

Chapter 4 TRADITIONAL TRAITS SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

The Journey from Will to Power to Will to Serve

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Trait School of Leadership -In the 1920's and 1930's, research focused on identifying traits that differentiated leaders from non-leaders. Hundreds of trait studies have been disappointing, show weak relations between particular traits and leader effectiveness. When some traits were found with predictive power most of the leadership researchers had left for other islands. The out-of-the-box point is about theatrics.



PIRATE'S ISLAND STORY:

Pirate's Island is where Pirate's go to recruit their crew, to find mates with particular traits. The island has a glorious history. Early in the 20th Century, pirate-leaders were said to be POWERFUL, taller, stronger, more intelligence and self-confident. Then, Sir Stogdill in 1948 reviewed all the Trait studies of the first half-century. He concluded that the idea that leaders had universal and unique traits different from non-leaders was quite absurd. The Academy (of Management) of Leader Professors wanting to get tenure, fame, and fortune decided that a new theory of leadership must be found or all their jobs would be as extinct as dinosaurs. Corporate money flowed into the university ivory tower, but only to fund a tamer, less powerful leadership; a bureaucratic cage was put around the leader traits (traits of efficiency, conformity, and utility to power dominated).

Time passed... bureaucracy became too boring to consider, and traits, there were way to many, and having this one or that other one did not correlate with performance. So the Leader Pirates sailed to the island of Situation, not because they distrusted the bureaucratic cage, but to escape the Myers-Briggs trait theory of personality types. The situations believe leaders are chameleons; they change their colors (behaviors) to suit the situation. All but the Industrial Psychologists and high school career counselors boarded the ship, leaving the Isle of Traits to sail to the Isle of Situation; those who remained behind never much cared for the sea.

Sir Stogdill in 1974 returned from the Isles of Situation (Bear & Snail Ilands) to see what the Industrial Psychologists were up to. Low and behold with a slew of new

methods (lab studies, in-baskets, forced choice surveys, and value inventories) those psychologists found significant Trait correlates with leader performance. But alas it was too late, the entire Leader Academy had already settled on the Isles of Situation and were bent on restricting leadership to just the WILL TO SERVE. The hermits left behind turned to Zarathustra. It would mean a costly resettlement and changes in the mindset of the entire Academy to set sail from the Isles of Situation to the Motherland of Trait (Pirates Island), and rediscover the WILL TO POWER in the hermit's cave.

Still there was a bigger problem. Several BUREAUCRATIC Trait theories were exceedingly popular. The Baron Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Y was all the rage (Why not just tuck it away in the iron cage). X was the autocratic strong man, obnoxious but without much power, while Y the preferred new age leader, was considerate of others, and worried about followers' development needs. You cannot find a Management textbook that does not include it or a group of students who cannot recite it by rote. The popularity of the bureaucrat's X & Y meant that managers were now using it, even though it did not work as a Trait theory. Never mind that the McGregor theory was never proven in any rigorous research. Still it did serve to resocialize the masses to appreciate WILL TO SERVE over WILL TO POWER. This meant that researchers were now discovering X's and Y's because they had taught managers to believe in the WILL TO SERVE and IRON CAGE mythos.

All was not lost. Esquire McClelland was using stories on the Isle of Trait, to identify leader Traits, and this method dovetailed with a band of misfits born on Situation Island who only heard tales of the Isle of Trait and its dead religion of Traitordom. McClelland combined the NEED FOR POWER with two more bureaucratic needs. The misfits set sail for the Isle of Culture, where storytelling, symbols, and rituals were now all the rage. They made a pact never to use the word "McClelland" and never to utter the words "NEED FOR POWER," but took to collecting leader stories, just the same. So Stogdill 1974 got it right, and some traits do predict leadership behavior.

The search for the traits defining "natural leaders" continues, spurred on by interest in leadership effectiveness (especially in the late 1970s and 1980s when the Japanese lean production machine wreaked havoc in the Leader Academy). The problem is those WILL TO POWER types keep turning up on Horse Island.

Duke Boyatzis, born on Pirate's Island (in the shire of culture), set sail for Case Western, having discovered a treasure chest of Traits in 1982. The great Isle of Culture sought to transform corporate cultures, to enhance performance and leaders now serve this cause. The Duke Boyatzis dubbed the treasure, (iron cage) "competencies" and began training less than eager doctoral students to measure 9 traits that would fit leaders for the culture wars. Several seem to replicate Esquire McClelland, but also combine aspects of Sir Stogdill's lists of traits and skills. No matter, the Leader Academy could now continue its Bureaucratic WILL TO SERVE Trait research, though in reality, most of the Academy were now citizens of either the Isle of Situation or the Isle of Culture, exercising the WILL TO POWER in their daily affairs, and having no intention of taking another sea voyage to unmask WILL TO SERVE for what it is.

The methodologists invented fancier wares and the rush to rediscover WILL TO SERVE Traits was now ready to cast off. Care to join the crew?

But, the new methods could not just pour new wine into the old skins. Instead some reinvention had to take place. Princes Kouzes and Posner set about to ask people what traits they wanted in a leader. They could have asked the author of the Prince. Still the people were tired of lying presidents who made power decisions on the phone while having office sex, and celebrities who killed their wives. The public wanted leaders with credibility, trust, and even spirituality; they wanted WILL TO SERVE. Let the leaders serve the people for a change; banish those with any hint of WILL TO POWER. What is the Trait call of this millennium? You know the answer. Bishop Covey came to rally this cause for more spiritual leaders (Tree of Life Island). And soon the entire Leader Academy was finding spiritual traits amongst their members, and wisdom courses in leadership flowered everywhere. How convenient that the academy of leadership no longer has a WILL TO POWER and are submitted to the WILL TO SERVE. More important, Trait study had been reborn or should we say was born again. After 9-11, the nation wanted its leaders to have a will to power, and was willing to follow any mono-voiced (decisive, listen to only themselves) leader, even if it meant surrendering all their freedoms of privacy and assembly.

Theatrics of Traits (Out of the Box perspective)- *Leadership is theatre*, but one that is determined by society and capitalism. It is theatre that transmits certain kinds of knowledge to spectators dictated by society. Tastes in traits change over time. Leadership is part of what Aristotle describes as the cathartic function, to purify the spectator, to purge an audience of all ideas they can change society. In the Middle Ages, the clergy and nobles controlled theatrical productions. Leaders were defined as those who preserved the feudal traditions and customs; which suited clergy and nobles just fine. The function of Middle Age theatre was to inculcate spectators with solemn religious attitudes and present noble-leaders as possessing divine and saintly traits. Some thingsß never change. Theatre intimidated spectators, especially the poor, by showing what terrible punishment (torture and execution) those who were not fearful of leaders. The traits of the medieval leaders was their connection to the spiritual, being born with the silver spoon, inheriting gold, not being industrious. In Shakespeare's play, *Merchant of Venice*, for example, Portia's hand is one by the suitor who can choose correctly between silver (born with a title), gold (inheriting riches), or lead (the industrious entrepreneur).

In Renaissance theatre, the rising bourgeoisie class of business folks wanted to rest control from the nobles and clergy. The slow pace of life of Middle Ages changed as people moved to cities, invented new technologies (cannons), and lived the faster pace of the Renaissance. Saint Peter became the first accountant who at the moment of death, checks our credits and debits in a ledger (Boal, 1991: 56). During the Renaissance dramaturgy, business leaders were rescripted, given new characters with virtuous traits: initiative (free will), resourceful (not destined), industrious (not idle like aristocrats or clergy). The traits of the Renaissance (business) leader was one who economized, industrious, organized, and never idle (in contrast to the medieval nobles). The new leader had the traits of an accountant, someone who managed financial transactions for

great commercial enterprises; the behind the scenes organizer and producer of the on-stage performances.

During war, people want leaders with authoritarian, determined, jaw lines; after WWII, Europeans distrusted leaders; not just leaders like Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini, but all leaders; better to just have managers (.i.e. with will to serve, not will to power). Each epoch (e.g. feudal, modern industrialism, postmodern spectacle) promotes traits it wants from its leaders.

I assume that each sector of society (business, church, aristocracy, military, state) proposes various leader traits; yet it is those with the most economic power that establish which traits define leadership. That is because those with the money (or social capital) possess the ability to disseminate that knowledge in theatrical themes suitable to the governing classes (Boal, 1991: 53).

Stogdill 1948

What traits differentiate leaders and nonleaders?

Stogdill 1948 Review of 124 Trait Studies (1904-1948)

MAIN TRAITS STUDIED:

- Requires status through active participation
- Demonstrates ability to facilitate the efforts of the group to attain its goals
- Intelligent
- Alert to others' needs
- Understands the task
- Initiative
- Persistence in dealing with problems
- Self-confident
- Desire to accept responsibility
- Desire for the position of dominance and control

TYPOLGY

- Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgment)
- Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments)
- Responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel)
- Participation (activity, social ability, cooperation, adaptability, humor)
- Status (socioeconomic, position, popularity).

Jennings (1960: 165)

CONCLUDED:














1. Traits varied by situation (non support for hypothesis that leaders have different traits from nonleaders).
2. Relative import of trait varied by situation (and no trait, apart from others, correlated highly with effectiveness).
3. Therefore "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits..." (Stogdill, 1948: 64; See Yukl, 1989: 174-175).
4. Two leaders with different traits could be successful in same situation (Yukl, 1989: 175).

Stogdill 1974










What traits differentiate leaders and non-leaders? Stogdill lists 4,725 leader studies, and concludes, "the endless accumulation of empirical studies has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership"

Stogdill 1974 Review of 163 Trait Studies (1949-1970)

MAIN TRAITS STUDIED:

-  Adaptable to situations
-  Alert to social environment
-  Ambitious and achievement oriented
-  Assertive
-  Cooperative
-  Decisive
-  Dependable
-  Dominant (desire to influence others)
-  Energetic (high activity level)
-  Persistent
-  Self-Confident
-  Tolerant of stress
-  Willing to assume responsibility

MAIN SKILLS STUDIED:

-  Clever (intelligent)
-  Conceptually skilled
-  Creative
-  Diplomatic and tactful
-  Fluent in speaking
-  Knowledgeable about group task
-  Organized (administrative ability)
-  Persuasive
-  Socially skilled

CONCLUDED:

1. The 1904-1948 negative trait findings causes many leader researchers to reject the relevance of traits entirely (Stogdill, 1974: 72; Yukl, 1989: 176).
2. Therefore the field of leadership (the Academy) sailed off into situation (contingency) theories of leadership.
3. The result is the situation leader theorists over-emphasized the situation and under-emphasized the traits that did indeed mark leader from nonleader.
4. So now we conclude that there are certain traits that increase the probability that certain leaders will lead their followers successfully in a narrow range of situations.

Stogdill, Ralph (1974) Handbook of Leadership. NY: Free Press

McGregor 1960 Theory X Y

Theory X Leaders Assume:	Theory Y Leaders Assume:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Employees inherently dislike work and, whenever possible, will attempt to avoid it.2. Because employees dislike work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to achieve desired goals3. Employees will shirk responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible4. Most workers place security above all other factors associated with work and will display little ambition	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Employees can view work as being as natural as rest or play2. Men and women will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives3. The average person can learn to accept, even seek, responsibility4. The ability to make good decisions is widely dispersed throughout the population and is not necessarily the sole province of managers

Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Y became the most popular trait theory. McGregor based his dualistic theory on Maslow's need hierarchy (let's not go there). McGregor stayed in the WILL TO SERVE part of [Figure One](#).

X and Y is a dualism, because the dialectic relationship is left out. For example, Theory Y is Theory X in Sheep's Clothing (Salaman, 1981), a way to seduce worker motivation

(with smiles & compliments) to get higher levels of worker performativity (here performativity means work till you drop dead). Neither X nor Y challenge the underlying system.

McClelland 1965 Stories of Leaders

Need for Achievement:	Need for Power:	Need for Affiliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achiever Imagery ● Concern with standard of excellence ● Instrumental activity successful or unsuccessful ● Anticipate success or failure ● Help by person ● Achiever Sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A state to succeed ■ Obstacles to achievement (a person's own laziness, external obstacles blocking path to success) ■ Means of gaining achievement goal ● Is the story whole centered or only peripheral concern? Achiever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concern with the control of the means of influencing a person. ● Emotional reactions to a dominance situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pleasure in winning ■ Anger in losing an argument ■ Statements wanting to avoid weakness ● Dominance Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disputing a position ■ Arguing something ■ Demanding or forcing something ■ Trying to put a point across ■ Giving a command ■ Trying to convince someone of something ■ Punishing someone ■ A superior person (boss, judge, etc.) with position-control of the means of influencing another who is subordinate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affiliation imagery ● Concern in one or more characters over establishing, maintaining, or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person. ● Characters related to one another out of friendship. ● Warming, caring and companionate relationship. ● Liking and desire to be liked ● Approval-seeking

<p>Like a probability of success that is at least 50-50 (not gamblers; dislike low odds; want to stretch and not have it too easy. May not always be a good team player (wants to succeed alone).</p> <p>Stories about being good at sales and entrepreneurship. Stories focus on attaining challenging goal, setting new records, completing difficult tasks, and showing off skills at solving problems.</p> <p>Seek situations where they can attain personal responsibility for finding solutions, get rapid and clear feedback on results, and set challenging goals.</p> <p>Dig adventure movies with lots of action.</p>	<p>The need to make others behave in a way that they would not have behaved otherwise. Can be rude and prone to drink. Like Clinton they tend to exploit others sexually and impulsively while inspiring loyalty (except for Monica). Others are more mature (socialized) about use of power (less ego and defensive).</p> <p>Stories of defeating a competitor, winning at argument, and gaining a position of power and authority are told.</p> <p>Like situations where they can be in charge (CEO, President, labor Organizer, Military, and even Law), seek to influence others, and promote competitive and status-seeking climate.</p> <p>Tend to like movies with explicit scenes of violence, like Gladiator and Max Max.</p>	<p>The desire for friendly and close interpersonal relationships. Prefer harmonious and utopia settings. Full of spirituality, family values, and need to build cultures. Has lots of meetings so they can socialize and build interpersonal relations.</p> <p>Stories of co-dependency, the need to be liked and and accepted are told here. Stories about letting others make the unpopular decisions. Tending to show favoritism to their friends (loyalty matters).</p> <p>They prefer cooperative situations over competitive ones, and seek mutual understanding. Like family-oriented work cultures.</p> <p>Tend to like romantic Family (G-rated) movies made by Disney, at least before Eisner took over (ironic because many Disney toons are quite violent).</p>
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METHOD - Write a story about each picture. Do your own content analysis of responses to see what your need-type is. The chart is adapted with gracious apologies for my irony, satire and parody from Yukl (1989: 184-188). I do contend that one can learn a lot about Leaders from studying their stories.

David C. McClelland's theory of storytelling was reduced by post-1950s leader theorists to a need theory (contrasted with Maslow's hierarchy), and then to a three-factor need theory. And most important, the NEED FOR POWER (related to WILL TO POWER in [Figure One](#)) was stripped away from the typology.

In the fashionable [behavior theories of leadership](#), need for achievement became initiating structure and need for affiliation became consideration in the Ohio State and University of Michigan Models. Note that the WILL TO POWER was now gone and forgotten, and McClelland's NEED FOR POWER with it. The Achieving (Bureaucratic) Leader is Theory X, while the Affiliation Leader Theory Y (a gross reductionism) is also the BUREAUCRAT. It was an interesting bit of reductionism to limit leader traits to only the BUREAUCRATIC ones ([Figure One](#)).

The fact that studying the storytelling leaders received from their mothers and their community (or country of birth), was just forgotten. Also forgotten, was the fact that McClelland did a globe leadership project that he reported on in 1961, in *The Achieving Society*. There is currently a globe leadership underway by Bob House and company that includes measures of McClelland's three types of leadership. However McClelland based his globe leader theory on [Max Weber's](#) idea that the protestant work ethic had something to do with economic development. We will have to wait to see the Bob House results before we know how McClelland's theories have been operationalized. Within the individual, there is recent work suggesting that Achievement (and other) personality traits of leaders may not be stable (Miller & Droge, 1986; Miller, Kets de Vries, & Toulouse, 1982). ([See Dialectic Theory of Traits above](#)) In short, reducing McClelland to a 3-factor trait theory, is grossly inappropriate. For more on this point go to Storytelling Gameboard and read up on [McClelland and Storytelling Leadership](#).

You may also want to question if Achievement, Affiliation or Power are basic needs. Rather, McClelland contended that the need to achieve could be taught, and was an active consultant advising mothers and businesses how to train achievement behaviors. Bottom

line, leadership theory since McClelland split off POWER from ACHIEVEMENT and AFFILIATION, reducing leadership to only the WILL TO SERVE.