The Commonality of Harmful Actions at the Top

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Abstract

Researchers in Norway surveyed a cross-section of the workforce to determine how often each of the four damaging leadership behaviors described by the damaging and Constructive Leadership Behavior Model was seen. Both the operational classification method (OCM) and the latent class cluster (LCC) analysis are used as estimate techniques in this work. The overall prevalence of destructive leadership conduct ranged from 33.5% (OCM) to 61% (LCC), suggesting that destructive leadership is not an outlier. Passive kinds of destructive leadership are more common than their forceful counterparts. The findings indicated that tyrant leadership was the least common harmful leadership style, followed by supportive-disloyal leadership and derailed leadership. Laissez-faire leadership was shown to be the most common destructive leadership style. The fact that many leaders exhibit both positive and negative traits suggests that leadership is neither purely positive nor purely negative. This research expands the theoretical understanding of what constitutes normal leadership behavior.

Introduction

The data for this research came from a joint effort between Statistics Norway and the University of Bergen. The research was funded in part by the Norwegian government's National Insurance Administration and its FARVE initiative, as well as by two Norwegian employer groups (the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities). We would like to thank Bengt Oscar Lagerstr m and Maria H stmark of Statistics Norway and Stig Berge Matthiesen of the Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen, for their participation to the data collecting. 2006). While some scholars (e.g. Aryee et al., 2007) contend that destructive or abusive leadership is not all that common, others (e.g. Burke, 2006; Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzino, 1990) disagree and instead view it as a serious issue in many businesses. Sixty to seventy-five percent of workers in studies of workplace environments conducted between the mid-1950s and 1990 (Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990) said that their direct supervisor was the most stressful part of the job. In the USA, workplace pressure has been stated in 75% of workers' compensation claims in which mental stresses were the major reason of absenteeism, and 94% of those claims were purportedly caused by abusive treatment by supervisors (Wilson, 1991). Thus, there is mounting evidence demonstrating that leaders engage in damaging behavior, either against their subordinates (Bies and Tripp, 1998; Tepper, 2000, 2007) or the company as a whole (Kellerman, 2004; Vredenburgh and Brender, 1998) or both. The destructive nature of leadership has far-reaching consequences for leadership theory, leadership assessment, and the selection, development, and improvement of leaders. The current study aims to add to the growing body of literature on destructive leadership by exploring the prevalence of four types of destructive leadership behavior using a representative sample of the Norwegian workforce and the Destruc- tive and Constructive Leadership (DCL) behaviour model (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skog- stad, 2007).

Conceptualizations of destructive leadership

Many concepts have been used to describe destructive forms of leadership, such as 'abusivesupervision' (Tepper, 2000) and 'petty tyranny' (Ashforth, 1994), referring to leaders who behavein a destructive manner towards subordinates, byintimidating subordinates, belittling or humiliat- ing them in public or exposing them to non- verbal aggression (Aryee et al., 2007). Conceptssuch as authoritarian (Adorno et al., 1950; Bass,1990a), Machiavellian (Christie and Geis, 1970),autocratic (Kipnis et al., 1981), narcissistic leadership (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1985) and personalized charismatic leadership (House and Howell, 1992) emphasize similar but not over- lapping behaviours. However, these concepts mainly focus on control and obedience, and less on the abusive aspect of leadership.

Leaders may also behave destructively in a way that primarily affects the organization (Keller- man, 2004; Lipman-Blumen, 2005), potentially leading to negative consequences for the execu- tion of tasks, quality of work, efficiency andrelations with customers and clients (Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser, 2007). Concepts frequently used to describe such behaviour are 'flawed leadership' (Hogan, 1994), 'derailed leadership' (McCall and Lombardo, 1983; Shackleton, 1995), the 'dark side of leadership' (Conger, 1990),'toxic leadership' (Lipman-Blumen, 2005) and 'impaired managers' (Lubit, 2004). Such leaders neglect, or even actively prevent, goal attainmentin the organization by, for example, sabotaging subordinates' task execution, by working towards alternative goals than those of the organization (Conger, 1990), by stealing resources such as materials, money or time, or by encouraging employees to engage in such activities (Altheide et al., 1978).

Considering the breadth of the concepts used to describe destructive leaders, it seems clear that destructive leadership is not *one* type of leader-ship behaviour, but instead involves a *variety* of behaviour. Taking this diversity into account, the present study uses the overarching concept of 'destructive leadership', defined as 'systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organization by undermining and/or sabota-ging the organization's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates' (Einar-sen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007, p. 208). Hence, destructive leadership is about systematically acting against the legitimate interest of the organization, whether by abusing subordinates or by working against the attainment of the organization's goals, including any illegal beha-viour. The definition emphasizes repeated de-structive behaviour as opposed to a single act such as an isolated outburst of anger or spontaneous misbehaviour. However, if mistakes or outbursts of anger become repeated, they represent destructive leadership according to the definition irrespective of their intentions or antecedents. Furthermore, destructive leadership is about behaviour that violates, or is in opposi-tion to, what is considered to be the *legitimate* interest of the organization. Including legitimate interest is in accordance with Sackett and DeVore's (2001) definition of 'counterproductive workplace behavior', narrowing what an organi-zation may expect from its leaders to what must be seen as legitimate, legal, reasonable and justifiable behaviour in a given cultural setting. Hence, what is perceived as destructive behaviour may vary between cultures and societies and also over time (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). In accordance with the above definition, the DCL model (see Figure 1) describes four main kinds of destructive leadership behaviour target-ing either subordinates and/or the organization (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). Cate-gorizing leadership behaviour as subordinate-oriented and organization-oriented is not new. However, while many models of leadership behaviour, such as the managerial grid developed by Blake and Mouton (1985) and the full range of leadership model (Avolio, 1999; Bass and Riggio,
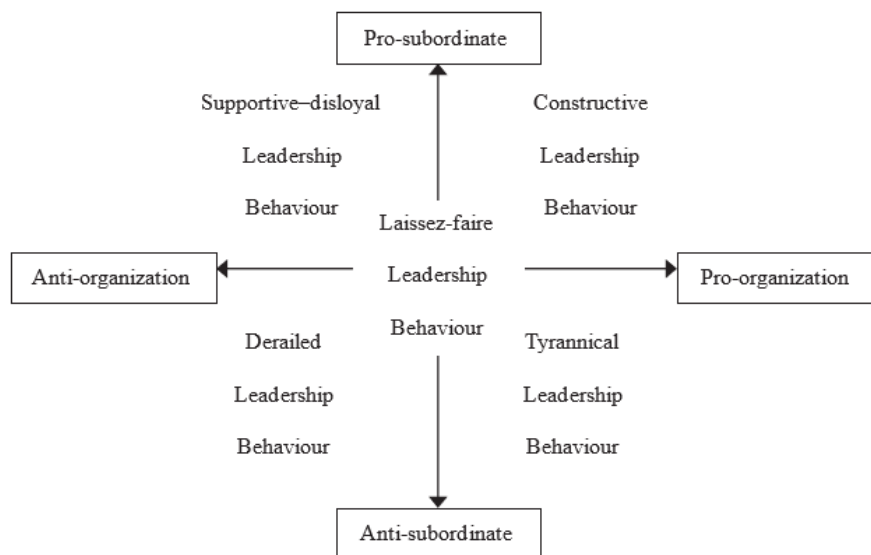

Figure 1. A model of destructive leadership behaviour

2006), are based on the assumption that leader-ship behaviour can be seen on a continuum from low to high with regard to constructive leadership behaviour, the present model views leadership behaviour on a continuum from highly 'anti' to highly 'pro' (Aasland, Skogstad and Einarsen, 2008).

Hence, the subordinate dimension describes leadership behaviour ranging from anti-subordi- nate behaviour to pro-subordinate behaviour. Anti-subordinate behaviour illegitimately under-mines or sabotages the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates, involving beha- viour such as harassment and mistreatment of subordinates (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). Pro-subordinate behaviour fosters the motivation, well-being and job satisfaction of subordinates, including taking care of and supporting them in accordance with organiza- tional policies. Organization-oriented behaviour may also range from anti-organization behaviour to pro-organization behaviour, where the former violates the legitimate interest of the organization by working in opposition to the organization's goals,

values and optimal use of resources, by stealing from the organization, by sabotaging theorganization's goals, or even by being involved in corruption (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). Anti-organizational behaviour can alsobe described as counterproductive workplace behaviour directed at the organization (Fox and Spector, 1999; Sackett and DeVore, 2001). Pro- organizational behaviour is about working to-wards the fulfilment of the organization's goals, setting clear and unambiguous objectives, mak- ing or supporting strategic decisions and imple- menting legitimate organizational change.

By crosscutting the two dimensions, the DCL model presents five categories of leadership behaviour, one of which is constructive, three of which are actively destructive – tyrannical, derailed, and supportive–disloyal leadership be- haviour (Einarsen Aasland and Skogstad, 2007) –and one of which is passive: laissez-faire leader- ship, situated in the middle of the proposed model. Constructive leadership is in accordance with the legitimate interest of the organization, showing both pro-subordinate and pro-organiza- tion behaviour to some degree. Constructive leadership is about displaying behaviour that involves supporting and enhancing the goal attainment of the organization, making optimal use of organizational resources, as well as enhancing the motivation, well-being and jobsatisfaction of subordinates. Such leadership behaviour can also be described using concepts such as transactional (Bass *et al*., 2003), trans- formational (Bass *et al*., 2003), charismatic (e.g.Conger and Kanungo, 1987) and empoweringleadership (e.g. Conger and Kanungo, 1988). However, the focus of the present paper is on destructive leadership behaviours.

Tyrannical leadership behaviour is about dis- playing pro-organizational behaviour combined with anti-subordinate behaviour. Strictly speak- ing, such leaders may behave in accordance with the legitimate goals, tasks and strategies of the organization. However, they typically obtain results not through, but at the expense of, subordinates (Ashforth, 1994; Ma, Karri and Chittipeddi, 2004). Tyrannical leaders may hu- miliate, belittle and manipulate their subordi-nates in order to 'get the job done'. Because tyrannical leaders may behave constructively in terms of organization-oriented behaviour while at the same time displaying anti-subordinate behaviour, subordinates and superiors may eval-uate the leader's behaviour quite differently. What upper management may see as a strong focus on task completion may at the same time be seen bysubordinates as abusive leadership or even bully-ing (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007).

Derailed leadership is about displaying both anti-organizational and anti-subordinate beha- viour. Such leaders may bully, humiliate, manip-ulate or deceive, while simultaneously engaging in anti-organizational behaviour such as absen- teeism, fraud or otherwise stealing resources from the organization (Aasland, Skogstad and Einar- sen, 2008; McCall and Lombardo, 1983). Conger(1990) focuses on similar themes in his study of 'the dark side' of leadership, in which he recognizes that leaders may use their charismaticqualities for personal gain and abusively turnagainst what is good for both followers and the organization.

Supportive–disloyal leadership consists of pro-subordinate behaviour combined with anti-orga-nizational behaviour. Such leaders motivate and support their subordinates, while simultaneously stealing resources from the organization, be it materials, time or financial resources (Altheide*et al*., 1978; Ditton, 1977). Supportive–disloyal leaders may give employees more benefits then they are entitled to at the expense of the organization, encourage low work ethics and misconduct and lead their subordinates to be inefficient, or towards other goals than those of the organization, all of this while behaving in a comradely and supportive manner. They may also commit embezzlement or fraud, or encou- rage subordinates to enrich themselves through such anti-organizational behaviour (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). This form of leadership behaviour has some features in com- mon with the leadership style that Blake andMouton (1985) termed 'country club manage- ment', as both forms of leadership behaviour reflect an overriding concern with establishing camaraderie with subordinates and ensuring theirwell-being. However, while country club manage- ment involves a minimum of focus on productionand efficiency, thus being *low* on the organiza- tion-oriented dimension, leaders who behave in asupportive but disloyal manner behave *destruc- tively* towards the organization, thus behaving inan *anti*-organizational manner (Aasland, Skog- stad and Einarsen, 2008). Hence, the *absence* of constructive leadership behaviour is not the sameas the *presence* of destructive leadership beha- viour (Kelloway, Mullen and Francis, 2006).

However, destructive leadership is not necessa-rily limited to such active and manifest behaviouras described above. Buss (1961) describes aggres- sive behaviour along three principal axes, namelyphysical versus verbal, active versus passive anddirect versus indirect aggression. Consequently, destructive leadership behaviour may also in-clude *passive* and *indirect* behaviour (Skogstad *et al*., 2007). Kelloway

and colleagues (2005) also acknowledge this in their study of 'poor leader- ship', in which they differentiate between an active, abusive leadership style and a passive one. Avoidant or passive leadership, which is alsoreferred to as 'laissez-faire leadership' (Bass,1990b), represents a leadership style in whichthe leader has been appointed to and still physically occupies the leadership position, but in practice has abdicated the responsibilities and duties assigned to him or her (Lewin, Lippitt andWhite, 1939). Such leaders may avoid decision- making, show little concern for goal attainment and seldom involve themselves with their sub- ordinates, even when this is necessary (Bass,1990b). Ashforth (1994) emphasizes the impor- tance of passive destructive behaviour in his conceptualization of the petty tyrant, including 'lack of consideration' and 'discouraging initiative'as two of six dimensions. Thus, the systematic absence of positive behaviour is conceptualized as destructive leadership behaviour. Indepen- dently of the causes of passive or laissez-faire leadership behaviour, be it a result of incompe- tence, lack of knowledge or strategic intent to harm, it clearly violates the legitimate interest ofthe organization as well as legitimate expecta- tions of subordinates, and it may thus harm both the organization and the subordinates (Frischer and Larsson, 2000; Hinkin and Schriesheim, 2008;Skogstad *et al*., 2007).

A small but growing body of studies exists on destructive forms of leadership behaviour. How-ever, these studies are mostly limited to the characteristics of such destructive leadership andits effects on subordinates. Apart from two studies investigating the prevalence of leadershipaggression (Hubert and van Veldhoven, 2001; Schat, Frone and Kelloway, 2006), we know littleabout how prevalent various forms of destructiveleadership behaviour are. Such knowledge is of great importance, especially since efforts to develop effective interventions against such be- haviour may depend on the prevalence of the phenomenon (Zapf *et al*., 2003). Moreover, further theoretical developments specifically re- lating to destructive leadership, as well as toleadership in general, depend on an estimate of the prevalence of destructive leadership beha- viour. Nuanced information in this regard may alter our perception of leadership as a phenom- enon and lay the foundation for how much attention should be devoted to this aspect ofleadership in future leadership training and development (Burke, 2006). Hence, the aim of the present study is to investigate, on the basis ofa representative sample of subordinates, the prevalence of the four forms of destructive leadership behaviour laid out in the DCL model.

Method

Procedure/Sample

Questionnaires were sent by regular mail to a representative sample of 4500 employees, ran- domly drawn from the Norwegian CentralEmployee Register during spring 2005, with two reminders. The sampling criteria were employeesbetween 18 and 65 years of age, employed duringthe last six months in a Norwegian company withfive or more employees, and with mean workinghours of more than 15 hours per week. A total of57% responded (N 5 2539), which is somewhatabove average for surveys of this kind (Baruch and Holtom, 2008).

The mean age was 43.79 years (SD 511.52),(range 19 to 66). The sample is representative ofthe working population in Norway, except for a minor overrepresentation of women (52% versus47%; H stmark and Lagerstr m, 2006). Data were collected by a questionnaire measuringdemographic variables, exposure to bullying, observed leadership behaviour of the respon- dent's immediate superior, job satisfaction, sub- jective health complaints and various aspects of the psychosocial working environment. Only demographic variables and questions related to leadership behaviour are included in the present study.

Leadership behaviour was measured using 22 items from the destructive leadership scale (Einarsen *et al*., 2002). *Tyrannical leadershipbehaviour* was measured using four items (Cron-bach's alpha 5 0.70). Examples of items included 'has humiliated you, or other employees, if you/ they fail to live up to his/her standards' and 'has spread incorrect information about you or your co-workers, in order to harm your/their position in the firm'. *Derailed leadership behaviour* was measured by four items (Cronbach's alpha 50.71),examples of items being 'has used his/her positionin the firm to profit financially/materially at the company's expense' and 'regards his/her staff moreas competitors than as partners'. *Supportive– disloyal leadership behaviour* was measured by fouritems (Cronbach's alpha 5 0.65). Examples ofitems measuring this type of leadership behaviourare 'has behaved in a friendly manner by encoura-ging you/your co-workers to extend your/their lunch break' and 'has encouraged you to enjoy extra privileges at the company's expense'. *Laissez-faire leadership behaviour* was measured by four items (Cronbach's alpha 5 0.72) from the Multi- factor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Avolio,1990), an example being 'has avoided making decisions'. To prevent response set among the participants, constructive leadership behaviour in the form of employee-centred, production-centred and change-centred leadership was

included usingsix items from Ekvall and Arvonen (1991) (Cronbach's alpha 5 0.87), examples being 'gives recognition for good performance' and 'en- courages innovative thinking'. Items measuring constructive leadership behaviour were distribu- ted randomly among the items measuring de- structive forms of leadership.

Four response categories were employed ('never', 'sometimes', 'quite often' and 'veryoften or nearly always'), and the respondents were asked to report on leadership behaviour which they had experienced during the last sixmonths.

To ensure the internal validity of the scales measuring the destructive forms of leadership, a series of exploratory factor analyses was con- ducted. The model that yielded the best fit to the data was a five-factor solution (w^2 5 467.10; df 5 199; comparative fit index (CFI) 5 0.95; goodness of fit index (GFI) 5 0.88: consis- tent Akaike information criterion (CAIC) 5933.01; root mean square error of approximation(RMSEA) 5 0.026) supporting the internalvalidity of the scale, which measures four destructive forms of leadership behaviour in addition to constructive leadership behaviour. Table 1 shows the fit statistics for all the factor solutions.

Data analysis

Two methods are used to estimate the prevalence rate of destructive leadership: the operational classification method (OCM) and latent class cluster (LCC) analysis. The former defines a specific criterion that classifies respondents as either exposed or not exposed to destructive leadership, based on their reports of their immediate superiors' behaviour, a method com- monly used in research on workplace bullying (e.g. Nielsen *et al*., 2009). As the definition ofdestructive leadership emphasizes repeated and systematic behaviour, the classification criterionemployed was exposure to one or more types of destructive leadership behaviour during the last six months, 'quite often' or 'very often or nearly always'. Destructive leadership behaviour that is reported 'quite often' or 'very often or nearly always' is coded as 1, whereas all other frequen- cies are coded as 0. All instances are then added up and, when the sum is zero, the respondent is not considered to be exposed to destructive leadership; otherwise, the respondent is consid- ered to be exposed.

Although a common method of reporting prevalence rates, some weaknesses have beenpointed out concerning the OCM (Notelaers *et al*., 2006). First, the cut-off point provided by the OCM is an arbitrary choice that reduces a complex phenomenon to a simple either–or phenomenon. Second, the number of items used may influence the prevalence rate (Agervold, 2007). Third, subordinates who are frequently exposed to a wide range of specific destructive leadership behaviour, but where each specific behaviour only occurs 'sometimes', are not regarded as being exposed to destructive leader- ship. Of course, a low level of exposure to manydifferent types of destructive leadership beha-viour may still reflect a systematic pattern in the leader's behaviour.

To compensate for these potential weaknesses, we applied LCC analysis, which is a systematic way of classifying research subjects into homo- geneous groups based on similarities in their responses to particular items, in our case the items describing the behaviour of their immediate supervisor. LCC analysis thus identifies mutually exclusive groups based on the distribution of observations in an n-way contingency table of discrete variables (i.e. observed destructive leader behaviour). A goal of traditional LCC analysis isto determine the smallest number of latent classes, *T*, which is sufficient to explain (account for) the associations observed between the manifest variables (the reported leadership beha- viour) (Magidson and Vermunt, 2004). The analysis typically begins by fitting the *T* 5 1 class (only one group of destructive leadership beha-viour is reported) baseline model, which speci-fies mutual independence among the variables.

Table 1. Fit statistics for the factor analyses solutions

Model	Satorra-Bentler scaled w^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	CAIC
One factor: Leadership behaviour	3949.76	209	0.093	0.81	0.52	4329.39
Two factor: Constructive and destructive leadership behaviour	1654.05	208	0.058	0.88	0.64	2042.32
Three factor: Constructive, supportive–disloyal, destructive (laissez-faire, derailed and tyrannical) leadership behaviour	821.56	206	0.038	0.93	0.81	1227.08
Four factor: Constructive, supportive–disloyal, laissez-faire, destructive (derailed and tyrannical) leadership behaviour	572.40	203	0.030	0.94	0.82	1003.80
Five factor: Constructive, supportive–disloyal, laissez-faire, derailed, tyrannical leadership behaviour	467.10	199	0.026	0.95	0.88	933.01

Table 2. *Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations for all continuous measures* (N 5 2539)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Age	43.79	11.52	–							
2 Number of employees in enterprise	279	835.9	0.00	–						
3 Mean working hours per week	37.49	10.36	0.01	0.05*	–					
4 Tyrannical leadership	0.11	0.26	— 0.10**	0.02	0.02	–				
5 Derailed leadership	0.21	0.38	— 0.04	0.01	0.07**	0.60**	–			
6 Supportive–disloyal leadership	0.29	0.38	— 0.10**	— 0.09**	0.08**	— 0.03	— 0.01	–		
7 Constructive leadership	1.44	0.66	— 0.05*	0.03	0.04*	— 0.21**	— 0.29**	0.35**	–	
8 Laissez-faire leadership	0.57	0.52	— 0.01	0.03	0.02	0.38**	0.54**	— 0.08**	— 0.37**	–

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Assuming that this *null* model does not provide an adequate fit to the data, a one-dimensional LCC model with $T\ 5\ 2$ classes (that distinguishes between destructive and non-destructive leader- ship behaviours) is then fitted to the data. This process continues by fitting successive LCC models to the data, increasing the number of classes each time – thus implicitly introducing multidimensionality – until the simplest model that provides an adequate fit is found (Goodman, 1974; McCutcheon, 1987), and a model is found in which the latent variable can explain all of the associations among the reported behaviours (cf. Magidson and Vermunt, 2004).

Different from traditional cluster methods (such as *K*-means clustering), LCC analysis is based on a statistical model that can be tested (Magidson and Vermunt, 2002a). In conse- quence, determining the number of latent classes is less arbitrary than when using traditional cluster methods (Notelaers *et al*., 2006). It can thus be seen as a probabilistic extension of *K*- means clustering (Magidson and Vermunt, 2002b). The LCC analysis will thus determine whether different groups exist among the respon-dents with respect to exposure to destructive leadership behaviour based on similarities in their response patterns (Notelaers *et al*., 2006). As the sample size in the present study is large, the level of significance was set to po0.01.

Results

The inter-correlations, means and standard de- viations for all the continuous measures used in the study are reported in Table 2. *Prevalence of destructive leadership behaviour using the OCM* Destructive behaviour by superiors proved to be quite common, as 83.7% reported exposure to some kind of such behaviours. Yet, according to the operational criterion, 33.5% of the respon- dents reported exposure to at least one destruc- tive leadership behaviour 'quite often' or 'very often or nearly always' during the last six months (Table 3). Employing this criterion, 21.2% were exposed to one or more instances of laissez-faire leadership behaviour, while 11.6% reported one or more instances of supportive–disloyal leader- ship behaviour. Furthermore, the prevalence of derailed leadership was 8.8%, with the prevalence rate of tyrannical

leadershipbehaviour   being   3.4%   (Table   3).

Table 3. Exposure to constructive and destructive leadership behaviour, 'quite often' or more often

	Number of instances of behaviour exposed to				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more[a]
Constructive behaviour	29.1	12.4	10.4	11.7	35.9
Tyrannical behaviour	96.6	2.4	0.7	0.2	0.1
Derailed behaviour	91.2	6.1	1.7	0.7	0.3
Supportive–disloyal behaviour	88.3	8.8	2.3	0.4	0.1
Laissez-faire behaviour	78.8	13.1	4.8	2.4	0.9
All destructive behaviour[b]	66.6	17.9	7.8	3.5	4.3

Frequency in per cent for rows (N 5 2539).
[a]The constructive behaviour list consists of six items. The tyrannical, derailed, popular but disloyal lists each consist of four items.
[b]'All destructive behaviour' is the sum of all tyrannical, derailed, supportive–disloyal and laissez-faire items (16 items).

Table 4. Average conditional probabilities (for all items concerned) expressed as percentages

	Cluster 1 Non-destructiveness	Cluster 2 Laissez-faire	Cluster 3 Sometimes laissez-faire, sometimes supportive–disloyal	Cluster 4 Sometimes destructive	Cluster 5 Supportive–disloyal	Cluster 6 Highly abusive
Size	0.39	0.19	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.06
Never	0.91	0.75	0.665	0.57	0.78	0.42
Sometimes	0.09	0.21	0.29	0.36	0.17	0.33
Quite often	0	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.16
Very often/nearly always	0	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.09

Conclusion

Destructive forms of leadership behaviour are highly prevalent, at least in their less severe forms, including the passive form of laissez-faireleadership. Considering the negative effects of destructive leadership for both subordinates and the organization documented in several studies (Bamberger and Bacharach, 2006; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, 2000), destructive lea- dership constitutes a serious problem in con-temporary working life. Furthermore, destructive
leadership behaviour comes in many shapes and forms, categorized along two basic dimensions, namely pro-organizational versus anti-organiza- tional behaviour and pro-subordinate versus anti-subordinate behaviour, meaning that a leaderover a period of time may display constructive aswell as destructive behaviour.

A high prevalence rate of destructive leader-ship behaviour has important implications fortheory development regarding destructive leader-ship in particular, but also for leadership researchin general. Leaders who behave in a destructivemanner are not exceptional, nor can they bereferred to as a few deviants, at least not asexperienced by their subordinates. Moreover,destructive leadership behaviour is not a phe-nomenon that exists apart from constructiveleadership, but must be viewed as an integralpart of what constitutes leadership behaviour.Including this 'dark side' of leadership, a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the veryphenomenon of leadership behaviour mayemerge, which in turn may contribute to thegeneral understanding of both the nature and effectiveness of leadership, and to the develop-ment and management of leaders (Burke, 2006). Leaders may behave destructively for a variety of reasons, be it their personality, incompetence, perceived injustice or threat to their identity,financial reasons, low organizational identifica-tion etc. Future studies should investigate theantecedents of the different forms of destructiveleadership behaviour identified in this paper, assuch knowledge could help us prevent suchbehaviour among leaders and develop tools fororganizational reactions and the rehabilitation ofleaders who act in breach of the legitimateinterest of the organization.

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