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A Review of the Field or an Articulation of Identity Concerns? Interrogating the Unconscious Biases That Permeate I-O Scholarship

Gerard P. Hodgkinson
The University of Manchester

S. Alexander Haslam
University of Queensland

Aguinis et al.'s (2017) analysis of the "most frequently cited sources, articles, and authors in industrial-organizational psychology textbooks" is a commendable piece of scholarship. Certainly, they have applied themselves to an important question and articulated a meaningful set of answers. We have no doubt too that for many readers the insights and answers they provide will be informative, compelling, and even reassuring—if only because they

Gerard P. Hodgkinson, Alliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester; S. Alexander Haslam, School of Psychology, University of Queensland.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Gerard P. Hodgkinson, Alliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, F34 AMBS East, Booth Street East, Manchester M13 9SS, UK. E-mail: gerard.hodgkinson@manchester.ac.uk

reinforce a view of the world with which they are familiar and by which they are comforted, even if that familiarity and comfort are framed in terms of a set of knotty professional concerns (Morton, Haslam, Postmes, & Ryan, 2006).

While there is much about Aguinis et al.'s (2017) focal article to debate in its own terms (e.g., by questioning their methodology and analytic strategy), in this brief rejoinder we want to draw attention to a broader set of concerns that serve to question the value both of their efforts and of their capacity to inform debate in the field of industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology. These concerns relate to questions of identity, and more particularly to the self-categorical lens (the theory of "us") through which the researchers view the field they survey (Peters, Daniels, Hodgkinson, & Haslam, 2014).

The core point here is that while Aguinis et al. (2017) purport to offer insights that are relevant to the field of I-O psychology *as a whole*, the imagination of their project is limited by the narrowness of the identities underpinning it. This is most obvious in the way that the field of I-O psychology is defined and investigated as an almost wholly North American pursuit—written about in North American textbooks and journals, researched and taught by North American researchers who are employed by North American universities and members of North American professional societies, and whose impact is gauged by North American metrics. The fact that information about these activities was accessed via a North American Web site (Amazon.com) and that those who were invited to comment on the article were editors of North American journals serves only to compound their project's identity-infused myopia. At the same time, we recognize that the authors' confidence in the value of their contribution has been reinforced by the fact that the identity in question is one that is widely shared and, partly as a result of this, is one that connotes both power and authority.

When we look closely at Aguinis et al.'s (2017) article, it is clear, then, that a range of more or less abstract identity assumptions not only informs their scholarship, but also limits it in particular ways. These assumptions are summarized in Table 1, and it is interesting to speculate that the existence of the blind spots that they create becomes more obvious to an increasingly narrower set of readers the further down this table one reads. Thus we would expect that although many readers and reviewers might question the authors' reliance on secondary textbooks as a source of information, their reliance on the expertise of U.S. academics might be more apparent to those who (like us) are European or Australasian.

Yet having been alerted to this issue, one is reasonably entitled to ask whether it matters for the subject at hand. Our own answer is that it does, for at least two reasons.

Table 1.   Identity-Related Assumptions That Inform Aguinis et al.'s Review

I-O psychology is represented by textbooks.
I-O psychology is represented by second-edition textbooks.
I-O psychology is represented by information gleaned from US Web sites.
I-O psychology is represented by US textbooks.
I-O psychology is represented by US journals.
Business is represented by US practitioner publications.
I-O psychology is represented by US professional societies.
I-O psychology is represented by US academic institutions.
I-O psychology is represented by US scholars.
I-O psychology is represented by a small group of US scholars.

Note: The table organized so that higher-order identity concerns (associated with less exclusive self-categorizations) are at the top.

First, the issues that Aguinis et al. (2017) discuss are ones that have been addressed at some length by scholars from other parts of the world (see, e.g., Anderson, 2007; Anderson, Herriot, & Hodgkinson, 2001; Gelade, 2006a, 2006b; Hodgkinson, 2006; Hodgkinson, Herriot, & Anderson, 2001; Hodgkinson & Rousseau, 2009; Hodgkinson & Starkey, 2011; Kieser & Leiner, 2009, 2011; Romme et al., 2015; Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2009; Starkey & Madden, 2001; Symon, 2006; Tranfield & Starkey, 2008; Van Aken, 2004; Vicari, 2013; Wall, 2006). As those scholars have all had interesting things to say about these issues, in the interests of scholarship it would have been useful to have seen their contributions incorporated into the framing of Aguinis et al.'s study and in their interpretation of its findings.

Second, these issues of identity and bias are ones that are themselves of profound interest to I-O psychologists (e.g., Haslam, 2001; Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Ryan & Ford, 2010). It is, therefore, somewhat ironic that at the same time that we tell the world about the importance of identity concerns for organizational psychology, we are inured to their impact on our own professional activity.

To be more specific about this point, across a diverse array of professional fields and scholarly disciplines, researchers have long contested the territorial boundaries of their domains and debated the ultimate purpose(s) of the knowledge production process (see, e.g., Abbott, 1988; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Whitley, 2000). The ongoing debates in I-O psychology and related fields of management and organization studies concerning the academic–practitioner divide are similarly constituted (see, e.g., Anderson et al., 2001; Briner & Rousseau, 2011a, 2011b; Gelade, 2006a, 2006b; Hodgkinson, 2012; Hornung, 2012; Morrell, Learmonth, & Heracleous, 2015; Rousseau, 2012; Rousseau & Gunia, 2016; Tranfield & Starkey, 1988). At the heart of all of these debates, we suggest, is a series of funda-

mental identity dynamics, which, despite their potency, often lie beyond the realm of conscious awareness (see, e.g., Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; Jost et al., 2009), epitomized by the blind spots we have identified in Aguinis et al.'s (2017) analysis. One important antidote to this unfortunate state of affairs is to continually raise awareness of these dynamics, with a view to fostering more inclusive and pluralistic conceptions both of the nature of a given scholarly community or profession and of what it means to be a member of it. This, we suggest, will ultimately be to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders within society at large.

In conclusion, then, we applaud Aguinis et al. (2017, p. 508) for observing that "overall, it seems that pluralistic definitions of scholarly impact and the assessment of contributions to practice and teaching remain an afterthought." At the same time, however, we would note that there are important forms of pluralism to which their own endeavor is oblivious and by which it is consequently hamstrung. Indeed, it is disappointing that although other researchers have drawn attention to the relevance of issues of identity for the I-O psychology profession and expressed a desire to address and overcome the problems these create (e.g., Hodgkinson, 2013; Peters et al., 2014; Ryan & Ford, 2010), in Aguinis et al.'s own enterprise they do not even achieve the status of an afterthought.

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From Analysis to Evaluation: Brand Management and the Future of I-O Psychology

Kevin P. Nolan
Hofstra University

> "*When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened.*"—John M. Richardson

Aguinis et al. (2017) address an issue of upmost importance for the field of industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology: recruitment. The ability to attract and retain talented individuals is a principle determinant of success in a knowledge-driven economy (Yu & Cable, 2012). The focal article notes that future practitioners and researchers are commonly exposed to the field of I-O psychology for the first time via introductory courses taken during their undergraduate education. A study by Rose et al. (2014) likewise suggests that introductory courses are among the most popular channels through which business and human resource professionals learn about I-O psychology. Consequently, the information communicated in these courses not only shapes the beliefs and behaviors of those who might one day produce/provide the goods/services of I-O psychology, but also those who might consume them. Introductory courses are, therefore, both an important re-

Kevin P. Nolan, Psychology Department, Hofstra University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kevin P. Nolan, PhD, Psychology Department, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11549. E-mail: kevin.p.nolan@hofstra.edu