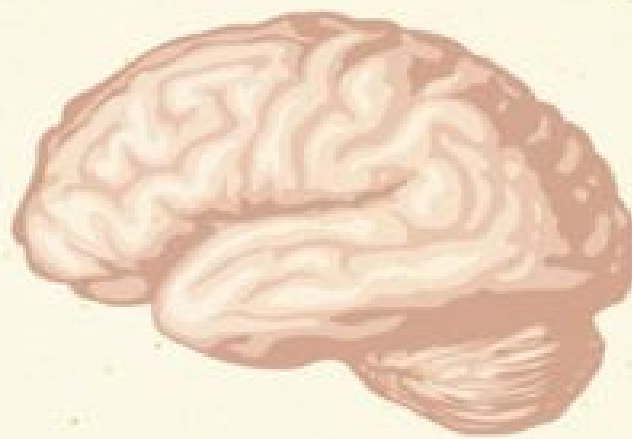


“This book is truly amazing—actually, a masterpiece. It tells the story of the human condition.”—From Foreword by WARREN BENNIS

DRIVEN TO LEAD

GOOD, BAD, AND



MISGUIDED LEADERSHIP

PAUL R. LAWRENCE

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

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Endorsements

“This is an inspiring book, filled with excellent examples, valuable advice, and warnings not to be overlooked. Every executive would be well-served to read this book cover-to-cover.”

—*Robert Porter Lynch, chairman emeritus, Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals*

“Paul Lawrence tracks leadership qualities into the deepest recesses of the human brain. Listen up, business! Tapping into this scientific understanding of leadership is key to your company’s success or failure.”

—*William C. Frederick, professor emeritus, Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh*

“Paul Lawrence proposes that nature has provided us with individuals of conscience who are capable of good leadership, but also with a small number of individuals whose lack of conscience typically makes them bad leaders. He refers to such individuals as free riders, psychopaths, or ‘people without conscience,’ and discusses in detail the devastating impact they have when placed in a leadership role, particularly in business, politics, the military, and religion. His thesis is brilliant and compelling, and in line with current research on the neuroscience of psychopathy. *Driven to Lead* is essential reading for anyone who hopes to

gain some understanding of the scandals and disasters that result from bad leadership.”

*—Robert D. Hare, professor emeritus of psychology,
University of
British Columbia*

Praise for *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices*

“In this pathbreaking book, Paul R. Lawrence and Nitin Nohria show [that] ... the deep study of human nature does not justify Social Darwinism and gladiatorial commercial combat of the kind often portrayed in popular media. On the contrary, it offers formulas for a more harmonious and efficient conduct of human affairs. The approach is naturalistic, based on self-understanding and the cultivation of the strong cooperative instincts that have favored group survival for countless millennia.”

—Excerpt from the Foreword by Edward O. Wilson

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DRIVEN TO LEAD

Good, Bad, and Misguided Leadership

Paul R. Lawrence

Foreword by Warren Bennis

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Warren Bennis

A WARREN BENNIS BOOK

This collection of books is devoted exclusively to new and exemplary contributions to management thought and practice. The books in this series are addressed to thoughtful leaders, executives, and managers of all organizations who are struggling with and committed to responsible change. My hope and goal is to spark new intellectual capital by sharing ideas positioned at an angle to conventional thought—in short, to publish books that disturb the present in the service of a better future.

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Nohria *Driven*

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Sample *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*

Schein *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*

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Zaffron,
Logan *The Three Laws of Performance*

To Martha, my lifelong partner

FOREWORD

by Warren Bennis

This book is truly amazing—actually, a masterpiece. It tells the story of the human condition. It tells this story across human history, *deep* human history. Lawrence realizes that our understanding of leadership can be no better than our understanding of what makes humans, all humans, tick—what are the ultimate motivators of our behavior. This is true because leadership is *all* about relationships with others. So that is where he starts—with the basic few motives, the innate drives that have been essential to our survival and development into the dominant species on earth.

To do this, Lawrence had to rediscover Darwin's insights about humans in Darwin's second epic book, *The Descent of Man*, which evolutionary biologists have, strangely, ignored. This reveals a new Darwin that turns the public's assumptions about Darwin upside down. The key is Darwin's revolutionary observation that the *most important* difference between humans and lower species is our innate moral sense, our conscience. What an observation—and now we have evidence that it is a valid observation—except for the very few people who are missing the key mutation in their brain.

But this is enough of the story for me to tell here. Read on and you will find explanations of key turning points in human history, explanations of good, bad, and misguided leaders, and even evil leaders like Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. Lawrence provides an explanation of the greatness of

America's governmental form as well as the nature of its current crisis, and the same is true of the greatness and the current crisis of our vast corporations.

And, finally, *Driven to Lead* offers a path toward a better future for all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the years that I have worked on this research project I have benefited greatly from the many scholars and friends who have studied various drafts of this work and helped me develop its strengths and avoid its pitfalls. The following people have read and provided insightful comments on one or more drafts of the work: Louise Ames, Oakes Ames, Max Bazerman, Michael Beer, Robin Ely, William Frederick, Benjamin Freidman, William George, Joshua Greene, Boris Groysberg, Ranjay Gulati, Marc Hauser, Linda Hill, Rakesh Khurana, John Kotter, Anne Lawrence, William Lawrence, Hans Loeser, Jay Lorsch, Robert Porter Lynch, Joshua Margolis, Kenneth Miller, Lynn Paine, Steven Pinker, Joseph Platt, Jo Procter, Robert Simon, Scott Snook, Renato Taguiri, David Thomas, Andrew Towl, Michael Tushman, Andrew Van de Ven, Charalambos Vlachoutsicos, and Richard Wrangham.

In addition, I wish especially to recognize the help of the following:

- Nitin Nohria, my coauthor of *Driven*, who throughout the work on this follow-on book has been a steady and wise advisor to me every step of the way.
- Warren Bennis, the general editor of the Jossey-Bass series on leadership, for his unwavering support of the merit of this work.
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- Martha, my wife, for her constant support and her amazing patience with my many years of preoccupation with this project.

Especially because this book is pushing on the edges of knowledge in a diverse set of fields, it is by no means perfunctory for me to add that I take full responsibility for any errors and other shortcomings of the text.

Bedford, Massachusetts

May 2010

PAUL R. LAWRENCE

THE AUTHOR

Paul R. Lawrence is Wallace Brett Donham Professor of Organizational Behavior at Harvard Business School. He grew up in Michigan, where he did his undergraduate work in sociology and economics at Albion College. After serving in the Navy in World War II he finished his masters and doctoral training in organizational behavior at the Harvard Business School. He was the cofounder of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics. His research, published in twenty-five books and numerous articles, has dealt with the human aspects of management, organizational change, organization design, human nature, and leadership. His best-known titles (with coauthors) are *Organization and Environment*, *The Changing of Organizational Behavior Patterns*, *Renewing American Industry*, and *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices*.

INTRODUCTION

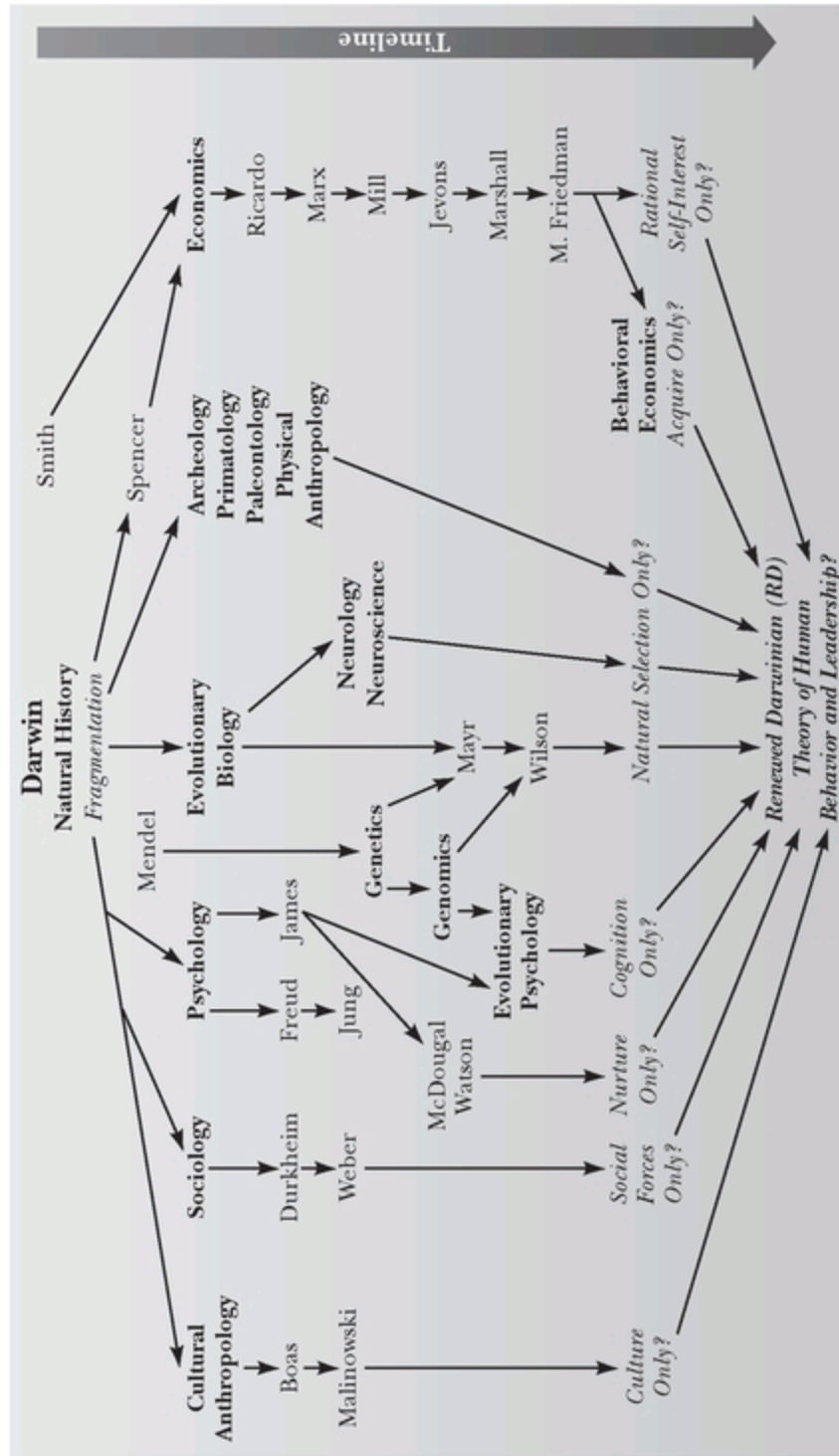
Humans have studied human behavior and leadership behavior for as long as we've had written records. In the past four centuries or so, the methods of systematic science have been applied to this study, at both the individual and collective levels. But it has been a somewhat messy pursuit.

As this book will show, the truly scientific understanding of human behavior began with the work of Darwin, published some 150 years ago. Since that time, however, the study of human behavior has become a story of fragmentation. Each of the disciplines shown in [Figure 1.1](#) was launched and carried forward primarily by the intellectual leadership of the persons named beneath each discipline. The prominent newer fields are also named. [Figure 1.1](#) illustrates not only the fragmentation of the effort to understand human behavior scientifically but also the nature of the task of integrating these various fields in order to develop a unified theory of human behavior and leadership. The repetition of the question "only?" at the bottom of the figure indicates the limitations, as I see it, of each discipline's approach to human behavior.

Specialization, as illustrated, is an essential phase in the advancement of knowledge, but it needs to be balanced with continual efforts to integrate and unify our ever-growing understanding. This integration process has been badly neglected in the human sciences, largely, I believe, for institutional and organizational reasons. University departments compete for funding, personnel, and attention. A scholar who hopes to advance within a discipline is expected to make noteworthy specialized contributions for his or her "team." Who can afford to collaborate with the

competitive teams? Perhaps a senior professor, such as myself, whose career struggles are over but whose intellectual life is not.

[FIGURE 1.1.](#) SCHEMATIC OF THEORY FLOW REGARDIND HUMAN BEHAVIOR SINCE DARWIN.



In 1991, when I moved to emeritus status at Harvard Business School, I started working full time (on a half-time salary) on the challenge of finding a more accurate model of

human behavior and leadership. Although I had been a student of the full spectrum of the disciplines of human behavior since I was a young man, my primary motivation in 1991 was the rapid rise of agency theory, not only at Harvard Business School but also at many other business schools. Agency theory, as proposed by Michael Jensen and others, started with the axiom of economics that rational self-interest motivated all human behavior and built further on Milton Friedman's argument that the sole purpose of business was to maximize shareholder (owner) returns. I deeply believed that this doctrine was seriously flawed and that it was generating many disturbing consequences. But such was the enormous appeal of agency theory that I felt it could only be displaced by a better theory of human behavior and leadership, one which took into account the (to me, obvious) fact that there is much more to human behavior than simply rational self-interest.

But there was more on my mind than the need to move on from agency theory. I and others had long been frustrated by the fragmentation and dissonance of the various human sciences. It seemed to be an outrageous case of the blind men describing the elephant. For these reasons, I felt strongly that the time to try for a better synthesis had arrived.

We continue to be mystified by much of our own behavior, both as individuals and as nations, races, and faiths. The historian Norman Davies, summing up the period of the two world wars, wrote,

At a time when the instruments of constructive change had outstripped anything previously known, Europeans acquiesced in a string of conflicts, which destroyed more human beings than all past convulsions put together What is more, in the course of those two war-bloodied generations, the two

most populous countries of Europe fell into the hands of murderous political regimes whose internal hatred killed even more tens of millions than their wars did.... Future historians, therefore, must surely look back on the three decades between August 1914 and May 1945 as the era when Europe took leave of its senses In the course of the horrors, Europeans threw away their position of world leadership¹

We can ill afford to remain such a deadly mystery to ourselves. The human race now faces more than one danger that (1) could end civilization as we know it and (2) is of our own making. Nuclear war, environmental collapse, and the spread of pandemics such as AIDS readily come to mind. And how can we account for the fact that people such as Hitler can cause so much damage to so many other people? A more adequate theory of human behavior and leadership would generate practical applications and would distinguish the possible from the impossible. Such a theory would surely be worth a mighty effort.

And although the fragmentation of the human sciences was discouraging, the sheer variety of findings was most encouraging. Amongst so many pieces, there might be enough to put together a unified picture. Particularly exciting were recently developed techniques such as brain imaging, which is giving us fantastic new insights into what happens in the brain during various kinds of normal human behavior, such as remembering and deciding. Gene analysis has also made tremendous advances recently and can throw a bright light not only on what makes us uniquely human but also on how we became uniquely human through the processes of evolution. Hard data on the wellsprings of human behavior were starting to accumulate and, to my mind, demanding to be brought together.

But most of all (and most surprising of all), the time was right because a scientific theory which could account for the new findings and provide understanding of the big questions we want to answer—about consciousness, ultimate motives, conscience, morality, the sense of self, emotions, and complex decision making—*had been available for many years*. As we will see in Part One, Darwin’s theory of evolution, formulated in 1842 and published in 1859 (*Origin of the Species*) and 1871 (*Descent of Man*), is quite up to the task. For the most part, all I had to do was (1) pay close attention to certain aspects of Darwin’s theories about *humans* that had largely been ignored since his time and (2) give Darwin’s insights the benefit of contemporary research.

This fortunate discovery came about when I collaborated with my Harvard Business School colleague Nitin Nohria on *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices*, published in 2002.² In that book, we proposed a foundation for a new model of human behavior, based on four innate drives and a mechanism for keeping them in balance as a choice is made amongst possible actions. That is the one element of this book’s theories which is original work. The rest is pure synthesis of the work of others.

When *Driven* was published, our four-drive model of man was highly controversial. It bucked the prevailing paradigms of the major disciplines concerned with human behavior. Economics explained all behavior with the axiom of rational self-interest; sociology explained it all with social forces; psychology with the learning that filled the “blank slate” of the mind; anthropology with the teachings of the local culture; and evolutionary biology with natural selection and our “selfish” genes, as Richard Dawkins memorably called them. Since then, these oversimplified (in my opinion) positions have been rapidly changing. While the struggles over these fundamental assumptions about human nature

are by no means over, the tide has turned. There can be no going back.

But neither could I stand still. *Driven* was a success as far as it went, but it was still not an adequate theory of human behavior and certainly not of leadership, my central focus. What was missing was the process by which the prefrontal cortex not only came up with all the options for action but also, by working back and forth with the four drives, made the final action decision that was reasonably balanced as regards to all four drives. This was the impulse/check/balance mechanism that was not addressed in *Driven*. More important, the theory in *Driven* was not yet applied to leadership.

I believe that the Renewed Darwinian theories presented in this book are stronger theories of human behavior and of leadership than any of the current alternatives. They are theories that are universal, testable, and actionable. Now it is up to you, the reader, to decide whether or not this outrageously bold claim is justified.