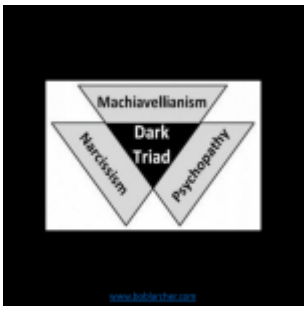
The Dark Triad



So, what exactly is the Dark Triad?

The **Dark Triad** is a construct of three personality types that are in some ways closely related, and all share "dark" traits, characterised by malevolence. They are:

- **Psychopathy** – Characterised by enduring antisocial behaviour, risk-taking, impulsivity, selfishness, callousness, remorselessness, lack of empathy, lack of conscience, and by being charismatic, superficially charming, crafty, deceptive, and manipulative.
    - The scale which is largely used in the literature to measure Psychopathy is the Self-Report Psychopathy (SRP) developed by Delroy L. Paulhus, Craig S. Neumann and Robert D. Hare
- **Machiavellianism** – Characterized by being critical, negative, ethically suspect, manipulative, cynical, immoral, driven by self-interest, deceitful, cunning, calculating, intelligent, and emotionally detached.
    - The scale which is most used to measure this construct is the Machiavellianism Mach-IV developed by Richard Christieand and Florence L. Geis
- **Narcissism** – Characterized by being proud, egoistic, arrogant, cocky, controlling, duplicitous, hyper-sensitive to criticism, highly entitled, and by having

an inflated view of themselves, and a lack of empathy. They tend to be exhibitionist, exploitative, dominant, boastful, uncompromising, and prone to exaggeration, and aggression.
    - The scale largely used to measure this trait is the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) developed by Robert N. Raskin and Calvin S. Hall

All three traits share characteristics such as a lack of empathy, interpersonal hostility, and interpersonal offensiveness.

Each trait is in itself a combination of different "facets"; Machiavellianism, for example, being made up of: Authority, Self-Sufficiency, Superiority, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Vanity and Entitlement.

Interestingly, the GLOBE study (Global Leadership & Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) carried out at the end of the nineties (and still ongoing) identified "malevolent" as the least *universally* desirable of the 21 leadership scales they developed. The study also identified eight "traits" of what they called an "anti-leader":

- Loner
- Irritable
- Asocial
- Egocentric
- Indirect/Non-explicit
- Ruthless
- Non-cooperative
- Dictatorial

At the funeral of Nelson Mandela, Ban Ki-moon, Obama and others talked of the nobleness of Mandela and the need today for other world leaders to take up the Mandela legacy; something which seems to be strongly lacking today.

When I look at current world leaders (and even some business

leaders I know) many of them seem to exhibit far too many behaviours both from the Dark Triad and from the Globe “Anti-leader” list.

You can see how dark you are here: https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/SD3/

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