Paradigm Busters: Researchers into Stomach Ulcers and Corporate Psychopaths

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Abstract

Through the lens of Kuhn's ideas concerning scientific paradigms, this paper looks at two fields of research where findings were previously rejected by their disciplines; firstly, the existence of bacteria in the human stomach as a cause of ulcers and secondly of psychopaths in corporations as a cause of organisational dysfunction. The paper discusses how both streams of research were pioneered and propagated by a few individuals and involved methodological breakthroughs. Additionally, both streams set themselves against the prevailing view of their subject matter and were initially ridiculed and rejected by journal editors, preventing findings from being published. Eventually, both streams of research proved to be insightful, busting the prevailing paradigms of the time. The paradigmatic understanding of what causes ulcers has been changed forever and the paradigmatic understanding of organisational disease has been expanded to include corporate psychopathy. A way forward to improve the acceptance of radical new papers is suggested.

Key words: Corporate psychopaths, paradigms, scientific revolutions, Helicobacter pylori, psychopathy, successful psychopaths.

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1. Introduction

Challenging views which go against current architypes can make it hard to be heard in a community of long-term systematic research. Yet two areas of research which have successfully managed to change beliefs have been studies of non-criminal psychopathy and that of what causes the development of stomach ulcers. Although different, both were challenged and ignored before finally breaking new ground in the research world.

Drawing from literature on the philosophy of science e.g. Kuhn (Kuhn, 1962) this paper examines similarities between two research approaches which broke the prevailing scientific paradigms in their respective areas. The term paradigm comes from the work of the historian and philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn who coined the term paradigm in "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (Kuhn, 1962). A paradigm is described as a way of looking at the world, such as Galileo's (initially rejected) heliocentric view of the solar system and it includes an associated set of practices that bind practitioners to a common culture and society (Barnes *et al.*, 2004). In other words, paradigms are not merely abstractions, but are embodied in people, in their relationships and interactions, in institutions and in their culture (Barnes *et al.*, 2004). Kuhn thus recognized that academic enquiry is never just academic but is embedded in academic society.

Paradigms can be high level, for example in terms of whether a positivist or interpretivist approach to scientific enquiry is utilised (Rao, 2019) or may be more specific, such as entailing a shared understanding of what constitutes an area of concern in specific disciplines such as environmental management (Díaz-Rodríguez, Yate-Arévalo and Sánchez-Buendía, 2019).

Importantly, paradigms as established ways of thinking or knowing something, often prevent us from seeing new potentials (Parviainen and Eriksson, 2006). Academic journal editors, although they arguably have a responsibility to the wider scientific community (da Silva, 2013) may seek to protect the status quo by rejecting transformational research findings which jeopardise their paradigmatic view of the world. Thereby, new and important ideas are not clarified, discussed, and debated in the literature (Johnson, 2011).

These mindsets of knowledge are referred to as scientific paradigms and they can lead to the circumscribing of problem situations (Harrison, Leitch and Chia, 2007). Causal explanations (Boddy, 2019a) which originate from outside the prevailing paradigm are dismissed out of hand. Those researchers embedded in the paradigmatic way of looking at situations do not know what they do not know (Parviainen and Eriksson, 2006) and cognitive biases may prevent them from seeing new ways of comprehending events, situations and behaviour. Just as in management (Ortenblad, 2010) the spread and diffusion of new ways of thinking can be opposed by those deeply entangled in established theories and conceptual models.

This current paper attempts to describe and illustrate this phenomenon by examining and comparing two research breakthroughs, one in medicine and one in management research. These are briefly described below and then the development of those ideas through initial ridicule, methodological innovations, rejection of evidence, attempts at disproval and on to final acceptance, recognition and paradigm change are described.

1.2 Research into Helicobacter Pylori

Stomach ulcers develop in about 10% of the population at some stage of their lives and the development of ulcers was previously linked to stress and dietary factors. Helicobacter pylori was a previously unknown bacterium which lives in the human stomach and is now associated with chronic gastritis, peptic ulcers and some carcinoma (Ahmed, 2005; Zamani *et al.*, 2018). The prevailing paradigm the research had to overcome was that bacteria could not survive in the human stomach and so it was ridiculous trying to establish that a) they were there and b) they caused ulcers. However, two medical researchers persevered in their thesis and supported it with compelling evidence. Since then, it has been estimated that up to 60% of stomach ulcers may be caused by Helicobacter pylori infection.

1.3 Research into Corporate Psychopaths

Corporate psychopaths are a previously unknown type of psychopath who largely avoid imprisonment and function successfully enough to exist relatively unnoticed in the corporate world (Boddy, 2005c). The prevailing paradigm the research had to overcome was the notion that psychopaths were impulsive, violent criminals, often in jail and so it was ludicrous trying to establish that a) they were in the corporate sector and b) they planned and caused, through their self-oriented activities, various forms of corporate dysfunction. This paradigmatic view of the psychopath as a violent impulsive criminal came about because the first studies of psychopaths were often in prison populations. Criminality and psychopathy became confounded in the minds of both lay people and psychologists alike and generalisations were made from criminal populations of psychopaths, which simply reflect the nature of the research

samples used. Criminal psychopaths may be violent and impulsive but this became the accepted view of all psychopaths.

Corporate psychopaths are apparently friendly white collar employees and executives with no conscience who are willing to lie and can portray a charming façade so as to gain managerial promotion via a ruthlessly opportunistic and Machiavellian approach to career advancement (Boddy, 2005c). Self-serving, opportunistic, ego-centric and shameless, they can also be charismatic, charming, manipulative and ambitious and are drawn to corporations as sources of the power, prestige and money they crave (Boddy, 2005c). They may have the skills of a master strategist (Singh, 2021) but these skills are directed to self-oriented and not organisationally-oriented ends (Boddy, 2017a). They constitute a threat to corporate social responsibility because they have no sense of guilt, shame or remorse about the consequences of their decisions. Similarly, they constitute a threat to business performance and longevity because they put their own interests before those of the organisations they work for (Boddy, 2005c). About 30% of employees will work closely enough to a corporate psychopath to be directly influenced by their abusive personality. Many others may be sufficiently distanced to feel their adverse influence without recognising where the ill-effects originate.

2. Initial Ridicule

In 1979, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren e.g., (Marshall and Warren, 1984) developed their hypothesis related to the bacterial cause of peptic ulcers and gastric cancer (Pincock, 2005). The "revolutionary" H. pylori theory was ridiculed and rejected by establishment medical scientists and doctors, who under the prevailing paradigmatic viewpoint of the time, did not believe that bacteria could live in the acidic environment of the human stomach (Warren, 2008). Marshall and Warren were viewed as upstarts pushing a hypothesis with no scientific credibility (Abbott, 2005).

According to Kuhn, a leading commentator on the philosophy of science, a change in the prevailing paradigm is a phase in scientific development in which the underlying assumptions of the field are re-examined and a new paradigm or set of ideas about what is happening, is established (Kuhn, 1962). Prior to Marshall and Warren it was considered that ulcers were caused by excess stomach acid related to lifestyle issues and stress (Ahmed, 2005) and their ideas that ulcers were caused by a bacterial infection were seen as heretical (Abbott, 2005) to that paradigmatic way of explaining ulcers. Rejection of their idea, involved a refusal to examine empirical evidence, which was converse to the positivist idea that science should progress via empirical testing of hypotheses (Tymoshenko, 2021). The constraints of the prevailing paradigm were apparently so strong, that usual conventions were disregarded and the evidence that the paradigm's conventions were inaccurate was simply ignored.

In 1995 Paul Babiak proposed the idea that psychopaths could be found in industry, but it appears that the idea was so novel that his paper was largely ignored, at least by academics, for almost ten years afterwards. In the meantime the idea of the corporate psychopath began to be discussed in the press e.g. (Prior, 2002) and health researchers started to state that society needed to know more about non-incarcerated psychopaths (Kirkman, 2002). Management commentators then discussed executives as possible psychopaths in conceptual terms (Morse, 2004). After this, in 2005, Boddy, inspired by work on criminal psychopaths, and his own

experiences in business with partially psychopathic colleagues, developed the theory (corporate psychopathy theory) that psychopaths were much more influential and disruptive in corporate life than anyone had previously imagined (Babiak, 1995; Boddy, 2005c; Boddy, 2006d). Further, that such research was relevant to management in multiple important ways (Boddy, 2006d) and so overcame the relevance gap so often discussed by management academics (Worrall, 2008).

At the same time an Australian organisational psychologist also took up the idea and published a book concerning organisational psychopaths in the workplace; "Working with Monsters" (Clarke, 2005) while an ex-prison psychologist partnered with Babiak in writing another book; "Snakes in Suits", on the subject (Babiak and Hare, 2006a). Other psychologists had also started to question the idea of the psychopath as always being a violent, anti-social criminal (Cooke *et al.*, 2012; Cooke *et al.*, 2004; Lilienfeld and Andrews, 1996). Yet others had long maintained that the idea of psychopaths being impulsive and not planful, was simply incorrect (Levenson, Kiehl and Fitzpatrick, 1995; Levenson, 1993; Levenson, 1992).

However, this slowly changing view of psychopathy was largely unrecognised by most management researchers and management academics initially scoffed at the idea of the corporate psychopath (Boddy, 2006a). Under the prevailing paradigmatic viewpoint of the time, psychopaths were associated with criminality and management researchers and other social scientists did not believe that psychopaths were to be found in corporate environments. Indeed, the first measures of psychopathy were criminally oriented and specifically included criminal elements such as recidivism (Hare, 1991). At this time white collar misbehaviour and crimes were mainly explained by opportunity, external pressure on employees and rationalisations (Sutherland, 1940) rather than on the personality of the employee. Personal characteristics have since been increasingly recognised as antecedents of managerial behaviour e.g., (Dhir and Shukla, 2018; Boddy *et al.*, 2021; Sheehy, Boddy and Murphy, 2020).

3. Methodological Breakthroughs

A methodological innovation, (Marshall swallowed a culture of H Pylori), demonstrated that H Pylori had colonised Marshall's stomach, after which he developed gastritis then ulcers and subsequently cured himself with antibiotics. This experiment was published in 1984 in The Lancet (Marshall and Warren, 1984) with a follow up version in 1985 in the Medical Journal of Australia and is among the most cited articles from that journal.

Using a methodological innovation, specifically an "observer-rating" of psychopathy, (the Psychopathy Measure Management Research Version – which gets employees to rate their managers on psychopathy) Boddy's 2008 research showed that primary psychopaths, whom he called corporate psychopaths, were found in corporations and were associated with multiple areas of disruption within them. In evaluating the PM-MRV, psychopathy researchers estimate that it's explicit focus on the interpersonal and affective features of psychopathy make the measure well-suited for use in business research (Smith and Lilienfeld, 2013).

Prior to this 2008 methodological innovation, which allowed for psychopathy research to be conducted via survey research techniques, research into corporate psychopaths had been based on self-report measures or on case study analysis. For example, in Babiak's paper on an "industrial psychopath" (Babiak, 1995) a case study approach based on Babiak's consultancy

work is used to describe the ascent of a psychopath through the corporate ranks. Similarly, case studies are referred to in Clark's findings from his work as an organisational psychologist (Clarke, 2005) or in Hare's speculations as to whether his research among criminal psychopaths also applied to people in the corporate sector (Babiak and Hare, 2006b; Hare, 1999). Prior to Boddy's innovation, self-report measures were used to identify psychopaths at an individual level and examine their personal characteristics, rather than their effects on other people e.g. (Levenson, Kiehl and Fitzpatrick, 1995).

A further methodological innovation was to expand academic research into psychopathy from a focus on the individual psychopath, addressing questions such as will they be successful as individuals, will they be counterproductive as individuals, and are they treatable as individuals, towards wider issues. For example Boddy looked not at whether psychopaths were themselves counterproductive at work (Wu and Lebreton, 2011; Özsoy, 2018) but rather whether those unfortunate enough to work closely with corporate psychopaths retaliate against their organisation with counterproductivity (Boddy, 2014). They do. How corporate psychopaths influence organisational innovation has also been examined (Boddy and Taplin, 2020).

The organisational disorders associated with the presence of corporate psychopaths in the workplace included increased employee withdrawal and absenteeism, increased employee workloads, increased bullying and conflict, perceived lowered corporate social responsibility such as lower levels of doing business for the good of the local community, increased organisational constraints and decreased job satisfaction and employee well-being (Boddy *et al.*, 2020; Boddy, 2020c; Boddy, 2020a; Boddy, 2020d; Boddy, 2017b; Boddy and Taplin, 2016; Boddy *et al.*, 2015; Mathieu and Babiak, 2016; Mathieu *et al.*, 2014; Oyewunmi, Akinnusi and Oyewunmi, 2018).

Corporate psychopaths are also associated with fraud (Boddy, 2020b; Boddy, 2018; Boddy, 2016; Jeppesen, Leder and Futter, 2016; Perri and Lichtenwald, 2007; Ramamoorti, 2008; Perri, 2011a; Perri and Brody, 2011; Lingnau, Fuchs and Dehne-Niemann, 2017), environmental degradation (Boddy, 2005c; Boddy, Ladyshewsky and Galvin, 2010a; Ray and Jones, 2011) and toxic leadership (Boddy, 2011a; Boddy, 2019b; Hanson and Baker, 2017). Perri in particular has been attempting to break down the idea that fraud is the result of contextual situations and not of personality and has published multiple papers arguing that the psychopathic are drawn to committing fraud as part of their greedy and parasitic personalities e.g., (Perri and Lichtenwald, 2007; Perri, 2011b; Perri and Brody, 2011; Perri, 2013; Perri, Lichtenwald and Mieczkowska, 2014).

4. Rejection of Evidence and Tenacious Reporting

In 1983 Marshall and Warren submitted their finding that H Pylori was to be found in the human stomach to the Gastroenterological Society of Australia, but the reviewers turned their paper down, rating it in the bottom 10% of those they received that year. Marshall displayed tenaciousness and "dogged determination" in presenting the idea that duodenal and gastric ulcers could be caused by the bacteria (Abbott, 2005).

Similarly, Boddy would reportedly not let the conceptualisation of the corporate psychopath rest and from 2008 submitted numerous papers to many of the world's top management journals detailing his findings showing that corporate psychopaths were to be found at senior

levels within corporations. All these papers were turned down, usually by the editors, and some were rejected so quickly that arguably only the title and abstract could possibly have been read.

To gain acceptance of the idea that corporate psychopaths existed Boddy presented widely at marketing conferences (Boddy, 2006c), research conferences (Boddy, 2005a), conferences concerning corporate social responsibility (Boddy, 2005b), and business ethics (Boddy, 2006b; Boddy, Galvin and Ladyshewsky, 2009). The first two journal editors to sit through one of these conference presentations on the subject of corporate psychopaths became among the first to realise the ground-breaking and societally important nature of the research and the first to publish papers on corporate psychopathy in their journals e.g. (Boddy, 2010; Boddy, Ladyshewsky and Galvin, 2010b). Since then Boddy, attempting to demonstrate the importance of the subject across disciplines, has been prolific in publishing articles on corporate psychopaths.

Meanwhile Babiak continued to contribute to this paradigm busting and followed his initial pioneering paper on industrial psychopaths up with the publication of a co-authored book on workplace psychopaths (Babiak and Hare, 2006a) followed by papers with other collaborators on corporate psychopaths (Babiak, Neumann and Hare, 2010; Mathieu and Babiak, 2016; Mathieu *et al.*, 2014).

5. Replication Research to Disprove the Importance of the Research

Warren reported that after his and Marshall's medical research was finally published, other researchers started to replicate the work "trying to prove we were wrong" (Warren, 2008) but finding instead that the findings were supported.

Similarly, work into organisational psychopaths was replicated by researchers attempting to show that the idea that there were psychopaths in the workforce "should be treated with caution" because of the low incidence of psychopaths in the adult population. Nevertheless, findings were that 13.4% of employees rated a superior who displayed the worst interpersonal behaviours at work, as being significantly above mean scores on a psychopathy measure (Caponecchia, Sun and Wyatt, 2012). Caponecchia et al"s work therefore rather than diminishing its importance, inadvertently underlined the importance of studying workplace psychopathy. Other researchers wondered what could be done about these ruthless people in organisations who jeopardise the practice of business ethics (Marshall, Baden and Guidi, 2013; Marshall *et al.*, 2014).

6. Final Acceptance

While it took "a remarkable length of time" for Warren and Marshall's paradigm shifting idea to become accepted, once it was, a large amount of other research took place into Helicobacter pylori (Ahmed, 2005) and it is now accepted wisdom that the bacteria causes duodenal and peptic ulcers.

Arguably, research into corporate psychopaths has now almost reached a similar level of acceptance. This was aided by a fortuitous event in that a co-editor in chief of one of the World's most prestigious business ethics journals sat through a presentation of Boddy's (Boddy,

Galvin and Ladyshewsky, 2009) and found that the research was a good deal more insightful and accomplished than the title, involving the juxtaposition of the words "corporate" and "psychopath" had led her to believe.

The editor explained that from the paper's title, she was expecting "total nonsense" but instead found well-executed and insightful research. Papers discussing the role of corporate psychopaths in bullying and unfair supervision in the workplace, on corporate social responsibility and organisational commitment to employees, and in the global financial crisis were then published and became highly cited.

Like the work of Warren and Marshall on stomach ulcers, the acceptance of research on corporate psychopaths has taken time to gain momentum and it wasn't till the early 2000's that publications on the topic started to increase. In a literature search on corporate psychopaths and associated terms, 98 papers were found from 1966 to 2020. Figures 1 and 2 show how the publication rates have changed over time.

Figure 1 – Number of published papers on corporate psychopaths by decade.

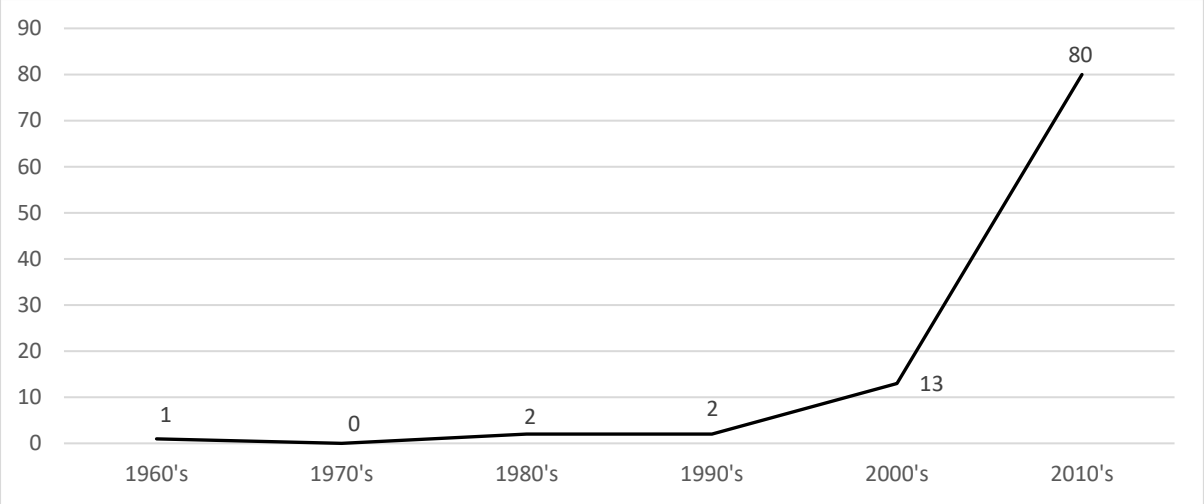

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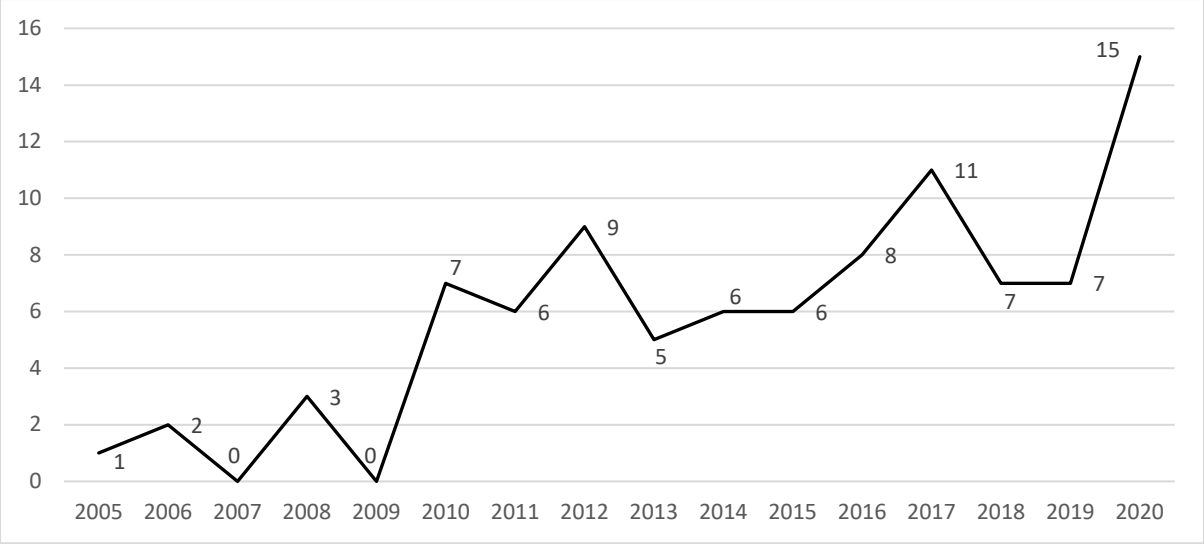
Figure 2 - Number of published papers on corporate psychopaths from 2005 to 2020



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Acceptance of the idea that psychopaths exist in business is now so established that ethicists can write books which argue about whether it is ethical to screen psychopaths into or out of employment (Steverson, 2020) and lawyers are considering the legal implications of organisations employing the psychopathic (Sheehy, Boddy and Murphy, 2020).

The subject of psychopaths in politics is also being explored with Hermann Goering and Donald Trump identified as holding psychopathic personality traits (Gilbert, 1948; Boddy, 2021; Lee and Eisen, 2018; Dutton, 2016). Lilienfeld has also looked at psychopathy in relation to other US presidents and stated how such research is important for the future of humanity (Lilienfeld, Miller and Lynam, 2017; Lilienfeld *et al.*, 2012).

7. Eventual Recognition

In 2005, the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine to David Marshall and Robin Warren "for their discovery of the bacterium Helicobacter pylori and its role in gastritis and peptic ulcer disease" (Pincock, 2005).

There is no Nobel prize in management but as evidence of the acceptance of corporate psychopathy theory in 2011 an on-line commentator on the Bloomberg website wrote that the theory that corporate psychopaths were involved with the global financial crisis was a “brilliant article”. The commentator went on to report that this subject would never have been addressed in his era and was decades ahead of academic peers and that the theory had “hit the jackpot”. The commentator went on to report that he thought the subject of psychopaths in society was a vital issue, determining major events within the present and future existence of humanity and that he (Ashcroft, 2016) sincerely hoped that adequate resources would be made available to scientists in this field, for further research. Nonetheless, the area remains underfunded.

Similarly, Babiak’s work has been cited in numerous influential newspaper and magazine articles and reports of work on corporate psychopaths have been published in web-based video news channels, radio channels, financial news channels like CNN.com and in on-line newspapers and in magazines such as GQ. Newspaper reports of corporate psychopathy theory include those in The Independent, The Korea Herald and The Irish Examiner, The Star (Canada), The Australian and others. The Cambridge Independent newspaper, the London

Evening Standard Newspaper and Mensa Magazine have also covered work on corporate psychopaths. TV documentaries have included "Meet the Psychopaths" a documentary series first aired on Channel 5 (UK TV) in December 2015 and Canadian Broadcasting Corporations documentary "The Psychopath Next Door" about psychopaths in society.

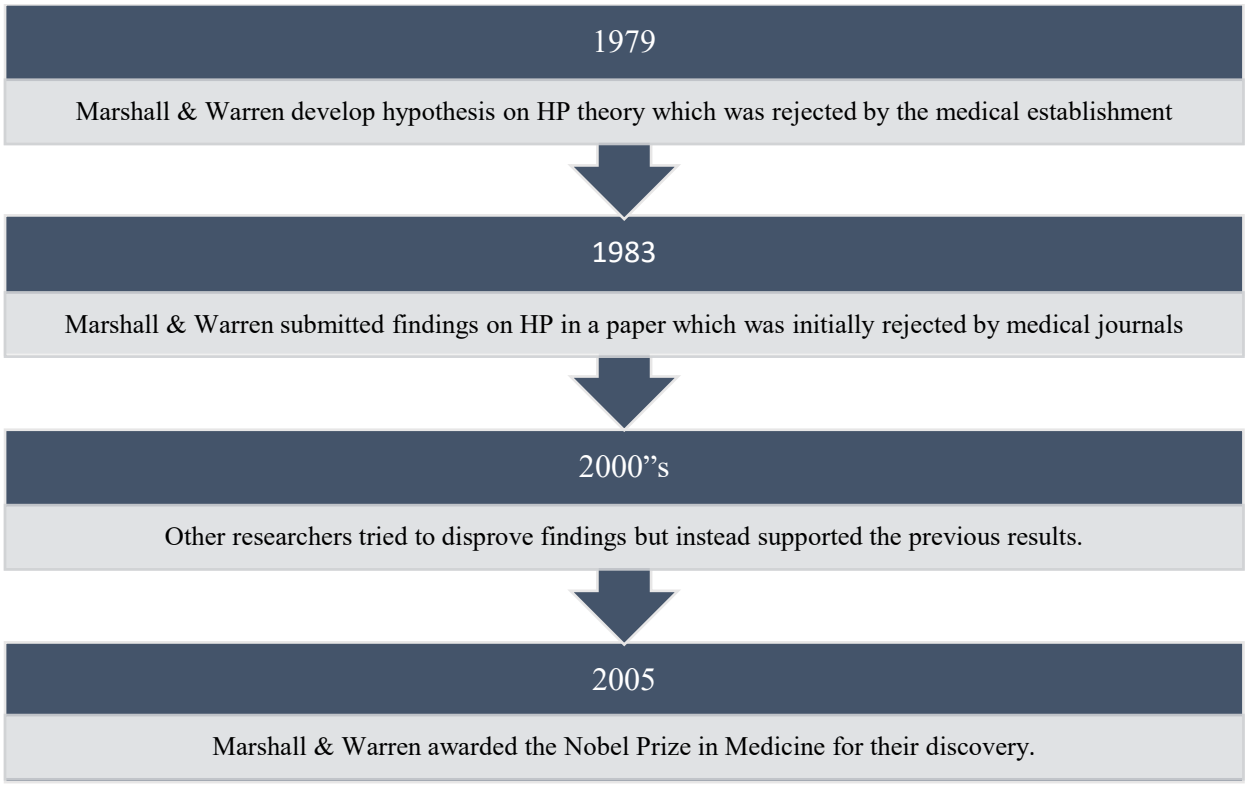
Since 2011, other corporate psychopathy researchers have called for academia to be more open-minded concerning the study of corporate psychopathy and for much further work on this to be conducted (Lingnau, Fuchs and Dehne-Niemann, 2017; Lingnau and Dehne-Niemann, 2015). In 2013, Boddy's work "Corporate Performance and Corporate Psychopaths" was awarded a "best paper in conference" award at the "Improving Corporate Performance Conference" hosted by the British Academy of Management at Westminster Palace. This again indicates that the subject of corporate psychopaths has reached some level of acceptance among management researchers.

8. Paradigm Change

Marshall and Warren's view that gastric disorders such as ulcers are the result of infectious diseases is now firmly established and there is increasing evidence for a role of H. pylori infection in other gastric conditions such as cancers. This has been described as a change in paradigm, a change in the accepted view of how and why ulcers form in the stomach (Pincock, 2005). Treatment of ulcers now focuses on combatting H. pylori bacteria.

The summary flow of acceptance of the radical idea that H pylori bacteria can cause stomach ulcers is illustrated below in figure 3. Treating ulcers has now changed radically and for the better. A similar summary flowchart for acceptance of the idea that psychopaths can be found in the corporate sector is then shown in figure 4. The latter idea has implications for how senior corporate managers are recruited, trained and managed if organisational success and global longevity and sustainability are to be fostered (Boddy, 2013; Boddy and Baxter, 2021; Lee and David, 2017; Sheehy, Boddy and Murphy, 2020; Marshall, Baden and Guidi, 2013; Marshall *et al.*, 2014).

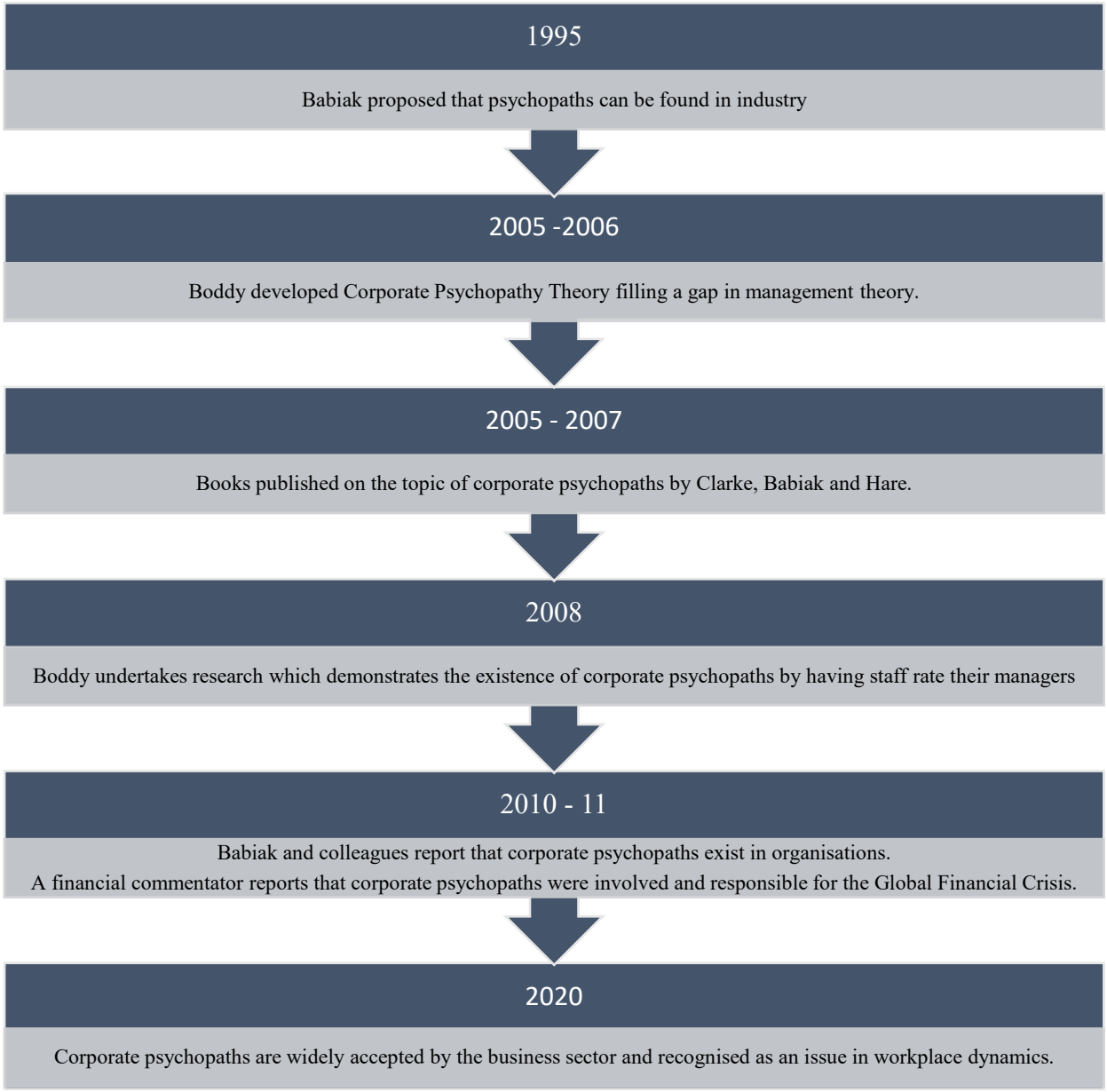
Figure 3 – The flow of acceptance of stomach ulcers caused by Helicobacter pylori



Babiak's revelation that a workplace psychopath can get to the top regardless of colleague's eventually realising the type of person they are (Babiak, 1995) and Boddy's view that many of the symptoms of unethical, self-centred, risky decisions in corporate life are the result of the presence of corporate psychopaths (Boddy, 2005c; Boddy, 2006c; Boddy, 2006b; Boddy, 2006d) is now accepted. Corporate psychopaths are deemed by some to be the current greatest threat to business ethics around the world (Marshall *et al.*, 2014). Calls for corporate psychopaths to be selected out of leadership positions in the workforce are increasingly made e.g. (Anderson, 2011; Cohan, 2012). The study of corporate psychopaths has attracted new researchers to the field and corporate psychopathy has been associated with fraud (Perri and Brody, 2011) and correlated with the acceptance of fraud and insider trading as examples of societally important white-collar crime (Lingnau, Fuchs and Dehne-Niemann, 2017).

Recent papers show that psychopathy is associated with students choosing management disciplines as areas of study (Litten *et al.*, 2020), involvement in unethical businesses such as human trafficking (Okeke, Duffy and McElvaney, 2020), lowered job satisfaction (Khan *et al.*, 2020; Boddy *et al.*, 2020), unethical decision making (Shank *et al.*, 2019; Sheehy, Boddy and Murphy, 2020; Erkutlu, 2019), getting career advancement (Hill and Scott, 2019; Pavlić and Međedović, 2019; Tudosoiu, Ghinea and Cantaragiu, 2019), bullying (Valentine, Fleischman and Godkin, 2018) and a negative influence on business and society (Itzkowitz, 2018; Palmen, Derksen and Kolthoff, 2018; Wisniewski, Yekini and Omar, 2017; Boddy, 2017b). The "observer report" method of identifying corporate psychopaths in survey research apparently first used by Boddy in 2008, has been adopted by other groups of psychopathy researchers, e.g. using observer reports of management psychopathy, employee distress has been associated with the presence of management corporate psychopaths (Mathieu *et al.*, 2012).

Figure 4 – The flow of acceptance of corporate psychopaths as a form of psychopathy



Having established the important ramifications that paradigm busting research can have, we now discuss some ways in which such radical research can gain quicker acceptance.

9. A Way Forward

Kuhn's view was that paradigms are eventually overturned under the weight of their own contradictions but his work implies that this involves a long timeline. A question for editors is how they can permit the evaluation of radical, apparently senseless new ideas, while remaining true to their paradigmatic viewpoints? Perhaps a way forward is to allow a "senseless/counterintuitive" paper to be reviewed every so often or to put all such papers out to review in case reviewers can see some potential in what is being proposed that more staid editors cannot. An alternative may be for editors to call for further explanation from authors when there is an apparently nonsensical, counterintuitive paper submitted.

A way forward for authors may be to position their radical papers in a less confrontational style. For example, putting the words "corporate psychopath" in the titles of some papers may have been too confronting for people who, at the time, did not believe such a person existed. Concluding, via a systematic accumulation of evidence, that such people may exist may have been more subtle than starting with the proposition that they do. Similarly, the title of Marshall and Warren's 1984 paper "Unidentified curved bacilli in the stomach of patients with gastritis and peptic ulceration" would be confronting for any doctor who did not believe the stomach could contain bacteria.

Challenging established scientific perspectives is fraught with difficulties. As scholars perhaps we must not only acknowledge but accept challenges to our established paradigmatic viewpoints and see them as opportunities for future innovation and wisdom generation. Although the two examples of radical research given here were eventually published and accepted, it is unclear how many other discoveries have been ignored, forgotten and unpublished because of the tendency that the scientific establishment may have towards rejecting the novel, new or ground breaking. The resulting loss to humanity may be large.

10. **Conclusions**

Paradigm altering research seems to go through the phases of ridicule, rejection, lack of funding publication difficulties and final acceptance after attempts at repudiation, as reported by Warren, Marshall and Boddy. There was an initial rejection and ridicule of Marshall and Warren's 1979 development of their hypothesis (the H. pylori theory) related to the bacterial cause of peptic ulcers and gastric cancer, by establishment scientists and doctors. Under the prevailing paradigmatic viewpoint of the time, the medical establishment did not believe that bacteria could live in the acidic environment of the stomach and so saw their research as a waste of time, unworthy of funding or publication. However, this "radical idea" is now "accepted wisdom".

Similarly, management academics did not believe that psychopaths could work at senior levels within corporate organisations or that there was such a thing as a corporate psychopath. After Babiak's case study of a single psychopath at work (Babiak, 1995) Boddy's 2008 work was apparently first to establish this more scientifically, in quantitative studies of workplace populations (Boddy, 2011b; Boddy, 2009) while Babiak and colleagues also established that corporate psychopaths are to be found at senior levels in the corporate sector (Babiak, Neumann and Hare, 2010).

Since then leading psychology researchers have admitted that "there is such a thing as a corporate psychopath" (Derrick, 2015) and while there is still some resistance to the idea, so have management researchers (Boddy *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, there is an increasing acceptance that rather than this being a minority issue, their presence influences organisational behaviour across many different areas and with important implications for employees, organisations and society. One eminent psychologist even posits that in some economic sectors, psychopathy is the norm and psychopaths will do well in terms of their own advancement through the organisational ranks in these sectors (Furnham, 2014). Others state that corporate psychopaths and similar dark personalities present as attractive employees to HR personnel and this helps them gain executive jobs and then ascend the career ladder (Boddy, Boulter and

Fishwick, 2021; Kholin, Kückelhaus and Blickle, 2020; Hill and Scott, 2019; Boulter and Boddy, 2020).

Paradigm breaking is apparently arduous in any discipline, including in medical and management research. Pre-existing viewpoints which seem to preclude the reasonable consideration of the ideas being put forward, have to be continuously countered. Journal editors can defend the status quo and refuse to send radical papers out for review. With dogged and conscientious persistence, researchers may eventually persuade a person in authority of the worth of the research and a champion can emerge, such as an editor who grasps the importance of the new ideas and allows related papers out for review and then publication. Finally, the radical idea becomes accepted wisdom and a new paradigm is established. Alternatively, the radical new idea may be ignored, forgotten and consigned to oblivion, with its potential benefits lost to humanity.

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