Destructive Leadership – Processes and Consequences

Anna Nyberg

Abstract This chapter starts with a case describing the development of a leadership process over the time period of three years. Theories and empirical evidence regarding destructive leadership processes and their outcomes are thereafter reviewed and discussed in relation to the case. The focus is on individual characteristics and the processes linking destructive leaders with destructive followers. Bullying processes and their consequences as well as possibilities to counteract destructive leadership and for targets to change their situation is also discussed. A specific focus is given the role of followers or bystanders in destructive leadership processes.

Keywords Destructive leadership • Destructive followership • Destructive group processes • Bullying • Stress • Health

In the following chapter I will introduce a fictive case and discuss some theories and empirical evidence regarding different forms of destructive leadership (destructive leaders, groups, and followers) and its relationship with stress, wellbeing and health of employees. My intention is not to give a full review of the literature, but rather to discuss and try to link a fictive case with some theoretical models and a selection of scientific evidence. I hope to shed some light on the complexity of destructive leadership and group processes, believing that a greater awareness may contribute to a higher readiness among involved parties to prevent destructive processes from occurring and developing at our workplaces. This chapter furthermore serves to introduce the reader to destructive leadership processes that may be improved by the power of cultural experiences, discussed in the next chapter of this book.

The following fictive case is about a management team in a Swedish division of a global company within the production industry. There is the division manager, Richard, and the three line managers Johan, Maria and David. The story is told from David's perspective and the setting is a small town in Sweden. The case will be followed by a discussion about leadership, followership, group processes, wellbeing and health.

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Case

The work as line manager had been quite stressful the past year. We were three at line manager level, Johan and Maria were running the other two units of our division. Our division manager announced just before Christmas that he had been offered a job at one of our competitors'. I don't know if we were sorry about that, really, he had not proven a particularly outstanding boss by any means. Not that he had done anything strikingly horrific, apart from all the things he didn't do. And he was boring. One would sit through his meetings realizing that one had not heard a word he had said since he started. I don't know if that says more about my attention span than anything about him, but he basically didn't make much of an impression. If he were to describe his assignment in the company he would probably say something about keeping budget, making sure people delivered according to plans etc. Right, but… yeah. And we didn't do very well back then either. That nitty gritty way of presenting figures and sitting down with us to follow up on our activity plans didn't pay off. We didn't speed up production and we didn't increase market shares. I don't know if he was asked to leave, or if a new opportunity was truly the reason for his resigning. Anyhow, after he left the company, the following spring, things started to change.

Where do I start? Well, let's start with that morning about three years ago when Johan came in to my office with coffee in a paper mug from the machine around the corner. It was raining outside and he hadn't bothered folding up his umbrella before he stepped in. I remember because the drops of water from his huge umbrella created darker red dots on my red carpet and although that really didn't matter I wasn't particularly fond of it. He sat down on my desk in a very Johanish kind of way, his new brown corduroys left stripes in my soft desk pad when he later stood up and started to walk around, fiddling with his keys while he talked to me. Don't get me wrong here, I like Johan, no, I love Johan, but also his blond, curly and rather long hair was wet that morning and he hadn't bothered passing by the bathroom drying it up before he stumbled in. The drops of rain water left his blond curls and fell on his nose and one even on a report I had printed that morning.

"Richard Henderson is taking over!", Johan said. And it was easy to tell that he was thrilled. Did he spill coffee on my desk? No, he didn't. The Boston star, we had all heard of his success in cutting expenses while simultaneously taking production to "a whole new level". So we were finally worthy a change? We sure needed it. We had recently been fighting old machinery breaking down on us while new orders from an important customer came in. We were running around like chickens while Mr Bland sat in his office calculating god knows what. We had been lagging behind both competitors and other divisions for the past couple of years and had almost started to accept our position as the company losers. Richard Henderson played a completely different ball game, that was for sure. Both Johan and I were convinced that he would be the one to save our jobs. Not that any of us wouldn't be able to tell him that all we needed was new machinery, but anyway, someone had to make that happen.

"When do we see him? We need him straight away to solve the situation we're in right now!" I stood up, as if that would make things happen faster.

"No idea, heard it from a connection outside the firm, no one probably knows yet" Johan said and I sat down on my chair again.

He came to see us about a month later. Apparently he was moving here with his family – wife and two kids, 7 and 10, almost the same ages as mine. Big move, we were kind of stuck out here in the countryside, 60 kilometres to a reasonably big town. Our Sweden manager was overexcited about this top recruitment and had let us know that this was our chance. If we didn't manage to make profit again for the next two–three years we would be forced to close down production. We were a burden to the rest of the company right now. None of us wanted to shut down, there weren't really tons of qualified jobs here. Johan, Maria and I would probably all have to move our families if that happened. Not to speak about all the people on the floor.

My first impression of Richard was that he was a much smaller man than I had imagined him. Not at all as grand as the rumours about him. He looked strong though, athletic, with brown short hair, straight nose, brown eyes. He was wearing a black coat and a hat, which was kind of odd out here in the countryside. His handshake was firm and warm and I instantly felt some kind of connection with him, which surprised me. He sat down at the end of the table and we watched every move he made, trying to get hold of the difference between him and us.

One of the first things I noticed was oddly enough the skin on his hands. It was tanned and although I didn't know for sure since I hadn't touched the top of his hand, his skin looked strangely soft and smooth for a man his age. What could he be, 45?

He started by saying something appreciative about our town, how he had had a jog around the lake last night and found it wonderful. How the mill community with its history was fascinating and something completely different from what he came from. He appeared completely sincere and as such immediately connected strongly with us and made us think differently about ourselves and the place we were in.

After that he gave an account of his understanding of the situation at the production units. He was matter-of-fact and completely correct in his analyses. This was not a presentation he had prepared last night. His decision to come out here did not appear to be an impulsive one, on the contrary. He seemed to have the situation well thought-out and carefully prepared. The sense of ease and security this inspired in me made me aware of how difficult the situation had been for quite a while. But while he created a strong trust in himself as a leader, he simultaneously drew a picture of an extremely difficult situation to solve. He was not sure that we would make it or that all three units would be running in six months. This was frightening, but although we left the room knowing that the next six months would involve a lot of hard work, it seemed better than being frustrated about that the problem everyone was aware of didn't get addressed.

Johan came over on his way home that night. "Wow, finally!"

He started telling my wife Cecilia about the situation before I had had a chance to. In a month's time we would be working under the greatest boss in the company, this would take us out of the crisis, no one had anything to worry about anymore. We would not get unemployed, we would not have to shut down, we would not have to move. This had been the constant topic of conversation between our families for the past year.

After having analyzed our situation for about a month, Richard presented very structured steps ahead. We were all asked to present ways to cut our expenses with 25 %. We would go through the same procedure again in a year. We didn't have any money to invest in new machinery, so this was the first step we had to take to survive. We all needed to cut down on personnel. This was done in an extremely professional manner with all the support structures there were for employees to benefit from when being layed off. Assistants and administrative staff had to go, we would manage their tasks on our own from now on. We would get down to a very crude level of managing the plant in a few months. But Richard made us feel as one big family on a wreck on the turbulent ocean this first six months of his management. It was tough, even tougher on the people we had to lay off than on us, of course. But we had agreed upon working up to 80 hours a week in order to get this done promptly. Our families were happy as long as we had a job. We all tipped in our share and felt like a community raising a community hall together or something. One big family.

We admired Richard. Apart from having all the important connections within the organization, he was tremendously sharp, happy, and energetic. It seamed as if he could motivate anyone to accomplish anything. We felt extraordinarily happy to be around him. He would invite us together with our families to his house, so we were all getting to know his wife and children. In a way he made us all feel like we belonged to his family, too. We were a little bit like adult children coming back home to Sunday dinners, even if we were actually almost the same age. I could see it on Johan and Maria. Johan showed a streak of hungry puppy behavior that I had not seen in him before, and Maria sometimes got something girly

about her and she became more eager to please. How it showed on myself I don't know, but I could feel it too. It was as if he released us from a heavy burden, and carried it for us.

Sometimes loud classical music came out of his office, and once or twice when I went in to see him, I found him sitting there reading a novel. He didn't look ashamed of it, but would give me a review and let me know if the book was worthwhile picking up. Both my wife and I appreciated his literature recommendations.

It took some time to discover that there was also something severe and uncompromising in Richard's personality, seemingly hiding under his positive energy and generosity. It mostly showed through him talking negatively about people and things that were outside of our group and company. He could talk to someone openly and what seemed to be sincerely and respectfully, but as that person left the room he could give a condescending comment and snarl at what the person had said. I guess this created some sort of insecurity in us, we did not want to be subject to that. There was no room for relaxing, as soon as he found us non-productive he would get a certain look of, was it contempt, in his face. We did all we could not to evoke that look.

Anyway, in a year and a half we had actually started making profit, enough to invest and change one of the machines in Johan's unit, which was the most important one for the next couple of years. Richard had made this decision after structuring past customer demands and analyzing the coming. We had worked tremendously hard and were rather worn out, to be honest, as Christmas was approaching. I had taken only one week of holiday over the past two summers. My wife and kids had spent their holiday with my wife's parents. And although we had agreed upon this sacrifice, my wife was getting tired.

It was during this time that it became clear that Johan had become closer to Richard than Maria and I were. We were unaware of how and when this had happened, but all of a sudden Johan appeared to have access to information that we lacked.

As this development progressed Johan started showing us completely new sides of his personality. A picture that remains in my head is how he would stand in front of the coffee machine with Richard and discuss something and as I turned up in the corridor he would almost ridiculously clearly move a little so that I saw a little bit more of his back than I had when I turned up. Richard appeared focused, efficient, but also socially relaxed in Johan's company. As they had finished their conversation they would leave the coffee machine, nod at me, and get back to their offices.

It was a strange development of a friendship. My wife and I invited Johan and his family over just as this had started and things were practically the same between us. But I was probably a bit more guarded in his company, which could be the reason why Johan became a little bit more Johanish. He talked a little bit louder, laughed a bit more often. I hadn't said anything to my wife at that time and she thought that Johan appeared to be in a particularly good mood.

What plans did Richard and Johan have that Maria and I were left out of? And how would those affect our future in the company? I consulted Maria in this matter after a while, and although the situation didn't upset her in a personal way that it upset me since Johan was a close friend, she too had made efforts to try to get on top of the situation.

The management team's meeting of the month was approaching and I had prepared a number of questions that I needed to get an answer to in order to get settled. I had expected that Richard would present them, they were all quite basic, but since he had created an uncertainty in Maria and I the past month I just wanted to make sure. Apart from wanting the updated sales figures, and the strategic plans for the near future, it was about the orders that we were working with at the moment.

Richard came almost straight from his jogging tour, by the looks of his wet hair, and was on the phone as he entered the room. He continued talking while we were all sitting there, but eventually hung up and at the same time left the room to go fetch something. We were left there looking at each other.

He came back and started the meeting by announcing that he planned a party for the company at his house in about a month's time. Everyone would be invited. This was a surprise. Apparently colleagues from the U.S. would turn up as well. He had recently been over there himself. And he told us some anecdote about our CEO and we laughed.

I left the meeting in a good mood, but I had not had the opportunity to raise my questions. Richard had not spoken about anything but about colleagues from the US and the upcoming party.

I went to his secretary to check his schedule, but it was fully booked and I couldn't get time with him for the next three weeks. This meant that I had to make certain decisions that I would have liked to check with him first. I sent him an email trying to explain the situation, but he didn't get back to me. I sent it again a few days later in order to make sure it wasn't due to some IT failure, but I still didn't get a response.

At the party Richard raised a toast for and wanted to celebrate that the first goal in turning the negative trend on the Swedish market was reached. He held a speech in which Johan filled in some information on the super modern technology we had replaced the old machinery with. They presented the analyses of the growth in Johan's unit for the next five years. Everyone seemed pleased and impressed.

It was about a month later that Richard knocked on my door. I felt relieved to see him and to get an opportunity to talk to him about the progression of my unit. However, he quickly sat down and said that he needed my help. Maria's unit wasn't running very well and he was not pleased with her accomplishments. He said he knew that it was part of his deal not to choose his team, but particularly Maria had proven to be a disappointment. He had expected someone a lot more independent, analytical, and sharp. Someone a little bit more like me, he said. I felt flattered of course, but also a little confused. It turned out that what he wanted me to help out with was to find someone to replace Maria, someone who could run the department independently from now on. He said it like it was the most natural thing in the world.

After discussing the matter with my wife I decided I wouldn't do it. I told Richard that I thought that Maria was capable of running her unit, as she had been up until now. I couldn't help him replace her. I also went to Johan to discuss with him what had happened. First he didn't believe me, and later into the discussion he started agreeing with Richard in that Maria perhaps lacked some competence needed in order to save her unit.

I announced to the management team that I would like to present some figures on the next management team meeting and discuss how to handle certain issues. I still hadn't had this opportunity for the past weeks. Richard set this up on the meeting agenda. I was glad that he eventually seemed interested. However, the meeting developed into the strangest meeting I have ever sat through. Richard questioned everything I presented in quite an aggressive manner and Johan nodded and agreed. Maria raised some questions indicating that she wanted more facts in order to be able to give any feedback. Richard said I had driven my unit in a direction he was highly troubled with, and I responded that I had tried to get in contact with him for the past two months. Richard stood up and went out to get some coffee. As he came back he wrote three words on the white board. I can't remember them anymore, I am sure he made them up as he was watching the coffee machine out there. Anyway, those were the words we should have in mind while leading our units. It was probably something like vision, strategy, and judgment, and I guess he wanted me to believe that I had failed on all three. I asked him what his suggestions were for the next six months and he responded: "Well, that is something that we will have to discuss thoroughly for the next couple of weeks, although I had intended to spend them on completely different things" He looked on his watch and moved on to the next meeting point.

Afterwards I spent many hours dwelling upon how stupid I had been not realizing that this was a natural consequence of my last discussion with Richard. I started thinking that I was far too naïve for my position and worried even more frequently about how long I would last.

I didn't get much direction from Richard after that either. I kept running my unit as I always had, making different decisions along the way, fearing that Richard would confront me again out of the blue and say I was doing the wrong thing. I had lost my close connection with Johan, but had become closer to Maria and we consulted each other from time to time.

Maria was striving hard to get Richard more involved in her unit and her specific problems. She prepared questions for the meetings and brought things up that she wanted to discuss. Although Richard would approach her questions politely, he never appeared to have the patience to listen to her properly or to put himself in her shoes. Instead he would refer to his own analysis of the situation, which was not always related to the question she was asking. He appeared to be the most content when we came to the meetings, listened attentively to what he had to say and reported successful figures from our departments. Other information appeared to hazzle him and arise some sort of contempt in him and he quickly got irritable. Johan said very little during the meetings, he had taken the role as Richard's quiet assistant. I found very little reason to speak up myself. We started reporting on positive events from our departments to please Richard and to protect ourselves from his official statements of disapproval. Everyone became more and more nervous to speak up, and I noticed that it affected me to the extent that I felt a little uncomfortable leading my own work group. It was as if we had started tip toeing around Richard also when he wasn't around.

It had, with time, become apparent that Richard inspired a trust and confidence in him that he did not manage to convert into hands-on support and help when we needed it. He turned out to be more interested in keeping his role as the hero of our department, than in helping us out. He had proven willing to put us down in public if not submitting to his authority and control. Besides our admiration for him, we were becoming scared of him.

Maria would follow every move he made in order to figure out what he expected from her and made sure not to say or do the wrong thing. When she came up with a solution that he agreed with, her sense of relief was apparent to everyone. I had always seen Maria as a strong person with both feet steadily on the ground, but she slowly changed and became more and more insecure. The doubt as to whether she could truly run her department independently became a matter on all of our minds.

It was apparent that Richard used our fear of losing our jobs and the subsequent competition between our units as a means of staying in control. He would flatter us in private while simultaneously talking negatively about the two of us who were not in the room. Information was no longer shared openly at meetings, but transferred in private conversations between him and one of us at the time. This made us highly suspicious towards each other, since we never knew what the others planned. Unfortunately Johan didn't seem to see through this or understand that the only way to protect ourselves from this was to stand together. Or he simply took advantage of the benefits it gave him in relation to us.

Maria started looking very tired that winter and I noticed that she often came in late and left early. She said she had a flu that just wouldn't let go. I heard Richard interrogate her about her health one morning when she came in at 10, but she quickly responded that she was just fine. The next day she came in early with painted nails and unusually colorful clothes.

One morning, when I was in Maria's office, she said she had to tell me something. Thousands of thoughts ran through my head as I sat down. She started to cry and told me that her five-year-old daughter had been diagnosed with a brain tumor. Surgery was planned to take place in a week.

After that Maria - as expected - disappeared from work for several months. Richard announced that we could not afford to replace her but had to run her unit together while she was away. He later said to me in private that he expected me to take the main responsibility since I was the only one he really trusted capable of it. That resulted in me being back on a schedule of 80 hours a week. This time it didn't feel as motivating as the last time, and my

wife wasn't as understanding either. She was getting tired of the situation and of me being in a bad mood most of the time. We had had fights over the past six months of a kind that we had never previously had. Maybe due to the sleep disturbances that I had developed lately and that the couple of hours of rest I got were not enough. And I was aware of that the glasses of whiskey that I took to calm down made it all worse.

It had also become evident that the problems in Maria's department had very little to do with her. In fact, it became obvious from an agreement with a customer, signed by Richard, that he had sold a large amount of products that we did not produce and therefore were unable to deliver. Maria had probably tried to address this but perhaps been too scared to put it on the table and confront Richard with it. First as I realized this did it dawn on me why Richard had given me this assignment.

I kept in contact with Maria, whose daughter appeared to respond well to the treatment and was getting better, but who had started questioning whether she would come back to work. Richard hadn't even given her a call during this difficult time, except once when having to solve administrative matters relating to her absence. He had dealt with the whole thing politely but Maria had sensed that she was nothing but a problem to him now.

A couple of months ago I had been working for Richard for almost three years, of which the past year and a half had been pretty bad. I had booked a meeting with our Sweden manager to let him know about the situation and that I was going to resign. He started the meeting by saying that he supposed that I was worried about what was going to happen now that Richard had completed his assignment and was going to move on. I looked at him for a while to try to grasp what he just said. "Is he leaving?" And he looked back at me for a while and responded "Yes, didn't you know?"

Apparently we were doing better now, there was more money to invest in better technology and we would not have to close down. Richard would move to the next crisis area in our organization, this time in Buenos Aires apparently. I was too relieved and too tired to say much to our Sweden manager, except that it had been a difficult time. He nodded and said "yes, but you made it" and looked sincerely appreciative.

I came to think about Richard later when I read an ad in the local paper. Apparently someone had started an art-inspired leadership development program. I thought that could have actually interested Richard, he was a curious person after all. But, anyway, that was too late now. I thought I might sign up myself instead.

This fictive story has not been the subject of any empirical research. The intention with it is merely to have a starting point for the following discussion. How can we understand this fictive case with support from theoretical concepts and scientific evidence on leadership and its effects on group processes and the wellbeing of employees?

Our story started with a difficult assignment, three capable line managers and a division manager thought to have the competency to turn the situation around. The story could have been about a management team with four collaborating members working together to solve a difficult situation, ending up strong, healthy and proud to have done so three years later. Why did this not happen? Why were the company's goals fulfilled at the expense of the wellbeing of at least two management team members? Was this a necessary development or could it have been prevented? What were the reasons for these destructive interpersonal processes?

Richard was a manager with both positive and negative sides to his personality, like most leaders. The positive sides were more evident in the start of his management, and the destructive sides became more evident with time. The discussion below will focus mainly on the destructive parts of Richard's leadership and the

effect such leadership may have on group processes and subordinates. The role of the followers and the context in the destructive leadership process will also be discussed.

The research on leadership is far more extensive with regards to investigations of positive effects of constructive leader behaviours than the opposite. Some even argue that leadership per definition is positive, and that other dimensions of an interaction between leader and follower is something else than leadership (Kellerman 2004).

Destructive leadership has, however, been the subject of increased interest in recent years and a growing number of empirical studies have emerged. Several concepts have been suggested and investigated, of which abusive supervision, petty tyranny, the dark side of leadership, derailed leadership, and laissez-faire leadership are some examples (Einarsen et al. 2013).

One first thing one may ask oneself is *why* destructive leadership comes about or *where* it comes from. What triggers leaders to behave in destructive ways? One could firstly imagine that their behaviours are consequences of their personality traits and ways of interpreting and explaining their surroundings (Einarsen et al. 2013; Judge et al. 2009; Keller Hansbrough and Jones 2014; Mathisen et al. 2011). Leaders would furthermore not be able to exert influence unless they were supported by followers or subordinates. The emergence, development, and maintenance of destructive leadership must therefore involve also destructive followers (Padilla et al. 2007). It is also known that group processes strongly affect individuals' actions, and if destructive group processes develop, these may influence individuals' behaviours. One could also imagine that certain environmental factors trigger leaders to behave abusively towards subordinates (Mathisen et al. 2011; Padilla et al. 2007), or subordinates to promote and follow destructive leaders (Kets de Vries 1989). The following sections are consequently divided into an investigation of and discussion on Destructive leaders, Destructive group processes, Destructive subordinates or followers, and last the contribution of The context. We start with the leaders.

Destructive Leaders

Einarsen et al. (2007) define destructive leadership as "The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates". Thus, they acknowledge destructiveness in leaders' relation both to the organisation and subordinates. They subsequently categorise leaders into four groups based on whether their behaviours are constructive or destructive in relation to the organisation and/or the employees. They have later expanded the model to include also the passively destructive laissez-faire leadership behaviour, situated in the middle of the model (Fig. 1).

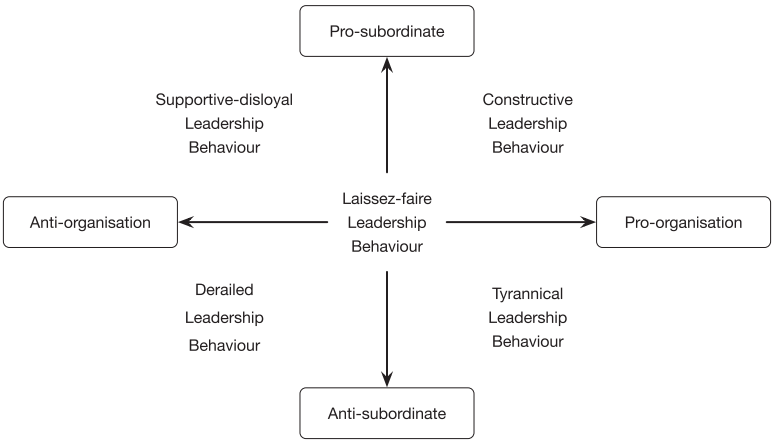

Fig. 1 A model of destructive leadership as defined in Aasland et al. (2010)

Tyrannical leaders, who are pro the organisation but anti subordinates, obtain their organisational goals but do so by acting aggressively towards, and by manipulating and humiliating subordinates. *Derailed leaders* are destructive towards both subordinates (e.g. by bullying and harassing them) and the organisation (e.g. by absenteeism and theft from the organisation). *Supportive-disloyal leaders* are pro subordinates but anti the organisation and show consideration towards subordinates at the expense of goal accomplishment. Laissez-faire *leaders* hold a formal leadership position but do not fulfil the responsibilities accompanied with this role. They may not make necessary decisions, may not work to reach the organisation's goals and they may refrain from getting involved in subordinates. Last, *constructive leaders* "are concerned with the welfare of their subordinates while simultaneously being focused on goal attainment and the effective use of resources in the service of the legitimate interests of the organisation".

The prevalence of destructive leadership, as defined by Einarsen et al. above was investigated in a representative sample of the Norwegian workforce (Aasland et al. 2010). As many as 33.5 % of the respondents reported that they had been exposed to at least one destructive leadership behaviour "quite often" or "very often or nearly always" the past 6 months. Laissez-faire leadership was the most common one; 21.2 % were exposed to one or more instances of laissez-faire leadership behaviour. Supportive-disloyal leadership was the second most common, reported by 11.6 %, followed by derailed leadership, reported by 8.8 %. Tyrannical leadership was the least common of the destructive leadership types, and 3.4 % reported being exposed to that behaviour. These figures are from the Norwegian workforce. However, it is well known that leadership culture varies over the world, and the prevalence of destructive leadership most likely differ accordingly (Culture, Leadership, and Organizations 2004).

How could the leadership of Richard in our case above be understood in the perspective of the model presented by Einarsen et al.? One could argue that Richard started off acting constructively towards both the organisation and his subordinates. As time passed by his leadership changed. How can we understand this development? To whom or what were the destructive sides of his leadership directed?

Padilla et al. (2007) go further than the model presented by Einarsen et al. in their definition of destructive leadership. They describe not only destructive behaviours of leaders, but a toxic triangle in which there is an interplay between destructive leaders, susceptive followers, and conducive environments. They assert that destructive leadership is seldom absolutely or entirely destructive, but that there are both good and bad results in most leadership situations. They describe the process of destructive leadership to involve dominance, coercion, and manipulation rather than influence, persuasion, and commitment and that the process of destructive leadership has a selfish orientation. It is focused more on the leader's needs than the needs of the larger social group. Also Lipman-Blumen emphasises the interaction between leaders and followers in what she calls *toxic leadership* (Lipman-Blumen 2005). She describes the dysfunctional characteristics of toxic leaders to be, among others, a lack of integrity, insatiable ambition, enormous ego, arrogance, amorality, and cowardice. She points out that toxic leaders' deliberate and unconscious behaviours lead to that their followers are left worse off than they were found. The toxic leaders consciously feed their followers with illusions that serve to enhance the power and influence of the leader while restricting the followers' possibilities to act independently. They play on basic needs and fears of followers, constrain constructive criticism and foster a culture of compliance. They furthermore mislead followers by deliberate untruths, subvert processes that are constructive, maliciously set constituents against each other, and identify scapegoats and motivate others to castigate them. Lipman-Blumen's central question, however, which is also further investigated in this chapter, is why followers accept, follow and sometimes even prefer toxic leaders to more constructively oriented ones.

We will discuss the role of followers and the environment later, but wish to maintain attention on the leaders for a while. Modern leadership research, starting in the beginning of the twentieth century, was for many years occupied with trying to identify individual characteristics that could predict successful leadership. This trait approach to leadership has been criticised for being too simplistic and not taking the context into account. However, with the emergence of the five-factor personality model, the Big Five, the picture changed somewhat. The personality factors in the Big Five, namely extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and neuroticism, have been found associated with leader emergence and effectiveness (Judge et al. 2009). Although this research can be criticised from several points of view, it is likely that leader personality characteristics is a contributing factor in the emergence and development of destructive leadership. Judge et al. (2009) listed the following personality traits to be dark sides of leadership: Narcissism, hubris, social dominance, and Machiavellianism. He also discussed the dark sides of charisma.

Charisma and *narcissism* are two characteristics that are often discussed in relation to destructive leadership (Einarsen et al. 2013). Charisma is essentially a bright leader characteristic found related to positive outcomes among subordinates. However, some charismatic leaders also have other sides to their personality, which are destructive for followers and the organization (Conger and Kanungo 1998). In order to understand more about what attracts people to charismatic leaders, also

when they are destructive, we will look at some theories describing the core influence processes of charismatic leadership.

Charisma

Charisma is often discussed as a personal characteristic of certain individuals or leaders, but charisma can also be described as created in the eye of the beholder. Max Weber described the concept as "a certain quality of an individual's personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader" (Weber 1978).

Charisma is a characteristic that is seen by many as an important part of *successful* leadership. Conger and Kanungo (1998) describe that charismatic leaders are particularly talented at recognizing deficiencies or under-used opportunities in the present, and that they are highly change-oriented innovators. Furthermore, Conger and Kanungo mean that charismatic leaders articulate visions or an idealised goal and become charismatic "when their vision represents an embodiment of a perspective shared by followers in an idealized form". Charismatic leaders are prepared to work hard and take on high personal risks in order to achieve the shared vision. High expertise and past successes furthermore contribute to the attribution of charisma.

The influence process of charismatic leadership is a transformational process. Conger and Kanungo (1998) write: "When managers no longer accept the status quo of their organizations and instead formulate an idealized vision that is discrepant from the status quo and that is shared by subordinates, then such managers move away from being caretakers or administrators and instead function as transformational leaders. In this case, the leader works to bring about a change in the followers' attitudes and values, as he or she moves the organization toward its future goals. This change in followers' attitudes and values essentially is achieved through empowering techniques that increase the self-efficacy beliefs of the followers and affirm that they are capable of achieving the future goals. Followers' compliance is the result of two important factors: (1) their internalization of the leader's vision and (2) an increase in their self-efficacy beliefs."

Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) describe the sources of charismatic leaders' personal power to be their elitist, idealized vision, their entrepreneurial advocacy for radical changes, and their depth of knowledge and expertise. These qualities appear extraordinary to followers, and these extraordinary qualities form the basis of their personal power and charisma. The leaders' empowerment strategies and the resulting empowering experience of followers are furthermore thought to be the ingredients critical to the success of the transformational influence process.

Transformational leadership includes four dimensions; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass 1985). Very briefly explained, the transformational leader is viewed as a role model, presents clear and inspiring visions, builds a creative atmosphere, and develops each subordinate individually. "The successful transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy their higher needs, and engages their full potential. The result of the most adept transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents" (Burns 1978). This leadership model is perhaps the most investigated and has in several studies been found negatively linked to employee stress and burnout, and positively associated with employee positive emotions (Arnold and Connelly 2013). Both transformational and charismatic leadership have also been found associated with a host of other positive organisational outcomes (DeGroot et al. 2000; Lowe and Kroeck 1996; Sharon 2013; Wang et al. 2011).

Charismatic leadership is, however, also by many scholars acknowledged as central in destructive leadership (Conger and Kanungo 1998; Padilla et al. 2007). Charisma may always have the potential to be dangerous, since it activates certain psychological (unconscious) processes in us, which can give the charismatic leader great power that in turn can be exploited. Conger and Kanungo (1998) discuss that the shadow sides of charisma stem from two factors: the dependence of followers enacted in transference processes and the leaders' predisposition for narcissism. Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) write: "What most leaders seem to have in common is the ability to reawaken primitive emotions in their followers. Leaders, particularly those who are charismatic, are masters at manipulating certain symbols. Followers, when under the 'spell' of certain types of leaders, often feel powerfully grandiose and proud, or helpless and acutely dependent." Leaders become, in some psychological respect, a substitute for a parent. Kets de Vries (1989) describes one of the most crucial aspects of the charismatic leadership process to be the projection of the followers' ideals and wishes onto the leader. This process is thought to take place particularly in times when individuals feel a loss of safety and clarity, and therefore search for a strong parental figure to carry responsibility and secure them. We all have unconscious memories from our childhood of a relationship with an omnipotent parent, and we may as adults bear unconscious wishes to fall back in to a state of dependency on someone who can protect us. Charismatic leaders easily activate this wish and may furthermore act in order to maintain such illusions. The process of transference that then takes place implies that the relationship between the individual and the charismatic leader is strongly affected by the relationship between the individual and a parental figure from the past. The strong emotional bond, perhaps sometimes not unlike the one taking place when one falls in love, is partly driven by strong emotions experienced in childhood.

Kets de Vries (1989) describe three forms of transference reactions involved in leadership processes; idealizing, mirror, and persecutory reactions. The idealising transference reaction implies that the follower projects upon the leader his or her own omnipotent fantasies and then "merges" or identifies with the leader. This is in essence a defence mechanism used in order to escape feelings of inferiority,

dependency, and vulnerability, and may make the follower experience an elevated self-esteem. Strong and simple emotions are involved in this transference reaction. The relationship with the leader may be characterised by feelings of omnipotence and perfection experienced in early childhood. This state may furthermore be experienced by the follower as more attractive than anything else, and when being drawn into this process "the followers may seem intoxicated, behaving like sleepwalkers" (Kets de Vries 1989). The mirror transference describes what may take place in leaders when having been subject to idealizing and admiration for an extended period of time. The leader may simply start believing it all to be true and start acting accordingly. He or she may become preoccupied with omnipotent fantasies of unlimited success and power, and in order to affirm this grandiose fantasy be attracted to followers who have strong dependency needs. Kets de Vries (1989) writes: "But the followers may be in for a shock. Preoccupied by grandiosity, and having become intolerant of criticism, such leaders can become very callous about the needs of their subordinates. They may exploit them and then drop them when they no longer serve their purposes". Or, as Conger and Kanungo (1998) put it: "For followers, there is a hope or fantasy that somehow certain of the admired person's qualities will be acquired by association. Being in a relationship with someone who is admired also reaffirms followers' sense of importance, existence, and self-esteem. This affirmation of self and resulting dependence can either then be exploited by the charismatic leader solely for his or her own personal aims or serve as a vehicle for constructive mentoring for followers' own growth. These differing outcomes provide a critical distinction between negative and positive forms of charismatic leadership".

The third transference reaction is the persecutory reaction. This is related to that the idealised leader inevitably with time will disappoint the followers' immature dependency needs, and given the strong emotions involved, followers are likely to display strong reactions of anger. An idealised leader can quickly become a devalued leader when the followers' needs are not met. If leaders are not able to understand and handle this reaction in a mature way, he or she may start experiencing being persecuted. In such situations the leader may start looking for victims and retaliate. This is when leaders fall into the defence mechanism characterised by splitting the world into good and bad. Their work groups may be divided into those who are with the leader and those who are against him or her. Another defence mechanism discussed by Kets de Vries is that of "identification with the aggressor". This is a process, which takes place in a follower who is aware of the destructive behaviours of their leaders. It involves clinging to the illusion that through the identification with the leader they can incorporate aspects of the perceived omnipotence of the leader and thereby escape their own fears. "Naturally, followers who adopt this defence mechanism share the outlooks of their leaders and support them even if they engage in unrealistic, grandiose schemes or imagine the existence of malicious plots, sabotage and enemies" (Kets de Vries 1989).

Padilla et al. (2007) write that "All charismatic leaders are not destructive, but most destructive leaders are charismatic". The relationship between the leader, ascribed with charisma, and his or her followers, may form the basis from which

destructive acts can be performed. Conger and Kanungo (1998) discuss that what distinguishes a destructive charismatic leader from a constructive is ethics. Destructive leaders use their position for self-aggrandizing purposes, whereas more ethical leaders use it to serve others. House and Howell (1992) distinguish between socialized and personalized charisma, where leaders with a socialized charisma have certain characteristics that counterbalance possible destructiveness. Although the socialized charismatic individuals have a high need for power, they are also low in authoritarianism and Machiavellianism, and have a high self-esteem and an internal locus of control. The leaders with personalised charisma, on the other hand, are higher in narcissism and act in self-serving manners, lead in totalitarian ways, using punishments and rewards to motivate followers, and foster dependence rather than independent thinking among subordinates. It is recognized that most charismatic leaders use both of these types of charisma, but to varying degrees. Padilla et al. (2007) discuss that destructive charismatic leaders' visions include a threat from the outside world that need to be defeated, and that they articulate visions that enhance their own personal power. Their rhetoric and self-promotion is furthermore intended to build support for themselves rather than for common good.

Although many interesting studies have emerged in recent years that provide evidence of an association between destructive leadership and employees' wellbeing and health (Einarsen et al. 2013; Schyns and Schilling 2013), few have studied the link between charismatic leadership and abusive supervision. However, based on the charismatic leadership process, Pundt (2014) specify five distinct pathways that may lead from charismatic leadership attempts to abusive supervision. The first one is *Overdramatized charisma* with abusive supervision as an unintended consequence. Leaders may exaggerate typical leader attributes that followers or subordinates mostly perceive as charismatic in order to establish a strong leader-follower relationship. However, the leader may fail due to having exaggerated and is interpreted as for example "irascible instead of well-tempered, despotic or tyrannical instead of dominant, belligerent or militant instead of aggressive, fanatic instead of passionate, and dogmatic or totalitarian instead of visionary". The second possible pathway is *Overambitious charisma* with abusive supervision as a stress reaction. Charismatic leaders are characterised by very high ambitions, which means that they create a great amount of pressure on themselves. An exceedingly high ambition may result in that the leader gets exhausted and loses internal resources necessary for positive leadership. Thus, abusive supervision is here a behavioural result of the leaders' experiences of strain caused by exceedingly high goals. A third pathway is *Refused charisma* with abusive supervision as a reaction to frustration and provocation. Charismatic leaders are dependent on the support from subordinates or followers, and when this support does not appear, they may get frustrated and angry. Followers may refuse charismatic leaders for example because their visions are not realistic or because they act in ways that lack in morals or ethics. The fourth pathway outlined by Pundt is *Disappointed charisma* with abusive supervision as a reaction to threatened self-esteem and negative affect. If subordinates or followers are incapable of or unwilling to accomplish what is needed in order to reach the goals of charismatic leaders, they may experience negative affective states such as personal

offense and anger, which in turn may increase the likelihood of leaders falling into abusive supervision. The last possible pathway between charismatic leadership attempts and abusive supervision is *Abandoned charisma* with abusive supervision as a volitional change of influence tactics. This is an alternative and more strategic way of handling the fact that the charismatic leaders' visions have not been accomplished. The leaders may change influence tactics and use abusive supervision on purpose, such as threats and intimidations, in order to get subordinates to comply.

These suggested pathways between charismatic leadership attempts and abusive supervision have not yet been tested empirically. If we look back at our case for a moment, can Richard be described as a leader with charisma? How did Johan, David and Maria respond to it? Do any of Pundt's (2014) suggested pathways that may lead from charismatic leadership attempts to abusive supervision apply for the leadership processes in Richard's leadership team?

Narcissism

Narcissism is by many scholars thought to be an important ingredient in destructive forms of leadership (Kets de Vries and Miller 1985; Padilla et al. 2007). Narcissistic personality traits may be what distinguish the destructive charismatic leader from the constructive.

According to the DSM-V criteria for narcissistic personality syndrome, a person with such a syndrome has a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behaviour), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
3. Believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
4. Requires excessive admiration
5. Has a sense of entitlement, (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations)
6. Is interpersonally exploitative, i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
7. Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her
9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviours or attitudes

Narcissistic traits in leadership have by Padilla et al. (2007) been described to be dominance, grandiosity, arrogance, entitlement, and the selfish pursuit of pleasure.

They assert that narcissistic leaders claim special privileges, abuse power, and demand obedience of followers. Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) discusses the feelings of inferiority of the narcissistic personality as an important part of the negative sides of narcissistic leadership. The sense of inferiority drives the narcissist to search recognition and superiority, and when they experience threats to their omnipotent self-image they do not fear acting violently towards followers or enemies. They are often suspicious about others' intentions, and furthermore likely to stick to their grandiose and self-centred view of the world no matter what. This makes them inflexible and likely to make poor judgments.

There has been a debate among psychoanalytical scholars with regards to how narcissism is established early in life and as to what extent there are positive and negative narcissistic developments (Kernberg 1975; Kohut 1971). The literature regarding narcissistic leadership has furthermore been largely concerned with discussions of positive and negative sides of narcissistic leadership (Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006). Some scholars have discussed narcissism as a common driving force behind the desire to become a leader (Kets de Vries and Miller 1985).

Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) presented three types of narcissistic leaders with varying degrees of pathology; the *reactive*, the *self-deceptive*, and the *constructive*. The *reactive* narcissistic personality is thought to have experiences of being rejected and of perceiving a lack of emotional response early in life, resulting in a sense of inadequacy that forms the sense of self also in adulthood. An image of being special or perfect is created as a compensation for feelings of not having been loved. An important consequence affecting the individual's driving forces later in life is that this image constantly has to be re-established and protected in order for the individual not to experience anxiety, loss, and disappointment. The *self-deceptive* narcissists have a rather different personality development where they were led to believe that they were perfect regardless what they did. The self-deceptive narcissist has been burdened with others' (parents') own ideals and desires. The consequence is thought to be that the individual has failed to moderate his or her grandiose self-image and has prevailing ideals of perfection to live up to. Kets de Vries writes that although such individuals will encounter peers with a more realistic picture of them that will help them create a more realistic self-image, the traumas of early disappointments may have left a somewhat fragile sense of self. They remain "ideal-hungry" and have difficulties in establishing a stable identity. Last, *constructive narcissists* are outlined to have had a healthy personality development with adequate and realistic responses, where the whole pallet of emotions was allowed to be expressed and was responded to without retaliation. The child did not have to live up to parents' expectations on being special. Such individuals have a more realistic and stable picture of themselves and the surrounding world and do not frequently use primitive defence mechanisms.

One core primitive defence mechanism important in the development of destructive group processes is that of splitting. Splitting has its roots in early childhood with the consequence that some individuals have higher risks of regressing to this primitive defence mechanism than others. This defence mechanism implies that the "good" has to be kept separate from the "bad" in order to be protected. This brings

about that the ambiguity and complexity of real life gets lost (Kets de Vries and Miller 1985). Melanie Klein described the degree of integration of "good" and "bad" experiences in terms of the two intra-psychic positions the *schizo-paranoid* and the *depressive* or *integrative* positions (Klein 1984). These situations are thought to form the foundation of two different perspectives and experiences human beings have on themselves in relation to the outside world. When in the schizo-paranoid position children as well as adults, are occupied by trying to identify threats to the own survival. When in this paranoid position individuals are sceptic towards other people and the surroundings and try to keep the "good" safe from dangerous threats. Individuals are then apt at simplifying reality in order to create a world that is possible to navigate in. The strange or unknown is something to avoid or conquer. When in the integrative position, on the other hand, respect, curiosity and concern about other people dominate the way individuals relate to others. Within this position individuals look upon others as irrefrangible and feel responsible also for the other's wellbeing. This integrative position is obtained as the infant reaches certain maturity as a consequence of that he or she is taken care of well enough. However, in the relationship between the infant and its caregiver, there will always be little disturbances, that make the schizo-paranoid position develop and live as a constant possible perspective to take for all individuals. It is from this position that evil acts are conducted (Igra 2001).

Related to the defence mechanism splitting is that of *idealization* and *devaluation*. The idealisation process is an attempt to create an all-powerful protector against inner experiences of helplessness and worthlessness. The devaluation process takes place when the individual experiences that the idealised person cannot live up to expectations on complete protection. Other related primitive defence mechanisms are *projection* and *projective identification*. This describes the attempt to project onto others unwanted aspects of the self, such as weakness or anger. Projective identification refers to that the individual who has been the target of projection starts acting in accordance with the projection.

Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) discuss that the above mentioned defence mechanisms are used to varying degrees among the narcissistic leader types outlined above and form the basis of their relative destructiveness. The typical reactive narcissistic leader exhibits the most grandiose and exploitative behaviours among the three types with the consequence that subordinates have to play politics in order to survive. The self-deceptive leader is thought to be a milder form of narcissist.

Although it is widely acknowledged that narcissism is a personality trait common in many leaders and its negative effects on organisational life has been discussed, the link between narcissistic personality traits and abusive supervision has not been outlined or studied empirically to any greater extent. However, a case study has been conducted by Goldman (2004) involving two leaders, of which one was diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder, and the other with antisocial personality disorder. In both cases the leaders, who were appreciated and admired at first, with time and following certain events that frustrated or threatened them, turned into bullies who toxicated the work environment for their colleagues and subordinates.

A conceptual model that details how narcissistic leaders' cognitive processes may promote abusive supervision was recently presented by Keller, Hansbrough and Jones (2014). Firstly, they discuss that narcissistic leaders may find tyrannical leader behaviours to be "normal", since they have all personal prerequisites to behave tyrannically themselves (see the description above). This implies that narcissistic leaders may "normalize" abusive supervision in organizations and establish a belief that such supervision is in line with expected and desired behaviours by leaders. Secondly, narcissistic leaders have, as part of their need for self-aggrandizing, a negative view of other people. This naturally includes followers, who consequently may be seen by the narcissistic leader as incompetent and disobedient. Furthermore, research has established that people higher in power are less accurate in reading and interpreting other people's facial expressions than people lower in power. Keller et al. discuss that since narcissistic individuals are particularly poor at empathetic responses, this is likely to apply even more to narcissistic high power individuals. Due to narcissists' tendency towards paranoia and negative implicit theories of other people, they are very likely to misinterpret the intentions of others. Furthermore, due to that narcissistic individuals are highly sensitive to insults and have a tendency to react aggressively (lacking in empathy and morals) they are likely to interpret actions from followers as insubordination and consequently punish them harshly. Due to paranoia, narcissistic leaders may even interpret negative performances by subordinates as intents to undermine the leader and punish the subordinate accordingly. Narcissistic leaders may see their abusive behaviour as an acceptable means of retaliation, since their followers are assumed to try to do them harm.

Looking back at our case again, could Richard be described to have narcissistic personality characteristics? If so, how did these characteristics affect the organisation, how did they affect the group processes and each of the group members Johan, David, and Maria?

Destructive Groups

It has been asserted that theories, scientific research and interventions to improve productivity and well-being in workplaces have focused excessively on the individual leaders, while forgetting the large impact of followers and group dynamics (Jackson and Parry 2008). Fletcher and Käufer (2003) write: "New models of leadership recognize that effectiveness in living systems of relationships does not depend on individual, heroic leaders but rather on leadership practices embedded in a system of interdependencies at different levels within the organisation."

Several theories of group development have been proposed over the years and these overlap to a large extent. The results of research suggest that most new groups go through four phases, where the first one is characterised by orientation and dependency, the second one by conflict, the third one by trust and positive relationships, and the fourth one by work and productivity (Wheelan 2013). In the first phase the group members search the leader and need and want a strong leader with

clear directions and support. The group members are susceptible towards norms and rules in order to make sure to fit in and not be excluded. As they become more secure in the group, often after a few months, the next phase naturally follows. The group members then start questioning things in order to take an independent stand in relation to the rest of the group members and conflicts with regards to the goals and work methods of the group are likely to arise. If and when these are worked through successfully, the next phase characterised by more structure and trust is entered. The group is now more focused on the task than on handling conflicts. The fourth phase can be described as more of phase three, and a work group in this phase is highly productive, focused on the task, can alternate in taking leadership roles depending on who is the most capable for each specific task, and quickly solves conflicts that arise. Crucial in a group's development, as described by Wheelan, is that necessary conflicts regarding for example roles and work methods are worked through in the second phase of a group's development. In groups where power struggles and conflicts do not find a solution, destructive processes such as bullying are likely to arise. Another likely outcome if conflicts in phase two are not handled adequately is that the group dissolves.

It has been reported that 5–10 % of employees are subjected to bullying at work and that 50–80 % of these cases include a superior as bully. The bullying often involves both a superior and one or more co-workers, and typical behaviours are insults, unfair criticism, and social exclusion that are used to frighten, humiliate, or punish the subject (Einarsen et al. 2013). Workplace bullying was by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) defined as "repeated actions and practices directed against one or more workers, which are unwanted by the targets, and which may be carried out deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence, and distress, and may interfere with work performance and/or cause an unpleasant working environment".

Ludvig Igra described the human destructiveness in thoughts and acts as a triad of narcissism, projection and anal-sadism (Igra 2001). He discussed that humans have the capability to use symbols as part of their inner world, an important part of for example relationships between people. However, when symbols become highly overloaded with narcissistic images, these images may become more important than the aspect they are meant to represent. As an example Igra mentions the idea of loving humanity and simultaneously being incapable of truly loving any other person. A better society without social classes or individual glory are examples of symbols that human beings may be prepared to partake in destructive acts in order to achieve. The anxious and defensively oriented projection, used when individuals or groups of people do not want to acknowledge certain aspects of themselves form the second part of the destructive triad. Weakness or evil intentions are typical aspects that individuals and groups may not want to integrate as parts of themselves and therefore use other individuals or groups of people to carry. The narcissistic images and the projections of the unwanted onto others become important parts in the construction of reality that unite people. And this construction may soon start living its own life far beyond the people it is meant to describe. A stranger may be loaded with projections and this created image may be very difficult to correct since it is not

alive or subject to curious investigation. These kinds of images are intended to create a stable and predictable world and may with time be very difficult to unfold since the "real world" is well hidden underneath. When looking at the world in a totalitarian way, an enemy who is portrayed as the root of all the evil is required. The stranger or enemy is portrayed as having undesired, filthy and unworthy characteristics that need to be controlled, adjusted or cleaned somehow. This *anal-sadism* is the third part of the destructive triad according to Igra (Igra 2001). Ludvig Igra, who was born at the end of world war two and whose parents survived the holocaust, devoted parts of his life to trying to understand and explain the roots of destructiveness that all human beings carry within. These destructive human processes can also in various forms and to different extents bite into the social lives of managers and employees in our workplaces. This is for example evident in recent figures of the amount of employees reporting that they are subject to bullying, often by their managers, in today's workplaces (Einarsen et al. 2013).

Although many of those who report being targets of bullying at work report that the perpetrator is their supervisor or manager, little research has been conducted with regards to the relationship between leadership style and bullying. A recent prospective study conducted in our research group (Oxenstierna et al. 2012) was performed on a representative sample of Swedish working men and women. They were asked to describe their work environment and they were also asked to report whether they felt that they had been bullied during the past 12 months ("Are you exposed to personal persecution by means of vicious words or actions from your superiors or your workmates?"). Those who did not report that they had had such experiences were followed for 2 years and their reported work environment was analysed in relation to the likelihood of being a new case of "bullying". For both men and women, significant work environment predictors of bullying were conflicting demands, low decision authority and organisational change. In additional multivariate analyses, men who reported dictatorial leadership, lack of procedural justice (functioning possibility in the workplace organisation to resolve conflicts) and that they were regarded as expendable at their workplace had an increased likelihood of becoming bullying cases in the 2-years follow-up. Similarly, women who reported that there was lack of humanity in their workplace also had an increased likelihood of becoming cases (Oxenstierna et al. 2012).

Aquino and Thau (2009) found in their review of the literature on workplace victimisation (other terms include harassment, bullying, mobbing, petty tyranny, emotional abuse, workplace incivility, abusive supervision, social undermining, and identity threat) that role conflict and role ambiguity reported by subordinates were associated with the strongest effect sizes with regards to exposure to various forms of victimizing behaviours. Aquino and Thau (2009) furthermore concluded that a laissez-faire or autocratic leadership style may predict victimization. Skogstad et al. (2007) found the association between laissez-faire leadership and bullying to partly be mediated by role conflict and conflicts with co-workers. A supportive and fair leadership has later been found to significantly predict the incidence of workplace bullying (Hauge et al. 2011). Hoel et al. (2010) studied to what extent workplace bullying, as seen by both observers and targets, was associated with the lack of

participative leadership as well as the presence of autocratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership and non-contingent punishment. They found that the leadership style most strongly related to workplace bullying reported by observers was autocratic leadership whereas among targets of bullying non-contingent punishment by leaders showed the strongest association with perceived bullying. Laissez-faire leadership was significantly related to bullying among both observers and subjects. Furthermore, narcissistic personality traits in top CEO's were studied in a dissertation from 2014 and found to be related to higher levels of bullying within the organisation (Regnaud 2014).

Referring back to our case: If Richard's subordinates had been asked whether they were victims of bullying by their manager, how could we imagine that Johan, Maria and David would have responded at various time points of Richard's leadership? Was Richard a bully? How did Richard's more destructive behaviours influence the group processes?

When a group has reached its highest and most productive level, as described by Susan Wheelan above, the role of the formal leader has decreased and the contributions of individual group members increased. Shared or distributed leadership is discussed as a form of leadership of modern workplaces. Pearce and Conger (2003) define shared leadership as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. The key distinction between shared leadership and traditional models of leadership is that the influence process involves more than just downward influence on subordinates by an appointed or elected leader. Rather, leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals". Since organisational demands on team-based work arrangements are increasing, distributed forms of leadership may become more common (Pearce and Conger 2003). When individuals from various backgrounds are put together in order to solve specific tasks, all contributing with their unique competence, leadership may more naturally come to be shared between team-members.

Sandahl et al. (2010) discuss the fact that since in constructive group development processes the team leader becomes less and less important and the individual team members more and more independent, such leaders may not get the best results on work environment surveys often collected in organisations. A mature leader who has taken a step back in order to let the team develop may not, and should not, be viewed by the team members as an idealised figure.

How can we understand the group development in our case study in relation to the stages of the research conducted by Susan Wheelan (as described above). The three line managers knew each other from the start, but Richard's entrance on the scene changed the dynamics within this group. How adequate was Richard's leadership when reflecting upon demands on leadership in different phases of group development? In which phase(s) of group development were the management team? What behaviours by Richard and the team members facilitated or hindered the group to develop into more structured work methods and productivity that dominate the later phases of constructive group development?

Destructive Followers or Subordinates

In a study of leadership ideals and leadership practice that our research group conducted in four European countries (Germany, Sweden, Poland, and Italy) we collected data from employees in the hotel sector on both the ideal characteristics and behaviours of leaders and the actual observed characteristics and behaviours of their present superiors. As has been reported in several other studies (Culture, Leadership, and Organizations 2004), the view of an ideal leader differed between countries in our study. Data on the observed leadership gathered in our project followed a similar pattern. The discrepancy between ideal and practice was almost the same across countries and leadership dimensions. For example, the index malevolent leadership (the items were hostile, dishonest, vindictive, and irritable) was rated higher in Italy than in the other countries, both with regards to ideals and practice, thereafter came Poland and last Sweden. The distance between ideal and practice was almost the same across countries, although the ratings of ideals and practice were on different levels. The difference in rated malevolent leadership ideals between countries was statistically significant. Swedish hotel employees expressed the lowest levels of malevolent behaviours in their present leaders and the differences in relation to all other countries were significant. There was also a significant difference in leadership practice between Poland and Italy, where Italian leaders were rated more malevolent than Polish. In Germany, the recruitment process had been very difficult, so in the end the participants who joined the study were recruited through the union. Here, the discrepancy between ideals and practice was much wider. The ideal leadership regarding malevolent behaviours expressed by German hotel employees was on approximately the same low level as the Swedish leadership ideals, but the reported malevolent leadership practice was on the same high level as in the Italian sample. One could ask oneself if these participants had lost trust and faith in their leader, and expressed clearly that they wanted something completely different from what they had rather than giving an "objective" value (Fig. 2).

One reflection to make regarding these results (which have not been published) is that employees appear to support also negative aspects of leadership as long as they fit within certain boundaries of what can be (culturally) expected from a leader. A leader can perhaps show certain malevolent behaviours, if that is part of the leadership culture, or perhaps if it is balanced by other more positive sides. At some point, however, a leader can lose his/her trust from employees completely. We never found out what the disappointment among the German hotel employees was about, but it raises the question of what is demanded from a manager to completely lose trust and faith.

There has been a growing interest in the role of the followers, or co-producers of leadership (Barbuto 2000; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014). Followers are today to a greater extent than before seen as subjects with possibilities to choose how to respond to leadership attempts. The scientific literature on followers is, however, still very limited, and there are few studies performed on the role of followers in the process of destructive leadership.

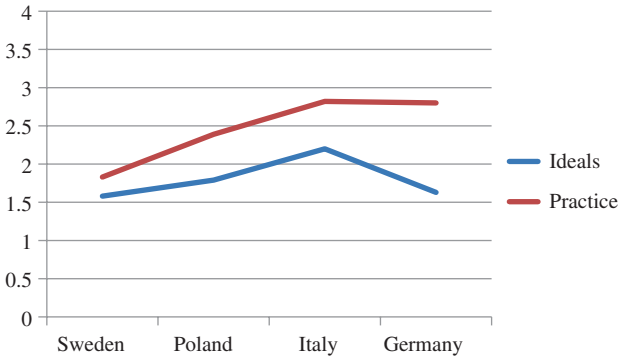

Fig. 2 The figure showed the means of Malevolent leadership practice (upper curve) and and malevolent leadership ideal (lower curve)

Lipman-Blumen (2005) suggests certain basic human needs and fears that make us seek leadership and furthermore make us vulnerable to destructive leaders. She believes that our need for authority figures, for safety and security, for feeling chosen or special, and for social belonging, together with our fear for isolation and personal powerlessness are core aspects that may drive us towards following leaders also when they have proven to be toxic. She writes "Though we yearn for independence, when we achieve it, we often feel isolated and adrift. Paradoxically, that anomie may send us scurrying back to familiar, comforting submission to an authority figure." Lipman-Blumen furthermore discusses that the umbilical cord linking followers to leaders are *illusions*. Some leaders offer illusions about their omnipotence and possibilities to protect their followers from uncertainty and powerlessness and some followers may gladly give up reality for this comforting illusion. "Many of us look to leaders who project an aura of certainty – real or imagined – that we lack within ourselves. And if they are not knowledgeable and in control, we convince ourselves that they truly are, to satisfy our own desperate need. In the process we sometimes push leaders into believing in their own omniscience. Some, of course, don't need much of a push."

Padilla et al. (2007) distinguished between two types of followers in destructive leadership: conformers and colluders. Conformers submit to destructive leaders because of their immature or dependent personalities, and colluders follow destructive leaders because they share their mind-set and values. Conformers tend to suffer from poor self-esteem, a low self-efficacy, and external locus of control, and may follow a charismatic leader because they wish to become someone more desirable and by identifying with a strong leader, they may feel they are. They may submit to manipulations because they do not believe they deserve better, and they may need a strong leader to feel protected and cared for. Padilla et al. discuss that loyal followers of destructive leaders follow them because they have something to gain personally from the situation. The conformers gain things like strength, a sense of belonging, and a release from the burden of responsibility. The colluders gain status and power.

Thoroughgood et al. (2012) recently presented a more detailed taxonomy of followers associated with destructive leadership, where they divide the conformers into three subgroups (lost souls, authoritarians, and bystanders) and the colluders into two subgroups (acolytes and opportunists). Lost souls are thought to have negative self-evaluations and ill-defined self-concepts, and to easily be attracted to charismatic leaders since they provide them with the direction, clarity and enhanced self-esteem that they lack. The lost souls are eager to please and gain recognition from the charismatic leader, whom they identify strongly with, and this makes them highly vulnerable to manipulations. The lost souls "adopt their self images from role expectations of leaders and behave in ways that satisfy such individuals to first gain acceptance, then increased status and self-esteem". Lost souls are according to Thoroughgood et al. (2012) thought to have unmet basic needs from early childhood, which make them seek out authority figures as adults whom they think can offer protection, love, and a sense of belonging. Destructive leaders can use this vulnerability and make the lost souls sacrifice their autonomy to please their leaders and gain acceptance. Lost souls also lack the internal values needed in order to evaluate the messages of destructive leaders. They lack direction and by identifying with charismatic leaders and adopting their belief system, they get a greater sense of purpose and self-esteem. They have a combination of poor self-esteem, poor self-efficacy, poor locus of control, and a high level of neuroticism. They see themselves as worthless and unable to solve arising problems, long to be someone more desirable, and may find it justified to be manipulated. Furthermore, lost souls are more neurotic than others, more emotionally unstable and dependent, and more often feel sad and anxious.

The authoritarians are quite different from the lost souls. They obey destructive leaders because they hold internal values stressing obedience to authority figures or to those who have a higher rank in an organisation. It is unrelated to self-esteem, fearing retributions, or gaining recognition, but is rather related to a rigid way of looking at the world. They are characterised by uncritical deferment to authority, strict adherence to in-group norms, rules, and social conventions, and intolerance towards out-group members. These individuals are intolerant towards uncertainty and ambiguity, strongly preferring a simple and well-defined world. They believe that whatever happens it must be fair and that people who are punished must be punished for a reason. This is associated with a blind trust in (unethical) leaders and a devaluation of targets of aggression.

The bystander is motivated primarily by fear. Thoroughgood et al. discuss that the bystander might be the most common type of susceptible follower. They simply conform in order to minimize personal costs. They may not agree with the leader or be particularly dependent on him or her, but acts in an instrumental way in order to keep personal rewards and avoid punishments. The bystanders, like the lost souls, are thought to have negative core self-evaluations. They lack the self-esteem to constructively solve conflicts or to confront superiors. High in self-monitoring, they are alert to others' perception of them and eager that others view them positively. This makes bystanders highly apt at avoiding behaviours that may be punished by supe-

riors. Bystanders are furthermore discussed to be low in extraversion and dominance and as such more sensitive to warnings of punishments, making them likely to refrain from resisting destructive leaders. Also lacking a courageous-prosocial disposition (empathy, altruism, social responsibility, and risk-taking) the bystander exhibits few characteristics needed in order to resist destructive leadership.

The opportunists are more similar to the destructive leaders themselves than are the conformers. They believe that complying with the destructive leader will give them benefits and rewards. Opportunists are ambitious individuals who create alliances with those who can get them ahead and are not afraid of exploiting others in an unethical way in order to advance. They display unsocialized characteristics such as Machiavellianism in order to gain power and control. They are likely to flatter a destructive leader and withhold criticism from him or her. Opportunists are greedy and lack self-control, meaning that they are attracted to short-term benefits, sometimes at the cost of the long-term outcomes.

Finally, acolytes naturally follow destructive leaders because they share the leaders' toxic goals and visions. They are described to have a firm sense of self and to be more apt at following the destructive leader the stronger the belief in the leader to have the skills and qualifications needed in order to drive the organisations towards the destructive goal.

In a study by Blair et al. (2008) with the aim of determining the extent to which narcissism was related to managerial effectiveness and integrity, narcissism was negatively related to supervisor ratings of interpersonal performance and integrity, but unrelated to subordinate ratings of interpersonal performance and integrity. This is an interesting finding because it may say something about the kind of relationships that narcissistic individuals build with their subordinates. Followers to narcissistic leaders may seek approval from their leader to the extent that they may not see their shortcomings, and find their abusive leadership as justifiable (Conger and Kanungo 1998). Subordinates may buy into the dynamics of the narcissistic leader and the narcissist's explanation of the surrounding world to the point where they ignore their own doubts. Some followers of narcissistic leaders may consequently not acknowledge or report the leader's behaviour as destructive.

How could one understand the role that Johan, Maria and David respectively took in the group dynamics that developed in Richard's management team? What could we imagine motivated them to take the roles they took? How did the position that each of them had affect Richard's possibilities to keep exerting his leadership? How did the group members' roles affect the other team members' possibilities to act? Were some of them more responsible for the destructive leadership development than others?

Bystanders of workplace bullying are conceptually related to followers in destructive leadership processes and have received similarly little attention in research. The term bystander implies that the individual has choices with regards to how to act in a bullying process rather than being just an observer. Paull et al. (2012) outlined 13 potential roles that bystanders in bullying processes can take. They categorise the roles according to if they are constructive or destructive and if they are

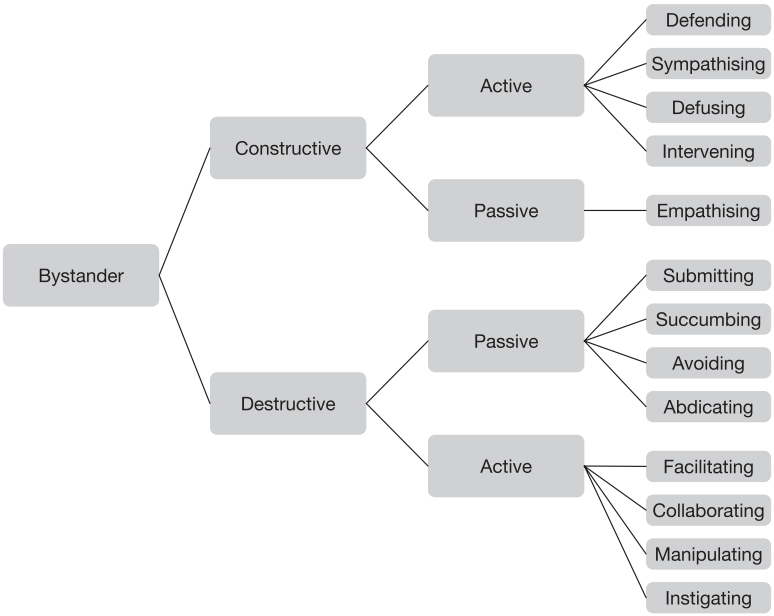

Fig. 3 The thirteen potential bystander roles presented by Paull et al. (2012)

passive or active. The more active bystanders may encourage the bully's actions and the more passive may feel and act more as a victim. They describe this as a continuum where bystanders to varying degrees identify either with the bully or with the victim. Individuals can take several bystander roles simultaneously and also change positions with time (Fig. 3).

Of the constructive and active bystanders, the *defending* bystander takes sides with the victim and speaks up and defends the victim in a group of people. The *sympathising* bystander offers sympathy and practical support to the victim but without getting drawn into the conflict. The *defusing* bystander tries to mediate or negotiate in order to reduce the tension of the conflict, but does not intervene in order to solve the situation. The constructive passive, *empathising* bystander, takes the victim's side emotionally but does not act to prevent the bullying.

Among the destructive passive bystanders, the *submitting* bystander offers him or herself as an alternative target for the bully in order to take attention away from the victim. The *succumbing* bystander becomes a fellow victim due to for example having tried but been unsuccessful in attempts to defend the victim. The *avoiding* bystanders try to protect themselves at the expense of the victim by for example absenting themselves from situations where they might be expected to speak up. The *abdicating* bystander facilitates the bullying by ignoring it. Of the actively destructive bystanders, the *facilitators* join in with the bullying, perhaps without being fully aware of the consequences of their

actions. The *collaborating* bystander more actively backs up the bully by for example showing aggression towards the victim or laughing at a derogative remark. The *manipulating* bystander is less overt and may for example supply, withhold or distort information about the victim in order to gain something personally from the situation. The *instigating* bystander has also been called a puppet-master and sets up the situation by feeding the more openly aggressive bully with information or advice, which direct the bully's aggression towards the victim. An instigating bystander may for example spread malicious gossip to cause the bully to act aggressively.

We can look back at our case and try to identify situations where David, Maria and Johan took different bystander roles. What roles did each of them take in different situations? Could we imagine that any of David, Maria and Johan at any given time point could have changed the direction of the destructive leadership process?

The case shows that the individuals in the team, Maria, Johan and David, were also partly responsible for the destructive group development at the workplace. Paull et al. (2012) find that educating employees on their power and responsibilities as bystanders is an important aspect when intervening to promote a climate that diminishes bullying. In sum, they discuss that in order to help prevent bullying bystanders should "intervene on behalf of targets, keep safe from and not assist the bully, inform others, and remain sensitive to how stories lead to the construction of organisational realities".

The Role of the Context

Padilla et al. (2007) discuss conducive environments as part of the toxic triangle of destructive leadership. Followers or subordinates are more inclined to accept and follow charismatic, assertive, and destructive leaders in times that are unstable and characterised by a threat to their security. Lipman-Blumen (2005) writes: "Constant change, seasoned with ambiguity, increases our vulnerability to toxic leaders. They promise to allay those fears and protect us – despite the fact that they really can't. In the anxiety of such moments, we become only too willing to trade our fears for the sheltering "security" of a strong leader, one with a clear ideology and a clear explanation of the disturbing changes exploding around us, a leader who can bring meaning to our chaotic world."

There were aspects of the context surrounding the management team in our case that perhaps partly could explain why the work processes and relationships developed as they did. Could we imagine the situation developing in other directions if the surrounding conditions had been different?

Padilla et al. suggest that in organisations that are less regulated and the possibility to abuse power is higher, destructive leadership is more likely to emerge. They discuss that higher up on the organisational hierarchy (where the discretion among leaders is greater), and in young and rapidly growing organisations, one should be

extra alert towards the development of destructive leadership. Furthermore, in cultures where there is a larger distance between privileged and non-privileged, there is, according to Padilla et al. a greater acceptance of destructive behaviours of leaders (Padilla et al. 2007).

Experienced stress due to environmental pressure is furthermore a likely reason for why managers behave destructively. Managers' experienced stress was in a recent study found to be highly important for employees' ratings of the managers' bullying behaviour (Mathisen et al. 2011). It is discussed in the literature that managers may fail in self-regulation when stressed, and subsequently displace aggression on subordinates. Environmental stressors discussed in the literature are for example that managers perceive procedural injustice, being mistreated by their employer, organisational constraints such as poor resources and support, role overload or that the demands are too high, interpersonal conflicts, and subordinates pressuring managers in different ways and thereby triggering destructive behaviours (Einarsen et al. 2013). In one of our own recently published studies of a representative sample of the Swedish working population we show that managers reported high demands and conflicts with co-workers, as well as conflicts between work and private life more often than did employees without a managerial position (Nyberg et al. 2015). Female managers reported high demands and low workplace influence more often than male managers and the stressors were generally more frequent in the public sector where many women in Sweden work. In another study conducted in our group, investigating changes in individual health after a promotion, we found that Swedish men and women who had been promoted over the past two years reported more depressive symptoms and lower self-rated health two years later. This indicates that an increase in responsibility may put pressure on individuals affecting their well-being and health, and possibly also their leadership and performance (Nyberg et al. under review). However, more research is needed on the role of contextual factors in antecedents to destructive leadership (Collins and Jackson 2015; Einarsen et al. 2013; Tepper et al. 2006; Wang et al. 2010).

Whom Do We Select as Our Leaders and Why?

It has been asserted that narcissism is a common trait among leaders around the world (Kets de Vries and Miller 1985; Maccoby 2007). Why are so many individuals with destructive sides to their personalities promoted to managerial positions in the first place?

One could start by asking why Richard was selected by the organisation to run a department, which at the time of his appointment was going downhill. What were the qualities in Richard that made decision makers believe that he was the man for the job? And, given the outcomes of his three years of leadership, had he been the man for the job?

The implicit leadership theory posits that we all have a more or less conscious picture of what characteristics a successful leader should have and that leaders are

selected according to degree of fit with this inner picture (Lord et al. 1984). Some general characteristics found to be related to leadership emergence include intelligence, dominance, high self-esteem, extraversion, confidence and generalized self-efficacy (Judge et al. 2002). Narcissists have been found to score high on all these characteristics and are rated by others as highly intelligent, thereby holding most of the personality characteristics that many people across situations believe is associated with successful leadership (Nevicka et al. 2011). Individuals high in narcissism have furthermore been found to more often emerge as leaders in leaderless group discussions than individuals low in narcissism (Brunell et al. 2008; Nevicka et al. 2011).

Research furthermore shows that men more often than women emerge as leaders in previously leaderless groups (Eagly and Karau 1991; Ritter and Yoder 2004) and there is a large body of research discussing that our pictures of a successful leader to a large extent coincides with attributes associated with male gender (Eagly and Karau 2002; Heilman 2001; Heilman and Okimoto 2007). Yet, female leaders are rated by subordinates as somewhat higher in transformational leadership style, a style that is positively related to a large amount of positive outcomes (Eagly and Carli 2003).

We have seen a trend in the literature from ideals encompassing more hero-like leadership, towards leadership dominated by ethics, fairness, and servant leadership (Brown and Treviño 2006; Jackson and Parry 2008; Nyberg 2008, 2009; van Knippenberg et al. 2007). However, although critical voices are heard in favour of anti-charismatic leadership, other authors point out the positive sides of narcissistic leadership, and that narcissistic personality types are always going to be seen at leadership positions (Maccoby 2007). The reason for this is argued to be the strong career drive, need for power and confirmation that these individuals have. They may also be extraordinarily talented in their specific field of knowledge and thereby contribute in ways that others cannot.

Destructive Leadership and Women

There are several charismatic and destructive leaders from our recent history discussed in the literature on destructive leadership. Very few of them are women, which may be due to that few women hold top leadership positions. There is, however, little knowledge and discussion in the literature about the role of gender in destructive leadership processes (Thoroughgood et al. 2011).

There is some evidence showing that female leaders are more ethical and less apt at taking risks than male leaders (Ho et al. 2014). Female leaders may furthermore be more severely punished if engaging in destructive leadership. Thoroughgood et al. (2011) conducted a study in which several hundreds of undergraduate students read through a vignette describing an aversive leader and the leader's subordinates in a sales department. The students were asked to put themselves in the subordinates' shoes and then to respond to numerous questions. They found the leader to be

more aversive when the organisation was under financial pressure and had a climate intolerant towards destructive leadership. Moreover, female leaders were perceived as more aversive under such circumstances than male leaders.

In our case above: Would our perception of the development in the management team be different if the manager was a woman? How would we interpret the events in the story if exchanging the name Richard to Emma? Would Emma have to act differently than Richard in order to gain trust, respect, motivation and willingness to follow her as a leader? Could we imagine David, Johan or Maria responding differently to the abusive sides of Emma's leadership compared with the abusive sides of Richard's?

Lipman-Blumen's (2005) assertion that illusions are the umbilical cord linking followers to leaders is interesting when reflecting on this topic. She discusses that leaders may offer illusions about their omnipotence and possibilities to protect their followers from uncertainty and powerlessness and that this may result in that followers give up reality for this comforting illusion. Can women carry such projections? Are they socially encouraged or accepted to do so?

Eagly and Karau (2002) discuss that according to social role theory, gender roles include both beliefs about how women and men *are* (descriptive norms or stereotypes) and also how they *ought to* be (injunctive norms). The descriptive norms associated with men are more often *agentic* (e.g. assertive, controlling, confident aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and prone to act as a leader) and the norms associated with women are more often *communal* (e.g. concern with the welfare of other people, affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle). The *injunctive* norms prescribe behaviours that are considered socially appropriate for men and women. Women who diverge strongly from this gender role expectation are likely to be punished by men as well as by women (Heilman 2001; Heilman and Okimoto 2007; Rudman et al. 2012). Eagly and Karau (2002) propose in their role congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders that perceived incongruity between the female gender role (communal) and leadership roles (agentic) leads to that women are perceived less favourably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and that their behaviours that fulfill the prescriptions of a leader role are less favorably evaluated than men's.

In one of our own studies we investigated predictors of job promotion and a high salary increase between 2008 and 2010 among Swedish women and men and found important gender differences (Nyberg et al. 2015). While it was particularly important for women's career success that they were very well educated, ambitious, and that the work organisation employed just procedures, it was particularly important for men's career success that they used open coping strategies when in conflicts with superiors. Open coping strategies means actively stating your opinion or suggesting a compromise to a conflict. Covert coping, on the other hand, means dwelling on matters or taking frustration out on others, such as family members. This study shows that there appears to be gendered processes in the promotion of men and women in current Swedish working life that supports Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders (Eagly and Karau 2002).

There appears to be great potential for new interesting research investigating the role of gender in destructive leadership processes, for example how our preconceived ideas of gender roles affect the process of selecting and promoting men and women with potentially destructive personality traits to leadership positions, the nature of the relationships that male and female leaders with pronounced destructive sides to their personality may build with their followers, the group processes that keep destructive men and women in leadership positions in power, and how we in retrospect may make sense of and judge destructive leadership in men and women leaders.

Health-Related Consequences of Destructive Leadership

As has been mentioned above, although the shadow sides of charisma and the presence of narcissism in leaders are thought to be crucial for the development of destructive leader behaviours, these concepts have not often been tested directly in relation to negative outcomes for subordinates and the organisation. Examples of concepts of destructive leaders that have been studied are Machiavellian leaders, petty tyranny, derailed leadership, abusive supervision, poor leadership, toxic leaders, destructive leadership, and bullying leadership (Einarsen et al. 2013).

Schyns and Schilling (2013) report in their meta-analysis positive associations between destructive leadership and a wide range of negative outcomes. They found particularly strong associations between abusive supervision on the one hand and attitude toward the leader and counterproductive work behaviour on the other. The association between destructive leadership and subordinates' resistance towards the leader was weaker, and the authors discuss that subordinates may prefer to act out negative attitudes on the job than on the leader him/herself due to fear of retaliation. The association between abusive supervision and follower stress and well-being was also highly significant, but somewhat weaker. They found the association with wellbeing to be stronger than that with stress.

Also other reviews of the outcomes of destructive leadership have been published recently (Einarsen et al. 2010; 2013; Tepper 2007). The authors have found abusive supervision to be linked with several indicators of psychological distress, such as anxiety, depression, burnout, and somatic health complaints (Duffy et al. 2002; Grandey et al. 2007; Sosik and Godshalk 2000; Tepper 2000; Yagil 2006).

In one of our own studies we investigated the relationship between perceived leadership and self-reported sickness absence and presenteeism in the Swedish working population (Nyberg et al. 2008). We found that autocratic leadership in the closest superior (the superior being autocratic, bossy, elitist, and dictatorial) was associated with a greater total amount of sick days the past 12 months among men. Among women there was no significant relationship between perceived autocratic leadership and self-reported sickness absence. The relationship was adjusted for self-rated health, which indicates that the relationship has a distinct behavioural component. Men may be more reluctant towards autocratic leadership than women,

and have a greater tendency to report sick if working under an autocratic manager regardless of their health status. In another study we investigated the association between autocratic (see above), malevolent (hostile, dishonest, vindictive, irritable), and self-centered (self interested, non-participative, loner, asocial) leadership on the one hand, and poor mental health, low vitality and high behavioural stress on the other in the hotel industry in Sweden, Poland, and Italy (Nyberg et al. 2011). There were no country-differences in self-centered leadership, but hotel employees in Italy reported the most autocratic and malevolent leadership, followed by Poland. In Sweden such behaviours in hotel managers were the least common. Self-centered leadership was, however, the destructive leadership dimension that was the most strongly associated with the well-being outcomes after adjustments for occupational group, type of hotel, country and working conditions were made.

In a recent publication Mathieu et al. (2014) studied the relationship between employees' perception of psychopathy (manipulative/unethical, callous/insensitive, unreliable/unfocused, and intimidating/aggressive) in their closest superior on the one hand and their job satisfaction and psychological distress on the other. Two samples were used, one smaller from the financial sector including mostly women, and one larger from the public sector including mostly men. In the first smaller sample there was no direct statistically significant link between psychopathy in leaders and psychological distress among subordinates, but a link that was mediated through work-family conflict. In the second larger public sector sample there was a direct link between psychopathy in the leader and psychological distress among employees. The authors argue that the lack of significance in sample one can be due to lack of power in the statistical analyses. They furthermore discuss that there may be gender-related differences in the association between perceptions of psychopathy in leaders and psychological distress, where the negative effect may be mediated through e.g. work-family conflict in women, but be more direct among men.

Skogstad et al. (2007) reported that laissez-faire leadership was associated with bullying and distress among employees and that conflicts with co-workers, role conflict, and role ambiguity mediated this relationship. Skogstad et al. (2014) furthermore showed in a recent longitudinal analysis that avoidant leadership predicted role ambiguity among subordinates. Two other measures of leadership, initiation of structure and consideration, did not predict role ambiguity, which strengthens the evidence for avoidant or laissez-faire leadership as an important aspect of destructive leadership.

Einarsen et al. (2013) write that being exposed to abusive and bullying leadership, often combined with collegial aggression or ostracism, is such a distressing event that it may result in a severe cognitive-emotional crisis. Being targets of destructive leadership or workplace bullying can seriously affect and damage our view of the surrounding world, other people and ourselves. When bullied or socially excluded our basic need for belonging is threatened, we may lose a meaningful connection between our actions and their outcomes, and we may be troubled with difficult emotions such as shame and guilt (Williams 2001).

Workplace bullying (in general) has in research with robust designs been shown to be associated with increased risk of depression, cardio-vascular disease, and

sickness absence (Einarsen et al. 2013; Kivimaki et al. 2003; Nielsen et al. 2008; Ortega et al. 2009). The strongest associations have been reported between victimization and outcomes such as negative emotions at work, frustration, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion, followed by self-esteem and life satisfaction (Aquino and Thau 2009; Bowling and Beehr 2006).

Protecting Oneself Against Destructive Leadership

As discussed above, followers may play a crucial role in the development of destructive leadership, and may be an important key when it comes to preventing and stopping destructive leadership. Most managers are also subordinates, and thereby have key functions and choices when it comes to either getting drawn into or preventing destructive processes to spread in an organisation.

Researchers have proposed several possible roles that can be ascribed to individuals and that individuals can take when involved in destructive leadership and group processes. When destructive leadership and group processes take place, these will most likely have negative effects on the wellbeing and health of the individuals involved. So, what can one do not to get drawn into these processes in the first place? Can they somehow be counteracted? And what can you do to protect your self-esteem, happiness, and wellbeing if you have become a victim?

Protecting Oneself from Becoming a Destructive Leader

Kellerman has presented some guidelines for leaders to follow in order not to fall into destructive leadership (Kellerman 2004). Her first suggestion is to limit the leaders' tenure. Sometimes destructive components of managers' leadership develop with the role over time, such as grandiosity, poor reality testing, and deteriorating morals. She furthermore suggests that the leader shares power and compensates for his or her weaknesses as a leader. She also points out the importance of keeping contact with reality when it comes to self-perceptions, perceptions of the surrounding world, and the purpose of the organisation. She asserts the importance of creating an open social climate where opposing opinions are allowed to be raised, where advisors are encouraged to be strong and independent and the leader is surrounded with honest and critical friends. Information should be collected widely and with diversity and decisions made after careful evaluation of the information available. Developing and sustaining self-knowledge, self-control, good habits and good health are other suggestions.

In the next chapter of this book an art-inspired leadership program is presented (Romanowska 2014). The managers who participated in this program were not selected because they exhibited destructive behaviours, but represented common managers from a wide range of organisations. This program was in several

empirical studies shown to have positive effects with regards to developing constructive components in managers' leadership. This in turn showed positive effects on the wellbeing of both the managers and their subordinates. This gives evidence that interventions that put people in strong aesthetic experiences evoking deep emotional states and encourage reflections on ethics and responsibility may help prevent people (managers) to partake in destructive acts towards other people.

Protecting Oneself from Becoming a Destructive Follower

Lipman-Blumen (2005) suggests several constructive ways of handling toxic leaders; confronting them, helping them to change, quietly undermining them, blowing the whistle on them, and organizing to oust them. She emphasizes the importance of forming coalitions with other people within and outside the organisation if wanting to change the situation. An individual working alone takes a high risk and can easily be the one ousted out instead of the toxic leader. Also Kellerman (2004) has presented some suggestions how followers can strengthen their personal capacity to resist destructive leaders. First on her list is to empower oneself, meaning that one should think of oneself as a person with power to influence the direction of events rather than a follower with little power to make use of. The second point is to make sure to be loyal to the whole, or to the common goal, rather than to one single individual (e.g. a destructive leader). Other advice she presents is to be sceptical and not regard any human being as having god-like qualities, to dare to take a stand and assert your opinion, and to pay attention to what is going on around you with regards to the leadership processes. She furthermore emphasises the importance of building allies and working together with others.

From the taxonomy of followers in destructive leadership processes outlined by Thoroughgood et al. (2012), it appears that while some followers of destructive leaders appear to act solely in order to gain something, many may act in order to avoid becoming a victim themselves. It furthermore appears that many of the destructive group processes described in this chapter tap into unconscious strong positive emotions, fears, and defence mechanisms that the members to some extent are unable to understand, object to, or withdraw from. Knowledge about the underlying psychological mechanisms in destructive leadership processes may need to become more available and common to everyone. If we all more quickly could identify signs in ourselves as well as in our surroundings and interpret events that may lead up to destructive leadership and group processes, some of them may be prevented.

Protecting Oneself as a Victim

Several studies have been conducted trying to sort out who gets chosen as victims of workplace aggression (in general). Although some personality measures have been found associated with bullying, the causal directions of these relationships are

not clear. For example, individuals who report high negative affectivity scores, or low self-esteem scores may be victimized due to these personal characteristics, or they may report these characteristics because they have been bullied (Aquino and Thau 2009). Consequently, we cannot say anything with certainty regarding personality as a risk factor for being bullied. However, two behaviours that have been found related to workplace aggression (in general) are submissive behaviours and provocative behaviours. The submissive victims are insecure and passive and do not defend against attack. The provocative are aggressive, hostile or irritating and therefore likely to be attacked by others. The submissive may be perceived as easy targets for abuse and the provocative as deserving targets (Aquino and Lamertz 2004).

The research on how victims can protect themselves from destructive leadership is limited. May et al. (2014) proposed a theoretical model of the interaction process between leaders and followers focussing on in what ways followers can cope with destructive leadership. They argue that the degree of confrontativeness of the chosen coping strategy in turn affects leaders' perceptions and resultant behaviours. If leaders perceive their followers' coping strategies to be aggressive or retaliatory, they are likely to maintain or increase their destructive behaviour. But also when followers are perceived to act submissively are they likely to keep acting abusively. A meta-analysis by Aquino and Thau (2009) presents a rather pessimistic picture of the possibilities of victims to defend themselves against bullies. If the victim acts aggressively it is very likely that the conflict escalates into a vicious cycle of reciprocal aggression, which makes the situation of the victim worse. Also the use of other voice strategies such as seeking social support from others or whistle blowing is associated with exposure to more harassment (Chan and McAllister 2014). However, it has been found that although these retaliatory consequences face those who speak up, those who do speak up appear to have better health than those who do not. Open coping, which means clearly stating your opinion if in a conflict with a superior or co-worker, has been found to be more advantageous with regards to health outcomes than covert coping (Härenstam et al. 2000). Covert coping means that you dwell on things or take out frustration on people close to you rather than on the people the conflict concerns. Furthermore, the results from a study by Harvey et al. (2007) indicate that using ingratiation (flattery and other related tactics) or scoring high on positive affectivity (the dispositional tendency to experience positive emotional states and view others and oneself positively) may help victims when exposed to abusive supervision. The authors discuss that using ingratiation tactics may give victims a sense of control and also that the positive affect may in itself protect against experiences of stress.

Aquino and Thau (2009) discuss that victimized employees run the risk of becoming locked in a vicious cycle in which the experience of victimization motivates them to engage in behaviours that invite further victimization. This interpersonal process is further explored by Chan and McAllister (2014). The starting point is that experiencing that a leader abuses his or her power evokes strong negative emotions in us. The consequence of such abuse is likely to be paranoia within the organisation, namely an exaggerated distrust that affects to what extent followers believe that they are being threatened and mistreated. This paranoia in subordinates may result in subordinate negative behaviours that may provoke further abuse by the leader.

The most effective strategy to improve the wellbeing of the bullied individual appears to be that the victim avoids the perpetrator or leaves the workplace (Aquino and Thau 2009; Cortina and Magley 2003; Zapf and Gross 2001). Leaving the organisation may however not be a desirable option for many of us. We may have made important investments in our workplaces, such as having worked hard in order to prove our competency, built relationships with co-workers, and we may have a career in mind in this particular organisation. Some of us cannot change work places because of a lack of other job opportunities available. We may also understandably think that we should not have to leave a job we like because our manager does not function well in his or her role. If wanting or having to stay in the organisation, avoiding the destructive person, and using strategies that help the victim feel more in control of the situation appear to be the most successful. Using a constructive problem-solving approach to the conflict is one example (Aquino and Thau 2009).

One spokesperson for the positive sides of narcissistic leaders is psychoanalyst and consultant Michael Maccoby. Although he recognizes certain downsides (narcissistic leaders don't listen, are oversensitive, paranoid, overcontrolling and overcompetitive, explode in anger, exaggerate, are isolated, grandiose, and lack self-knowledge) he believes narcissistic leaders to be unique when it comes to finding creative solutions and moving businesses ahead (Maccoby 2007). Due to these unique contributions of narcissistic leaders he finds it worthwhile to discuss how subordinates and co-workers can try to understand and best relate to a narcissistic manager. He discusses, for example, that a subordinate to a narcissistic leader must accept to be there to support the manager, and not expect it to be the other way around. You need to show your narcissistic manager that you can help solve his problems, while not talking about your own. Furthermore, you must protect your narcissistic manager's image. Narcissists are supersensitive to threats to their image, which according to Maccoby can be very confusing since they are completely insensitive to others'.

In our case, what attempts did Johan, Maria and David respectively do to change their situation? What were the outcomes of these attempts? Could they have handled the situation differently? Could we imagine Johan, Maria or David using any of the constructive ways of handling toxic leaders suggested above? Could they have been successful?

Concluding Remarks

In the present chapter we have, using a fictive case as our starting point, discussed the literature on some common characteristics of destructive leaders, susceptibility among followers, and the process linking susceptible followers with destructive leaders, making up the process of destructive leadership. We have also discussed some literature on the link between managers' destructive leadership and the well-being and health of subordinates. Also the current state of knowledge about how individuals can protect themselves against destructive leadership has been reviewed.

Table 1 Leadership behaviours in the stress profile associated with ischaemic heart disease among male employees in the Stockholm area

	Statement	Risk of ischaemic heart disease (95 % confidence interval)
1	My boss gives me the information I need	0.65 (0.50–0.83)
2	My boss is good at pushing through and carrying out changes	0.61 (0.45–0.81)
3	My boss explains goals and sub-goals for our work so that I understand what they mean for my particular part of the task	0.61 (0.46–0.79)
4	I have a clear picture of what my boss expects of me	0.77 (0.59–1.01)
5	My boss shows that he/she cares how things are for me and how I feel	0.71 (0.54–0.93)
6	I have sufficient power in relation to my responsibilities	0.64 (0.48–0.84)
7	My boss takes the time to become involved in his/her employees' professional development	0.69 (0.51–0.92)
8	My boss encourages my participation in the scheduling of my work	0.84 (0.63–1.12)
9	I am praised by my boss if I have done something good	0.73 (0.55–0.97)
10	I am criticised by my boss if I have done something that is not good	1.03 (0.77–1.38)

In one of our own studies, we found several aspects of employees' ratings of managers' constructive behaviours to be protective of the development of ischaemic heart disease during a follow-up period of 10 years (Nyberg et al. 2009). When in a process of applying for a new job, it may be warranted to take references on your future manager before accepting a job offer. The list below could perhaps be used as one of several guidelines available on health-promoting leadership. Approximately 3000 men in various occupations in the Stockholm area went through a medical survey and also filled in a questionnaire about their closest superior during a visit at an occupational health unit. These men were then followed by register data on hospital admissions and deaths for 10 years. The results were pretty clear with respect to a relationship between rated leadership and risk of developing ischaemic heart disease. Men who rated their managers high on the following questions had a lower risk of developing heart disease over a subsequent time period of 10 years (Table 1).

The association was particularly strong for questions concerning the extent to which the manager gives information and sufficient control to employees in relation to their responsibilities, explains goals and sub-goals thoroughly, and is good at pushing through and carrying out changes. Statement 4, 8, and 10, on the other hand, were not statistically significantly related to risk of developing ischaemic heart disease. It was shown that the longer the participant had been employed at the workplace with good leadership the lower was the risk of developing heart disease. This supports the evidence of a dose-response relationship between perceived leadership and heart disease.

The knowledge we have today about the harm destructive leaders can cause for organisations and individuals support the importance of careful selection of leaders

to key managerial positions. We are all easily attracted to charismatic individuals, since they may evoke many positive emotions in us. Since individuals who exhibit destructive sides to their personalities most often also contribute with creative visions and key competencies, we may not always be able to exclude these individuals from influential positions in our organisations. We may sometimes have to find other ways to cope with potentially destructive behaviours in managers. One way is of course to develop these leaders individually, as proposed by Julia Romanowska in the next chapter. Her leader development program is a unique contribution with its focus on aesthemetics: the combination of aesthetic power of imagination, strong emotional experiences, and ethical reflections. It has been asserted that it is more often emotional than cognitive factors that cause leadership to fail or destructive leadership processes to evolve (Jackson and Parry 2008). Destructive personality traits may be very difficult to change. A leader development program with pronounced emotional components in combination with creative imagination, and reflections on ethics may, however, have a greater potential to reach deeper layers within individuals than programs aiming at developing certain cognitively oriented skills. Other ways are to enhance the awareness in organisations of destructive sides of leadership and to implement policies in order to handle and control the damage these individuals can make. Damage includes both that organisations lose competency due to employees fleeing from a destructive work environment, and that employees who stay lose (parts of their) health and work capacity. The literature on the individuals' chances of protecting themselves against workplace aggression once having been targeted reveals a rather dark picture. The individual has almost no other option than to leave the workplace. Could this situation be prevented if there were more knowledge and awareness about these types of processes in our organisations? If looking back at our case, could for example the Sweden manager, if having been closer to the management team, have stopped the destructive development? And what about Johan, David, and Maria – if they had been more aware of the attractions to and destructive components of many charismatic leaders, or the interpersonal processes common in destructive groups, could they have been better prepared to do something to stop the progress?

In the next chapters we will investigate whether the dark sides of leadership and group behaviour in workplaces could be influenced by cultural experiences. Would it be possible to reduce destructive leadership in our workplaces if we apply a combination of knowledge about cultural experiences, compassion training and the brain? Could we use our knowledge about the ability of cultural experiences to evoke strong emotions to improve manager behaviour in a constructive way? And would the reactions that are triggered in the emotional brain surprise the cognitive brain so that changes of a long-lasting nature would take place in those managers' thinking about the employees? Could such knowledge reduce destructive, narcissistic, egoistic, malevolent and laissez-faire behaviours in managers? In other words, can emotions evoked by cultural experiences in managers change their behaviour for the better and could this be of benefit for employee health? And when and how can leadership development programs cause damage?

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