Women on the Rise

women, traits, and leadership: an analysis of the modern-day woman on her path to greatness

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Women in Leadership: How Did We Get Here?

In the Spring of 2020, I was an intern with the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) at the Clinton Foundation. I worked closely with the External Affairs team in preparation for our annual meeting that was set to take place April 17-19, 2020 at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Of course, this meeting was not able to take place in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the value of this internship in relation to the ensuing body of work remained ever present. This internship with CGI U is quite simply all about leaders, particularly in the realm of youth leadership. With roughly 800 students from over 100 countries around the world who have been identified as leaders in their communities, they propose a project that we refer to as a Commitment to Action: "a positive and effective social impact project that is new, specific, and measurable."[1] Naturally, leadership became a common word used among my colleagues and me as we looked to the leaders of tomorrow who proposed projects related to food insecurity, homelessness, women's rights, and infectious diseases to name but a few.

Part of my interest in studying women in leadership came from my first team meeting. While my team has grown since then, we were about seven women and our boss was a man. I noticed this across the Foundation. A look across our open floor plan office space and anyone could notice that a majority of those who work with the Clinton Foundation were women. However, looking at the senior leadership team, the majority rested with the men. As such, I was interested in looking at traits in their relation to leadership, specifically in women. I wondered why a sector that is classically dominated by women could still have its leadership be represented by a male majority. I felt like this was an elephant in the room, so to speak, and I

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[1] Clinton Foundation, "Commitment to Action", https://www.clintonfoundation.org/clinton-global-initiative/meetings/cgi-university/about/about-cgiu-commitments, accessed January 2020.

wanted to dig a bit deeper. Why has the United States failed to have a female president? Why do so many seemingly incompetent men continue to take hold in positions of power? These questions - and many more - floated around my head and ultimately served as the catalyst for this work that will analyze leadership traits specifically in relation to gender in leadership and how the perceived traits of a leader may have evolved over time to favor women.

The ensuing body of work will take a closer look into leadership defined, how we perceive leadership in terms of the traits we look for, the trait approach to the study of leadership and the individuals who exert it, and a deep dive into gender in leadership, specifically how female traits may be exactly what we need as the world shifts to expect new ways and practices from those whom we look upon to lead us through good, and more importantly, bad times. The findings of this research will display that women and men have fundamentally different traits, and some of the traits that women tend to possess more than men - mentoring, nurturing, communication, team building - may be what the workforce of today is in need of. It is important to note that this study does not look into gender fluid, transgender, non-binary, etc. for purpose of brevity and lack of relevant studies on the matter at this time.

While the broader study of leadership is relatively new, the field remains populated with a variety of theories, practices, and subcategories of research. The subcategories on which this work will focus are the trait approach of leadership and gender in leadership, specifically focusing on women in this work. What is the trait approach and how does it give the leadership scholar an insight into what makes a leader successful? To take this a step further, we will analyze the traits of women leaders. How have women advanced in their careers and found themselves in positions of influence? Where are some of the areas in which we see disparities

and why? Who are some of the leading ladies of today? Surely, further questions will arise throughout this work, and in a world that evolves so rapidly, the findings of this body of work are subject to change as youth leaders take the stage, as new generations step into roles of leadership and influence, and as the state of the world demands different leadership styles.

Over the past century, the idea of what makes one a leader has evolved rapidly, each decade seeing a relatively new list of traits based on various bodies of empirical research. How have we gone from a time where dominance and masculinity were the reigning traits to a time where sociability, nurturing, and emotional intelligence increase in importance while masculinity drops off this list? As times change and new generations step into the workplace, leaders are forced to adapt to a new cohort of thinkers joining them with a set of life experiences that may differ drastically from their own. Should a leader be transactional or transformational? In other words, should leadership simply be an exchange between leaders and followers (transactional), or should it be motivational, creating a bond between leaders and followers and raising team morality (transformational)?[2] To make the situation again more complex, perhaps leadership is not a simple one or the other, but rather a mix thereof.

The landscape of leadership is changing drastically, but yet, it is not changing fast enough. As previously mentioned in 1986, "dominance" and "masculinity" were two of the traits most associated with leadership.[3] Decades have passed and the view has certainly changed, but a great deal of work remains to be done. Research shows that women and men do not differ greatly - if at all - in their leadership *competence* (there is a difference, however, between ability to lead

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[2]Peter. G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sages Publications, 2019), pg. 165.

[3] Lord, R.G, DeVader, & Allinger. "A meta-analysis of the relation between personality traits and perception: an application of validity generalization procedures," Journal of Applied Psychology (1986), pgs. 71, 402-410.

and success in a leadership role), and with a cohort of new workers that may be seeking more

guidance and support, the natural and biologically proven nurturing and motivational aspects of

women may trump the all-to-common overly-confident and narcissistic sides many male leaders

of today show.[4] Other approaches to leadership study may be important, namely the situational

approach and the behavioral approach, an idea we will touch upon later on. This being said, any

good leader can adapt to the situation at hand and change their behavior to approach a number of

different personalities that make up their team. Traits, on the other hand, are a bit less simple to

acquire; some would even say it is impossible to truly "acquire" a trait. As such, the guiding

question of this research is: what traits do women possess that help them climb their respective

leadership ladders… and why? Before we unpack, let's first dive into what leadership really is.

What is Leadership? Leadership Defined

The word "leader" is said to have first been used in the fourteenth century to refer to

someone in charge.[5] Most have a general understanding of what a leader is, but when asked to

define it, the equation becomes a bit less simple. For the purposes of this work, we will refer to

Peter G. Northouse's seminal work, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, in which he provides the

following simplified definition of the term: "leadership is a process whereby an individual

influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."[6] The ending of this definition - "to

achieve a common goal" - is of great importance. The waters can become murky in leadership

study when one points to a leader such as Adolf Hitler. Transformational leadership, a term

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[4] Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic & Cindy Gallop, "7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women", *Harvard Business Review*, April 1, 2020, https://hbr.org/2020/04/7-leadership-lessons-men-can-learn-from-women, accessed 2 Apirl 2020.
[5] *MacMillan Dictionary Online*, "leadership," accessed 13 April 2020, http://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/leader.
[6] Northouse, pg. 4.

conceptualized by James McGregor Burns in his 1978 work aptly entitled *Leadership*, outlines

that part of this form of leadership involves raising the morality of others.[7] Surely, Hitler

transformed the minds of his followers and made them to believe that they were indeed working

towards a common goal. In response to this, Bernard Bass coined the term

pseudotransformational leadership in 1998[8] in which: "a pseudotransformational leader has

strong inspirational talent and appeal but is manipulative and dominates and directs followers

toward his or her own values. It is… threatening to the welfare of followers because it ignores

the common good."[9] This is only the beginning of the nuance to leadership.

As the decades come and go and the world presents humans with new sets of challenges,

the common perception of a leader adapts to fit the present needs. This is an idea Northouse

outlines in the introduction of his *Leadership* text. In the early 1900s, leadership was largely

characterized by control and centralization of power. This evolved beginning in the 1930s when

traits and personality became more defining aspects of leadership and those who exert it. Over

the next decades until the 1980s, the concept of leadership remained more or less the same,

seeing tumultuous times in world affairs yet "harmony among leadership scholars."[10] It was in

the 1980s that the study of leadership took flight and with it, a great deal of new interpretations

of what it means to be an effective leader: influence becomes a buzzword in the scholarly

community; trait theory took hold in the spotlight, thus forming many people's opinions on what

it means to be a leader; and the idea that leadership is a transformational process came to the

forefront. The 1990s up to present day build upon the former, and "after decades of dissonance,

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[7] J.M. Burns, *Leadership*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1978).
[8] B.M. Bass, "The ethics of transformational leadership" in *Ethics: the heart of leadership*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998, pgs. 169-192.
[9] Northouse, pg. 165.
[10] *Ibid*., pg. 3.

leadership scholars agree on one thing: they can't come up with a common definition for leadership."[11]

How Past Experiences with Leadership Affect Our Future Expectations

What is a mental representation? Psychology has named this idea "schema theory" and it explains that our minds make sense of new experiences by supplying us with expectations and a framework of action based on prior experiences.[12] During cognitive development, our schemas expand to hold a more nuanced understanding of the experiences going on around us. There are three factors that cause such development: biological development which progresses in stages, interaction with the world of nature and objects, and interaction with others.[13] As such, it is not until we have natural maturation, interaction with the world, and interaction with others – notably, others who differ from ourselves – that we are able to build our schema relative to a particular subject.

How does this concept relate to women in leadership? While we are going to dig deeper into the trait approach in the following section, let's start by visualizing what a leader looks like. First, the typical profile of a United States president up to modern day: 100% male, 98% White/Caucasian (Barack Obama being the sole exception to this rule), and 50% between the ages of 50-59. Next, let's look at the U.S. Congress: until 1993, women consistently made up less than 10%. For the 119th Congress, 2019-2021, women make up 23.7%, still displaying an arguably massive disparity.[14] These roles are commonly perceived as leadership positions and

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[11]Northouse, pg. 4.

[12] Jeff Pankin, "Schema Theory," Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fall 2013.
http://web.mit.edu/pankin/www/Schema_Theory_and_Concept_Formation.pdf, accessed March 2020.

[13] Piaget, "The theory of stages in cognitive development" in *D. R. Green, M. P. Ford, & G. B. Flamer, Measurement and Piaget.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 1971).

[14] Jennifer E. Manning & Brudnick, Ida A. *Women in Congress, 1917-2019: Service Dates and Committee Assignments by Member, and Lists by State and Congress,* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 9 April 2019.)

thus, they make up the schema of leadership for many Americans and others around the world.

Such discrepancies are not only seen in the political world: published by *Fortune* Magazine, the

Fortune 500 is a list that ranks the top 500 United States corporations based on their total

revenue for fiscal years. It looks at both public and private corporations where their revenues are

made publicly available.[15] In 2018, 4.8% of the CEOs for these *500 companies* were women.

That is just 24 women.[16]

      With this information, it's true that we have seen improvement in many areas, although it

is important to note that the percentage of female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies decreased by

25% between 2017 and 2018.[17] Continuing into 2019, *Fortune* published the list once again, this

time with 33 female CEOs, or 6.6%.[18] The title of this article, "The Fortune 500 Has More

Female CEOs Than Ever Before", appears to take a hopeful stance. Continuing on to read,

however, a different reality becomes very apparent: why, in 2019, are we celebrating such a

disproportionate gender representation in the top *five hundred* companies in their senior

leadership? For someone who has grown up in the United States, they have not yet seen a woman

lead their country. If the president of the United States is classically referred to as "the leader of

the free world", what then does this imply? It takes time to develop our schemas. Perhaps the

idea of a woman running for the presidency 50 years ago would have been among the

unthinkable. While one mustn't discredit the advancements that have been made, one can surely

pose the question: "who gets to be a leader?" Already referenced several times throughout this

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[15]"Fortune 500", Fortune.com

[16] Zameena Mejia, "Just 24 female CEOs lead the companies on the 2018 Fortune 500—fewer than last year", *CNBC*, 21 May 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/21/2018s-fortune-500-companies-have-just-24-female-ceos.html.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18]Claire Zillman, "The Fortune 500 Has More Female CEOs Than Ever Before", *Fortune*, 16 May 2019, https://fortune.com/2019/05/16/fortune-500-female-ceos/.

work, "male" and "dominance" were important leadership traits in 1986, and those who held these beliefs are still alive today. As Millennials and Gen Zers come into the workforce, perhaps we will see more rapid change, but this change will take time as these respective generations make their way into positions of influence and power.

But It's Not All About the Schema…

While our mental representations of the world around us form many of our beliefs, there are numerous other realities women face in particular that may hinder them from advancing in their careers. Call it a glass ceiling, hoops to jump through, barriers, or any other term that seems fitting, but they all have one thing in common: most are unseen, and there are times that women hold prejudices against other women without even realizing. In the article "Women Rising" published in the 2020 Harvard Business Review *10 Must Reads on Women and Leadership*, the authors outline that "integrating leadership into one's core identity is particularly challenging for women, who must establish credibility in a culture that is deeply conflicted about whether, when, and how they should exercise authority."[19] Furthermore, ingroup favoritism, "the tendency to favor members of one's own group over those in other groups"[20], affects who gets to become a leader. If we classically see powerful men in leadership roles, it is natural human instinct to gravitate towards those who are like you.[21] How do we break this cycle? One final barrier to cite here is that of biology. While not all women decide to have children, this is a very real consideration when it comes to promotion, even if largely subconscious. If she has a baby and leaves for 10-12 weeks for maternity leave, who will be there to lead her team in her absence?

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[19]Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers" in *Harvard Business Review's 10 Must Reads on Women and Leadership*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2019), pgs. 39-50.
[20] Everett, Faber, & Crockett, "Preferences and beliefs in ingroup favoritism", Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience, 13 February 2015, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4327620/.
[21]Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb.

While this is of course illegal[22], it does pose another barrier to women on their trek up the

leadership ladder, thus resulting in a workforce of women that largely max out in managerial

positions. This is not an exhaustive list of the barriers women face in their pursuit of leadership

but rather it serves to display some inequalities. Now, we transition into the trait approach to

leadership in which we will see just how much our schemas have evolved, beginning our

conversation as to why women may have the leg up when it comes to future leadership.

Traits: How Who You Are May Affect Your Leadership Success

Naturally, ideas develop and change with time, with new knowledge, and with new

experiences. The trait approach to the study of leadership was naturally the first direction in

which leadership scholars looked to understand this otherwise indefinable concept. What did

leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Joan of Arc have in common? In

order to better understand what separates a leader from a follower, early leadership scholars used

classic examples such as these as they believed the traits of leaders influenced their capacity of

leadership; leaders were born with the traits and as such, only "great" people possessed them.[23]

As the 20th century continued and new scholars joined the leadership community, this idea

changed. In a survey of leadership studies, Ralph Stogdill wrote a now highly recognized work,

"Personal Factors Associated with Leadership", that was published in the *Journal of Psychology*

in 1948. According to Stogdill, personal traits of a leader were in fact important in their success

in this role, but there *also* exists a great importance of the people in the social situation. In other

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[22]The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Pregnancy discrimination involves treating an individual — an applicant or employee — unfavorably in any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits (such as leave and health insurance), and any other terms or conditions of employment. (Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Labor)
[23] Northouse, pg. 19.

words, quality leadership is situational - a great leader in one instance may be a poor leader in another.

Stogdill's 1948 survey on leadership studies and traits marked a new beginning in the way in which we view the persona of the leader. Rather than leaders simply being an essence of "the chosen one", Stogdill's findings suggested that "leadership was not a passive state but resulted from a working relationship between the leader and other group members."[24] Some traits Stogdill found to characterize the leader at the midpoint of the 20th century include intelligence, responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, and persistence.[25] His study displays that there does indeed exist a difference between leaders and followers when it comes to these traits. Through Stogdill's survey, he displayed that traits are not the only important aspect of leadership, but rather these innate traits are complimented by the behavior of the leader and the situation at hand. While behavior can be emulated by any group member, the intrinsic traits that leaders possess are the true factors that distinguish the leader from the follower.

Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York outlined this idea in a conversation with President William Jefferson Clinton, 42nd President of the United States, surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic on 18 April 2020 for the annual Clinton Global Initiative University meeting. During this conversation, he noted, "as a government official, as a manager, as a leader, you have to be a communicator. You have to be capable of managing a government."[26] Governor Cuomo goes on to outline that different people will need different skills in order to be an

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[24] Northouse, pg. 20.
[25] Stogdill, R.M. "Personal factors of leadership: a survey of the literature," *Journal of Psychology* (1948).
[26] Clinton Foundation, "CGI U 2020 - A conversation between President Clinton and Governor Cuomo on the COVID-19 pandemic", YouTube, published 23 April 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLYDtq5Mw3PkDPybySn7vza62Ct4lk_TYj&time_continue=15&v=jldpkGg83XM&feature=emb_title, accessed April 2020.

effective leader. The head of a hospital needs different skills and knowledge in order to

effectively manage their team than the president of a university, than the CEO of a fashion brand,

than a military general. All of the aforementioned are leaders in their own respect, but put a

college university president in the role of J.P. Morgan's CEO, and you will see that while some

fundamentals of leadership are truly the same across sectors, the details differ greatly.

For a leader such as Governor Cuomo, there is no question as to whether his skills are

adequate to lead in a crisis situation. Simply type into a Google search "Cuomo praised for

leadership" and the idea becomes abundantly clear: during the COVID-19 pandemic, this is

"Cuomo's moment."[27] He is said to offer fundamental leadership lessons for this moment in

history, and while his behavior in response to the global crisis and his skills are important in

leading his state through an unprecedented moment, it is the traits that are innate within his being

that guide his effectiveness as a leader: "it turns out that his signature traits — having a forceful

personality, putting results and competence before ideology — are exactly what's needed for

handling a global pandemic."[28] He is empathetic, he meets his followers where they are, he uses

communication effectively. The facts and the details are important. To quote Walt Disney, "there

is no magic in magic, it's all in the details."

About a decade after Stogdill's first leadership trait survey in 1959, the idea of leadership

changed once again, bringing a new perception of a leader and the traits he possessed. Here, the

pronoun "he" is quite intentional, as according to a survey conducted by Richard D. Mann of

over 1,400 leadership trait findings, the persona of a leader would be heavily characterized by

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[27] Rob Asghar, "This Is Cuomo's Moment—And It Offers Essential Leadership Lessons", *Forbes*, 6 April 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/robasghar/2020/04/06/this-is-cuomos-moment-and-it-offers-essential-leadership-lessons/#4f14eefc34a4, accessed April 2020.
[28] *Ibid.*

intelligence, masculinity, dominance, and conservatism, among other similar traits.[29] In 1978, Stogdill analyzed 163 new studies and compared them to his initial 1948 study.[30] Here, he validated that a leader's traits are quite important to their leadership alongside the matters of the situation at hand. Many of the traits Stogdill identified were similar, this time adding insight, tolerance, and cooperativeness.[31]

Traits are perhaps an easy concept to comprehend, and like the leadership movement itself in 1980, their importance surged with the national best-seller *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman in 1982. Perhaps inspired by nationalism in a time when Japan was seen as a rising world power, Peters and Waterman looked at the most successful American companies of the time and analyzed what made them so successful. Ultimately, much of the success of these companies was attributed to the traits of their leaders.[32] While their findings suggest that there are common themes found in the most successful companies, criticism of their approach has naturally risen, notably from Phil Rosenzweigh in his book *The Halo Effect*. According to Rosenzweigh, it's impossible to identify traits that make a company successful or unsuccessful.[33] Despite such criticisms, the concurrent surge of leadership study and the national success of *In Search of Excellence* meant that traits were the basis on which most built their schema of a leader. As the trait approach continued to take hold in leadership study, the specific traits associated with it simultaneously evolved.

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[29] R.D Mann, "A review of the relationship between personality and performance in small groups," *Psychological Bulletin* (1959): pgs. 56, 241-270.

[30] Stogdill, R.M. "Handbook of Leadership: a survey of theory and research," *Free Press* (1974).

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] T.J. Peters & R.H. Waterman, *In search of excellence: lessons from America's best-run companies,* (New York, NY: Warner Brothers, 1982).

[33] Phil Rosenzweigh, *The Halo Effect,* (New York, NY: Free Press, 6 February 2007.)

Perhaps the most relevant study to this greater work, however, is the one that has been mentioned numerous times already. In 1986, Lord, DeVader, and Allinger conducted a meta-analysis in the form of validity generalization[34][35] using fifteen articles identified by Mann in conjunction with nine following studies finding three very specific traits to dominate the schema of a leader: intelligence, masculinity, and dominance. This study was conducted with the guiding question of the relationship between leadership perception, personality traits, and leadership emergence. Their findings suggest that any other previous studies and the variance therein may simply be a cause of methodological differences. How does this add such relevance to a study of women in leadership? In 1986, masculinity was a defining characteristic of a leader. As the study of leadership did not explode, so to speak, until the 1980s, this is especially important to note. The new scholarly and public works on the topic brought leadership to centerstage, and with it, a plethora of definitions with a few common themes: do as the leader wishes, influence, traits, and transformation.

Today, many of the same traits apply such as intelligence and motivation. These haven't changed even when the perceived importance of other major leadership traits have. Arguably, a leader should always possess some form of intelligence, keeping in mind that this intelligence may indeed be situational as Stogdill's research has suggested. While the general competency traits are rather stable, 21st century leadership has seen the importance of new traits surface: emotional intelligence and stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness.[36] What does any of

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[34]Validity generalization refers to whether validity coefficients obtained in prior studies in organizational environments may be used to forecast the value of a validity coefficient in a new but similar organizational environment.

[35]Lawrence R. James, Robert G. Demaree, Stanley A. Mulaik, "A Critique of Validity Generalization" in *Policy Issues in Employment Testing,* edited by Linda C. Wing and Bernard R. Gifford (Berlin, Germany: Springer Science+Business Media, 1994), pgs. 13-76.

[36] Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, "Leader traits and attributes," *The Nature of Leadership* (2017), 3rd ed. pgs. 29-55.

this mean and why is it important to note? If men and women are supposedly equal in terms of

leadership capabilities - "large quantitative studies...indicate that gender differences in leadership

talent are nonexistent"[37] - then why is it important to study the differences between male and

female leaders, notably in terms of the traits they possess? As it turns out, men and women

naturally have different tendencies, and their different comportments affect all areas of their

lives, including their leadership and team management styles. While criticisms of this approach

to leadership study may suggest stereotyping, our next section will take a deeper look into the

nuances of gender in leadership and display how some of the very biological differences between

men and women affect their leadership style and overall talent.

Gender and Leadership, Because It Matters

While we cannot simply group all women and all men, there are indeed classic biological

differences between the two genders. In fact, a survey of an American population suggests that

men and women differ in some of these traits, and the schema of a leader today may very well

favor women. This idea is conveyed in a study conducted by Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth

Igielnik, and Kim Parker at the Pew Research Center, "a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the

public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world."[38] Where might these differences

lie? While most Americans claim that they don't see many differences between the genders

when it comes to leadership, this survey found that "most do see a gender difference when it

comes to being compassionate and empathetic, and about half make a distinction between men

and women in their ability to work out compromises."[39] The following graphs from the Pew

[37] Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic, "7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women," *Harvard Business Review*, April 1, 2020.
[38] Pew Research Center, "About Pew Research Center", https://www.pewresearch.org/about/, accessed April 2020.
[39] Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Kim Parker, "Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender", *Pew Research Center*, 20 September 2018,

Research Center display the areas in which men and women differ according to the survey's

participants in the political sector as well as the business sector respectively[40]:

Many see no gap between male and female political leaders on key leadership qualities; among those who see a difference, women have the edge on most

% saying men/women in high political offices are better at each of the following
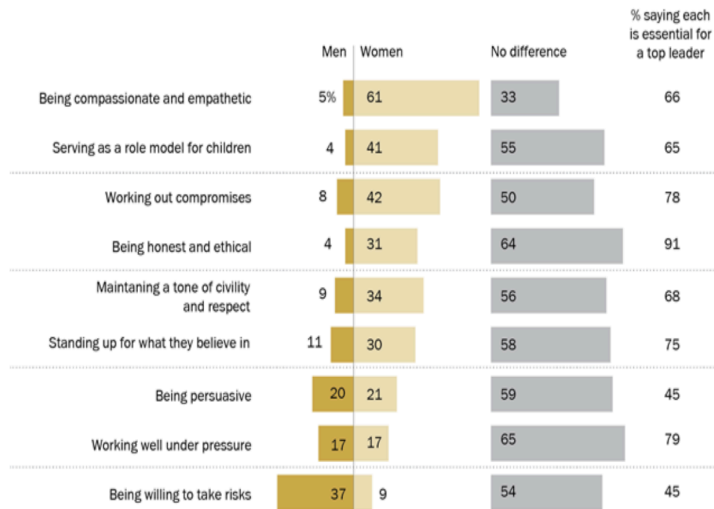
	Men	Women	No difference	% saying each is essential for a top leader
Being compassionate and empathetic	5%	61	33	66
Serving as a role model for children	4	41	55	65
Working out compromises	8	42	50	78
Being honest and ethical	4	31	64	91
Maintaining a tone of civility and respect	9	34	56	68
Standing up for what they believe in	11	30	58	75
Being persuasive	20	21	59	45
Working well under pressure	17	17	65	79
Being willing to take risks	37	9	54	45

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
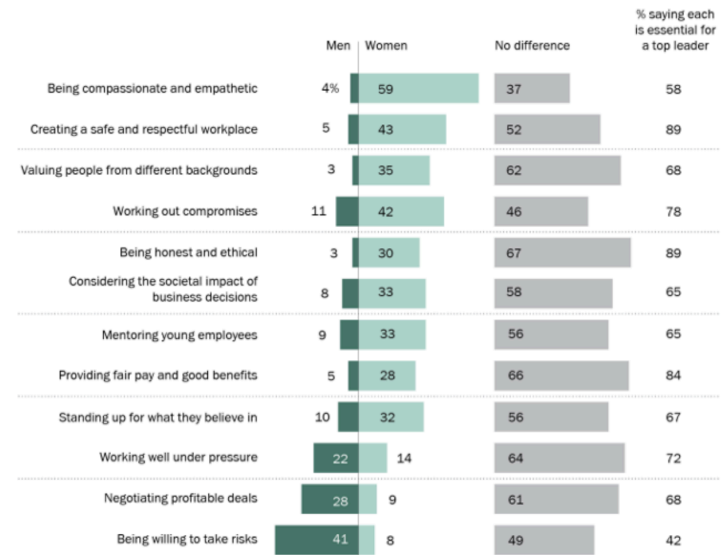Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In business, female leaders seen as more compassionate than men; men more likely to be seen as willing to take risks

% saying men/women in top executive business positions are better at each of the following

	Men	Women	No difference	% saying each is essential for a top leader
Being compassionate and empathetic	4%	59	37	58
Creating a safe and respectful workplace	5	43	52	89
Valuing people from different backgrounds	3	35	62	68
Working out compromises	11	42	46	78
Being honest and ethical	3	30	67	89
Considering the societal impact of business decisions	8	33	58	65
Mentoring young employees	9	33	56	65
Providing fair pay and good benefits	5	28	66	84
Standing up for what they believe in	10	32	56	67
Working well under pressure	22	14	64	72
Negotiating profitable deals	28	9	61	68
Being willing to take risks	41	8	49	42

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends

As is displayed within both graphs, women are perceived to be more successful in areas

such as mentoring, compassion, ethics, and working out compromises. In the political sector,

men were perceived to be slightly more proactive in taking risks, which also proved true in the

business sector along with working out profitable deals and working well under pressure.[41] Of

course, this is only one study and it has limitations. For example, Republicans tend to view

https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/09/20/2-views-on-leadership-traits-and-competencies-and-how-they-intersect-with-gender/, accessed March 2020.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Kim Parker, "Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender".

women differently than men. When Republican and Democratic men and women were asked to

say if women in high political offices were better at being compassionate and empathetic, 80% of

Democratic women and 60% of Democratic men said yes while 56% of Republican women and

42% of Republican men said yes.[42] It is also important to note that women may rank female

executives higher, thus indicating bias. Many leadership scholars negate the *entire* idea of a

difference between genders in terms of leadership (this is to say, they do not analyze differences

in behavior, skills, traits, etc.) and Stogdill and Bass did not even include a chapter in their

Handbook of Leadership in relation to this topic until the 1990 edition.[43]

Still, an overwhelming body of research suggests that "that sex and gender differences

exist in traits, styles and stereotypes of leadership, but not in flexibility or effectiveness."[44] This

was found to be true from a study published in *The Journal of Leadership Studies* in 1995 by

researchers Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker. While this study may prove to be dated, its findings are

relevant today when used in conjunction with the aforementioned study of Zaccaro, Kemp, &

Bader where more nurturing, relationship-building, and emotionally intelligent traits dominated

the leadership persona in their 2017 study.[45] In their survey of the current 1995 leadership

research, Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker found that, "studies of sex differences have found that

males assume an individualistic and task oriented leadership style compared to females who

assume a nurturing or relationship-oriented leadership style."[46] Furthermore, their review found

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[42] Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Kim Parker.

[43] Bass & Stogdill, *Handbook on Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 5th ed., (New York, NY: Free Press, 1990).

[44] Edward F. Murphy, A. Eckstat, & T. Parker, "Sex and Gender Differences in Leadership", *The Journal of Leadership Studies*, 1995, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247784644_Sex_and_Gender_Differences_in_Leadership, accessed March 2020.

[45] Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader. "Leader traits and attributes," The Nature of Leadership (2017), 3rd ed. pgs. 29-55.

[46] Edward F. Murphy, A. Eckstat, & T. Parker, pg. 6.

that leaders possessing masculine value and attitude tended to be more transactional, that is to say task-oriented, competitive, and reward driven. Feminine leaders, on the other hand, tend to have supportive value and attitude and are more transformational leaders: cooperation, relationship building, and increasing motivation and morality are important. While this 2017 study by Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader would suggest that these are the important traits and one could infer that women will therefore begin rising to positions of power in the present day workforce, we must also look to who is coming next: Millennials. A generation classically characterized by self-interest, work-life balance, and a preference for extrinsic rewards (i.e. transactional leadership), when the Millennial workforce begins to rise to positions of power, a 2017 study by Anderson, Baur, Griffith, and Buckley suggests that these nurturing and inspirational traits of women may not prevail.[47] This, however, is to be revisited when Millennials are common in c-suite, presidential, high governmental, and other noteworthy positions of leadership.

Stepping back from a hypothesis of the profile of future leaders, many of those who are being identified as impactful world leaders of today have one thing in common: they are female. Written as a *Forbes* opinion piece, "What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders" is written by Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, a leading expert building gender-balanced businesses. In a true crisis such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, the true leaders rise to the top while the rest fall woefully to the bottom. This is the epitome of "the fundamental state of leadership", an idea conceptualized by Robert E. Quinn in his 2005 work, "Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership." What could this possibly mean? "It's the way we lead when we encounter a crisis and finally choose to move

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[47] H.J. Anderson, J.E. Baur, J.A. Griffith, M.R. Buckley, "What works for you may not work for (Gen)me: limitations of present leadership theories for the new generation", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (28)1 (2017): pgs. 245-260.

forward… you made decisions… to suit what you understood to be instinctively right… you rose

to the task because you were being tested."[48] Referring back to our Pew Research Center study,

women are more skilled at honesty, ethics, and considering the societal impact of decisions.

In her piece about women leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, Wittenberg-Cox cites

leaders and uses examples of their respective leadership from the following countries: Germany

(Angela Merkel), Taiwan (Tsai Ing-wen), New Zealand (Jacinda Ardern), Iceland (Katrín

Jakobsdóttir), Finland (Sanna Marin), Norway (Erna Solberg), and Denmark (Mette

Frederiksen). She outlines four important aspects - truth, decisiveness, tech, and love - that have

been key components to the successes seen in their countries when responding to this virus

debilitating nations around the world, notably the United States, Italy, and Spain. Truth - Angela

Merkel of Germany was honest with her citizens right away about the severity of the virus and

acted swiftly. As a result, they are one of the first countries to begin reopening.[49] Decisiveness -

Tsai Ing-wen reacted immediately when she heard of the threat in early January, implementing

124 measures to block the spread without having to impose the stay-at-home orders like many

other nations around the world. As a result, the country saw fewer than a dozen COVID-19

related deaths. The same goes for Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand who imposed self-isolation

practices early on. Tech - Katrín Jakobsdóttir of Iceland made coronavirus testing available to all

citizens and has instituted a tracking system that has thus prevented them from needing to close

schools and businesses. In Finland, Sanna Marin leveraged the power of social media to have

influencers spread fact-based information in relation to the virus. Finally, love - Norweigan

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[48] Robert E. Quinn, "Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership" in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Managing Yourself*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2005) pg. 127.
[49] It is important to note that Merkel has been subject to a great deal of judgement for this decision, but the point for this greater work is that her leadership led to her country seeing a much less severe outbreak of the virus than some of her leader counterparts.

Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen used the similar

tactic of talking to their nations' children, explaining that it was OK to feel scared and showing

the truly nurturing trait often associated with women.[50]

With the analysis of these five countries and their respective strategies in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic, there are important factors to note. Size, population, and financial

restraints are only a few factors that may limit a country's ability and swiftness when reopening

following such an unprecedented world crisis. The population of the U.S. according to the 2010

census is approximately 330,000,000 while the population of Finland is approximately 5.5

million. This means that the population of the U.S. is 60,000 times that of Finland. On a separate

note, Italy has the second oldest population in the world - 23% are elderly.[51] Factors such as these

are important in analyzing a leader's effectiveness in a crisis situation. With this said, it is certain

that these female leaders are exhibiting transformational qualities and guiding their respective

countries with empathy, communication, honesty, and emotional understanding - both of their

own emotions and those of their followers.

These female leaders used the crisis to enter into the fundamental state of leadership in

which they made the best decisions to support their countries. While the true study of leadership

did not take off until the 1980s, the importance of the difference in gender trait based research

lagged at least a decade behind. Researchers continue to shyly suggest that these differences are

real, present, and important, but many urge women to emulate the classic male form of

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[50] Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, "What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders", *Forbes*, 13 April 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2020/04/13/what-do-countries-with-the-best-coronavirus-reponses-have-in-common-women-leaders/?fbclid=IwAR3yZ0o3SXpOH0iNhmyKRI9Kw_kcryEtnZG0Wit6eKCw1cIVyFVzui32v58#12b8fac3dec4, accessed 13 April 2020.
[51] Population Reference Bureau, "Countries With the Oldest Populations in the World", 23 March 2020, https://www.prb.org/countries-with-the-oldest-populations/, accessed April 2020.

leadership in order to advance in her career - political, business, or otherwise. Despite such

suggestions, these women are examples of a potential new era, one in which the men could learn

a thing or two from the women.

Women Are Told To "Lean In"... But To What?

This idea - that men have a bit to learn from women - comes from the article "7

Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women" published in the *Harvard Business Review* by

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic and Cindy Gallop. In fact, according to this article, there are about

seven things that men can learn. In essence, the guiding belief for their subsequent arguments

deserves to be cited in full:

> It would be more logical to flip the suggested remedy: instead of encouraging women to
> act like male leaders (many of whom are incompetent), we should be asking men in
> power to adopt some of the more effective leadership behaviors more commonly found in
> women. This would create a pool of better role models who could pave the way for both
> competent men and women to advance.[52]

"Lean in." This has become a popular phrase told to women in their quest to climb their

respective ladders to leadership, be it in the private sector, not-for-profit sector, government, etc.

Leaning in usually entails the embodiment of classic male traits such as confidence,

assertiveness, and boldness, generally being the traits that lead men to self-promotion and

aggression.[53] Chamorro-Premuzic suggests that we are generally unable to distinguish between

confidence and competence. Our society's narrative of today is "if you can dream it, you can do

it" and "anyone can achieve greatness if you believe." While this may sound positive on the

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[52]Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic & Cindy Gallop, "7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women", *Harvard Business Review*, April 1, 2020, https://hbr.org/2020/04/7-leadership-lessons-men-can-learn-from-women, accessed 2 April 2020.
[53]Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic & Cindy Gallop, "7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women".

surface, we should instead look to promote people into leadership roles based on their merit of

the position rather than their own perceived competence and ability to appear confident.

This idea is largely shown in a study published in the monthly journal, the *Personality*

and Social Psychology Bulletin, entitled "Leadership Emergence: the case of the narcissistic

leader", published in 2008 by Amy Brunell et al. According to the study's findings, leaderless

groups tend to elect leaders who are overly confident, egotistical, and narcissistic.[54] While

narcissists may indeed be extraverted and charming, this does not necessarily correlate with

effective and positive leadership. In the study, an average of 400 students were surveyed, and the

researchers did indeed take into account factors such as gender and personality traits such as high

self-esteem and extraversion. Moreover, the study's researchers also make an important and

notable distinction: "a person with high self-esteem is confident and charming, but they also have

a caring component and they want to develop intimacy with others...Narcissists have an inflated

view of their talents and abilities and are all about themselves. They don't care as much about

others."[55]

Naturally, these traits are more common among men than women. The best leaders tend

to be humble, and for whatever reason - biology, upbringing, etc. - women tend to exhibit

humility far more than men.[56] In addition, Chamorro-Premuzic cites The Hogan Development

Survey[57] in his *Harvard Business Review* article, "Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become

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[54]Amy Brunell et al., "Leader emergence: the case of the narcissistic leader", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34, 15 September 2008, pdf available via
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23259997_Leader_Emergence_The_Case_of_the_Narcissistic_Leader,
accessed April 2020.
[55]Amy Brunell et al., "Leader emergence: the case of the narcissistic leader".
[56]Jim Collins, "Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve", *Harvard Business Review*,
August 2005, https://hbr.org/2005/07/level-5-leadership-the-triumph-of-humility-and-fierce-resolve,accessed March
2020.
[57]"The Hogan Development Survey (HDS) describes the dark side of personality – qualities that emerge in times of
increased strain and can disrupt relationships, damage reputations, and derail peoples' chances of success. By

Leaders?" According to his survey of leadership trait literature in conjunction with this development survey, his findings were that men tend to be "consistently more arrogant, manipulative, and risk-prone than women."[58] While leaning in, be it to a conversation or self promotion, one shouldn't lean in if they do not have what it takes to back it up. The very traits that may lead one to get a job - charm, charisma, confidence - may be their very demise when it comes to crisis and the fundamental state of leadership becomes of vital necessity. It is in these trying times that one's true character really shows. Who may have the advantage in these circumstances and as such, the more effective leadership style that men should consider leaning in to instead of the reverse? From nuture to team building and empathy to a firm grasp on her limitations, a Northwestern University study drives this concrete idea home: female managers and leaders are more likely to gain respect and pride from those who follow them, they are more likely to effectively communicate their vision (thus giving the team something to strive towards in a collective effort), mentor their subordinates in a meaningful way, and approach problems in a new and innovative manner. [59]

Simply Put, What Do Women Have?

With these countless studies and surveys across sectors, the consensus is clear that women and men are fundamentally different when it comes to leadership *style*. The actual effectiveness of their leadership has minimal study and any relevant body of work suggests that there are negligible findings proving a difference in effectiveness of leaders between men and

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assessing dark-side personality, you can recognize and mitigate performance risks before they become a problem",
courtesy of https://www.hoganassessments.com/assessment/hogan-development-survey/.
[58] Chamorro-Premuzic, Thomas. "Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?" *Harvard Business Review*, August 22, 2013. https://hbr.org/2013/08/why-do-so-many-incompetent-men, accessed March 2020.
[59] Eagly, Alice and Anne Koenig. "Research Reveals How Stereotypes About Leadership Hold Women Back." *Footnote.co*, June 9. 2014.

women. It is also important to note that many of these findings are applicable to men and women *on average*. This survey of leadership traits and their relation to gender is surely not indicative of the entirety of the population, but through various bodies of work across the previous decades, the findings have continued to be in line.

In general, this research shows that women are more empathetic and nurturing toward their followers. People have an inherent need to feel welcome and safe, and a leader that fosters a positive work environment is more likely to incentivize their subordinates to produce and work towards the collective goal in this way. While women often have the same competence as their male counterparts (if not to a greater degree), their confidence is often found to be lower. *This is not a bad thing*. It is true that women tend to be less overly confident than men.[60] This awareness, however, leads to a greater deal of self-awareness which in turn allows them to understand how others feel about them, rank themselves where they are currently, and effectively plan for where they ultimately want to end up.

This increased self-awareness often possessed by women thus leads them to put others ahead of themselves. Leadership, as we mentioned early on in this work, "is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."[61] Leadership is not an individualistic process, and a leader that acts in such a way is likely not going to gain overwhelming support from their subordinates. Naturally, men are more self-conceited than women, ultimately meaning that they will lead in a more narcissistic way.[62] In a time where the

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[60] Patrick Ring et al., "Gender Differences in Performance Predictions: Evidence from the Cognitive Reflection Test", *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1 November 2016, https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01680/full, accessed March 2020.

[61] Northouse, pg. 4.

[62] Emily Grijalva et al., "Gender differences in narcissism: A meta-analytic review", *Psychological Bulletin*, 141(2) (2015): 261–310, https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-57446-001, accessed April 2020.

reigning traits associated with leadership include openness, motivation, conscientiousness, and emotional intelligence, narcissism seems to antithesize what the current cohort of workers desires in their leaders. If women naturally possess these more nurturing and emotionally developed traits, who are some female leaders of today to whom we can look to as examples?

Leading Ladies of Today: Forging A Path to the Top

The *Fortune* article noted earlier presenting the 2019 Fortune 500 female CEOs expressed an air of content that women had advanced in c-suite positions… even though women only made up 6.6% of these 500 companies. Diversity and inclusion programs at organizations across the globe tout equal pay for women and men as if this is an act that receives praise and note. Should equal pay for equal work not be a given? All of this is not to sound cynical, but rather it is meant to raise questions. Why are we in the second decade of the 21st century and have so far left to go? Advancements are being made, of this there is no doubt - there has been a nearly 10% increase in female representation in CEO positions among the Fortune 500 companies over the past three years.[63][64] Women are gaining traction in the political sector, holding more chairs in Congress than ever before. Gone are the days when it was simply "congressmen". Today, we are an era of congressmen *and* congresswomen.

With this, who are some of the leading ladies of today, and what traits can we extract that may help explain their subsequent success? To identify some of these wave-making women, we will turn to Forbes' 2019 ranking of "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women."[65] The first woman on this list is one who has already been praised in this work for the effectiveness of her

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[63] Mejia, Zameena. "Just 24 female CEOs lead the companies on the 2018 Fortune 500—fewer than last year".

[64] Claire Zillman, "The Fortune 500 Has More Female CEOs Than Ever Before", *Fortune*, 16 May 2019, https://fortune.com/2019/05/16/fortune-500-female-ceos/.

[65] Forbes, "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women", 2019, https://www.forbes.com/power-women/list/#tab:overall, accessed April 2020.

response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel is known

around the world, and some have even given her the title as the new "leader of the free world", a

title that would generally go to the President of the United States, Donald Trump.[66] Merkel is

said to be a truthful leader, relying simply on the facts and using them to guide her public policy

and her nation. She doesn't waste time pondering the evidence. In the 2020 CGI U annual

meeting, Vivek Murthy, 19th Surgeon General of the United States, noted, "part of leadership is

knowing when to step up, but also when to step back and put the right faces in front of the

cameras."[67] Merkel is not egotistical, narcissistic, or overly confident when she doesn't have

what it takes to back it up.

As *Time* magazine's 2015 "Person of the Year", Merkel was praised for her effective

leadership style, guiding Germany out of economic downturn to one of Europe's most prospering

economies. She showed a great deal of empathy when the crisis in Syria caused millions to flee

the country, immediately sparking a global refugee crisis in which Syrians were seeking refuge

anywhere they could. Merkel consistently opened the borders of Germany to a greater extent

than many other nations around the world, recognizing our common humanity. This empathy, as

we have discussed, is naturally more present in women.[68] We can compare Merkel's response to

the crisis to that of Donald Trump, 45th President of the United States. On 18 June 2018 at the

Meeting of the National Space Council, Trump notes, "The United States will not be a migrant

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[66] Sunny Hundal, "Angela Merkel is now the leader of the free world, not Donald Trump", *The Independent*, 1
February 2017,
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/angela-merkel-donald-trump-democracy-freedom-of-press-a7556986.html,
accessed February 2020.
[67] Clinton Foundation, "CGI U 2020 Plenary Session - The Task at Hand: Combating the COVID-19 Pandemic",
YouTube, published 23 April 2020,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLYDtq5Mw3PkDPybySn7vza62Ct4lk_TYj&time_continue=11&v=viTuAV
ZPuK8&feature=emb_title.
[68] Karl Vick, "Person of the Year: Chancellor of the Free World", *Time Magazine*, 2015,
https://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2015-angela-merkel/.

camp, and it will not be a refugee holding facility..."[69] Has the United States forgotten about the

motto inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty: "give me your tired, your poor, your

huddled masses yearning to breathe free"? While this is not the point of this argument, it is

important to note that Angela Merkel has consistently shown truth, compassion, decisiveness,

empathy, and problem-solving throughout her time as Chancellor. All of these traits have led not

only to her being named one of *Time*'s "People of the Year", but also being recognized around

the world as one of the most influential leaders of modern history, forging the way for the

women of tomorrow.

"Pack Leader Merkel, here hosting heads of G-7 nations ahead of a June meeting in southern Germany, has marshaled international consensus on crises in Ukraine and Syria."[70][71]

Joining Merkel in the top 10 of *Forbes'* list of the 100 most powerful women in 2019 is

Melinda Gates in position number six. She is the most powerful woman in philanthropy as the

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[69] The White House, "Meeting of the National Space Council", YouTube, live streamed on 18 June 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4NIv3pRdw8.

[70] Karl Vick, "Person of the Year: Chancellor of the Free World".

[71] Image by Jesco Denzel, featured in "Person of the Year: Chancellor of the Free World", *Time* Magazine.

co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest private charitable

organization with a US $40 billion endowment. Much of her work focuses on poverty, education,

access to contraception, sanitation, women and girl's rights, and helping people live more healthy

and productive lives. In her book *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the*

World, Gates outlines the two traits she identifies as crucial to leadership and are possessed by

the best, most effective leaders around the world. She writes, "Love is the most powerful and

underused force for change in the world. You don't hear about it in policy discussions or political

debates."[72] In an interview with *Business Insider*, Gates built on this idea further: "when you

reach out and connect with somebody over their humanity, that ultimately is love — whether you

name it or not."[73] Closely connected to this love, Gates says, is empathy.

　　In her time as a manager at Microsoft, she spent a great deal of her time working on

building connections and fostering community. Gates quotes one of her favorite spiritual teachers

in this *Business Insider* interview, further solidifying the importance of love in her leadership

style: "As one of my favorite spiritual teachers, Franciscan priest Richard Rohr, says, 'Only love

can safely handle power. For me, love is the effort to help others flourish—and it often begins

with lifting up a person's self-image."[74] This is transformational leadership in action. Melinda

Gates does not view the workplace as a transaction, and arguably as one of the wealthiest people

in the world, she doesn't need to be working at Microsoft in any capacity. Leadership is a passion

of Gates and something that is innate within her being. She views her followers as real human

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[72] Melinda Gates, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*, (New York, NY: MacMillian Publishers, 2019.)

[73] Alyson Shontell, "Melinda Gates reveals the secret to a strong marriage and the surprisingly simple answer to the world's toughest problem", Business Insider, 23 April 2019, https://www.businessinsider.com/melinda-bill-gates-interview-women-marriage-book-moment-lift-2019-4, accessed April 2020.

[74] *Ibid.*

beings that need attention, praise, and community. The idea of dominance that was believed to be of great importance in the 1986 study by Lord, DeVader, and Allinger[75] hardly exists within the leadership style of Melida Gates. Compassion, mentorship, development - personal, professional, emotional - empathy, and love are all traits that are inherently more present in women than men according to copious amounts of empirical research, many studies therein cited in this work, and they are the very traits that Melida Gates possesses that has lead her to be the most powerful woman in philanthropy, leaving her mark around the world.

Angela Merkel and Melida Gates are two examples of leading women of today, only representing the smallest fraction of women that are making waves in leadership and advancing the cause for their sisters around the world. It is no doubt that they are qualified for their positions of influence, both having received good education and having vast world experience. They are adaptable to the situation at hand, notably displayed in such a role held by Merkel in the tumultuous affairs of international leadership. The behaviors and skills they have have been curated over the years and certainly do aid the overall effectiveness of their leadership ability. With all of this said, their most defining characteristics - love, empathy, human connection, ability to amass a following of support - are not characteristics that can be learned, but rather are innate traits. As the world steps into the second decade of the 21st century, perhaps it is leaders like Merkel and Gates that will dominate the schema of leadership moving forward.

So What?

Part of the very beauty of the human race is that each and every person is different in their own way. A quick look through the DSM-5 and you will see nearly 300 different

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[75] Lord, R.G, DeVader, & Allinger, 1986.

psychological disorders, each with their own unique set of characteristics.[76] Human beings desire

putting things into neat categories - this person has depression, this one does not; this person is a

leader, this one is not. In reality, it is not quite that simple. For the purpose of this study, we

looked at traits in their relation to gender in leadership. While the discussion today in regard to

gender fluid, non-binary, transgender, etc. gains acceptance in the broader community, it still

lacks research in relation to leadership. Furthermore, traits are commonly referred to as "innate"

throughout this larger work, and the very meaning of innate means that one is born with

something, be it a trait or an instinct. As previously mentioned, we looked simply to men and

women and their traits in regard to leadership style and effectiveness.

In looking at the evolution of the perceived importance of leadership traits, it is clear that

we have advanced from a time where the leadership realm was dominated by the very idea of

dominance. Some traits have continued to hold their importance over time, namely aptitude and

intelligence. Where leadership trait perception and subsequent importance has changed, however,

is in the realm of emotional intelligence and stability, creatively solving problems, nurturing and

mentoring teams, building community, and even leading with love.[77] A number of studies

referenced in this greater work suggest that women naturally possess these traits more than their

male counterparts.

In the study cited from the Pew Research Center, the majority of those polled found that

women were more compassionate and empathetic, serve as role models for children, effectively

work out compromises, are honest and ethical, maintain their civility and respect, stand up for

what they believe in despite challenge, value people from different backgrounds, and are more

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[76] DSM–5 is a manual for assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders and does not include information or guidelines for treatment of any disorder. (courtesy of psychiatry.org)

[77] These findings come largely from Melinda Gates and Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader (2017).

persuasive than men.[78] As the world becomes "smaller" and our workplaces are increasingly diverse, this value of people from different backgrounds and desire to create an inclusive community will only increase in importance in the coming years. Gone are the days where the Americans stay in the United States, the Chinese stay in China, or the South Africans stay in South Africa. We are all working together, and this increased ability of women to recognize this will serve them well in their leadership endeavors of today.

In regard to the fundamental state of leadership, it is the women who are gaining the press - Angela Merkel, Tsai Ing-wen, Jacinda Ardern, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Sanna Marin, Erna Solberg.[79] We have indeed noted that there are a variety of other factors that may inhibit a country from the swiftness and success seen in these countries such as size or aging population, but when it comes to stepping up in a time of crisis, these women truly display what it looks like to step up and take control.

Women are also found to be less overly confident than men[80], and while this may seem like a negative at the outset, we must surely recall that there is a difference between confidence and competence. Women tend to know their place, can see where they have fallen short, and plan for how they will make improvements in the future. This is not to say that men are incapable of such reflection, but rather this is to note that women do this more in general. While confidence may get you the job, a moment of a crisis will quickly weed out those who are simply *confident* from those who are truly *competent*. Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic outlines similar ideas in his

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[78] Menasce Horowitz, Juliana, Ruth Igielnik, and Kim Parker. "Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender." Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends, September 20, 2018.

[79] Wittenberg-Cox, Avivah. "What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders." Forbes.

[80] Patrick Ring et al., "Gender Differences in Performance Predictions: Evidence from the Cognitive Reflection Test."

works cited throughout this research, notably that men tend to to lean in when they really have no reason to[81] and that incompetent men continue to hold the overwhelming majority when it comes to positions of leadership.[82][83]

We have seen the perception of leadership evolve over time to encapsulate some of these traits possessed largely by women, namely compassion, emotional intelligence, and the incorporation of love into their leadership strategy. As the affairs of the world continue to change and demand for these more nurturing and transformational traits appears to grow with leaders such as Angela Merkel and Melinda Gates serving as role models and taking centerstage, it seems as if women will continue to rise into positions of leadership in increasing numbers. We have already seen this with the percentage of female CEOs on the Fortune 500 list between 2017 and 2019, growing nearly 10%.

In the female pursuit up the leadership ladder, there is no question that a great deal of barriers stand in the way - stereotypes, misinformed schemas, subconscious prejudices, and a fear of asserting dominance to name just a few. With this, however, women are gaining traction and the very traits that are innate in the female psyche are proving more valuable than ever before as the workforce shifts to search for transformational leaders, often embodied by women. Only the future will truly tell the advancements that women will continue to make, but the female track record is nearly spotless to date, and with rising women around the world gaining followers and making change across sectors, the public opinion of leadership is on the brink of change. As Edith Stein once said, "the world doesn't need what women have. The world needs

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[81] Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic and Cindy Gallop, "7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women."
[82] Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic, "As Long as We Associate Leadership with Masculinity, Women Will Be Overlooked."
[83] Thomas Chamorro-Premuzic, "Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?"

what women are." The world needs unwavering guidance, leaders who are aware of themselves and their limitations. The world needs leaders who can conceptualize the vision and share that with their followers, pushing the team toward the common goal. The world needs compassion, empathy, love. Perhaps as this research would suggest, the world needs women.

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