted by the majority for not being cooperative and for being unwilling to readily adopt the majority point of view (Schachter, 1951). There is also a danger that dissent can lead to conflict that escalates and becomes problematic. For instance, unsuccessful groups in the study by Peterson and his colleagues (1998) seemed to be characterised by internal strife to the point of splitting into hostile factions that threatened to permanently split the group.

In an attempt to offset these liabilities, research has provided some clues about what strategies might work. For example, Dooley and Fryxell (1999) found in a study of US hospitals that dissent was positively associated with high-quality decision-making teams. However, the benefits of dissent were only realised in teams that managed to preserve dissent while at the same time building towards a consensus. This was achieved when people felt some sense of loyalty to the groups to which they belonged.

A continual problem is that people may respond to conflicting opinions by just shutting down the conversation. The dissenter may find it easier to remain silent, even if that means suppressing one's true opinions. For instance, De Dreu and West (2001) conducted a field study of innovation using semi-autonomous teams from several different organisations. They measured the extent of minority dissent using a survey measure and then assessed team innovation using supervisor ratings. They found that innovation was high in groups with dissent, but only when there was also a high degree of participation in team decision making. In other words, dissent may spark creative thought, but such thoughts are of little use unless there are procedures for ensuring that these thoughts are openly expressed. And getting them expressed is not easy (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Overall, however, the basic message has been received: in order to foster creativity and innovation in the workplace, it is necessary to preserve alternative points of view, provided there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and procedures ensuring full participation.

The research in organisational settings also demonstrates that not all forms of conflict are beneficial. In fact, a related line of research has shown that conflict may take on many forms and only certain types of conflict have the stimulating properties previously discussed. Relatively recently, Jehn (1995) has conceptualised intragroup conflict in terms of three distinct types. *Relationship* conflict refers to interpersonal incompatibilities among group

members, including tensions between group members. And *process* conflict should go about conflict ways to have conflict.

On non-routine tasks (Jehn, 1995) as it is critically important for groups to try to achieve their goals, they should thoroughly consider the relatively important differences shown to facilitate group performance. The difference is that in groups faced with a unanimous decision, the benefits of conflict are not realised. Understanding of the task and the generation of new ideas are important for performance (Jehn, 1995).

Task-related conflict can take destructive forms. Personality differences create tension, anger, and conflict within the group (Jehn, 1995). Related to the process of conflict is the task itself (Greer, Jehn, & Bendersky, 1995). 'What can be taken personally' assignment then you.

In practice, the value of conflict is often debated. Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of conflict, group performance effects were strong. Relationship conflict of the tradeoffs between conflict and performance for the dissenter can be an attack.

Some suggestions for the timing of the conflict

members, including personality differences. *Task* conflict refers to disagreements between group members about the content of the task being performed. And *process* conflict involves different strategies for how a group should go about completing a shared task (Jehn, 1995, 1997). There are many ways to have conflict but only some have been found to be productive.

On non-routine tasks, there is evidence that task conflict can be beneficial (Jehn, 1995) as it may cause the group to evaluate information more critically (Postmes, Spears & Cihangir, 2001) and break the tendency of groups to try to achieve consensus before all available alternatives have been thoroughly considered (Janis, 1971, 1972). This form of conflict is similar to the relatively impersonal, task-related issues that research on dissent has shown to facilitate group decision making (Nemeth, 1995). The key difference is that in most of the applied settings, it is not just one person faced with a unanimous majority; the conflict is more diffuse. Nevertheless, the benefits of conflict are similar in terms of promoting a deeper understanding of the task (Amason & Schweiger, 1994), stimulating the consideration of new ideas (Baron, 1991), and it thus contributes to overall group performance (Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999).

Task-related conflict, however, is not an easy one to separate from more destructive forms of relationship conflicts which are often related to personality differences and which can become very emotional. These can create tension, anger and frustration which are not generally beneficial for the group (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Even seemingly benign conflicts related to the process of getting work done can escalate into emotional conflicts (Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008). For instance, arguments over 'who does what' can be taken to reflect judgements of competence that can easily be taken personally, 'If you do not think that I can do this part of the assignment then you are also saying that I am stupid'.

In practice, the various types of conflict are often hopelessly entangled. Indeed, a recent meta-analysis revealed negative relationships between task conflict, group performance and satisfaction with the team. These negative effects were strongest when task conflict occurred in the presence of relationship conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Thus, we are reminded of the tradeoffs between cognitive stimulation and lowered morale, the tradeoffs between creative thought and performance. And the consequences for the dissenter can be considerable if her position is seen as a personal attack.

Some suggestions for ameliorating the negative consequences include timing of the conflict. For example, longitudinal research has shown that

high-performing groups had moderate levels of task conflict but, importantly, only at the midpoint between the group's inception and the deadline (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). The midpoint of a project is often the most critical moment during a group's lifecycle (Gersick, 1988). It is there, with a deadline looming, that the most productive discussions occur (Gersick & Hackman, 1990). By permitting, even welcoming task conflict at this point, groups are most likely to capture the benefits of such conflicts while containing the potentially negative effects. It is also likely the way in which the 'rogue' dissenter will be viewed in more favourable terms.

Encouraging voice and creating a culture of dissent

Up to now, we have extolled the virtues and value of dissent and the battle against perceptions of attention seeking, rogue and rebel. This is difficult enough in any setting but organisations, even those that claim to desire creativity, are often unwilling to do what is necessary to achieve it (Staw, 1995). And what prevents the voicing of dissent? Isn't ridicule and rejection enough to prevent 'voice'? Isn't the fact that the likelihood of winning is low? Isn't the fact that, even if 'voice' stimulates creative thought, no credit will follow? These are daunting considerations. Thus, for organisations truly committed to achieving open expression of dissenting opinions, the answer is not simple. Relative to laboratory settings, the pressures for conformity are probably magnified in organisational settings where there are real threats to one's livelihood for taking an unpopular stance. For instance, Sherron Watkins of the Enron Corporation took an enormous risk when she wrote a detailed seven-page letter to her boss basically saying that the company was a huge Ponzi scheme that was likely to implode at any moment.

What makes one employee stand up and speak the truth while others remain silent – to have 'voice' (Packer, 2008; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003)? And when is it beneficial? Innovation is best served when the 'voice' is prosocial and improvement oriented. It is here, with constructive input about task-related issues (Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998), that errors are corrected and learning occurs (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Butera & Mugny, 2001). But again, why would anyone do this? Apart from all the personal considerations, employees are in a more difficult situation because 'voice' often means speaking up to someone who has power over you, those who control your next pay raise or promotion (Detert & Trevino, 2010; Jetten *et al.*, 2010).

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dissent and the battle of the rebel. This is difficult to claim to desire because it is necessary to achieve it. Isn't it ridiculous and naive to think that the likelihood of dissent creates creative thought, innovation. Thus, for organisations, the expression of dissenting views in group oratory settings, the organisational settings making an unpopular decision. The Corporation took an open letter to her boss because she felt that was likely to

the truth while others are not. Van Dyne, Ang & Kelloway (2003) is best served when it is here, with conflict (LePine, 1998), that is the case (Butera & Gollwitzer, 2000). Apart from all the other situations because of power over you, those are the ones (Trevino, 2010);

There appear to be some personality traits that relate to the likelihood of speaking up. People who are extraverted, conscientious and not very agreeable are more likely to voice conflict than are their shy co-workers who would rather get along with others even if it means poor workmanship (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). People who are satisfied with their job, have a relatively high self-esteem and work in smaller groups are more likely to engage in voice than others (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). But even with the 'right' personality traits, there are consequences. Workers who show a great deal of personal initiative are often viewed as being 'rebellious' (Freese & Fay, 2001, p. 141) and such trouble-makers are frequently isolated by both their peers and their supervisors.

The hope is that bosses and organisations signal to their employees that they are truly open to alternative points of view – and mean it. In part, this means changing the perception of 'voice' and dissent from trouble-maker to courageous individual, from obstacle to contributor. This may be easier in more individualistic as opposed to collectivistic cultures, for the latter tend to view conflict as destructive and tend to have stronger pressures for conformity (Bond & Smith, 1996). While some have argued that conformity could promote an objective of creativity (Flynn & Chatman, 2001), there is recent evidence suggesting the reverse. In a recent study, Goncalo and Staw (2006) experimentally manipulated an individualistic or collectivistic culture and then had groups generate new business ideas for a space left vacant by a mismanaged restaurant. The individualistic groups generated more novel ideas than collectivistic groups. Further, they were better at implementation. From the list of ideas they generated, these groups combined ideas to come up with something new whereas collectivistic groups simply chose one idea from their list.

Rogues or heroes: team player or conformist

Throughout this chapter, we have emphasised that the usual reaction to a dissenter is negative. They are annoying, wrong and unpredictable. They are not 'team players', a trait that a recent survey of American workers (Kahpor-Klein & Kahlon, 2004) ranked more highly than whether they had knowledge, skill and ability. Yet, we believe (and the research demonstrates) that these rogues and rebels, assuming they are authentically voicing their views, provide benefit. They liberate us from conformity and, more importantly, they stimulate us to think more divergently and creatively. We consider more facts and more possibilities; we find and devise solutions. Their gift to

us comes at a cost to themselves and some discomfort to us. But groups, organisations and societies benefit from the open airing of competing truths (Mill, 1979) and it is time to recognise the contributions of those who dare to dissent.

Acknowledgements

This manuscript was supported by the Kauffman Foundation whose support is gratefully acknowledged. Requests for reprints should be addressed to Professor Charlan Nemeth, Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-1650, USA.

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