

# 15<sup>th</sup> International Winelands Conference

*Governance of transitions in a complex world*

30 March – 01 April 2016  
U.S.

*Complex shades of grey :  
Exploratory thoughts on Leadership as psychopathology  
VA CLAPPER*

Define tomorrow.

UNISA

  
college of  
economic and  
management sciences

# Road Map

- Leadership – reification
- Contextual approach: *personality vs traits*
  - Need for “digging deeper”
- Dark Triad – *spot-light on psychopathy*
  - What it is? (good/bad/complex)
  - Identifying / Measuring?
  - What to do about it?
- Conclusion

## Classical Leadership – problem of REIFICATION

- PRIMARY FOCUS – on those designated as leaders doing o.b.o. subordinates
  - Centralized Power
  - Particularly Theory X & Theory Y express the power relationship
  - & assumes lack of agency
- **But these elements are generally identifiable in most/all types of leadership orthodoxies.**

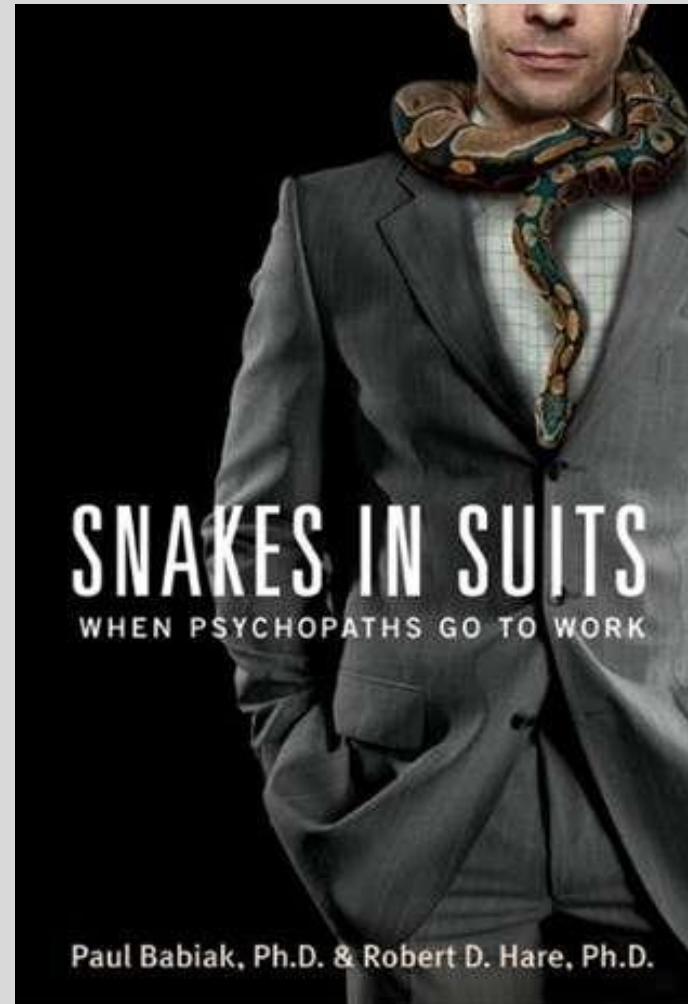
## LEADERSHIP REQUIRES THICKER DESCRIPTION & EXAMINATION

- Beyond singular traits (?)
- Personality of leader (contexts, wholistic, history, ....)
- Role of followers:
  - acknowledging agency &
  - acknowledging “lack”

# ACKNOWLEDGING *SHADES OF COMPLEXITY* LEADERSHIP AS PATHOLOGY

## *Why this research & presentation?*

- Financial risk research
  - Financial crisis (2007/8) & personalities involved
    - Global Recession
  - *Occupy Wall Street* movement : demand 3 of 9
    - Prosecute wall street criminals [pay back the money]
    - Popular press:
      - named and shamed personalities
      - Brought to surface PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR.
  - Prof Schwella article (more recently)



## Definition of a psychopath

- **Caveat and disclosure –**
  - I AM NOT A psychiatrist or psychologist
  - Neither do I lay any claim to manifesting ANY of the defining traits of psychopathy that the literature identifies.
- **Non-technical definition:**
- ***“Psychopaths are those one per cent of the population who have no conscience and who, therefore, demonstrate an egotistic and ruthless approach to living” (Boddy CR).***

## Deliberate choice of title

- *Go by the titles Industrial Psychopath, Executive Psychopath, Successful Psychopath, Organisational Psychopath, Corporate Psychopath – etc. (S.O.B.'s )*
- *I propose **Institutional Psychopath** for at least two reasons:*
  - “institutional” fits with traditional P.A. nomenclature and distinction vis-à-vis “organisation.
  - “institutional psychopath” also implies a distinction with “institutionalized psychopath”



# Character traits: Institutional Psychopath

Attractive traits	Dangerous to Org'	Beneficial to Org'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Likeable,</li><li>• charming,</li><li>• intelligent,</li><li>• alert,</li><li>• impressive,</li><li>• confidence-inspiring,</li><li>• great success with the ladies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irresponsible,</li><li>• self-destructive,</li><li>• fraudulent, deceitful,</li><li>• abusive</li><li>• <b>Condescending</b></li><li>• <b>Self centered</b></li><li>• <b>Promiscuous</b></li><li>• <b>Liar</b></li><li>• <b>Greed</b></li><li>• <b>Disregard for others (as insignificant, unworthy)</b></li><li>• <b>Exploitative</b></li><li>• <b>Vindictive</b></li><li>• <b>Arrogant,</b></li><li>• <b>Manipulative</b></li><li>• <b>Irritable</b></li><li>• <b>Exhibitionistic</b></li><li>• <b>Sensation-seeking</b></li><li>• <b>Lack of guilt or remorse</b></li></ul>	<p>Assertive, risk-embracing, prepared to take tough decisions <b>Ambition</b> <b>High self-worth</b></p> <p>(de Vries 2013)</p> <p><b>S.O.B's</b> (seductive operational bullies)</p>

# CAMOUFLAGE OF A PSYCHOPATH



(potentially) Institutionalized  
Psychopath



Institutional Psychopath

## Incidence of Psychopathy

- General society: approximately 1 %
- In the corporate world:  $\approx 3$  to 4 % (or higher?)
- In university population:  $\approx 5\%$
- Cited percentages distinguish between the *law-breaking (institutionalized) psychopath* and the *law-abiding (institutional) psychopath*  
*(much research required)*

## Results of psychopathological behaviour (primarily) – 1:

- Summary statistics:
- Business crimes account for +/-30% of case filings in U.S.
- Combined burglary, mugging, property loss, etc - +/- \$4 billion p.a.
- Corporate crime and crime in retail stores: between \$40 and \$200 billion p.a.

# Results of psychopathological behaviour (primarily) - 2:

- Counter productive work behaviour (CWB)
- Work place bullying on the rise (Steinman S – *Workplace Dignity Institute in South Africa*):
  - Def. of bullying: “repeated, health-harming mistreatment, verbal abuse, or conduct which is threatening, humiliating, intimidating, or sabotage that interferes with work
- Behaviour modelling (Social Learning Theory) in the institution.
- Health costs for victims of psychopathy:
  - Depression (highest claim incidence in 2015 – Discovery Health)
  - Absenteeism
  - Time wastage at work
  - Decreased emotional & physical health
  - Loss of self-esteem
- CCMA: costs – dismissal cases (particularly constructive dismissal)

# A “Take Home”

***Nb.:***

***success at work may ACTUALLY FEED  
PSYCHOPATHY AND PATHOLOGICAL NARCISM  
(Kernberg, 1975, Kernberg et al, 1979)***

# Conclusion

- Interviews coupled with psychopathic assessments
- Authentic background checks (psychopaths have a tendency to take their spoils and run).
- Dispersed leadership acknowledging & development AGENCY
- Protection of victims or prospective victims
- Leadership research agendas: authentic deeper research //thicker descriptions of complex leadership issues

**Thank you**

**Define tomorrow.**

**UNISA**

