

Psychopathic Leadership in Large Corporations and Its Measurable Harm to Societies

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the relationship between subclinical psychopathic personality traits and the leadership selection systems of large organizations, arguing that modern corporate capitalism is not neutral with respect to the personality traits it rewards. Drawing on a critical review of the available empirical evidence—from Hare's studies on prevalence among executives to the meta-analysis by Landay et al. (2019) and research on personality and societal conditions by Zettler et al. (2025)—the paper demonstrates that the overrepresentation of psychopathic traits in positions of power produces measurable harm at multiple levels: organizational, systemic-economic, cultural, and psychosocial. It is proposed that this phenomenon operates through four vectors of social harm, and that its effects form feedback cycles that degrade the moral fabric and social capital of societies that allow it.

Keywords: corporate psychopathy; destructive leadership; Dark Triad; organizational social harm; executive adverse selection.

Introduction: The Question That Academia Has Preferred Not to Ask

There is a question that the science of organizational behavior has taken decades to formulate with sufficient clarity—not for lack of evidence, but arguably because of the weight of the implications its answer carries: Are large corporations institutions that actively, albeit non-deliberately, select personality profiles close to psychopathy for their highest-power positions? And if the answer is affirmative—or even partially so—can the harm those individuals exert on societies be measured not only through their organizations, but also as public figures, as models of success, as cultural referents that societies observe, admire, and imitate? This paper proposes that both answers are affirmative, and that the available evidence, though imperfect and contested at its margins, points consistently toward a conclusion that is uncomfortable for researchers and markets alike: modern corporate capitalism is not neutral with respect to the personality traits it rewards, and the consequences of that non-neutrality extend far beyond the financial statements of affected companies.

To reach these conclusions rigorously, it is first necessary to clarify some conceptual misunderstandings that have contaminated the debate. The term "psychopathy" in the organizational context does not refer to the serial killer that populates popular imagination, nor to the psychiatric patient who destroys their environment with clinical violence. Subclinical psychopathy—also called corporate psychopathy or successful psychopathy in the specialized literature—refers to a personality profile characterized by superficial charm, profound egocentrism, genuine incapacity for empathy, strategic manipulation of interpersonal bonds, a tendency toward functional lying, absence of remorse, and a marked orientation toward social dominance (Hare, 1999; Babiak & Hare, 2006; Barrutieta & Ursúa, 2011; Lilienfeld et al., 2015). What distinguishes the subclinical psychopath from the clinical psychopath or the textbook antisocial personality is precisely their capacity to mask those traits behind a façade of

competence, charisma, and apparent leadership. It was Hervey Cleckley who first described this with literary precision in *The Mask of Sanity* (1941): a mask of a functionally normal person that conceals an affectively empty interior. Decades later, that description remains extraordinarily pertinent for understanding how certain individuals not only survive in high-level corporate environments, but thrive in them as fish in water.

The Axiom: The Corporation as Natural Habitat

The first thesis this paper advances—and which constitutes the necessary starting point for everything that follows—is that large corporations, structurally and not through any specific actor's malice, have built environments that favorably select individuals with subclinical psychopathic traits. This thesis is not a marginal hypothesis nor a business counterculture argument: it has a considerable empirical base, though also with critical voices that deserve to be heard with intellectual honesty.

The most cited data in this field come from the work of Robert D. Hare, creator of the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R), the most widely used diagnostic instrument in clinical and forensic contexts. Hare estimated that the prevalence of psychopathic traits in the general population is approximately 1%, but documented that this prevalence rises to between 3% and 4% among senior corporate executives (Hare, 1999), implying a three-to-four-fold overrepresentation relative to the population mean. Simon Croom, professor at the University of San Diego, found in more recent research that up to 12% of senior corporate leaders exhibit a range of measurable psychopathic traits (Croom et al., 2021). An analysis frequently cited in specialized media—though also subject to methodological controversy—suggested that one in five CEOs might be a corporate psychopath. The variability in these figures should not lead to

dismissal of the phenomenon: even Hare's most conservative estimate implies that the executive environment concentrates psychopathic traits in a proportion that cannot be attributed to chance.

The relevant question is not so much how many psychopaths there are on boards of directors, but why there are more of them there than in the rest of society. And here the answer is structural, not accidental. Babiak and Hare (2006) argued this in detail in *Snakes in Suits: When Psychopaths Go to Work*: the traits associated with psychopathy—superficial charm, projection of confidence, risk-taking without the emotional brake of guilt or fear, capacity for interpersonal manipulation, ability to create extraordinarily positive first impressions—are frequently misinterpreted by executive selection processes as leadership qualities. Selection committees see audacity where there is impulsivity without emotional consequences; they see charisma where there is calculated charm; they see strategic vision where there is an orientation toward dominance. The competitive high-level corporate environment is, in this sense, one of the few social ecosystems where lack of empathy does not constitute an evolutionary disadvantage but, in certain configurations, a functional advantage. Landay, Harms, and Credé (2019), in their meta-analysis published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*—one of the most rigorous reviews available on the topic—concluded that individuals with psychopathic tendencies are more likely to attain leadership positions, although the relationship between psychopathy and leadership effectiveness is weak and in many cases negative when properly measured. This is important: psychopaths arrive, but they do not necessarily perform well once there, except on the metrics they themselves control or distort.

The incentive structure of modern corporate capitalism amplifies this selection effect. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic (2019), business psychologist at University College London and Columbia University, notes that traits such as boldness and risk-taking co-occur frequently with

psychopathic tendencies, and that societies—especially in their corporate configurations—tend to celebrate those traits without interrogating the personality substrate that accompanies them. Fierce competition, short time horizons imposed by the logic of quarterly reports, reward systems that privilege results over process and individual gain over collective well-being: all of this creates what might be termed an adverse selection ecosystem for empathy. Selection does not operate consciously in favor of psychopathy; it selects against certain prosocial traits—guilt, remorse, consideration of consequences for others—that in that specific environment function as ballast.

The five-phase model described by Babiak and Hare for understanding how the corporate psychopath climbs positions illustrates the systematicity of the process: they enter the organization using highly developed social skills that make them appear highly collaborative; they rapidly assess others according to their usefulness (pawns to manipulate, patrons who can protect them); they build a network of instrumental alliances; they manipulate the narrative about their own performance while undermining competitors; and eventually, when the organization has ceased to be useful or when the consequences of their actions threaten to become visible, they move to another, higher position or institution, repeating the cycle. This model is not literary speculation: the longitudinal case study by Boddy (2017), published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, documented this pattern precisely in the case of a CEO of a nonprofit organization in the United Kingdom, comparing the period under that leadership with the prior period under a transformational CEO. The results were unequivocal: under the CEO with a high corporate psychopathy score, the organization experienced increased workplace bullying, massive turnover of the most capable staff, revenue decline, erosion of employee engagement, and collapse of innovative capacity.

It is important to register the critical voice here with honesty. Smith and Lilienfeld (2013) warned that media and academic attention to corporate psychopathy had far exceeded the available scientific evidence, and Lilienfeld himself—co-creator of the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI-R)—noted that the narrative of the "psychopath CEO" had become a popular diffusion phenomenon that oversimplified a much more nuanced reality. Landay et al. (2019) also relativized the magnitude of the link between psychopathy and leadership, characterizing it as statistically weak. Nevertheless, even those same authors acknowledged that executive selection processes are failing to identify and filter individuals with psychopathic tendencies, and that the concentration of those traits in positions of power, though statistically modest, has disproportionate consequences given the volume of power those positions concentrate. A 3% of psychopaths distributed randomly in the general population has very different effects from a 3% or 12% concentrated among those making decisions about thousands of employees, millions of consumers, and entire economies. Magnitude is measured not only in prevalence but in leverage.

Organizational Harm as the First Vector of Social Damage

Before scaling to the societal level, it is necessary to carefully document the harm that psychopathic leadership exerts at the immediately lower level: the organization itself. Because that organizational harm is the first mechanism through which the damage radiates outward—toward workers, the families of those workers, the communities where those organizations operate, and ultimately the broader economic and social structures.

The literature on the subject is consistent in identifying a pattern of consequences. Research in the United Kingdom among a well-defined sample of managers found that 35% of all workplace bullying was associated with the presence of psychopathic leaders. In Australia,

similar studies concluded that approximately 26% of all workplace bullying is explained by the 1% of the working population that exhibits psychopathic traits. The documented harmful effects include increased conflict, stress, personnel turnover, absenteeism, and reduction of both productivity and social responsibility. The ethical standards of entire organizations can be severely damaged when a corporate psychopath is in command. A British study from 2017 found that companies led by individuals with psychopathic characteristics destroy shareholder value, tending to have poor future returns on capital.

The financial cost of this type of failed leadership is not trivial. It has been estimated that the cost to an organization of a single failing leader ranges between 1.5 and 2.7 million dollars. Given that studies indicate approximately 50% of executive directors fail, and that between 30% and 60% act in destructive or self-interested ways during their careers, the financial costs associated both with employing and with terminating contracts of corporate psychopaths are, in aggregate terms, enormous. But those visible costs are only the tip of the iceberg. What is more difficult to quantify—and therefore more dangerous—is the damage that accumulates in the invisible tissues of organizations: the creativity that does not emerge because environments of fear kill initiative, the innovation that does not occur because those with ideas learn that the leader will appropriate them without recognition, the trust that erodes among colleagues because the psychopath has taught that betrayal is a tool of advancement.

The "trickle-down" model of abusive supervision has shown that employees exposed to abusive supervision begin to behave abusively themselves (Tepper, 2000). Employees typically do not confront the powerful for fear of consequences, and instead displace their discomfort onto peers, creating a hostile organizational culture. This is important because it indicates that the damage does not stop at the direct relationship between the psychopathic leader and their

immediate subordinates: it propagates downward and laterally through organizational structures, infecting behaviors and normalizing forms of interpersonal relationship characterized by the instrumentalization of others, absence of solidarity, and competition without ethics. The organization, in this sense, is not only the place where the psychopath causes harm: it is the laboratory where that harm learns to reproduce itself.

Among auditors who have interacted with corporate psychopaths in their careers, 43% reported that those psychopaths committed fraud (Boddy et al., 2015). This link between psychopathic traits and white-collar crime is not coincidental: the literature on the Dark Triad—the construct that groups psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism as a triad of socially aversive personality traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)—has consistently documented that psychopathy and Machiavellianism predict a greater disposition to rationalize fraudulent behavior (Harrison et al., 2018; Murphy, 2012), while the complete triad is strongly associated with inappropriate organizational behavior. Individuals with psychopathic traits are known to use manipulation to obtain financial, professional, or personal gain, and workplace behaviors such as compulsive lying, publicly humiliating colleagues, and appropriating others' work have been associated with corporate psychopathy.

Discussion: The Scale Jump (From Organizational to Social Harm)

Up to this point, the evidence—with its nuances and methodological disputes—supports with sufficient solidity the first part of the axiom: large corporations are not neutral with respect to the personality traits they promote to their highest positions of power, and there is documented overrepresentation of subclinical psychopathic traits at those levels. The second argumentative

step, and the most ambitious in this discussion, is to maintain that this phenomenon causes measurable harm to societies in dimensions that go beyond the organizations directly involved.

There are at least four vectors through which this social harm radiates: the first is the systemic-economic, particularly visible in moments of financial crisis; the second is cultural, through the mechanism of normalization and social modeling of the personality traits that corporate success validates; the third is political, when psychopathic leadership from the private sector permeates regulatory and governance structures; and the fourth is psychosocial, referring to the impact on individuals who work under or around these leaders, whose individual harm aggregates into collective harm.

The systemic-economic vector has in the 2008 global financial crisis its most dramatic and, paradoxically, most documented example. Clive Boddy (2011), one of the most prolific researchers in the field of corporate psychopathy, developed what he called the "corporate psychopaths theory of the global financial crisis," arguing that these individuals, disproportionately attracted to corporate banks by the material rewards they offer, played a central role in the reckless and irresponsible decision-making that triggered the collapse. Robert Hare himself had noted that if he were not seeking psychopaths to study in prisons, he would look for them in stock exchanges. Psychologist Oliver James described the credit crisis as "a massive outbreak of corporate psychopathy that resulted in something that almost collapsed the entire world economy." The behavior of the CEO of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Fred Goodwin, was identified by psychologist Manfred Kets de Vries (2012) as a case of "SOB"—seductive operational bully—or light psychopath: an individual who took excessive risks, showed little concern for his mismanagement, lived a luxury lifestyle while cultivating a culture of fear, and

reported to the board a luminous image of the institution that radically contradicted the experience of those working in it.

The 2008 financial crisis caused millions of families to lose their homes and trillions of dollars to be eliminated from stock market values. Experts and public opinion pointed to greed, overconfidence, and risky decision-making in the financial sector as the main triggers of the crisis. The significance of this interpretation is that it does not attribute the crisis to the individual wickedness of a few actors, but rather recognizes that the executive selection system of the world's leading financial institutions had placed in decision-making positions individuals whose psychological architecture incapacitated them from genuinely considering the consequences of their actions on others. They did not feel fear at the risk that was appropriately worth fearing, they did not feel guilt at decisions that would harm millions of people, and they could not be stopped by emotional self-regulation mechanisms that in most human beings function as natural brakes at the precipice. The resulting damage—mass unemployment, loss of family assets, increased poverty, collapse of institutional trust in entire countries—was measurable in concrete figures and in years of economic and social recovery.

But it is the second vector—cultural and social modeling—that proves most disturbing from a long-term perspective, and also the one that research has explored with least systematicity, partly because its effects are more diffuse and more difficult to isolate with rigorous quantitative methodologies. The central question is this: What happens to a society that observes for decades how individuals with psychopathic traits are presented as models of success, as icons of entrepreneurship, as referents for how one reaches the top? Is there evidence that this observation produces effects on the values, aspirations, and behaviors of that society?

The answer requires moving on two planes. The first is that of social contagion and behavioral modeling, a well-established field in social psychology. Behaviors, values, and social norms are profoundly contagious: people learn not only from their immediate environments but from the models that structures of power and social visibility present to them as successful and desirable (Bandura, 1977). When dominant cultural narratives—those constructed in the business press, in documentaries about magnates, in films about Wall Street, in business self-help books—consistently present leaders who are bold to the point of recklessness, who do not allow themselves to be softened by emotions, who see relationships as transactions, and who interpret empathy as weakness, those narratives are normalizing a set of traits that clinical psychology recognizes as components of the psychopathic spectrum. They are not diagnosing anyone, but they are constructing a cultural ideal that is functionally and structurally coincident with that spectrum.

Some researchers have noted that the dark triad of personality—Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism—is not limited to those who become extraordinarily rich, but that personality traits common among the ultra-wealthy class should seriously challenge the idea that the path to prosperity lies in emulating the one percent elite. Purdue Pharma continued aggressively marketing OxyContin for years after the company knew the drug was highly addictive, contributing to tens of thousands of deaths from prescribed opioid overdoses. Goldman Sachs recommended and sold to its clients billions of dollars in deceptively valued securities linked to risky mortgages, in order to offload those toxic assets from its own books. Tobacco companies spent decades concealing scientific evidence and deceiving the public about the harmful effects of tobacco. These are not aberrant behaviors by isolated actors: they are patterns repeated by organizations led by individuals who, according to the available evidence,

lack the emotional apparatus necessary to prioritize the well-being of others above their own objectives.

The second plane on which the cultural effects of psychopathic leadership must be explored is that of the demonstrated relationship between social conditions and the prevalence of dark personality traits. A recent study that used World Bank data on corruption, inequality, poverty, and violence found a clear relationship: countries and regions with higher levels of social adversity—greater corruption, greater inequality, greater poverty—tended to have populations with higher scores on dark personality traits (the so-called "Factor D") (Zettler et al., 2025). The bidirectional implication of this finding is fundamental to the argument of this paper: if adverse social conditions produce more individuals with dark personality traits, and if corporate psychopathic leadership produces more adverse social conditions (greater inequality, greater fraud, greater erosion of institutional trust, greater economic harm to the most vulnerable segments), then we are in the presence of a feedback cycle that cannot be interrupted without intervening at the source. Reforms that reduce corruption and inequality not only create better present living conditions, but may also contribute to mitigating levels of aversive personality among citizens in the future. The inverse argument is equally valid: systems that allow psychopathic leadership to perpetuate itself at corporate peaks are actively contributing to the degradation of the moral fabric of the societies they govern.

The Problem of Cultural Trickle-Down and the Legitimation of the Model

There is a specific mechanism that deserves particular attention, because it operates in an especially insidious way: the manner in which the corporate success of individuals with psychopathic traits functions as cultural legitimation of those traits. In more direct terms: when

the system visibly rewards those who have no scruples, it is sending society a message about what kind of person it pays to be.

This mechanism is not exclusively psychological; it has institutional and media components. Specialized business magazines, CEO profiles in mass media, television programs that glorify executive toughness, memoirs of magnates that present their emotional dispassion as strategic virtue: this entire cultural ecosystem constructs a narrative that normalizes and celebrates traits that clinical psychology would identify as warning signs. The figure of the "tough but fair" executive, of the entrepreneur who "does not allow emotions to interfere with business decisions," of the leader who "does not apologize for their results": these are not innocent descriptions. They are culturally sweetened versions of traits that in other contexts—the family, the community, intimate relationships—we would identify without difficulty as absence of empathy, incapacity for remorse, emotional coldness.

The Dark Triad has received considerable attention in the fields of occupational, business, and organizational psychology (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Cold and calculating manipulation can have drastic implications not only for individual well-being at work, but also for the overall functioning of workplaces, sometimes affecting entire societies and global economies. Leader psychopathy, furthermore, may involve specific emotion regulation strategies that amplify its harmful effects on followers (Wisse et al., 2024). What proves particularly disturbing is that the concentration of those traits in the positions of greatest social visibility does not occur in silence but, paradoxically, in full public view. The great psychopathic CEOs are not secret figures: they are magazine covers, frequent guests at innovation conferences, protagonists of laudatory documentaries, pedagogical models at business schools. Their visibility is part of their power, and that visibility has effects on those who observe it.

Individuals with dark personality traits are more likely to choose academic careers oriented toward corporate careers, such as business. Students at British private schools showed higher scores on Dark Triad traits than students at state schools. This opens a disturbing question about the circuits of reproduction of the phenomenon: if elite educational environments produce—or reinforce—dark personality traits, and if those environments are precisely the ones that feed the pipeline of high-level corporate leadership, then the system is not simply failing to filter psychopathic traits: it is actively cultivating them in certain contexts, and then rewarding them with power. Adverse selection is not only an accident of executive hiring processes; it is, potentially, a structural feature of educational and corporate systems that are profoundly intertwined.

The social modeling argument has a generational dimension that cannot be ignored. Young people growing up observing what kind of personality is rewarded in power structures—not only in corporations but in politics, in media, in entertainment—are receiving information about what behaviors and character traits are adaptive in their environment. When that information consistently signals that emotional coldness, risk-taking without contemplation of harm to others, manipulation capacity, and calculated charm lead to the top, that information operates as a system of symbolic incentives that can shape aspirations, behaviors, and ultimately personality traits. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory established decades ago that human beings learn by observing and modeling the behavior of others, especially those they perceive as successful and high-status. If the corporate system consistently produces successful and highly visible psychopathic leaders, it is generating a class of social models with consequences for the moral learning of the generations that observe them.

Measuring Social Harm: Possibilities and Imperfections

The most reasonable objection to this argument is methodological: how does one measure the harm that a personality class produces on a society? Causality is difficult to establish, confounding variables are abundant, and the distance between the individual in the boardroom and the citizen on the street is so great that any direct causal attribution seems speculative. This objection is legitimate and should not be dismissed. But the difficulty of measuring a phenomenon is not equivalent to its non-existence, and there are methodological approaches that allow more precise claims to be made.

Quantifiable economic damage is the most accessible. Financial crises generated partly by psychopathic leadership in financial institutions—the 2008 crisis as the central example—produced measurable losses in terms of unemployment, asset loss, collapse of pension systems, increased poverty, and destruction of human capital. These are available figures. The damage from corporate fraud—to which psychopathic traits contribute in a documented manner—is also quantifiable: deviant workplace behaviors cause losses of billions of dollars across all business organizations, and a large part of that behavior comes from corporate psychopaths in leadership positions (Boddy et al., 2015). The health damage to workers who have been subjected to psychopathic leadership is quantifiable in terms of absenteeism, mental healthcare costs, and lost productive life years. The reputational damage to entire industries—which affects consumer trust, public investment, and market stability—can be approximated with survey data and long-term analysis.

More difficult to quantify, but no less real, is the damage to social capital: the erosion of interpersonal trust, the degradation of norms of reciprocity and cooperation that make collective life possible, the cynicism about institutions that is generated when the system appears to

systematically reward dishonesty and manipulation. Political scientist Robert Putnam (2000) demonstrated decades ago that social capital—measured in terms of generalized trust, civic participation, and reciprocity networks—is one of the most robust predictors of collective well-being and long-term economic development. When corporate psychopathic leadership normalizes betrayal, manipulation, and exploitation as success strategies, it is corroding the very substrate on which that social capital rests.

Research on dark personalities and social conditions found that people in countries with lower levels of corruption and inequality, such as Denmark and New Zealand, tended to have lower prevalence of Factor D traits, while countries with greater adversity conditions concentrated more dark traits (Zettler et al., 2025). Although the observed link between environment and personality was moderate, the authors emphasize its real-world consequences: toxic personality traits are associated with behaviors such as aggression, deception, and exploitation, with high social costs. Even certain small variations can lead to large differences in how societies function.

This last observation is particularly valuable because it comes from data that transcend the organizational level and operate at the level this discussion ultimately targets: the level of societies and countries. If adverse social conditions produce more individuals with dark personality traits, and if corporate psychopathic leadership produces adverse social conditions, then the cycle is real, measurable—though with imprecision—and has consequences that accumulate over time. A clean and direct causality is not needed to affirm that the phenomenon matters; it is sufficient to document that the vectors of influence exist, operate in the indicated direction, and their effects are robust enough to change aggregate indicators of social well-being.

The measurement of social harm argument is also reinforced by what happens when the concentration of dark personality traits in corporate leadership finds political outlets. Some researchers have pointed to the phenomenon of "executive capture"—when the leadership of an organization is effectively controlled by a group of individuals with psychopathic or Dark Triad traits—and have drawn the parallel between that capture at the corporate level and the capture of the regulatory and political process at the state level. When corporations led by psychopaths exercise lobbying power over regulatory systems, when they externalize the costs of their decisions (environmental pollution, labor exploitation, public health deterioration) onto society while privatizing the gains, and when that externalizing capacity is protected by legal frameworks they themselves have contributed to designing, the harm ceases to be merely organizational or even economic: it becomes structural, systemic, generational.

The Gender of Successful Psychopathy and the Unequal Distribution of Harm

One element this discussion cannot ignore, because it affects both the understanding of the phenomenon and the distribution of the harm it produces, is the gender dimension. Researchers found that women leaders who displayed psychopathic characteristics were evaluated negatively, while men were not. The double standard is concerning: men get away with it, and there is a gender bias where women are being held accountable for their behaviors and men are not. This has implications that go beyond gender justice, though that dimension is important in itself. What it indicates is that the system not only selects psychopathic traits: it selects them in a sexed manner, validating those traits in men and penalizing them in women. The result is a high-level corporate leadership that concentrates both psychopathic traits and a specific demographic, producing a success model that is simultaneously masculine and

psychopathic, with the consequences that has for the models of masculinity propagated from those positions of power and visibility.

The cultural association between hegemonic masculinity and psychopathic traits—emotional toughness as virtue, lack of empathy as strength, domination without guilt as leadership—is not accidental: it is the product of decades of cultural validation of psychopathic male corporate leadership. When those models become references for the socialization of children and young people, when the cultural narratives surrounding them filter through films, television series, video games, and social media, the harm is not only to the employees of the corporations they lead: it is to the very configuration of the personality ideals that a generation internalizes as desirable.

Conclusion: The Urgency of Naming What the System Prefers to Silence

This paper has argued, with support from the available evidence, that large corporations are not neutral with respect to the personality traits they select for their highest positions of power; that there is documented overrepresentation of subclinical psychopathic traits in high-level executive leadership; that this leadership produces measurable harm at the organizational level that radiates toward the social level through multiple vectors—systemic-economic, cultural, political, and psychosocial; and that there is evidence that the adverse social conditions that corporate psychopathic leadership helps produce contribute, in turn, to increasing the prevalence of dark personality traits in affected populations, closing a cycle whose interruption requires intervention on several fronts simultaneously. None of this implies that all CEOs are psychopaths, nor that corporate capitalism is the sole responsible party for the social ills discussed. But it does imply that ignoring the link between personality architecture and corporate

power structure is an omission with real consequences for real people. Academia has been, for too long, more cautious than the evidence required. Methodological caution is a scientific virtue, but it can become complicit in structures of harm when used as a reason not to formulate uncomfortable questions. This text has attempted to formulate them modestly, with the honesty they deserve, and with the conviction that the first step toward interrupting a cycle of harm is naming it clearly.

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