



# Toxic Leadership

*An understanding on how a business environment is  
'contaminated' by leaders*

---

*Author(s):* Bourdoux Doriane  
Leadership and Management in  
International Context

Delabelle Manon  
Leadership and Management in  
International Context

*Tutor:* Dr. Philippe Daudi

*Examiner:* Dr. Björn Bjerke

*Subject:* Business Administration

*Level and semester:* Master's Thesis, Spring  
2013

# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>TABLE OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. The objectives and purposes .....	2
1.2. The justification of the project.....	4
1.3. The research question.....	5
1.4. The limitation of our research .....	7
1.5. Structure of the thesis .....	8
<b>2. METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1. Why does methodology matter?.....	10
2.2. Methodological views .....	11
2.2.1. Analytical view.....	11
2.2.2. System view.....	12
2.3. Qualitative approach .....	12
2.4. Collecting data.....	15
2.5. Narrative stories .....	17
2.6. Cases studies .....	18
2.7. Analyzing and writing .....	19
2.8. Generating knowledge.....	21
<b>3. CHAPTER 1: The toxic triangle</b> .....	<b>25</b>
3.1. Destructive Leaders .....	27
3.1.1. Charisma.....	27
3.1.2. Personalized need for power .....	29
3.1.3. Narcissism.....	31
3.1.4. Negative life themes .....	35
3.2. Susceptible Followers: who is likely to follow a “toxic” leader? .....	36
3.2.1. Unmet basic needs.....	37
3.2.2. Negative appraisal of followers.....	41
3.2.3. Ambition.....	43
3.2.4. Congruent values and beliefs .....	43
3.2.5. May followers create “toxic” behaviours?.....	44
3.3. Conducive environments.....	45
3.3.1. Perceived threat .....	45
3.3.2. Cultural values .....	46

3.3.3.	Absence of checks and balances and institutionalization .....	47
<b>4.</b>	<b>Toxicity in a Health care centre .....</b>	<b>48</b>
4.1.	Perrine as a leader with toxicity .....	48
4.2.	Nurses as susceptible followers .....	50
4.3.	Health care centre environment .....	52
4.4.	Toxic outcomes .....	53
<b>5.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 2: Emotional Intelligence AN EMPOISONED GIFT .....</b>	<b>56</b>
5.1.	GO BACK to Emotional Intelligence and its story .....	56
5.2.	Emotional Intelligence and ITS DARK SIDE .....	59
5.2.1.	Emotionally abusive leaders .....	60
5.2.2.	Utilization of deception .....	62
5.2.3.	Utilization of fear and intimidation .....	65
5.2.4.	Utilization of charm .....	68
5.2.5.	Utilization of trust and authenticity .....	70
5.2.6.	Summarizing Matrix .....	73
5.3.	Emotional intelligence as a MIND CONTROL “TOOL” .....	75
5.3.1.	Brainwashing .....	75
5.3.2.	Hypnotization .....	78
5.3.3.	Sensegiving process .....	78
5.4.	How toxicity is “injected” within the company? .....	80
5.4.1.	Sense-making process, Appraisal Theory and Affective Event Theory .....	80
5.4.2.	Emotional contagion .....	81
5.4.3.	Attribution theory .....	83
5.4.4.	Inner and outer theatre .....	85
<b>6.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 3: This is the time for stories ... NARRATIVES PART .....</b>	<b>87</b>
6.1.	“When I entered everything was silent” .....	88
6.2.	The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow .....	90
6.3.	Work, work ... and work! .....	91
6.4.	Everything should be perfect .....	92
6.5.	Be cool, relax! .....	94
6.6.	Followers possessed “the rein” .....	95
6.7.	It is like that and not otherwise, ‘I’ decide! .....	96
6.8.	Secret agenda .....	98
<b>7.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 4: Toxic Leadership Styles .... CREATIVE PART .....</b>	<b>99</b>
7.1.	The Chameleon Leadership Style ... MANIPULATION .....	101
7.1.1.	The Wolf .....	101
7.1.2.	The Praying Mentis .....	102
7.1.3.	The Octopus .....	104

7.2.	The Elephant Leadership Style – WELFARE FOR THE COMPANY .....	105
7.2.1.	The Queen Bee .....	106
7.2.2.	The Snail .....	107
7.2.3.	The Otter .....	107
<b>8.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 5: This is time for your first lesson ... DETOXIFICATION PART .....</b>	<b>109</b>
8.1.	Detectors of toxins .....	109
8.2.	Coaching to erase toxicity .....	111
8.2.1.	COMMUNICATION .....	111
8.2.2.	TRUST .....	111
8.2.3.	STOP TO BE A STAR! .....	112
8.2.4.	STOP TO BE A FRIEND OR A PARENT! .....	112
8.2.5.	FEEBACK AND REWARD .....	112
8.2.6.	KNOW YOURSELF .....	112
8.2.7.	IT IS NOT FINISHED! The ball is now in our court... ..	113
	<b>The limitations of our thesis .....</b>	<b>115</b>
	<b>Future research issues .....</b>	<b>117</b>
	<b>It is time to ... CONCLUDE .....</b>	<b>119</b>
	<b>Our learning .....</b>	<b>122</b>
	<b>Our time plan: Gantt chart.....</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>126</b>
	<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>137</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

We would like to thank deservedly all the people who contributed to our thesis' development and those who helped and supported us during this important process.

During this scholarship program, we are not passive observers anymore, sleeping on our bench but we become active artists, those who from day to day have created, innovated and learnt how to gather pieces of information to finalize the painting. These artists are the “*Young Bright and Beautiful*” students of this year; our dearest classmates that we would like to thank for this splendid time we spent together as Erasmus.

Hence, we would like to be grateful to our Professor and mentor Dr. Philippe Daudi who nurtured this outstanding program with brilliance. Throughout this thesis elaboration, he was our coach and guide who showed us the best path to shape our “baby”. His precious pieces of advice and relevant points of view have been a major contribution to our thesis' development. He motivated and encouraged us in the pursuit of our vision. We would like also to thank him for his patience and availability.

We thank our Professor Björn Bjerke for his insightful advice during the feedback which has strongly contributed to the enhancement of our methodology's quality. Also, we are grateful to the Professors Mikael Lundgren and Max Mikael Björling for their constructive recommendations during the feedback sessions.

We warmly thank our welcoming program's coordinator, Terese Johansson for her kindness, patience and assistance.

We would like to express our gratitude to our narrators, consultants who have contributed to the accomplishment of our work: Bénédicte Dehon, Adyla El Hajjaji, Mathieu Hermans, Thomas Hillebrand, Mats Lindblad, Mette Lindgren Helde, Diether Maack, Paul Magonet, Stéphanie Pech, Alexis Peeters, Georg Ranzenbacher, JVH, Simon Wallerand, Ikramov Yaros, Sebastien Santarelli.

We deeply gratify the people of the home care nursing services, who have agreed to participate to the case study.

We thank also our four editors for their useful correction, patience, availability and empathy: Francesca Invernizzi, Florence Dasty, Artemis Aghvami and Maryse Le Dréau.

We are also very grateful to our friends and family who supported us during this time and thank them for their support and attention.

We thank our opponent and friend, Sascha Plöbst for his brilliant correction and all of his advice.

*Thank you to those who each day, enhanced our knowledge and allowed us to develop personally...*

# ABSTRACT

---

Who has never heard anything about leadership? This concept appears almost everywhere: in the classroom, on TV program, in reviews, in books, etc. However, who really knows about the real nature of leadership? Most of you might have a good image of it in mind. However, the reality is far different.

How many of you have ever listened to stories whereby people were stressed or were depressive due to their job? In this thesis, we will expose *how the business environment is “contaminated” by leaders presenting toxic behaviours*. Once toxic behaviours occur in the company, the entire system becomes “alienated”, its welfare is undermined. Leaders, in our view, act like snakes which, with its venom contaminate, step by step, their environment.

The best way to erase toxins, in such surrounding is to be first aware of its root. *For knowing this issue, please, attach your belt, the travel will start ...*

**KEY WORDS:** leadership, bad leaders, destructive leaders, toxic leadership, toxicity, manipulation, toxic leadership styles, consultant, coaching, stories, venom, followers intoxicated.

# TABLE OF FIGURES

---

Figure 1: Our process of the theory's construction .....	17
Figure 2: The path of our development.....	24
Figure 3: The toxic triangle .....	26
Figure 4: Different types of charisma .....	28
Figure 5: Personalized VS Socialized Power Orientation .....	30
Figure 6: Elements of narcissism .....	33
Figure 7: The Leadership Development Model .....	36
Figure 8: Hierarchy of human needs .....	38
Figure 9: Types of followers in the health care centre .....	51
Figure 10: Followers' departure.....	53
Figure 11: The toxic triangle in the health care center .....	54
Figure 12: How leaders use emotional skills to manipulate .....	62
Figure 13: Features of Emotional abusive leaders presenting a probable toxicity .....	74
Figure 14: How toxicity is "conveyed" within a company via sensemaking, AT and AET .....	83
Figure 15: How toxicity is "spread" within a company with Attribution Theory .....	84
Figure 16: Toxic Behaviours Signals "viewed" by our consultants .....	87
Figure 17: The signals of toxicity emerging through the category: "Everything was silent" ..	89
Figure 18: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow" .....	91
Figure 19: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Work, work and work!"	92
Figure 20: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Everything should be perfect!" .....	93
Figure 21: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Be cool, be relax" .....	94
Figure 22: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Followers possessed 'the rein'" .....	96
Figure 23: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "It is like that and not otherwise, 'I' decide!" .....	98
Figure 24: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Secret agenda" .....	98
Figure 25: Our process of theory creation .....	99
Figure 26: Our personal interpretation of each animal .....	100
Figure 28: The process of the consultant of toxicity elimination .....	114
Figure 29: "Allegory of the Good and the Evil leadership".....	119
Figure 30: The well balance of toxicity.....	122



# 1. INTRODUCTION

---

*If we ask our readers what leadership is, we are pretty sure to know their answer. You certainly have the idea of a courageous and visionary leader who is able to build a team and create a harmonious relationship among his members. Nevertheless, you are maybe right, but mainly wrong...*

---

*“Leaders are not always interested in effecting change for the purpose of benefiting the organization and its members as a whole: rather, the leader may be more interested in personal outcomes” (Show, Erickson, Harvey, 2011, p.575).*

Leadership is an ongoing concept which has been constantly evolving. Over the past five decades, the majority of authors (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan 1994; Ashby & Miles 2002; Bennis & Nanus 2004; Blight et al. 2007; Bennis & Thomas 2007; Judge, et al. 2008; Bligh & Kohles 2009) have related leadership to positive outcomes, accompanied by the image of heroic, charismatic, saviour leaders able to save the world (Slattery 2009, p. 2; Higgs 2009). This heroic leadership vision was created by those authors who have mainly focused their theory on *the right side* of leadership. Those authors by proposing taxonomy of a good leader’s features to answer the issue of *how to become a good leader*, have tended to glorify and romanticize leaders (Blight et al. 2007, p. 530).

The inception of the romance leadership thought dates back to ancient Greece with Plato (427-347 BC), an ancient Greek philosopher, who contributed to leadership’s development through his principles of “ideal political governance” (Takala 1998, p. 785). This sophist was and is still considered the first “leader-thinker” by raising this issue: “who shall rule the state”? – a statement contained in his first philosophical book Republic - (Burns 1978, p. 120). According to Plato (Baker 2001, p. 483), the best ruler to govern a country is a “philosopher king” possessing “magical skills and of superhuman wisdom”. According to this Greek philosopher (Ciulla 2003, p. 315), leadership requires a person with high morality and ability to put aside his self-interest. By constructing his theory, Plato thought that the ideal leader “the philosopher king who is wise and virtuous” (Ciulla 2003, p. 312), should rationally enhance their followers’ qualities (Burns 1978, p. 137).

*“The wise shall lead and rule, and the ignorant shall follow”* – Plato (n.d. cited in Burns 1978, p. 120).

In his first book of Republic, Plato (n.d. cited in Burns 1978, p.124) concluded that leadership is only conducted by wise people. In contrast, ignorant people were followers and unable to control their own attitude. His ideas of good and just leadership have strongly influenced the “whole Western administrative thinking” (Takala 1998, p. 786) and thus the development of leadership. Indeed during the 1990s many authors, such as Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994), supported Plato’s concept that leadership is all about *good leaders*. Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994, p. 493) maintained this unrealistic image by defining leadership as a pursuit of a common goal for the group’s welfare. This definition does not imply domination but indeed persuasion. They asserted (1994, p. 3) that “persons who can require others to do their bidding because of their power are not leaders”. Also, “If it is unethical or immoral it is not leadership” (Higgs 2009, p. 167).

### **1.1. The objectives and purposes**

These arguments merely ignore the existence of a shadowy side of leadership whereby leaders are bad. Up to now, few studies (Conger 1990; Pelletier 2011; Blight et al. 2007) have really explored the dark side of leadership. Even though this concept has been evolving, it is still blurred. Indeed, authors do not convey an understandable picture of it and label this *dark side* differently: destructive (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007), bad (Kellerman 2004), evil (Bostock 1995), charismatic (Sankowski 1995), narcissist (Maccoby 2000), pathological (Bostock 1995), machiavelian (Bostock 1995), leadership derailment (Tepper 2000), aversive (Blight et al. 2007), bullying (Hogan, Hogan & Kaiser 2003), abusive (Tepper 2000) and toxic (Lipman-Blumen 2005; Pelletier 2011; Reed 2004). Conspicuously, after reading these expressions, we can become quickly confused regarding the issue: *what does dark side mean?*. This is why in order to avoid confusion and a too broad vision, we will only stress one dark side’s label, which is “*toxic*”. Naturally, congruent with toxicity, other labels such as charisma, narcissism, machiavelism, bullying and abuse will be studied because of their potential links.

Toxicity is deeply pejorative. Indeed, etymologically, toxic emanates from Greek mythology: *toxicus* means “poison” (Gangel 2007, p. 1). When looking up in the dictionary, toxicity will often be related to “snake, venom, alcohol, solvents” (Gangel

2007, p. 2). The first person who linked toxicity with leadership was Dr. Marcia Lynn Whicker who proposed in her research three types of leaders within workplaces: “trustworthy (green light), the transitional (yellow light), and the toxic (red light)” (1986 cited in Tavanti 2011, p. 128). Later, Lipman-Blumen defined (2005, p. 2) toxic leaders as “individuals, who by dint of their destructive behaviours and dysfunctional personal qualities generate a serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even entire societies they lead”.

Our thesis will not be a continuation of Whicker and Lipman-Blumen’s studies, in the sense that we are not going to use the label “toxic leaders” to write our paper, but rather, *toxins in leaders, leaders with toxicity or leaders’ toxic behaviours* which seem for us more appropriate. Indeed, pretending toxic leaders exist would signify that they have any good insight. By doing so, we would have limited our research to diabolic, evil leaders – e.g. Hitler, Mussolini. This thinking would not have been meaningful because it is obvious. The discovery of leaders with toxins in their body and mind is more interesting and relevant for our report; e.g.: uncover some good leaders who had concealed a devil mask during their entire career, jeopardizing their surrounding, and who are nonetheless perceived and considered good. Notwithstanding this, we will keep the terminology *toxic leadership*, because leadership refers to a mutual relationship between leaders and followers. We have concluded that toxic leadership is thus shaped by toxicity in their interaction and do not limit our work.

We have found through our research (Bligh et al. 2007; Ashkanasy & Daus 2001) that the hallmark of toxic leadership is “destructivity”. Thus, we can tie toxic leadership to *destructive leadership*, which Show, Erickson and Harvey (2011, p. 576) defined as “a systematic and repeated set of behaviours by a leader that have a significant negative (i.e., destructive) impact on organizational and/or employee outcomes”. Ensuring consistent references for our readers is critical for us. This is why a shared interpretation of toxic behaviour is required. According to us, toxic behaviours poison and harm others. Wilson-Starks (2002, p. 2) adds an added value to our perception, by asserting that harness is provoked through the “poisoning of enthusiasm, creativity, autonomy, and innovative expression. Toxic leaders disseminate their poison through over-control”. Leaders with toxicity use charm, manipulation, harassment to undermine people (Lipman-Blumen, Ducker &

Ito 2005, p. 1). Toxins within leaders can therefore be undetectable for both leaders and followers. Often, toxins in leaders are related to self-fish, deceptive, autocratic, ignorant, cruel, evil, demanding, reckless people who “like to succeed by tearing others down” (Kusy & Halloway 2009, p. 129; Gangel 2007, p.3, p.6). These leaders are considered having “psychological disorders”, “adult(s) attention deficit disorder” (Kusy & Halloway 2009, p. 131) because of their flawed skills - what Higgs called (2009, p. 166) “flawed leadership”.

## **1.2. The justification of the project**

Toxicity in leaders is unfortunately a reality within organizations (Tavanti 2011). How many people have ever worked for an abrasive boss who impairs their self-awareness? Their toxic and destructive behaviours wound their subordinates by propagating enduring and poisonous effects in their minds. Have you ever worked for a nasty, deceitful, faithless, peevish, excitable, mischievous, moody, callous, nefarious, unscrupulous, stern leader? Maybe, you were not conscious that you were working for a leader presenting toxic traits. Powerful people with selfish ends can often become manipulative and create a dysfunctional and flawed atmosphere. Eventually, they leave their subordinates “worse off than when they began” (Tavanti 2011, p. 127).

Toxins are unfortunately present at workplaces and erode organization’s and followers’ well-being (Lipman-Blumen, Drucker & Ito 2005, p. 1). We would like to make you aware of the toxic reality and its influence on followers and organizations through our empirical research. Up to now, there has been very little literature on the impact of toxicity, more of it has focused on toxic traits such as: egoistic, manipulative and bullying. The hidden costs of toxic leadership can be metaphorically viewed as an “iceberg in the fog”. Kusy and Halloway (2009) explain that at the top of the iceberg, the leader’s behaviours are barely noticeable but their human consequences, at the bottom of the iceberg, are invisible. This interpretation of reality demonstrates that often good leaders hide some toxic features which harm themselves too (Tavanti 2011, p. 129).

We would like to understand how leaders are labelled toxic or not. Indeed, the followers' perception for our empirical data will be critical. Furthermore, we assume that their interpretation will differ depending on the context and followers' personalities, this is why, we always aim for a contextual view. Indeed, as Tavanti

claimed (2011, p. 129), an abusive leader is not necessarily toxic to followers and companies, while a charming, cheerful leader may be. This assertion is quite relevant in the way that people who present the best characteristics for leadership can finally be the worst. Throughout our thesis and especially our interviews, we hope to detect and describe this phenomenon.

While some researchers (Show, Erickson & Harvey 2011, p. 576; Slattery 2009, p. 2; Pelletier 2011, p. 374) argue that this concern tends to grow, nonetheless, the evolution is still slow. Indeed, by comparing figures on Amazon, an online sales website, we can clearly see a huge gap between the good and dark sides of leadership. We have discovered that there are more than 17 000 books about “leadership”, of which 3 051 books concern good leadership, only 376 are about bad leadership and only 53 about toxic leadership. Our thesis will therefore allow the development of this field, which has not been sufficiently researched.

In order to remain in harmony with our concept, leadership’s interpretation has to be lead back to its true reality. In order to do so, we are going to modify the definition of leadership proposed by Slattery (2009, p.2), which is: “Leadership can be considered to be a reciprocal relationship between leader and follower, where the leader uses social influence to persuade people to set aside their own pursuits in order to attain organizational goals”. Our realistic perception including the “dark side” of leaders, possessing toxins, will be: *leadership is a social process whereby leaders influence, even manipulate, their followers for both good and evil ends.*

Who has not felt uncomfortable working in a team and therefore not daring to speak? We experienced this situation many times during our education. We personally know how toxins in organizations can destroy insiders. This is why we really want to make change happens by providing a real insight into this concept. Sometimes, we feel weak in front of the people who have this ability to make us feel inferior. We strongly believe that we are close to this subject because toxicity occurs everywhere and we – just like everybody – hold a stake in this situation.

### **1.3. The research question**

Human beings like and, even need, to be able to answer important questions to have a better understanding of their environment. We are among those who are curious and really want to know how and why things occur.

Our keenness on this subject pushed us to set up our research questions, which are:

- *How do “toxins” in leaders appear?*
- *How are organizations alienated?*
- *Why do people follow toxic leaders?*
- *How can leaders use emotional intelligence to manipulate people?*
- *How is toxicity injected into companies?*
- *What is the impact of toxicity on the well-being of followers, organizations and even leaders?*

All of these questions represent the elements under our “umbrella” (P Daudi 2013, pers. comm. 25 April). By “umbrella”, we mean the core issue of our thesis. Indeed we thought interesting and relevant to present you all the questions because they allowed us to create our “umbrella” issue, which is:

---

***How do leaders’ toxic behaviours “contaminate” our surrounding in the context of business area, and how can we erase them?***

---

Throughout our thesis, we would like to highlight our capitalist society in which people are constantly pursuing money and profit. Toxicity can wreck all of the system. We hope to enhance your frame of reference and deepen your self-awareness in this paper. Perhaps, you – leaders, managers, CEOs – will recognize in yourselves some toxins and try to erase them for society’s well-being. Maybe, you – followers, employees, subordinates – will detect toxic behaviours in your leader and attempt to gather your colleagues to change this toxic surrounding. This is our goal: to reach our readers' awareness, try to educate them by providing guidelines.

*“Leadership is not just about results [...] the obsession with results is a contemporary conceit and is partly responsible for eroding the moral dimension of leadership”*

(Jones 2011, p. 2).

According to us, our theory represents a learning process which enriches our frame of reference and insight. Our work could help many companies to avoid this toxicity among its members that jeopardizes their environment. This is why we hope to bring new insights for future generations and make our contribution to the construction of society's knowledge.

---

*We are not simple robots ready - blindly - to execute tasks without any emotion... We are human-beings*

---

#### **1.4. The limitation of our research**

The limitation part frames and outlines the parameters of our research: *in which direction are we going*. As everything is interpretive, it is important to ensure a common frame of reference with our readers and give them guidelines to allow them a better understanding during the reading.

Firstly, what do “*toxic behaviours*” mean for us? This can be understood in different ways. According to us, toxic behaviours mean the way leaders behave undermine to followers’ well-being. We also stress that, even when leaders possess a good vision (e.g. fulfil the mission of the firm) and want the best for the company, they can bring toxicity within their company and create an alienated surrounding because of the *toxic way* they lead others.

Secondly, our research will be restrained to the business area. Indeed, at the beginning we thought to present “toxicity in our society” in general. However, this topic would be too broad and would consider toxicity everywhere. Our research would lose its relevance if toxicity was studied too generally.

Also, as we remain in the organizational area, only formal leaders will be taken into consideration.

Finally, we will not make any gender or cultural differentiation. Indeed, we also thought about making a distinction between countries because according to their culture, people perceive toxic behaviours differently. For instance, in Japan or China, leaders must be respected and people follow them without objection. In these countries people would probably perceive less their behaviours as toxic.

Indeed they have certainly received a strong and severe education concerning the hierarchy and the respect of it. While this element would have been really interesting, it concerns a very broad area and view for our purpose, it was preferable to limit our research.

### **1.5. Structure of the thesis**

In the first chapter we are going to answer these questions: *how do toxins in leaders appear? How are organizations alienated? Why do people follow toxic leaders?* To do so, we will use the article by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007) as the core of our work and attempt to develop this subject further. Those authors presented the “toxic triangle” concept. Through their theory, which is based upon three components: “destructive leaders”, “susceptible followers” and “conducive environments” (2007, p. 180), we expect a confluence between them that explains the creation of toxicity. We will analyze each constituent separately. Indeed, in the first component, the authors pointed out (2007, pp. 180-182) that some characteristics such as charisma and narcissism could lead to toxicity. The second element – susceptible followers – enables us to answer the question: *Why do people follow toxic leaders?* We expect people to follow because of certain psychological needs. The third component refers to some factors in the environments favourable to the creation of toxicity. Thomas and Bennis (2007) called such spark a “crucible” which are events that leaders encounter during their life. These categories will allow us to answer the question: *how do toxins in leaders appear? How are organizations alienated?* Furthermore in this chapter, we will introduce two leaders: Steve jobs and Tony Hayward as illustrative figures of toxicity. Also, this chapter concerns a case study in a home care nursing service. In this section we will attempt to apply the toxic triangle theory to this case and analyze how toxic leadership emerges in a medical centre.

The second chapter will focus on emotional intelligence. We will firstly examine the genesis of emotional intelligence to reframe the context. Then, we will meticulously inspect the dark side of emotional intelligence when leaders use this ability to manipulate people. We will call them: emotional abusers. This study will answer: *how can leaders use emotional intelligence to manipulate people?* Finally, this chapter will explain *how toxicity is injected into companies.* We will review psychological theories which explain this phenomenon, i.e.: sensemaking process (Weick 1995), appraisal theory (Manstead 2005), attribution theory (Dasborough



2002), affective event theory (Ashkanasy & Daus 2001), emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson 1993; Barsade 2002), inner and outer word (Freud n.d.).

The third chapter includes the “narrative part”. At this stage, we will tell you the stories (personal experiences) about how our narrators perceived toxic behaviours. Then, based on these stories, we set up categories and created our own theory: “the Toxic Leadership Styles”, which will further explained in the chapter four.

The fifth chapter depicts the “detoxification part”: *how to erase toxins?* We will introduce some recommendations based upon our interviews and interpretation.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

---

*In this chapter, we will attempt to give an insight view of the methodology we have used. First of all, we will present you our perception of methodology, and then explain our methodological view. Additionally, we will describe what our perception of a qualitative approach is and how we collected data; organized our case and narrative stories. As a conclusion, we will include a discussion about how we become creator of knowledge.*

### 2.1. Why does methodology matter?

*Methodology is like a human heart, we need it to make things going.*

As soon as we began to read books about methodology, we became aware that we underestimate its importance. As Bjerke said (2012, pers. comm. 14 November) during one of his lecture about methodology: “you do not write a thesis like this, you need methodology.” Methodology is not really about the knowledge itself but rather the process used to create knowledge (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009). Indeed, studying methodology has made it possible to elaborate a process which has allowed directing our research and thus elaborating our future thesis.

Methodology encompasses many valuable concepts and helps organizing our ideas in a relevant manner. The benefit is wide: methodology improves our way to get over each step of the process in knowledge creation.

Bjerke and Arbnor (2009, p. 17) defined an insightful thought when they explain that the methodology applies to the act of describing but in the act itself as well. According to them, researchers are influenced by their backgrounds so this has an impact on their researches. It will be more correct to say: ‘researchers THINK the result is’ instead of saying ‘the research shows’. Likewise, “it seems that our interpretations of any empirical results, no matter which ones may be, depend upon what we already know beforehand about the object of investigation” (Daudi 1986, p. 126).

## **2.2. Methodological views**

Choosing a methodology view is crucial during the process of creation, and defines the growth of one's work. This enables the researcher to designate his or her definition and perspective of reality: "This, in turn, means that observations, collections of data and results are determined to a large extent by the view chosen" (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 19). To this extent, for our research we have chosen the analytical view and the system view. We will furthermore explain these methodological views more in details, and describe how we used them according to our research in the following sections.

### **2.2.1. Analytical view**

The analytical view means observing reality through independent phenomena and aspects. Researchers using this view set up hypotheses which they try to verify by analyzing and observing reality. Considering the interdependencies between several components will not be accepted by an analytical view. Indeed, the outcome expected by this view is to find a cause-effect relation among independent components and to "come-up with explanations" (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, pp. 81-101).

"The analytical view is based on the assumption that reality is factive" (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 175). According to this view, the reality is constructed with objective and subjective facts and the analytical creator of knowledge tries to catch the truth as close as possible to reality (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, pp. 81-101). In this way, we must consider our research as bringing some clarity and new findings by cumulating objective facts and subjective facts: people's ideas and opinions. As Bjerke and Arbnor explained, the analytical view can usually be combined with statistical studies or questionnaire. We realized a questionnaire one hundred people responded to. By doing that, our aim was to collect as much information as possible. However, we became aware that our questionnaire was not adapted to our work. Indeed, even if we had already collected and analyzed some result this questionnaire, we decided to focus on the interview which appeared to be more relevant to our methodology. It enabled us to look deeper into the information the answers revealed.

### **2.2.2. System view**

The system view is the view where reality is looked as a system. People are not observed as an individual but instead as a whole system (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 175). For instance, a company can be seen as a system. Each employee of this company is part of it, they talk to each other, and they work together to obtain a result, so they shape a system. As the analytical view is focused on the study of dependent components, the system view is concentrating on the description of interdependent components which affect each other. The aim is to create knowledge by describing and explaining the reality we perceive in this system. What matters is focusing on independent components which are “not accepted by the systems view” (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 175). Therefore in this system view, the researcher has to look at the behaviour, the interactions, and the relation between people who are part of the system in its context (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 50).

Regarding these two methodological views in our thesis, we are going to use the system view in the case study realized to illustrate the toxic triangle theory. Indeed, this choice makes totally sense due to the fact we conducted this case in a whole organization: a medical centre. All the people interviewed for this case are interacting with each other: they talk, work together in order to achieve one goal: taking care of patient as well as possible. The purpose will be to recognize some perception of “toxicity” in this medical centre.

One problem we might encounter by conducting this case is not to find accessible and consented organization’s members to wish an overview about the whole organization. Indeed, this is essential “to conduct interviews in a number large enough for a comprehensive and clear system picture” (Bjerke & Arborn 2009, p. 51). However, respondents agreed to be interviewed, and we succeeded in having enough perspective on our case: there are seven nurses working in this centre and we were able to interview five of them. Because our subject is sensitive, we will not use the real name of these persons, so names you will find are purely imaginative.

### **2.3. Qualitative approach**

Qualitative and quantitative researches are two main methods that we can use to conduct a researching approach. As the quantitative approach is more related to test and verify theories through numbers and statistics, the qualitative approach

needs to seek explanations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or answers to the research questions. Furthermore, this last one permits to gain a better understanding or to describe a situation or a phenomenon by extracting data from interviews. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 1) define, “Qualitative analysis” as “a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.”

Qualitative approach enabled us to be less restricted on our choice of method. Indeed, one of the biggest advantages of this approach, compared to the quantitative approach, is the wide range of qualitative methods we could use: interviews, documentary, videos, memoirs, etc. In addition to this, the benefit resides in its flexibility: because we are describing and explaining relationships or individual experiences we could adapt our questions depending on answers we obtained.

On the other hand, as qualitative approach allows researchers to hold as many perspectives as possible, in order to avoid being distracted by irrelevant issues or data, it is of the utmost importance to concentrate on key research questions. Indeed, it “helps to establish the boundaries of what will be studied” (Strauss & Corbin 2008, p. 25).

According to Wallimann (2001, p. 51), there are two existing data: “primary and secondary data”. He asserts how crucial it is to be able to distinguish their difference in order to choose the appropriate analysis. “Primary data” fits with collecting data by “direct observations, interviews, experiments” (Bjerke & Arbnor 2009, p. 176); indeed, we collect these data by a direct observation and then, we interpret them. On the other hand, “the secondary data” are commensurate with articles, books, magazines, documentaries, advertising, the internet, etc. (Wallimann 2001, p. 53). Actually, these data have already been written and interpreted, and we are going to reuse them. Our secondary data are accessible in our literature review.

Our narrative part encompasses diverse stories emanating from the interviews we have led with consultants and (few) followers. Underneath, there is the list of consultants that have been interviewed (only one of the consultant did not want to mention his really name thus we put his abbreviation: JVH):

- **Dehon Bénédicte** (20 April 2013): SAP SRM Consultant at Aptys Consulting, Charleroi, Belgium.
- **El Hajjaji Adyla** (14 April 2013): PwC Tax Consultant, Brussels, Belgium.
- **Hermans Mathieu** (14 April 2013): Business Consultant at Mainsys Engineering, Charleroi, Belgium.
- **Hillebrand Thomas** (29 April 2013): Director of Business Line and Service & Resource Management at Siemens, Vienna, Austria – previously Educator and Consultant at mbo (consulting and research gmbh) at Graz, Austria.
- **Lindblad Mats** (18 April 2013): Management consultant at Ideon Park – Lecturing in leadership in universities, companies and municipalities, Lund, Sweden.
- **Lindgren Helde Mette** (12 April 2013): Consultant and Teacher - Specialized in intercultural encounters, conflict resolution and communication, Sweden.
- **Maack Diether** (19 April 2013): Consultant in finance department, Munich, Germany.
- **Magonet Paul** (25 April 2013): Coacher of Human Resource for comporment, advice and Coacher of individual and team following, Belgium.
- **Pech Stéphanie** (24 April 2013): Marketing manager at Delta Lloyd Life, previously Project Manager and Management Consultant, Brussels, Belgium.
- **Peeters Alexis** (13 April 2013): Management consulting at ORMIT, Brussels, Belgium.
- **Ranzenbacher Georg** (29 April 2013): Manager Marketing at APA, service GmbH, Vienna, Austria.
- **Santarelli Sebastien** (15 April 2013): Business Consultant at EASI, Charleroi, Belgium.

- **VDH** (23 April 2013): Project Management and ERP Consultant, DTC consultant.
- **Wallerand Simon** (13 April 2013): Consultant at Sopra Banking Software, Gent, Belgium.
- **Yaros Ikramov** (12 April 2013): Consultant multi-level marketing at Qnet, Belgium.

We thought that it would be relevant to ask consultants' point of view because of their expertise and broad knowledge. These assets lead us to get diverse stories from the same person.

Besides the interviews with consultants, we wanted to realize other interviews with followers. Indeed, we thought that it would be a good idea as we could get a new perspective. As Björn and Arbnor quote (2009, p. 42), "to be able to look at something from several different perspectives, or to dare, which often go together, always gives the creative mind suggestions for new ideas". However, after having interviewed four followers, we decided to direct our attention only towards consultants. Indeed, followers are involved and have personally experienced this toxicity during their life. Thus, by asking some questions relative to difficult situations, they could remember disagreeable, even painful moments. This was not our purpose. On the opposite, consultants are external and only observers.

Furthermore, the quality of our interviews can be biased depending on the mood and personality of followers. Indeed, within the company some followers can perceive the leaders' behaviours as toxic while others will not. Consultants see "the big picture" and are more reliable because they look at the entire surrounding.

These are the reasons why we have mainly conducted interviews with consultants. Indeed, consultants are like inspectors and with their magnifying glass they can observe their clients' surrounding as an external agent. Therefore we have used interviews, more correctly "narratives" as a primary data.

## **2.4. Collecting data**

Following the numerous sources of data, i.e.: articles, books, memoirs, newspapers, videos, observations and studies, it was clear that we needed a methodology to organize our ideas. First of all, we started by reading as much as we can with a

highlighter in order to have an overview about the subject. Nevertheless, this method took us too much time and did not seem efficient enough (Fisher 2007, p. 91). Therefore, we decided to take notes for each article and transcript principal insights with our own words. Moreover, each of us concluded that we should elaborate a plan in order to classify our findings and to avoid wasting time. Likewise, as long as we were reading, each piece of information was placed into a specific area. One of the most challenging aspects during our thesis development was to be clear with the direction to undertake. We then split our work into two main parts. This strategy allows us to go further in specific field and to gain time doing so.

Another aspect to take into account during our process of collecting data was to sort out our findings and make sure of their quality. Indeed, “the first aspect of critiquing a book or article involves making an overall judgment of its worth” (Fisher 2007, p. 92). As we have studied the theme “toxic leadership” during our lecture with the professor Priscilla Elssas, it was logical to start with the references she gave us. From the beginning, we agreed that we would write our thesis with relevant sources. In this sense, we used the database of Linnaeus University, “Google scholar” and references which were advised by our professor Bjerke. Another pertinent strategy was to go through article reference list and pick up some articles from it. In this way, we could extend our point of view and still insure a good quality.

Another strategy, to complete our work, is to use the master network plus all our other connections. We thought that it would be an added value due to the huge quantity of experts we could have access to especially consultants. The purpose is to use the page “Leadership and Management in International Context” (LNU) and another page found on “linked in” about leadership and change “Integrated Leadership and Change Management”.:

- [http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Leadership-Management-in-International-Context-4840954?trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Leadership-Management-in-International-Context-4840954?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)
- [http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Integrated-Leadership-Change-Management-4210990?trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Integrated-Leadership-Change-Management-4210990?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)

In this way, we can freely let people share their ideas on our questions, debate, and bring new aspects or get new stories about their experience in “toxicity”.



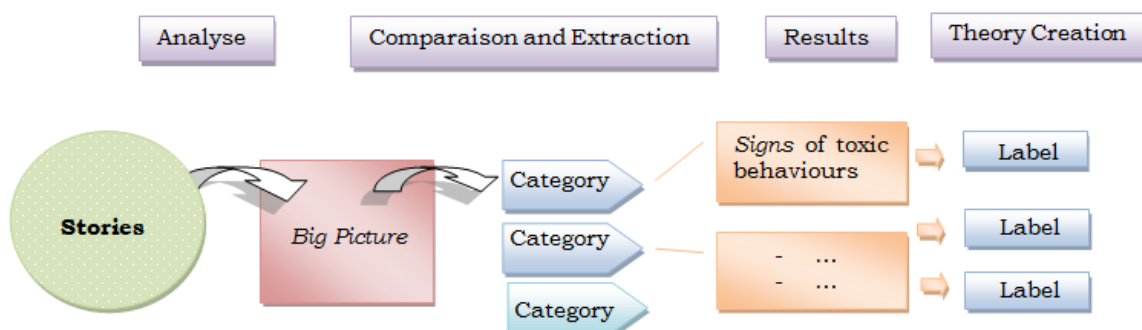
## 2.5. Narrative stories

Through our interviews we have obtained many diverse stories. First, we have meticulously analyzed all of them in order to obtain the *big picture*. Stories constitute a blurred puzzle and our task was to gather the entire pieces and put them in the right way, this is our personal interpretation of the “big picture”. It is once all the pieces are on the table that the analysis can start. Then we have compared the data of each story and combined similar ones together. Relating to those combinations, different *categories* have been created. These categories encompass different “codes”, “signs of toxic behaviours” emerging from critical events and represent the reality perceived by our narrators. Our role was to share “the voice” of our narrators with our readers. During the processing of coding, we remained fully neutral and did not influence the result: only the voice of our narrators was taken into account during the construction of our categories.

The process we have explained above emanates from the “grounded theory” elaborated by Glaser & Strauss (1967). Indeed, under its appellation, “grounded theory” means generating a new theory from collecting data and by a comparative analysis (Glaser & Straus 2009, p. 1).

The grounded theory allows generating the “substantive theory” (Glaser & Straus 2009, p. 32) in a specific area (ours is the business area). By creating a substantive theory, we make a further step to the creation of the theory. Indeed, the next step is to “appropriate” oneself to our own theory based upon our personal interpretation; in this process we are not “neutral mindset”.

**Figure 1: Our process of the theory’s construction**



Based upon the “Grounded Theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Regarding the diagram above, we have created our “labels” corresponding to our categories and literature review. We have used the metaphor of animals to create the “Toxic Leadership Styles” (our labels), this section about metaphoric will be developed at the end in the part: “Toxic Leadership Styles ... CREATIVE PART”

In our research, we will set up a matrix encompassing our own interpretation (which is based upon the stories) of the “signals” of toxic behaviours.

During the collecting data, we have elaborated a distinctive questionnaire for followers and consultants. These set of questions were used as a guideline, what Fisher (2007, p. 159) call “a semi-structured approach”. Indeed, “the interviewer has a schedule to remind him or her of the main issues and topics that need to be covered by the respondent” (Fisher 2007, p. 159). In this thought, we were engaged between an “informal conversation” and a “strict questionnaire” (Fisher 2007, p. 159). Indeed, respondents have been asked about specific issues which happened during their work and at the same time were allowed to tell their story as they wanted. During all the interviews, either by Skype or by face-to-face way, we attempted to minimize our influence. Our task was to avoid influencing the interview by our perception (Bjerke & Arbnor, 2009).

In term of interviews, we uncovered that the “email system” was not a good idea: people did not take time to answer deeply and many of the sent questionnaires were quite empty and thus missed of relevance for our thesis. Therefore, we have only kept the interviews from face-to-face and Skype to conduct our research and analysis of stories.

## **2.6. Cases studies**

What we would like to convey through our thesis is which toxic behaviours a leader can possess. By doing so, we would like to shape a matrix with features of toxicity. We thought the best way to explain our message to our readers would be to put into practice the theories we went through during our reading of “technical and nontechnical literature” (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 19). In fact, it is very difficult to measure the degree of toxicity. Indeed, “the essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Yin 2009, p. 17).

A statistic study would not fit with our thesis because it is very hard to know to what extent a leader is narcissistic or charismatic or how much the leader manipulate his or her followers. So we thought the case study would be a good method to explain this complex phenomenon. Indeed, “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events-such as individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organizational and managerial processes” (Yin 2009, p. 4).

Following Yin’s methodology, we had to choose which case model and which design would fit with our thesis. According to this author (Yin, 2009), we have four possible case study designs: single-case (holistic) designs, single-case (embedded) designs, multiple-case (holistic) designs, and multiple-case (embedded) designs. We thought the most appropriate case would be the “single-case (holistic) designs” (2009, p.46). In fact, the purpose of our case is to test the theory we developed before: “One rationale for a single case is when it represents the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory” (Yin 2009, p. 47). The single case permits to confirm the set of proposition that the theory has suggested and applied in a reality context: “Here, the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (Yin 2009, p. 48). This type of case authorizes us to be an observer and analyzer of this reality (Yin, 2009).

The case will be used to illustrate the theory of Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser with the “toxic triangle” (2007). The case occurs in a medical centre in France. Eight months ago, the head manager was changed and since this moment, the organisation has been falling down and employees have been leaving one after another. The purpose of this case is to understand the reasons and responsibilities. Is it because of the head manager? Or is it because of his followers? Or again is it because of the instable environment?

Thanks to their perception of neurotic organization and leaders, we hope to shape and analyze the matrix according to the features of toxicity.

## **2.7. Analyzing and writing**

After collecting data, it was time to analyze and start writing our ‘baby’. During this process, we were not in our “pink bubble” (Delabelle 2012) all the time. The work by peer was not an easy task and we faced some challenges and tensions.

Indeed, even if we decided from the very beginning to split the thesis into two parts, we had to discuss and agree on a new item almost every day. In order to do that, we communicated via Skype and created a group on Facebook to share each other's work. Unquestionably, a thesis should not reflect two 'little' thesis into one, but rather one clear and homogeneous work.

Another challenge we did encounter was our English writing. As we are not native English speaker, we spent our time on the website "word reference" in order to find synonyms and verify the grammar and word sense. The aim was to use an English as formal as possible to fit with the seriousness of our work. We did receive some help during the first and the second feedbacks. We decided to ask several teachers to correct the whole thesis:

- Artemis Aghvami: English teacher in High School in Sheffield, United Kingdom
- Maryse Le Dréau: English teacher in High School in France
- Florence Dasty: English and Spanish teacher in University of UMONS, Belgium
- Francesca Invernizzi: Editor in America

As we said we had to face some tensions between us. Learning to work by pair is challenging. We argued a lot about our different ideas and perceptions. Nevertheless, we always argued with diplomacy, and most of the time the discussion were meaningful and led to positive developments.

Because our subject concerns "toxic leadership", during all the process of our thesis construction, we applied the concepts that we were reading and thus learning. When we were working together we tried to avoid what could lead to toxic behaviours. For instance, one of us discovered that she was emotionally contagious: she put the pair under great stress. By being aware of it, she learned to keep her stress under control.

During the writing process, we set up diagrams on a whitepaper in order to get the "big picture". By doing so, everything appeared clearer in our mind and ideas sprang more easily and quickly. All the information found in books or articles were written on the paper and then our role was to gather all these puzzled pieces to constitute a sentence that had *sense*. After having written a sentence we reviewed it

many times in order to be sure that the readers would be able to understand it in the same way that we conceived it. Indeed, by constantly reading the work of each of us, we discovered that it was sometimes hard to convey our idea. If our formulation was wrong then the sense was lost. By reading the work of each of us we found out the way to avoid it. We were thus really careful during the writing process.

Furthermore, as advised by our professor B Bjerke (2013, 5 May), in a personal communication, a thesis should be relevant and comprehensive, “what should be in there, should be in there” “what should not be in there, should not be in there”. After deeply reflecting on it, we decided to delete the part “the bright side of emotional intelligence”. Indeed, during the second feedback, our professor Daudi was already reluctant concerning this part and did not find the “aim”. Thus after analyzing our whole thesis we decided to take into account their precious advice and delete this part. Afterwards we found out that our thesis was more relevant.

Moreover, during the writing process, as advised by our professor Daudi during one of the first lecture courses, we attempted to link each new part or concept with our personal “metaphors”. We believe that thanks to the association of words by the image our readers can have a better understanding.

## **2.8. Generating knowledge**

Self-reflection (Bjerke & Arborn 2009) might be viewed as a tool to become creator of knowledge. By using it, we start to think and reflect in a different way, and try to develop our perspective in order to see things in a different way (Bjerke & Arborn 2009). For instance, from the very beginning, we were focused on “toxic” leaders’ impact on followers. But it is crucial to put things into perspective: followers might be “toxic” too and may influence a ‘good’ leader to become “toxic”.

Furthermore, by having a self-reflection, we will become aware that other perspectives are conceivable and avoid being stopped by our own ‘clichés’ (Bjerke & Arborn 2009) or our old knowledge: “the researcher who is totally free from previous knowledge does not exist” (Daudi 1986, p. 126). In other words, we all have been influenced by our previous experiences and knowledge which have an impact on how we will perceive, interpret data or result during our thesis process. So, obviously, being objective will not be achievable. The purpose will just be to use our previous backgrounds, and try to go much further.

Moreover, we are aware that we must get out of the box we are used to being in, to think outside that box (Lundgren 2012). In other words, we will not be content with our own assumptions influencing our reality; we will rather attempt to develop new thoughts. As a result: shall we have to consider ourselves as creators of knowledge? Our answer is 'yes' because we expect to make our thesis or our "baby" as unique as possible, based on our own old assumptions but with our new perspective.

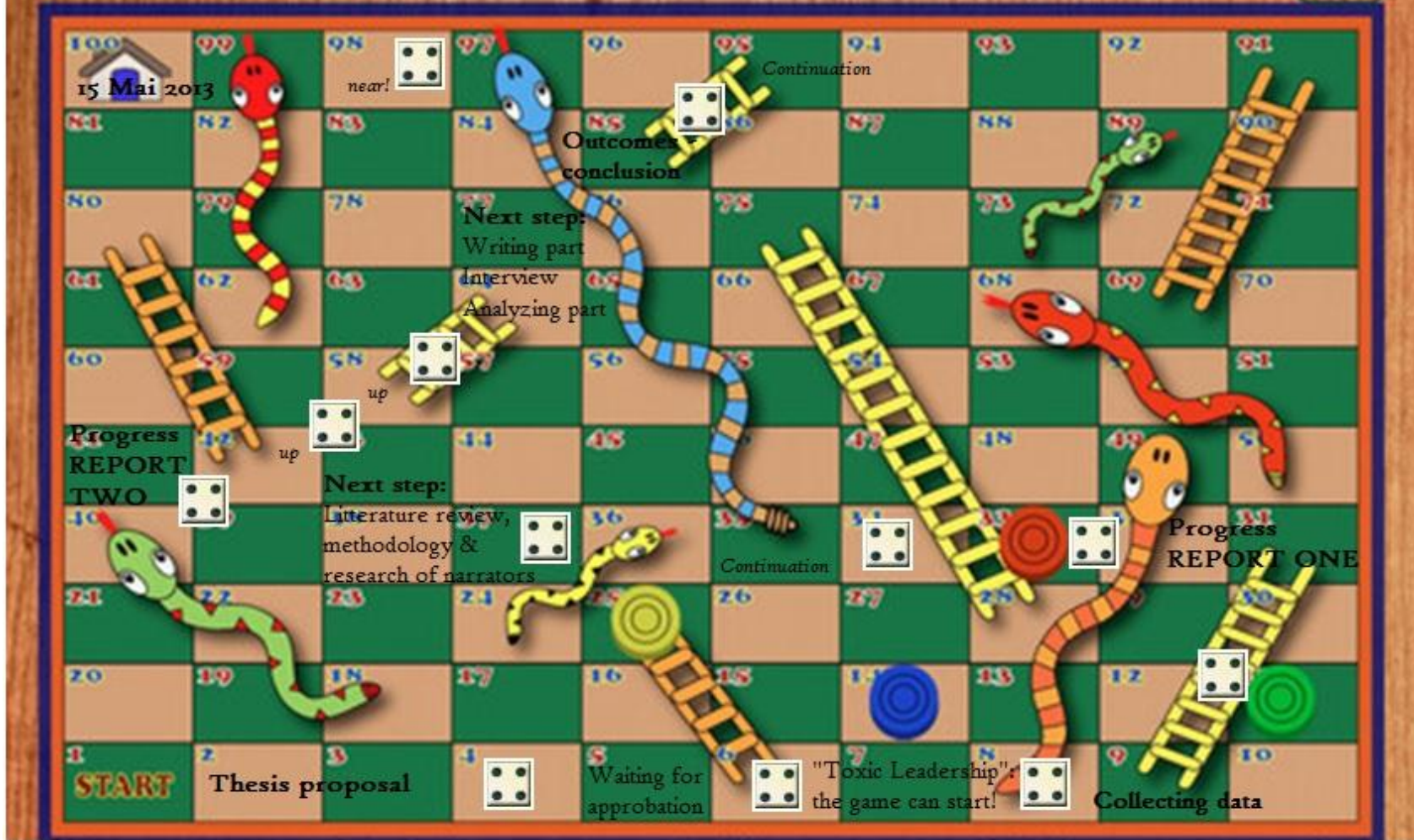
Here below is the path of our development and a creator of knowledge. At each step we personally evolved and learned. This chart explains how we have constructed our baby: from the thesis proposal till the thesis handling. During each of these phases, our goal was to apply every concept that we read concerning toxic behaviours: we learned how to avoid them. Those represent the snails and our "game" was to avoid them in order to ensure success.

**Figure 2: The path of our development**

The aim is to avoid snakes:  
the toxic behaviours

## THE PATH FOR SUCCESS AND AVOID TOXICITY

QUIT





### **3. CHAPTER 1: The toxic triangle**

---

*Before focusing on the emotional intelligence and how leaders with a “toxic” behaviours success to manipulate people, we need to see how “toxicity” might appear in our surrounding. Our purpose is not to give you a model of “toxic” leadership. Rather, it is to give you as much factors as possible which might influence a leader to have a “toxic” behaviours.*

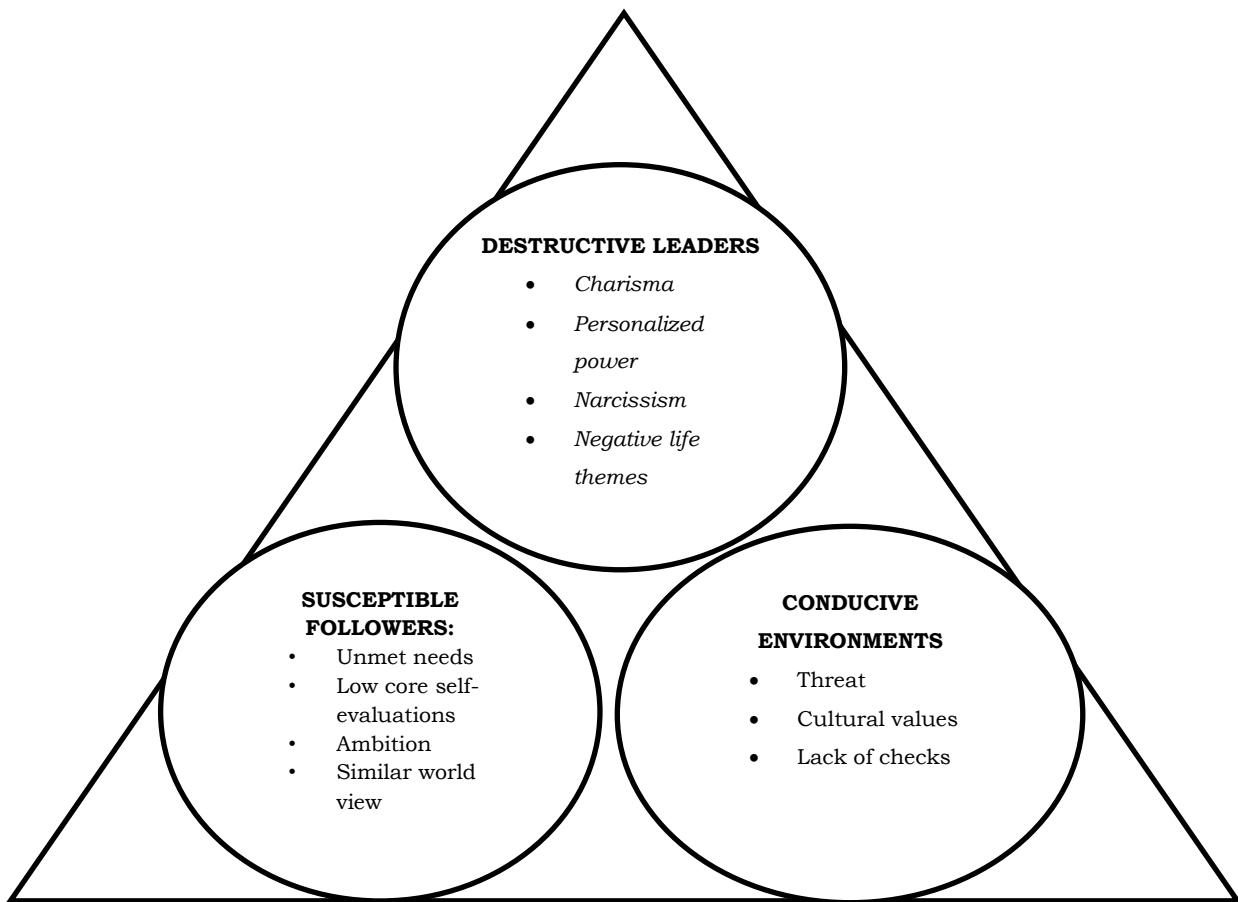
---

In this part of our thesis, we are using the notion of “toxic triangle, illustrated by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007) to explain how a leader is infected by “toxicity”. We assume that the phenomena “toxicity” is not only linked with a leader but also with the environments he or she is involved in and with the people influenced by him or her as well.

Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007), in their article they focused on a “bivariate relationship” or the relationship between two variables with destructive leaders, so they dropped the question about the relationship among these three components: “destructive leaders, susceptible followers and conducive environments” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 180).

They shaped a system to explain the effects of destructive leaders which included three major components: “destructive leaders”, “susceptible followers” and “conducive environments” (2007, pp. 176-194). It has been argued that we can find a confluence between them (Padilla 2007; Hogan 1990; Kaiser 2006). In the first component, the authors point out that some characteristics such as charisma can lead to “toxicity”. The second element illustrates the relationship between a destructive leader, his followers and the impact on each other. The third part of the toxic triangle highlights factors of the environment influencing “toxic” leader’s behaviours. These components are illustrated in the following figure.

**Figure 3: The toxic triangle**



Source: Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser 2007, p. 180

Nevertheless, one major point is important to highlight: even if a leader has some characteristics, it does not mean he or she will be a “destructive leader” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007). We will see that sometimes leaders can be charismatic or narcissistic and yet be “good” leaders. Along the same line, a leader can present some factor of “toxicity” in a certain situation (for instance during a crisis) but can be qualified as a “good” leader in others. Indeed, “even the most toxic leaders are not toxic all the time” (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 2). So the purpose of this part is to summarize which factors can influence leaders’ toxicity and discover how a leader can be “infected” by this “toxicity”.

In order to have a complete and clear understanding, we are going to use Steve Jobs and Tony Hayward cases to illustrate our parts about charisma and need for power. So we shall see to what extent they might have a toxic leadership style.

### **3.1. Destructive Leaders**

The first component of the triangle is specific to “destructive” leaders. Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser point out five signs: “charisma, personalized need of power, narcissism, negative life themes and ideology of hates” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 180). We will try to figure out how these traits can conduct a leader to be “infected” by “toxicity”. As Kellerman (2004, p. 19) described in her book, studying leaders’ traits can very subjective because some traits might be relevant in certain situations, but will not in others. For instance, a leader may appear narcissistic during bankruptcy because he or she is stressed; but he or she will not be narcissistic when the situation is become calm again. That is why, we would like to highlight that leaders’ trait should be studied by taking into account other variables such as followers and environment (Kellerman 2004) which we are going to review in the second and third part.

#### **3.1.1. Charisma**

Charisma has been studied as a characteristic that might influence “toxic leadership” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; O’Connor, Mumford & Clifton 1995; Conger 1990; Hogan, Raskin & Fazzini 1990). However, we must bear in mind that not all charismatic leaders are “infected” by “toxicity”; and not all leaders with a “toxic” behaviour are charismatic. Charisma might be viewed as a possible characteristic which can influence a leader to fall into “toxicity”. Now we are going to describe to which extent charisma can be defined as a factor to “toxic” leadership. And then we will review the use of charisma by “toxic” leadership in the second chapter (into the section “Emotional Charismatic abusers”).

But before going further, we should to go back and understand where charisma comes from. The terminology charisma emanates from ancient Greek: *kharisma* and means “divine favor” (Judge et al. 2008, p. 336). According to Plato, charisma was a “divine attribute”, “a favour from god” (Fineman 2003, p. 75). Max Weber, the first to discuss charismatic leadership, defined charisma as being “set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities... regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader” (n.d. cited in Judge et al. 2008, p. 336).

Linked with the concept of leadership, charisma has been defined as positive and as a tool for leaders in order to provide meaning to the organization, to increase followers' effectiveness into the company and to guide them towards goal organization (O'Connor et al. 1995). However, Conger (1990, p. 44) asserts that leaders who have a clear vision are able to empower their employees: the visionary can lead to a great success but also to a great failure. So we may wonder: what is the difference between charismatic leadership and charismatic leadership "infected by "toxicity"? To have a clear understanding, it is worth comparing two components of charisma: "vision, self-presentational skills" illustrated by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007, p. 180). In other words, we are going to examine the content of the message and how they communicate it.

**Figure 4: Different types of charisma**

	<b>CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP WITH "TOXICITY"</b>
<b>Vision</b>	Realistic vision: achievable goals with difficulties on the way	Unrealistic dreamers or illusion
<b>Rhetorical Skills</b>	using for social causes	using for self-interest
<b>Example</b>	Martin Luther King	Adolf Hitler

Source: authors' table inspired by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser 2007, p. 180.

One component of charismatic has been widely recognized: leaders' ability to use the language to convince or their impressive rhetorical skill (Burns 1978; Harvey 2001). Adolf Hitler and Martin Luther King held a magnificent ability to communicate and both can be qualified as charismatic leaders (Robinson & Topping 2012). However by comparing these two figures, very well known around the world, we are aware their outcomes were totally different. That is why we should distinguish among leaders those who use their rhetorical skill to serve their own interest, and others use it to serve social causes (House & Howell 1992). If a leader uses his or her rhetorical skills to convince his or her followers for his or her self-interest, it will be likely he or she is "infected" by toxicity.

Another major skill of charismatic leader is their ability to develop a vision about the future (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Conger 1990). Indeed, leaders who are able to generate a vision and to empower their followers have been described as "those who commit people to action, who convert followers into leaders, and who

may convert leaders into agents of change” (Bennis & Nanus 2004, p. 3). The difference between these leaders and leaders with “toxic” behaviours is based upon how far the vision appears to be realistic or not. By creating a “realistic” vision, leaders who are not “infected” by “toxicity” will envisage achievable goals, and expect some difficulties along the way. On the opposite, “the grand illusions that toxic leaders concoct are grandiose dreams of an unrealistic future that are unconditionally positive for the followers” (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 6). Indeed, they shape a vision where they introduce the world as full of threats and insecurity (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 181) and give the illusions they can save followers by offering them protection (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 50). Furthermore, charismatic leaders with “toxicity” will tend to explain to followers that the only way to be safe depend on their rivals. They might introduce their opponents as enemies and devaluate them (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007). The purpose is to reinforce followers’ self-identity to the group they belong to. We will apply this concept in the next sub-part to one of the most recognized chief executive officer in the world these days: Steve Jobs. Because we think it will be relevant to link charisma and personalized need for power, we will take this example in the following part.

### **3.1.2. Personalized need for power**

As charismatic and narcissistic traits, the “need for power” appears to be a notion we should nuance. In a certain extent, several authors demonstrated the necessity for power to become an effective leader (Bass 1990; House & Howell 1992).

However, it has been demonstrated that possessing an excessive need for power might conduct to “toxic” leadership (Kellerman 2004; O’Connor et al. 1995; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007). Indeed, “that need for power untended by responsibility or activity inhibition contributes to destructive” leadership (O’Connor et al. 1995, p. 532). Furthermore: “in its more extreme form, a craving for power can be dangerous” (Kellerman 2004, p. 20). Following this, we should distinguish the need for power in two parts: leaders who use the power to serve the interest for the organization and leaders who use it to satisfy their self-interest (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007).

*I am not interested in power for power’s sake, but I’m interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good.*- Martin Luther King Jr. (n.d. cited in Robinson & Topping 2013, p.194)

McClelland (1975) has called these two categories “personalized power orientation” and “socialized power orientation”.

**Figure 5: Personalized VS Socialized Power Orientation**

PERSONALIZED POWER ORIENTATION	SOCIALIZED POWER ORIENTATION
aggrandize themselves	benefit others
satisfy a need for esteem status	take a long-term view
centralize authority	seek advice from others
dominate subordinates	build commitment
restrict information	coach subordinates
create loyalty to the leader	create loyalty to the cause
control through reward and punishment	

Source: Authors’ table inspired by McClelland 1975

“Toxic” leadership appears to be characterized by “personalized power orientation”. Leaders “infected” will try to use their power to control everything: followers and tasks and to reinforce their self-image: they need to feel in control of others and dominate them (McClelland 1970; Kellerman, 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005).

Moreover, we are going to describe to which extent followers may be vulnerable to leaders holding a high need for power in: *Who is likely to follow a “toxic” leader?* Usually, people seek to authoritarian figures, security, belongingness (Lipman-Blumen 2005). Leaders with “personalized power orientation” might use these vulnerabilities as a “subtle appeal” to attract followers under their control (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007).

### **Steve Jobs**

May Steve Job be considered as having a “toxic” leadership style? It is not our purpose to assume this decision. Our aim is to detect some signs of “toxicity” in his leadership style.

Steve Jobs held an extraordinary innovative vision on information technology; he had the capacity to gather his followers and his ‘fans’ around him and many people designated him as a charismatic genius (Isaacson 2011). He introduced new products with empowerment and energy. However in Steve Jobs’ vision, we might recognize the importance he gave to the notion of enemies. His aim was to insist on the strong identity of Apple. Followers belong to a group, are motivated and they have to work harder in order to beat their opponents (Isaacson 2011): IBM or Dell.

For instance, in 2006, he sent an email to his followers to explain that Apple overtook Dell on capitalizing opportunity and then laughed about at his competitor.

Besides his charisma, through Steve jobs biography, we can recognize narcissistic signs. He had a very high self-esteem and the belief he could do whatever he wanted. Plus, he lacked empathy towards followers: two types of followers existed according to him: brilliant and stupid (Isaacson 2011). For instance, when he had to recruit new employees, he was particularly bully on purpose and criticized them (Isaacson 2011). By doing this, he expected finding employees able to have a solid conviction in their ideas.

### **3.1.3. Narcissism**

It has been showed that “toxic” leaders tend to be characterized by a narcissistic trait. Before going further we would like to highlight the fact that not all destructive leaders hold this trait and not all people with this trait are defined as a “toxic leader”. Indeed, “this does not suggest that narcissism is the sole of ‘bad’ leadership” (Higgs 2009, p. 175). Narcissism has been studied to demonstrate the interdependence with leadership. But to what extent is narcissism viewed as a negative characteristic? Where are the limits?

Narcissism finds its roots with the famous Greek myth: Narcissus (Narkissos in Greek), a beautiful Greek who fell in love of his own reflection in the water (Kets de Vries 1994, p. 24). Narcissism has been defined by an excessive interest or admiration of oneself and one’s physical appearance according to the Oxford dictionary. Several theories have been conducted to explain narcissism. Some authors have recognized it as a personality disorder (Emmons 1997; Raskin & Terry 1988) and others as a personality construct (Hall 1979; Raskin & Terry 1988) and an individual trait (Emmons 1997; Raskin & Terry 1988). But the most influencing theory of narcissism comes from Freud. Everyone has a narcissistic trait more or less developed and it appears to be a requirement if you want to survive in this world (Freud 1957). In his text, Higgs (2009, p.170) illustrates Freud’s theory by showing that narcissism can be viewed through three signs: “self-admiration, self-aggrandizement and a tendency to see others as an extreme of the self”. Most of the time, narcissism is connected with negative behaviours but several authors assert that leaders with this trait can lead to positive performance: “productive narcissism” (Maccoby 2000), “constructive narcissism” (Kets de Vries 1994). It

appears this type of narcissism may lead to increase confidence, thoughtfulness, realistic view, and reactive (Rosenthal & Pittinsky 2006).

One major task of leaders is to get followers to share their vision: it must make sense to them because they do not have the same experience, backgrounds, values and frames of reference as the leader. In organizations, the purpose is to make followers work together in order to increase the company's effectiveness. With a narcissistic trait, leaders should be more confident and develop skill to empower followers.

So to what extent is the leader's narcissism a prevailing cause of "toxic" behaviour?

*"The real disease of many executives, CEOs in particular, is narcissism" (Kets de Vries 2003, p. 26)*

In order to summarize all bad behaviours linked with narcissism found in literature, we thought it would be relevant to use some elements listed in Higgs' table, see in table 6 (2013, p. 171). Through literature, the noun "narcissism" is often linked with the following elements.



**Figure 6: Elements of narcissism**

Element	References
Grandiosity of personal belief system	Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal et al., 2006; Doyle and Lynch, 2008
Arrogance	Emmons, 1997; Paulhaus, 1998; Maccoby, 2000; Ronningstrom, 2005
Self-absorption	Emmons, 1997; Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal et al., 2006
Sense of entitlement	Emmons, 1997; Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal et al., 2006
Fragile self-esteem	Kets de Vries, 1993b; Maccoby, 2000
Hostility to negative feedback	Morf and Rosenwulf, 1988; Maccoby, 2000
Inflated self-view	Emmons, 1997; Gladwell, 2002; Campbell et al., 2004; Hogan et al., 1994
Need for positive reinforcement	Morf and Rosenwulf, 1988; Campbell et al., 2004
Attention-seeking	Emmons, 1997; Raskin and Terry, 1988
Exploitativeness/entitlement	Emmons, 1997; Hogan and Hogan, 2001
Self-admiration	Emmons, 1997; Kets de Vries, 1993b; Hogan and Hogan, 2001
No room for self-improvement	Emmons, 1997
Over-confidence in abilities	Campbell et al., 2004
Hubris	Campbell et al., 2004; Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007
Need for power	Kets de Vries and Miller, 1997; Gladwell, 2002
Need for achievement	Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Doyle and Lynch, 2008; Dominance Hogan et al., 1994; Gladwell, 2002
Intolerant of criticism	Kets de Vries, 1993b; Gladwell, 2002
Unwilling to compromise	Kets de Vries, 1993b; Campbell et al., 2004
Lack of empathy	Conger, 1997; Clements and Washbush, 1999; APA, 2000
Need for admiration	Emmons, 1997 ; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1997; Maccoby,
Hypersensitivity	Horowitz and Arthur, 1988
Poor listener	Horowitz and Arthur, 1988; Maccoby, 2000; 2004
Inflexibility	Conger, 1997; APA, 2000

Source: Higgs' table 2009, p.171.

We are going to review some of these characteristics in the following example of Tony Hayward.

### **Tony Hayward**

The best example we could find of a narcissistic leader is British Petroleum chief executive officer: Tony Hayward, thanks to our professor Philippe Daudi who took this example from the very beginning of our thesis process.

On Tuesday, April 20 in 2010, the *Deep Water Horizon* platform exploited by the British Petroleum oil group exploded killing eleven employees. How did Tony Hayward handle the situation?

We chose this example to illustrate the notion of narcissism because within two months, Tony Hayward succeeded in showing it perfectly. On the third of May, he asserted that British Petroleum had no responsibilities in this accident. Then, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May he changed his mind and said British Petroleum was responsible. However people should not worry because the Gulf of Mexico is a huge ocean compared to what flowed out: the tiny volume of petroleum. Along the same line, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May he assured the environmental disaster would probably be very modest.

His most shocking trait of lack of empathy is:

*"I'm sorry. We're sorry for the massive disruption it's caused their lives. There's no one who wants this over more than I do. I'd like my life back"* (Tony Hayward, May 31, 2010).

Lyons (2011, p. 97) summarized this sentence in a good way: "Not surprisingly, family members of the eleven dead noted that their loved ones no longer had the privilege of wanting their lives back". Finally, after apologizing for his apologies, Tony Hayward decided to take a one day break in England on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May in 2010, he provoked a scandal by participating in a race with his sailing boat.

In Tony Hayward's case, we can deduce that he lacked empathy towards families of the victims; plus he was particularly selfish: he took a day off to go to England when he was expected to try to minimize the victims' families' pain. His view of the

disaster was totally unrealistic compared to what really happened (example with the Gulf of Mexico).

#### **3.1.4. Negative life themes**

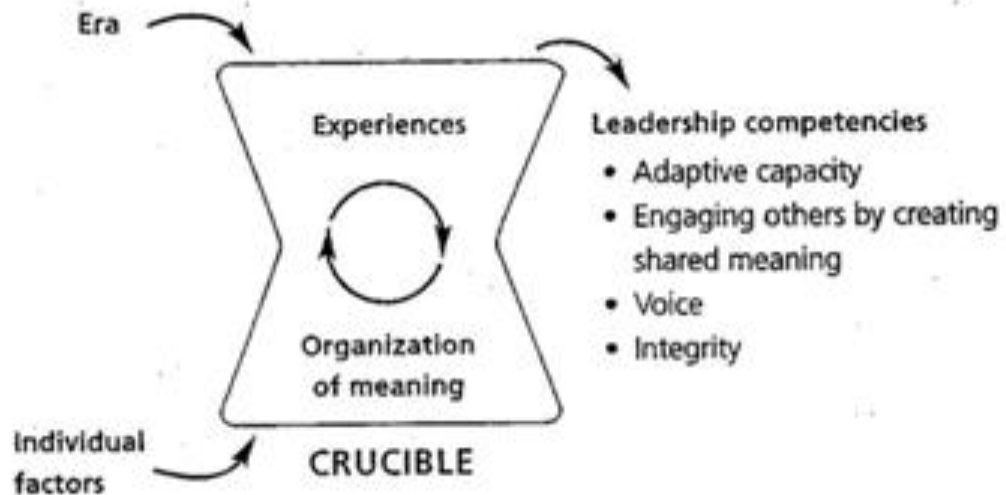
Even though, the “toxic” leadership style has not been studied widely, we found articles, studies, books related to it. Authors (Kellerman 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005; Higgs 2009) have been mainly centred on the nature of “toxic” leadership or “toxic” outcomes; but they did not investigate so much where these “toxic” behaviours came from. However, a few authors (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007; O’Connor et al. 1995) introduced the concept “negative life themes” to tend to explain the root of “toxic” leadership style that leaders might have.

Negative life theme is designated as “the extent to which the leader had a destructive image of the world and his or her role in the world” (O’Connor et al. 1995, p. 539). For instance, Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007, p. 182) point out that some circumstances might conduct to “toxic” leadership: “parental discord, low socioeconomic status, paternal criminality or child abuse”. If the leader has a “negative life theme”, he or she will have a bad view of the world. Moreover, in this way “negative life themes” will enhance leaders’ vision of the future based on their past experiences (O’Connor et al. 1995). In other words, if the leader had a childhood with disrespectful to others, it is likely that he or she will reproduce it during his or her leadership style. We assume and several authors too (O’Connor et al. 1995; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007) that a hard childhood can support a leader to “fall” into “toxicity” and explain how toxins appear in leaders.

We would like to complete this concept with the concept of the crucibles developed by Bennis and Thomas (2007) in their book *Leading for a life time*. They attempt to describe how leaders are transformed through personal events during their life stories; how they faced these events, how they put meaning into it, how they used their past to develop skills to face future adversity (Bennis & Thomas 2007). “The crucible” is “a transformative experience through which an individual comes to a new or an altered sense of identity” (Bennis & Thomas 2002, p. 40). Through the amount of interviews they conducted, Bennis and Thomas (2007) discovered that humans who went through a *crucible* have started to develop their leadership abilities. Indeed, during their *crucibles*, leaders begin to find a meaning, to find who they are and what they really want in their life. Leaders became stronger and

confident after experiencing their difficult event (Bennis & Thomas 2007). Obviously, these authors illustrated how a ‘simple’ human might become a ‘leader’ through this *crucible*. As we can see in figure 7, leaders retain *leadership competencies* like “adaptive capacity, engaging others by creating shared meaning” (Bennis & Thomas 2007, p. 89).

**Figure 7: The Leadership Development Model**



Source: Bennis and Thomas 2007, p.89.

Our purpose is to understand to what extent “the crucible” can influence leaders towards “toxicity”. What may happen if the leader is not able to make sense when he or she will face a difficult situation? He or she will not be able to reflect about him or herself and will not retain *leadership competencies*. Instead of improving them as leader, leaders might tend to develop their ideology of hate: increase their “anger, resentment, hate is a key component of the worldview on “toxic” leaders (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007).

### **3.2. Susceptible Followers: who is likely to follow a “toxic” leader?**

*“There is no leader without at least one follower” (Kellerman 2007, p.84)*

For a long time, the concept “followership” has been underestimated by authors. However, this tendency is changing and more and more researchers involve the followers’ role in the “leadership” concept (Kelley 2008; Lipman-Blumen 2008;

Kellerman 2007). Indeed, studying “leadership and followership as a unity” (Hollander 1992, p. 71), will allow us to understand how followers react to leaders’ style, “their needs, expectations, and perceptions” (Hollander 1992, p. 71). Thus, a leader should adapt his or her style to each follower; each of them will react and be influenced differently. This is why authors have started to classify and organize followers into groups according to their involvement (Kellerman 2007) or their level of independence and activity (Kelley 2008). In our paper, we will focus on “toxic” leaders’ followers and use the categorization made by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007, p. 182): they found two types likely to follow leaders with “toxicity”.

First of all, we are going to describe why “conformers” can be defined as followers who support a “toxic” leader. They are vulnerable, with a deep need for safety and certainty, their self-esteem is very low, or they are not prepared to confront toxic leadership. “Colluders”, the second type we are going to describe are followers who will share destructive leaders’ values, ideas, or followers who are ambitious and know they need to be on the destructive leader side to gain promotion.

In this part, we attempt to give an understanding of these following questions:

- Are all followers susceptible to follow a bad leader?
- Why do followers are following them?
- What is the role of followers in the construction of a destructive leader?

Moreover, we will add another point in the toxic triangle which explains that sometimes followers can transform a leader and make him or her become toxic.

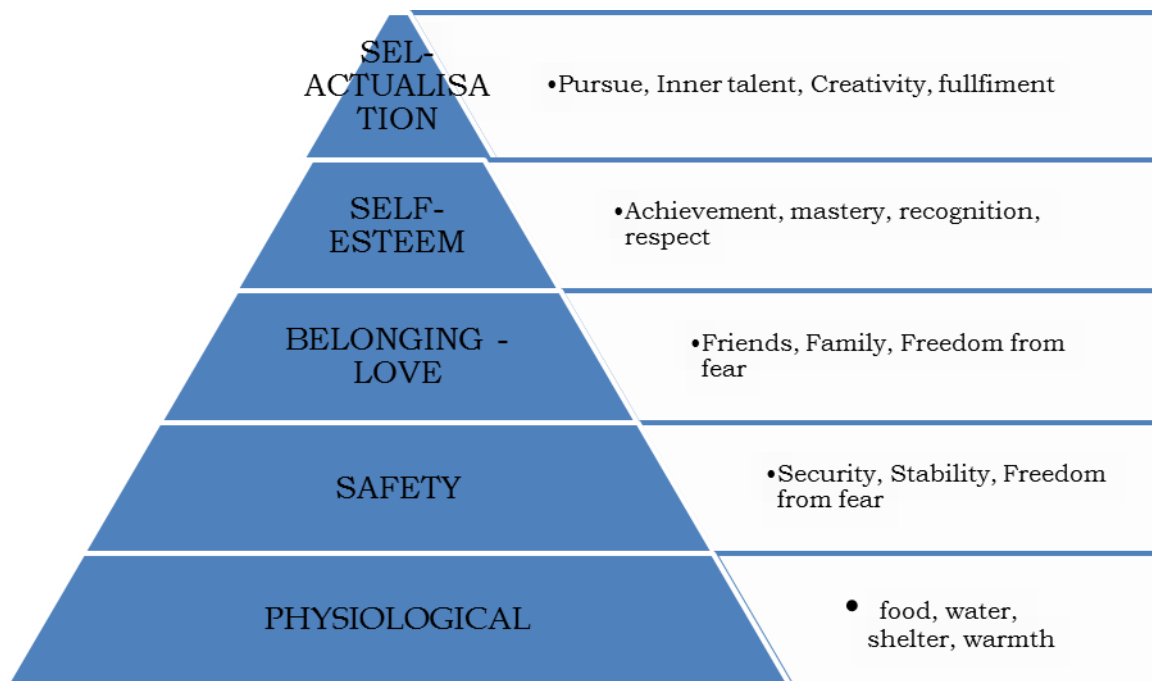
### **3.2.1. Unmet basic needs**

A leader “infected” by “toxicity” might use followers’ “unmet basic needs” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 183) to impose him or her as leader of a group. Considering that, these followers have been qualified as “conformers” by Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007, pp. 176-194). “Conformers” are seen as vulnerable because of their needs for safety, belonging, and their low self-esteem (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007). By doing so, they will prefer to comply with a “toxic” leader instead of facing him or her.

In the interest of owning a clear comprehension, we are going to use Maslow’s theory of human needs. Within the concept of “human needs”, Maslow (1970, p. 35)

describes the hierarchy of needs through a pyramidal structure to explain where humans get their motivation. Maslow (1970, p. 35) points out priority rules on needs, desires and motivations, and sets this concept to identify and classify them. The pyramidal structure is organized into five levels (Maslow 1970, pp. 35-58): “physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization”; thereby this concept means that humans cannot satisfy higher needs (for instance need to feel safe) if a lower need has not been contented beforehand (physiological needs).

**Figure 8: Hierarchy of human needs**



Source: made by the authors inspired by Maslow (1970)

As far as we have chosen to focus on the business field, we will assume that “physiological needs” (Maslow 1970, p. 35) are already reached by followers. Thus, we can directly get to the second need, which is “safety” (Maslow 1970, p. 35). Moreover, we will not review “self-actualization” needs because we think it is not really relevant for our work; we will rather focus on needs for safety, belonging and self-esteem. We do not expect to go thoroughly into Maslow’s theory, but we will use it to understand and explain where these needs come from. Indeed, researches (Kellerman 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Pelletier 2011) have been conducted on these needs to tend to explain how a “toxic” leader can influence followers.

### **3.2.1.1. Needs for safety**

Many authors (Kellerman 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Pelletier 2011) highlight the need of feeling safe to explain why humans are following or accepting leaders with “toxicity”. But why do we need to feel safe in our life? Maslow (1970, p. 39) described the need to feel safe as a need for “security, safety, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, from anxiety and chaos, need for structure, order, law, limits, strength of the protector”. Generally humans aspire to avoid threat, crisis or anything that could put their life at risk; by preference, they will choose familiar situations rather than new ones (Maslow 1970, p. 41). So by enhancing this theory in our nowadays’ context, we might add needs which would be: financial security, job security, health and well-being.

Another factor that explains our need for safety might be our necessity to have a paternal figure to follow, because it creates security. Some of us might need an authoritarian figure; in fact, from our childhood we learned to follow and do what our parents told us (Kellerman 2007; Lipman-Blumen 2005). Freud (1949, p. 22) associates this phenomenon to fathers’ role of leadership: “The great majority of people have a strong need for authority which they can admire [...] it is the longing for the father that lives in each of us from his childhood days”. During our childhood, most of us are controlled by our parents; later, when we can escape from our parents’ authority, we feel “free” (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 34). Nevertheless, there is a sort of tendency to refer to an authoritarian figure: we have been dominated in our childhood and in our adulthood; we try to find someone to stand in for our father (Freud, 1949, p.140).

Our needs for safety often make humans seek for a protector who is stronger than us, someone who is able to take responsibilities, to face challenges and crisis (Maslow 1970; Kellerman 2007; Lipman-Blumen 2005): “We tend to gravitate towards any leader who will make us feel safe, protected, and good about ourselves” (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 34). Obviously, this will make our life easier, simpler if we have someone to imitate, someone who has got many skills that we do not have, someone who tells us how or why to do, someone who makes sense of a stressful situation (Kellerman 2007, pp. 22-23). Our need to feel safe can be a factor to explain why humans accept leaders with “toxicity” or “toxic leadership style”, but our need to belong to a group can be an additional explanation.

### **3.2.1.2. Needs to belong**

*“Destructive leaders can attract followers by offering them a sense of community and a group in which to belong”* (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 183)

This need to belong to a group has been studied by several authors (Kellerman 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Pelletier 2011) explain why humans are following or tolerating leaders with “toxicity”. Besides, Kellerman (2004) points out that this concept has already been evocated by Plato (1950) in *The Republic*; according to him, humans are “social animals” and unable to live alone, they need to belong to a group (Kellerman 2004, p. 39).

But why do we need to belong to a group? In his hierarchical theory of human motivation, Maslow (1970, p. 43) asserts humans’ need to feel accepted by one or several groups to show their membership to the society they are evolving in. In this society, each human would like to obtain a place which is related to his ambition and abilities, the purpose is to be recognized (Maslow 1970, p. 43). Lipman-Blumen (2005, pp.38-39) identifies two psychological needs: “our deep, positive, human need for membership in community and our dread of community’s opposite face, ostracism and social death”. In her opinion (2007), belonging to a group offers meaning and security to his members; it will permit them to be part of something and gain value.

Thus, once employees are part of a company or a group and have to work with a leader with toxicity, they may feel afraid to be ejected out of this group if they confront him or her (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 42). Under these circumstances, humans will prefer to stay in the group, even in bad conditions, rather than be lonely or rejected. Lipman-Blumen (2005, p. 39) assumes: “we often give up our independence, our individuality, our associates, our beliefs, and sometimes even our integrity to guarantee our social belonging”. In this sense, leaders with “toxicity” will exploit this weakness: fear of ostracism to avoid protests from followers (Lipman-Blumen 2005; Pelletier 2011). These leaders “will convince the followers that the only way they will be saved is to comply with the leader’s demands” (Pelletier 2011, p. 377). In other words, this type of followers will be prepared to give up their values, beliefs or ethics to ensure they will stay in the group.



### **3.2.2. Negative appraisal of followers**

A “negative core self-evaluation” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998) has been studied by scholars to describe followers’ vulnerability to a “toxic” or “destructive” leader. “Core self-evaluations” was explained by Judge, Locke and Durham (2001, p. 81) as: “basic conclusions or bottom-line evaluations that individuals hold about themselves”. According to them (2001, p. 80), this concept is built around four characteristics: “self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability”. As self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control have been considered to tend to describe how followers can be vulnerable when they encounter a “toxic” leader (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007), we will review each traits developed by Judge, Locke and Durham (2001).

#### **3.2.2.1. Self-esteem**

Many authors (Lipman-Blumen 2005; Pelletier 2011; Maslow 1970; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Judge & Bono 2001; Korman 1970) have studied followers’ lack of self-esteem to describe their vulnerability when they face a “toxic” leader. Into this hierarchy of human needs, Maslow (1970, p. 45) describes “self-esteem” as the third need humans would pursue after satisfying their physiological and safety needs. He divided “self-esteem” into two parts: firstly: the desire for strength, achievement, competence, independence and freedom; secondly: desire for reputation, status, attention, importance and recognition. So as we consider studying followers’ vulnerability, what will the consequences be if they do not have these characteristics? In Maslow’s opinion, followers will be inclined to “produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness” (1970, p. 45). In other words, followers who suffer from a lack of confidence are worrying about what others might think and are pessimistic. According to the study he made, Pelletier (2011) have found that self-esteem was the characteristic which is most used by “toxic” leader ‘to attack’ their co-workers.

#### **3.2.2.2. Self-efficacy**

The concept of self-efficacy has been illustrated as the ability to execute actions and deal with events during our life (Bandura 1982). In a company, if an employee underestimates his or her competences, he or she will tend to be passive and will follow the leader with toxicity. Indeed, followers who own a low “self-efficacy” do not

trust their skills and think they represent nothing in the company; this is why they trust a leader's abilities and follow him or her.

Going further, Judge and Bono (2001, p. 81) associate "self-efficacy" with "job-satisfaction" and assert that humans with high "self-efficacy" will be tougher to face failures or challenges, and more likely to be satisfied by their work (Judge & Bono 2001). Then, we may deduce that people with low "self-efficacy" will be inefficient and stressful when facing a difficult situation. So, they will choose to let the leader with "toxins" take all responsibilities and will follow him or her to make life easier.

### **3.2.2.3. Locus of control**

This idea suggests that humans have the belief that they are an actor of events in their lives (Rotter 1966). Moreover, the locus of control has been defined as the "individual perceptions that she or he can have an impact on the environment" (Thomas & Velthouse 1990, p. 195).

Rotter (1966, p. 3) has distinguished two types of locus of control: the internal and the external. On the one hand, an internal locus of control means that followers feel they can control the outcomes they generate (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 195). On the other hand, the external locus of control implies that followers perceive their outcomes conceived out of their control (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 195). Hence, people who see themselves as 'victims' and think they do not possess any influence on the environment will tend to see themselves as followers (Rotter, 1966). Vulnerable followers will have an external locus of control. Consequently when they face a leader with "toxic" behaviour, they might think they cannot do anything except following him or her. So the external locus of control might explain why people follow leaders with "toxic" behaviours.

---

*By now, we know that some followers are too vulnerable to face a leader with toxicity, but other followers are not. They are called: "colluders" (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 183). This type of followers does not want to face a leader with toxins, they prefer to gain advantage by going along "contaminated" leaders' view. They are "ambitious, selfish and share the destructive leader's world view" (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 183). Kellerman (2004 p. 25) is going further when she asserts that these types of followers are bad.*

---

### **3.2.3. Ambition**

Even though a leader has “toxic” behaviour, some followers shall support his or her view despite their awareness of this “toxicity”. These followers are ambitious: they support “toxic” leaders because resisting would endanger them or their career (Kellerman 2004; Lipman-Blumen 2005). In other words, they gain advantage by approving “toxic” behaviours. Advantages might be status, a promotion, a job, or other favours like a new apartment, car, etc. On the opposite, by confronting the leader about his or her “toxic” behaviours, the follower may lose his or her job, advantages, etc. Kellerman designates these ambitious followers as “bystanders” (2004, p. 26): their purpose is to serve their own interest and let the “toxic” leader continue and perpetuate his or her “toxicity” (2004, p. 210).

To understand this notion, several studies have been conducted about ambition and it has been characterized sometimes as virtuous (Santayana, Kaufmann) and sometimes as vicious (Locke 1996; Aquinas 1981). Moreover, “ambition can have positive attributes such as taking initiatives, whereas in extreme it can lead to individuals constantly competing with each other” (Higgs 2009, p. 169). Furthermore “without it, there is no vision or engine for change; but unbridled ambition produces the worst sort of demagoguery” (Bennis & Thomas 2007, p. 146). So we may wonder if ambition is a bad or good thing (Pettigrove 2007, p. 58). Do followers need to give up their values to satisfy their ambition? ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ ambition will be different according to how and why we use it. By using ambition without ethical values, it is likely to be a sign of “toxic” leadership. But, even though they are passive and let “toxicity” extend itself, ambitious followers are not such true believers in “toxic” leaders compared to those who share the same values and beliefs with their leader as we are going to see in the following section.

### **3.2.4. Congruent values and beliefs**

In this section, we attempt to review another kind of followers who hold “congruent values and beliefs” (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 184) with the leader with toxicity. While ambitious followers agree with him or her in their own interest, they will not necessarily share his or her beliefs but some followers will. Kellerman (2004, p. 26) describes these humans as “acolytes”. These adherents stand as true believers and they commit to their “toxic” leader.

### **3.2.5. May followers create “toxic” behaviours?**

Until now, we were interested in “contaminated” leader’s impact on his or her followers who were viewed as ‘victims’. We may also explore a different approach: this time, the leader is considered as a ‘good’ leader but he or she is vulnerable and easily influenced by his or her followers who are likely to transform him or her into “toxicity”. “Leaders behaviours are derived from a reflection of follower needs and expectations can also result in ‘bad’ leadership” (Kets de Vries, 1994). Obviously, we could go further into details for this section but we will not, because our research question is based on the toxicity of leaders. This aspect may be viewed as a nuance or limitation of the notion: ‘Who is likely to follow a “toxic” leader?’ and show that sometimes, the leader is not the only person ‘to blame’.

Several authors (Lipman-Blumen 2005; Offerman 2004) asserted that followers could use flattery to tend to influence the leader. Offerman (2004) reminds us that everyone appreciates compliments and like being admired; knowing that, some followers try to turn the situation to their advantage, to obtain job security for example. The risk is that leaders feel encouraged by such compliments, and start developing his or her power; in other words he or she will begin to act for his or her self-interest, instead of acting for the organization.

Have you ever encountered a situation where you held a different point of view from the whole group you are a member of? Have you ever risen your finger during a lecture when the teacher asked a question but you could not answer, whereas the majority could. This phenomenon was illustrated by “the power of majority” (Offerman 2004). It is worth noting that humans prefer conformity to being viewed as the “ugly duckling” (Andersen 1842). So what may happen if a leader faces a united group whom disagreeing on his or her decisions?

In other words, the leader could soon start to be influenced by his or her followers and could “question his or her own judgement” (Offerman 2004, p. 2). One of the major purposes for a leader is to be able to satisfy his or her followers. So when the whole group is challenging him or her, the leader may change his or her point of view in order to satisfy all followers and gain employees’ commitment (Offerman 2004).

### **3.3. Conducive environments**

After reviewing leaders' traits and their followers, one component in our toxic triangle need to take into account: "conducive environments" (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 185) where followers and leaders are involved in. Actually, some authors (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007; Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998; Lipman-Blumen 2005) have admitted that the situation matters.

*"The dark leadership is a function of the situation"* (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 190)

By attempting to understand how a leader can become a "destructive leader", Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007, p. 185) highlight the importance of the "conducive environment".

In this part, the purpose will not be to explain and describe how a leader with "toxicity" shapes a "toxic work environment" (Macklem 1975). But rather how the environment can influence a leader to develop a "toxic behaviour". Moreover, we will apply three factors: "perceived threat, cultural values, and absence of checks and balances and institutionalization" (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 185) in order to figure out to what extent the environment might drive a leader to "toxicity".

#### **3.3.1. Perceived threat**

First of all, as "perceived threat" might appear unclear, it would be relevant to define it because threats can be many and varied. For instance, into an organization, leaders and followers may be threatened by an economic crisis or bankruptcy. Also it may happened when followers feel mistreated (e.g., Jewish during the Second World War). In which extent a "perceived threat" will affect a "toxic" behaviour?

By living in a threatened environment, followers' needs will be endangered. They risk losing their security, belongingness needs. This is why followers will be more disposed to support a "toxic" leadership style. In the meanwhile, leaders may use this "weakness" to empower followers: "during a crisis, a leader with toxicity can bring hope to followers" (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 193).

Moreover, sometimes threats are not presented but may be created on purpose by the leadership style in order to enhance the power by conceiving enemies (Lipman-Blumen, 2005), (e.g. Jewish were viewed as Germans' enemies during the Second World War, this view had been formulated by Hitler to achieve his idyllic world). Plus, in Steve Jobs' example we describe that inventing enemies will permit to insist on followers' identity to the company and give them the desire and the motivation to beat the potential threats: their rivals (Padilla, Kaiser & Hogan 2007).

During an uncertainty period, the leader may set off his or her abuse of power and have a "toxic" behaviour in order to avoid losing the control of the situation (O'Connor et al. 1995). Indeed they will become more authoritative because the situation involves quick decision: "because of this context, even more democratic leaders have had to exercise a directive and authoritative style as opposed to participative practices" (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 190).

### **3.3.2. Cultural values**

It has been showed that in some cultures more than in others, "toxic" leadership is more likely to emerge (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 186); indeed, several cultures' values might shape a social environment conducive to "toxicity". Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007), and Luthans Peterson and Ibrayeva (1998) attempt to explain this phenomenon by using Hofstede's theory (1991): the five intercultural dimensions. They have argued that cultures with avoidance of certainty, collectivism and a high power distance (Hofstede 1991) might be viewed as contributing factors to "toxic" leaders.

"Uncertainty avoidance" has been described as the preference for rigorous law rather than having disorder or 'anarchy' into organization, group or nation (Hofstede 1991). In society with a high level of uncertainty, people want to avoid risks (Hofstede 1991), ambiguous situations (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 186). In other words, they are looking for security and certainty. These expectations will help "toxic" leadership by using followers' vulnerability. "Constant change, seasoned with ambiguity, increases our vulnerability to toxic leader" (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 73).

In a culture people may have different priorities to look after (Hofstede 2013, n.p). If in culture people are familiar with "collectivism", they will expect groups' members to take care of them and vice versa, with "unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede 2013,

n.p). In this way, in collectivism culture, humans seek for a strong leader able to gather together all groups' members and provide a group identity.

Lastly, "power distance" concerns "the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede 2013, n.p). Thus, humans holding a high power distance are more likely to accept a "toxic" leader because they do not need further explanation about power disparity. On the opposite, people with a low high power distance will be susceptible to look for explanation if a leader may present a "toxic" leadership.

### **3.3.3. Absence of checks and balances and institutionalization**

In organizations, leaders have to trust their followers and delegate because they do not have time to watch and check each detail. Indeed, even if a leader will hold a manager status, it does not mean he or she is able to check everything. He or she has to trust his or her followers. Moreover, leaders do not hold full knowledge about their companies; they often have to take decisions without knowing all information (Offerman 2004). Leaders are not experts in each area: in marketing, in business, in finance so they are unable to be aware of each action in their companies. This "absence of checks" might be a good opportunity for unscrupulous humans to serve their own interest (Offerman 2004): "the absence of an established legislative, judicial and regulatory infrastructure, made the personal power of leaders" (Luthans, Peterson & Ibrayeva 1998, p. 187). That is why organizations need "checks and balance" (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser 2007, p. 186) to avoid abuse of power. An absence of it may be a contextual factor to "toxic" leadership: for "toxic" leaders' behaviours and followers as well. We already explain in which extent followers can influence "toxic" leader's behaviours. But leaders will be likely to abuse their power all the more since they are free and not supervised in their work.

---

*By going through our toxic triangle, we are able to understand how "toxic" leaders' behaviours may appear, why followers support it and in which extent external forces might influence "toxic" leadership. Now, it is time to apply our literature review in a health care centre.*

---

## 4. Toxicity in a Health care centre

---

Our case study relates events taking place in a private health care centre where ten nurses provide health care to patients at home supervised by a head nurse who is responsible for managing all the organization.

**Marie:** the head nurse, manager

**Nurses:** Perrine, H el ena, Amaury, Adrien, Lydia, Julia, Laurie, Fanny, Therese

These ten nurses have all state qualifications, and the head nurse owns an additional degree in health care management. The situation started to deteriorate in last October when Perrine, one of the nurses, had a cerebrovascular accident. Marie decided to put her in charge of administrative work because she was physically unable to assure health care to patients. Thus, she became responsible for organizing, planning, time tables, holidays, and weekends for the entire centre. She visited about 3 patients for blood tests each morning whereas all the other nurses attended to about fifteen to twenty patients in the same period.

That adjustment in the sharing out of work and time was made out of kindness for Perrine's sake. The head nurse allowed it but never referred to the occupational medicine as she knew it would not be accepted. This adjustment is not allowed in French law, if a medical centre does it, it will have to ask the occupational medicine before. We will consider Perrine as the leader now because she is responsible to manage the centre, even if Marie is still an institutional leader. We will describe in which extent in the last section: "absence of check".

### 4.1. Perrine as a leader with toxicity

Before we described leaders who are "infected" by "toxicity", tend to be only preoccupied by them and have a high need of power.

Since she is responsible for organizing work, she tends to be interested in her own needs first. Thus, she is in charge of organizing timetables. To visit all the patients, there are four nurses who work in the morning (from 7am to 12am) and two in the afternoon (4pm to 8pm).



By making the planning for the team and for her as well, Perrine arranges it for her self-interest only. For instance, she manages to work only in the morning and never at weekend and bank holidays anymore. The consequence of these privileges she gives to herself is that the rest of the team has to replace her to do the entire role so they increase their hours of work. Lydia, Adrien and H el ena have to work three weekends a month, with only one day off which is not allowed by the law. In medical health care, the nurses usually work two weeks a month with one and half day off per week. Because of her health problems, Perrine has now reached a position in the team which causes a deterioration of all the others' working life; being the head nurse of centre Marie should never have agreed to that situation.

Furthermore, in each health care centre, there are usually two staff representatives who are in charge of reporting employees' issues which is often linked to the schedule. In our medical centre, there is just one staff representative who is Perrine. Obviously, there are ethical issues at stake here. Perrine organized everything around her own needs and will not take anything else into account. And if a problem occurs, she will be the responsible as the representative staff to report the issue to the woman who make the planning: herself.

The other nurses who work one weekend more per month do not have any salary rise. Yet the French law says that when you work on Sundays, you should have a bonus. Lydia had the same salary: 1.700  whether she worked two or three weekends a month.

When nurses take care of patients, they have to give them medicines and sometimes to get them washed. A majority of their patients are bedridden so they cannot do anything by their own. According to our leader, this task suddenly becomes too difficult for her so she decided not to do it anymore. More than that, she claims ownership of the technical health care; it means she realizes blood tests, drips, etc. and let other nurses take care of toilets' patient. This is an example of her need for power. She justified this decision by saying she was an excellent "stepper", and with a long experience.

The decision leads to the patients to doubt about the value of some nurses. Indeed, each nurse holds his or her own round, so if Marie cannot help her patient to clean him or her, another nurse needs to go. So several patients asked H el ena, Amaury and Adrien: why are you not able to make the blood test and help me getting

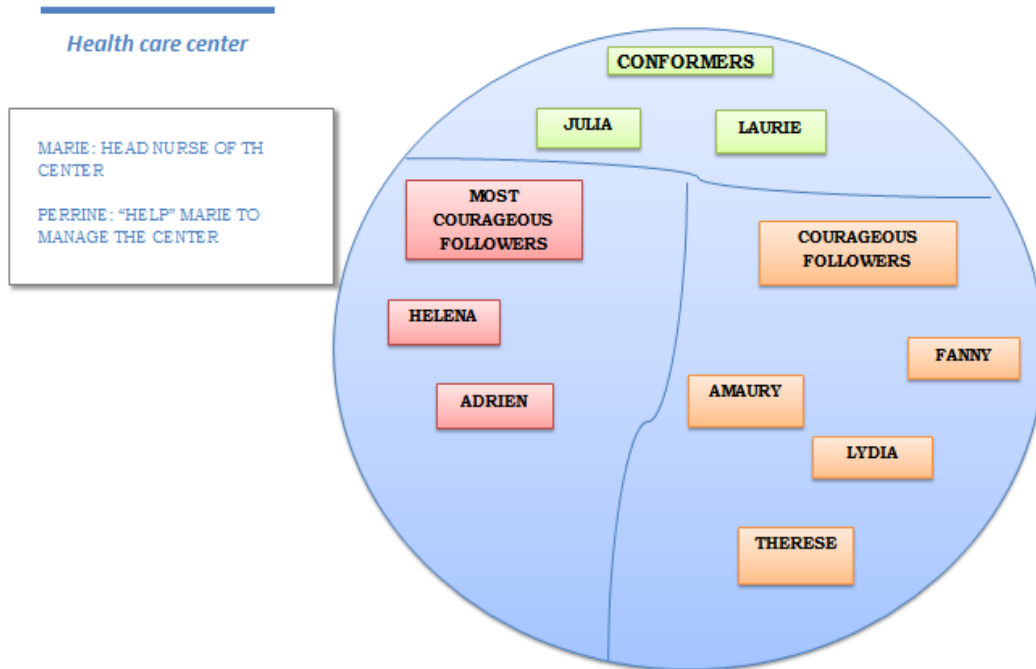
washed in the same time? Plus, social security does not pay back two visits to the centre but only one, so the health care centre loses money when Perrine acted like this.

Another incident happened due to her behaviour. Perrine decided to overstep her power this time and by doing so she put a patient in danger. Nurses are not allowed to give medicines by themselves to the patient, they have to respect the doctor's decision, and apply what he or she writes on the prescription. On one occasion she changed the dosage of a heart medicine, against the doctor's will. By doing so, she creates a vital risk for the patient. It was a real professional fault.

#### **4.2. Nurses as susceptible followers**

In our “toxic” triangle, we saw we may find two types of followers likely to follow a leader with a “toxic” behaviour: vulnerable followers with a deep need for safety and certainty, and a low self-esteem; and stronger followers who follow a leader with “toxicity” because they want to gain status, promotion or they are ambitious. However, in this centre we were able to recognize three groups which are summarized in our next figure 9:

**Figure 9: Types of followers in the health care centre**



Source: authors' chart

Two groups of followers were identified in the health care centre. The first one consists of two followers: Julia and Laurie who will not leave the centre. Laurie will retire within two years. She does not care about management issues; she has had enough work and is tired. Dealing with “toxic” leadership or just leadership would not make any difference according to her. She just wants to go through her two years, which is why she complies with Perrine’s behaviours. Julia has not been interviewed: nevertheless according to her colleagues, she does not plan to leave the centre even if she complains about the working schedule. We can compose these followers to conformers: they need their work to satisfy their security needs.

The second group might be related to “courageous followers” (Chaleff 2009): Helena, Adrien, Amaury, Lydia, Fanny and Therese. It was not possible to include these followers in our “toxic” triangle because they refused to support the leader. As we saw followers which are likely to follow leaders with “toxicity” may be weak or ambitious or share leaders’ values. It is not the case for the second group. So we

decided to create another type of followers in this case: “courageous followership” who are characterized by the following attributes: the courage to challenge and speak to the hierarchy, to keep their moral values (Chaleff 2009). In our case, followers asked Marie, the institutional leader, to have a meeting in order to speak about important issues with Perrine. Marie replied they needed to sympathize with Perrine due to the disease she went through. In other words, she took Perrine’s disease as a pretext to avoid conflict.

The most courageous were Helena and Adrien because they tried to solve the issues with Perrine and tried to find a compromise between their priorities and Perrine’s ones. Unfortunately after they failed to fix the problem, Helena, Adrien, Amaury, Lydia, Fanny and Therese decided to leave the health care centre.

### **4.3. Health care centre environment**

During crisis and instability time leaders have to take quick decision in order to save their organisation. This instability can act as pressure on them and lead to “toxic” leadership.

This medical health care has a difficult past. Three years ago, the centre was in deficit of 300 000€. Nevertheless the situation has been fixed and since two years the centre has been earning money. But each month it has to pay back 5 000 € to the bank to delete its debt. To such extent, each month the centre has to earn enough money to pay back the bank and pay its employees. This might be a reason to explain Perrine “toxic” behaviour: there is no salary rise in spite of the increasing work, and furthermore the hour’s adjustment is effectuated at the end of the year instead of the end of the month. Hour adjustment entails calculating if each nurse has done thirty-five hours a week or not realize it; they might be in deficit or in excess. For instance, H el ena was in deficit of forty-six hours last month, so she had to catch it up the following month and realized fifty-five hours a week. Like this, Perrine can avoid paying extra hours.

Leaders will be likely to abuse their power all the more since they are free and not supervised in their work.

We would like to emphasize on the relation between Marie (the head nurse) and Perrine with only the status of nurse. Marie is supposed to be the leader or at least checked Perrine’s work. We decided to focus on the ascension of Perrine as the

leader however we need now some explanation about Marie’s passivity. Indeed, before Perrine “took the power”, Marie had a participative management but she did not like to handle conflicts which are usually about schedules, weekends, and holidays. She used to blame the system to justify her choices and decline any responsibility. So when Perrine came back from her sick leave, Marie took the opportunity to let Perrine handle the administrative work. Thus, she could avoid conflicts. Marie is an institutional leader with a management degree; she gets the highest salary in the centre and works only in the morning and in fact delegates most of her tasks to Perrine.

#### 4.4. Toxic outcomes

How did Perrine emerge in “toxic” leadership? It appears to be a combination between Marie’s passivity and Perrine’s need of power. The outcomes are abundant: disorganization of the centre, miss of coordination among nurses due to the bad management, stressful work environment, risk of professional fault on patients. But the most important outcome of this toxicity is the number of people leaving the medical centre. We illustrate all departure in our following table:

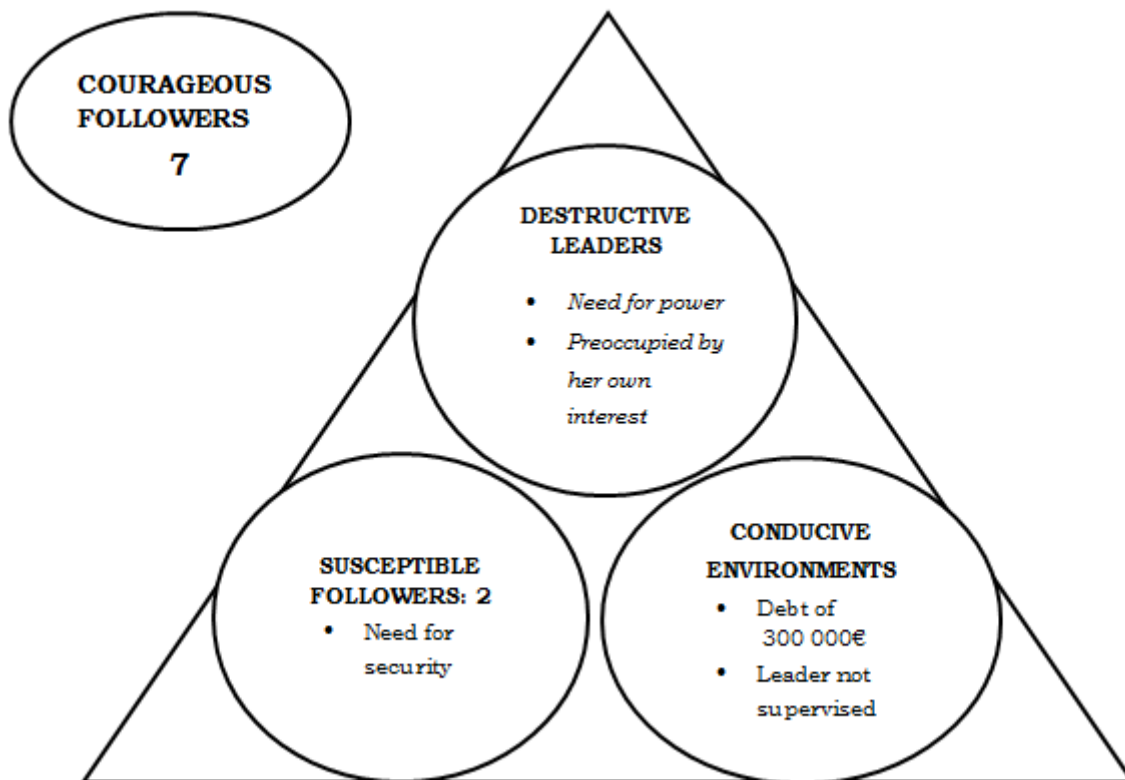
**Figure 10: Followers’ departure**

NURSES	LEAVING DATE	REASON
<b>Héléna</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> of May,2013	Work environment
<b>Amaury</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> of May, 2013	Work environment
<b>Adrien</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> of May, 2013	Work environment
<b>Lydia</b>	2014	Just waiting to have enough hours to open her own centre
<b>Fanny</b>	Middle of July, 2013	Work environment
<b>Therese</b>	End of June, 2013	Has another work in the same time, and prefer to leave the centre to consecrate her time to another centre.

Source: authors' table

To conclude, why are we able to qualified Perrine as having a “toxic” leadership style? After interviewing almost all the nurses working in the health care centre, we could apply our toxic triangle (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007) to the head nurse in the figure 11:

**Figure 11: The toxic triangle in the health care center**



Sources: authors' chart based on Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser's toxic triangle

Firstly, she already held some characteristics susceptible to influence her to have a “toxic” behaviour. She had an incredible need for power; it was never enough for her. Plus/in addition to that, she was narcissistic as she was only preoccupied by her own-interest and did not care about those of her employees.

In the same time, the environment might influence Perrine's behaviour to fall into “toxicity”. The health care centre holds a debt of 300 000€ so she has to deal with the centre in order to pay back 5 000€ to the bank every month. Plus, she was not supervised (by anyone), so basically she does whatever she wants.

Finally, the most interesting part in this case is that we found only two nurses who followed Perrine. The others did not accept her behaviour and tried to fix the situation by challenging and talking to her. Unfortunately, they did not succeed to improve the situation so they decided to leave the health care centre. This is why we can name these seven followers as “courageous followers” and add a new type of followers in our toxic triangle.

---

*In that stage of our thesis, we have reached the knowledge of how toxins appear in leaders and why people follow them. As we viewed in chapter 1, there are three favourable factors for toxicity: the characteristics of the leader which can be destructive, the “conducive environment” and the susceptibility of followers towards the leader (depending on their needs). This acknowledgment allows a better understanding of how the toxicity emerges. From this, we will present how once leaders are “intoxicated”, they will “contaminate” their surrounding.*

---

## 5. CHAPTER 2: Emotional Intelligence AN EMPOISONED GIFT

---

In this chapter we will present the way leaders can use Emotional Intelligence to manipulate others therefore creating a *toxic environment*. What we mean by this latter expression, is a place where members become “intoxicated” by their leaders’ behaviours and moods. In the end, the well-fare of these followers is undermined.

Firstly, as advised by P Daudi (2013, 17 April), in a personal conversation (i.e. always come back to the origin), we will present the root of Emotional Intelligence’s construction. For us, even if it is strongly rhetorical, this part is important because through its explanation the readers can understand both its benefits and its malicious power (i.e.: use for manipulative goals).

### 5.1. GO BACK to Emotional Intelligence and its story

---

The label of “emotional intelligence” did not appear before the end of the twentieth century (Salovey & Mayer 1990) because of a long discussion about the values of emotion. When we go back to 200 BCE until 300 CE in Ancient Greece, the Stoics considered logic and rationality superior to feelings and emotions (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008, p. 508). They saw moods, fears and desires as “too individualistic”, “too self-centred to be reliable” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 93). This “non-emotional” thought was then spread in the Christian religion, leading many Western people to believe that emotion was unreasonable, irrational (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 93; Lazányi 2009, p. 103), a “complete loss of cerebral control” and a “disorganized interruption of mental activity” (Salovey & Mayer 1990, p. 185). During the eighteenth century, emotions became a “contradiction”, opposing and approaching at the same time emotion with reason (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 93). Indeed, the emotion’s inferiority, implanted in Western thought by the Greek Stoics, was challenged by “romanticism”, the “sentimentalist” movement. Their credo was “follow your heart” - their real truth. Among this romanticist movement, many writers, painters and musicians expressed their emotions - through art - to rebel against those “rigid rationality rules” of this era (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 94). Afterwards, during 1960s, other sentimentalists led “emotional expressiveness” against oppression and inequality. For instance, women and black



Americans fought for their causes through “civil rights movement”, which implied emotional states (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 94). Towards the end of the twentieth century, emotions still remained at the centre of discussions, especially with “humanistic psychology”. Indeed, Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 95) were in favour of the importance of emotions in our live. They stated that “one urgent human need was to feel good about oneself, experience one’s emotions directly, and grow emotionally” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 95). More precisely, in 1960s, “emotional needs” became a solid part of our society. Nonetheless, the fight between reason and emotion was not totally concluded. In Europe, people were not able to control their emotions, due to “uncontrolled feelings” which was considered as an “irrational defect in human nature” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 95). Throughout Western history, an emotional person was labelled “mentally ill” and was put into jail or mental hospitals and tortured to erase emotions (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2000, p. 96).

This idea of useless emotions was not shared by all Greeks. Indeed, the old Greek philosopher and the “Saint of Reason” Socrates, believed that “emotions, desires, appetites can influence human motivation and all one’s moral actions” (Chopra & Kanji 2010, p. 974). We can therefore assume that behaviour is controlled by our feelings, which are the results of our emotions. This insight was then followed by his disciple Plato, who explained (Chopra & Kanji 2010, p. 974) that the human mind encompasses three distinctive elements which are: “the reasoning, the desiring and the emotive part”. Emotions “guide” our behaviours (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008, p. 508). How and why we react is based upon our emotions. This was scientifically proven by Donald McLean (1990), the pioneer of emotional intelligence, with his “triune brain theory” announcing that our brain is divided into three parts called little brains: thinking brain, emotional brain and reptilian brain (Chopra & Kanji 2010, p. 973). This important scientific discovery confirms the idea expressed by Socrates and Plato: emotions can be a useful tool for explaining behaviour and perhaps anticipating it. Nowadays, the emotion’s concept is widespread in the psychological and social literature to explain leaders’ motives.

Emotional intelligence encompasses two interlinked notions: emotions, which is the feeling part and intelligence, which is the thinking or logical part (Chopra & Kanji 2010, p. 973). Chopra and Kanji (2010, p. 977) claim that emotional intelligence is

a paradox containing two contradictory terms: “emotion” (subjective) emanates from the Latin “emovere” and means “out move” and “intelligence” (objective) which means “to understand”. Descartes (Salovey & Mayer 1990, p. 186) defined an “intelligent human” as a person, able to discern true from false. Therefore, emotion is also linked to reason because through a thinking process, emotion guides us to undertake and choose the appropriate action in a situation. Through this insight, we can claim that emotion is a technical and thinking tool for leadership. Before the appearance of the emotional intelligence label, Thorndike firstly proposed “social intelligence” theory and defined it as “the ability to perceive one’s own and other’s internal states, motives, and behaviours and to act toward them optimally on the basis of that information” (1920 cited in Salovey & Mayer 1990, p. 187). In reality, according to Petrides (2011, p. 656), “social intelligence” is the root of emotional intelligence.

Although many authors considered Mayer and Salovey the first to speak about “emotional intelligence”, they were in fact wrong. Indeed, Wayne Leon Payne, a student at that time, was the first to use the label “emotional intelligence” in his thesis in 1986 which however was not published to the wider public. No one reused this label except Mayer and Salovey (1990) who drew the first “Emotional intelligence theory” and supported it through empirical data. At around the same time, the interest in emotions within organizations grew, especially with Daniel Goleman’s book in 1995: *“Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter More Than IQ”*. Emotional intelligence became a mainstream concept in management and leadership scholarship. Indeed, many academics were interested in this emotional issue leading to the development of the management thought and practices at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Ashkanasy & Daus 2001, p. 5).

In the literature, we can find many definitions of “emotional intelligence” but the first one emanates from Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer 1990, p. 189). In order to summarise all the definitions proposed by these authors (Walter, Cole & Humphrey 2011; Austin et al. 2007; Kilduff, Chiaburu & Merges 2010; Fambrough & Hart 2012; Petrides 2011; Goerge 2000; Power 2004; Jang & George 2011; Mayer & Salovey 1990; Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008; Chopra & Kanji 2010), we suggest : “emotional intelligence” is a mental ability to manage

oneself - intra personal intelligence (Petrides 2011, p. 656) - and others' emotions - interpersonal intelligence - in order to behave appropriately in a given situation. Acknowledging this definition, to some extent we can pretend that emotional intelligence may be used by leaders to achieve professional or personal goals.

## **5.2. Emotional Intelligence and ITS DARK SIDE**

---

*Emotional intelligence is a talent that “can be used for either good or evil ends”*  
(Fambrought & Hart 2008, p. 749).

Many authors (Mayer & Salovey 1990; Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008; Walter, Cole & Humphrey 2011; George 2000) consider emotional intelligence as the “key contributor to leadership effectiveness” and leading to organisational well-being. Indeed, leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence can better understand others' emotions and thus fulfil their needs (Austin et al. 2011; Walter, Cole & Humphrey 2011). For example, these leaders are able to calm the atmosphere by expressing positive mood as sympathy in order to erase followers' stress, a negative emotion that can jeopardize a firm's performance (Jang & George 2011). As “leader's emotions influence followers' emotional reactions”, followers would feel more relaxed and happier (Walter, Cole & Humphrey 2011, p. 47; Lazányi 2009, p.105). As Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008, p. 524) said “*A person's inner well-being and external performance of mutuality influence one another*”.

Despite emotional intelligence being an advantageous asset, it presents a “*dark side*” when leaders use it to manipulate others for their own self-interest. Manipulation emanates from Latin *manipulus* and means “handshake” (Centre National de Ressources Textuelles and Lexicales [CNRTL] 2012). In the Oxford dictionary (2013, n.p.), we found the definition of manipulation: “control or influence (a person or situation) cleverly or unscrupulously”. Nonetheless, we do not completely agree with it; we see rather manipulation as being pejorative and used for “*malefic*” aims. Thus for us, manipulation is more about *control* than *influence*.

*“While manipulators lurk in the shadows with secret agenda, leaders walk in the light”* (Rockwell 2011, p. 1).

We distinguish manipulators (*false leaders*) from leaders (*true ones*) by their value system and beliefs (Dermott 2006). We can differentiate manipulators who lead with immorality from “true-leaders” who convince with ethical values. Also, leaders *influence* others, while manipulators *control* them. Leaders love and care, share and give (Rockwell 2011), while manipulators take and get only (Rockwell 2011). Moreover, in literature, manipulators are often characterized by “anti-social” skills, such as coldness and selfishness. We call the manipulators: the “emotionally abusive leaders” (Goldman 2009, p. 140), who exploit others at their expenses for their spiteful envy (Kilduff, Chiaburu & Menges 2010, p. 130). This kind of leaders will be described in the following section.

In the literature, few authors (Goldman 2009; Salovey & Mayor 1990; Côté & Golden n.d.) have discussed the “bad use” of emotional intelligence, which is why we have chosen this issue. Here we try to explain and understand how leaders can use their emotional skills to manipulate and create *toxicity*.

### **5.2.1. Emotionally abusive leaders**

*“Abusive behaviours are often psychological and emotional attacks against employees” (Roter 2002, n.p.).*

In many organisations, employees are victims of abusive “attacks” from their boss (Roter 2002). Roter (2002, n.p.) defines *abusive behaviours* in the workplace as “behaviours that include public criticism, use of derogatory names, condescending tones, intimidation, tantrums, rudeness, coercion, and blaming others for mistakes they did not make”. Abusive leaders use their emotional power to control others, often through fear, intimidation, charm or lies. They create a workplace environment favourable to manipulation by playing with others’ emotions or by suppressing them (Kilduff, Chiaburu & Menges 2010, p. 146). Consciously or unconsciously, these leaders leave an indelible and harmful print on their surroundings.

By abusing their employees, leaders create emotional responses like trouble, fear, confusion or misunderstandings. These emotional states cause followers to be depended on the leader.



*Manipulators “absorb” their soul to afterwards play with them as ‘simple puppets’.*

Source: Willett 2010

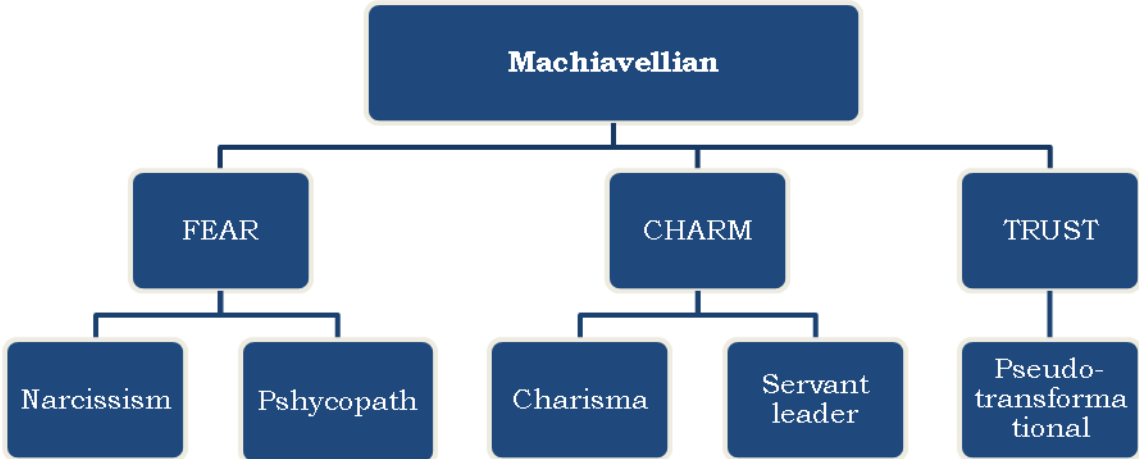
Through this picture, we perceive leaders as manipulators who play with their followers as “dolls” and lead them wherever they want. We view this process as a “mind alteration”, or brainwashing process. For instance, leaders can treat their followers as inferiors, stupid, or incapable. By repeatedly giving these insults, they can in turn start to believe them. They really start to think of “being incompetent, embarrassed, guilty, and shameful” (Roter 2002, n.p.). These abuses remain in their mind, as an indelible mark. Afterwards, the abused person loses self-confidence and becomes septic as for the possibility to find a new job.

Therefore, a leader can become the possessor of followers’ mind by emotionally abusing them. This behaviour is called “emotional abuse” and it is defined by Munro (2011, n.p.) as: “a series of repeated incidents – whether intentional or not – that insults, threatens isolates, degrades, humiliates, and/or controls another person”.

In the following part, we are going to present the leadership styles that we considered as being emotional manipulators: Machiavellian, Narcissist, Psychopath, Charismatic, Servant and Pseudo-Transformational leader. However, we have chosen the Machiavellian that regroup all the other ones. Indeed, for us and

relating to its characteristics, the Machiavellian is a manipulator by nature. At the bottom this is our guideline (figure 11), it will allow you to get a better understanding during the reading. Fear, charm and trust are the *types of emotional manipulation* used by each typical leader.

**Figure 12: How leaders use emotional skills to manipulate**



Source: authors' chart

**5.2.2. Utilization of deception**

**5.2.2.1. Machiavellian ... THE MANIPULATOR**

Machiavellianism found its origin with Niccolo Machiavelli, an Italian politician who, in 1513, wrote a book named *The Prince* in which he conveyed advices to maintain control (Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4; Jones & Paulhus 2009, p. 93). *The prince*, forbidden by Catholic Church, represented guidelines for (princes) leaders to best rule others by using shrewd tools like manipulation or deception (Kessler et al. 2010, p. 1869; Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4). In his publication, he presented society as “untrustworthy, self-serving and malevolent” (Fehr, Samsom & Paulhus 1992, p. 77). Machiavelli was perceived as perverse, cynic and sneaky (Corral & Calvete 2000, p.4). Four hundred years later, Christie and Geis, two psychologists, compared Machiavelli’s political ploy with people’s social demeanours in their daily life, and uncovered a positive correlation (Jones & Paulhus 2009; Corral & Calvete 2000). They took back Machiavelli’s hostile syndromes to label *Machiavellian* the character of manipulative individuals. In 1970, these pioneers of the terminology of Machiavellianism released a book named *Studies in Machiavelism* explaining this current fact and defining Machiavellian personality as the one of an individual who

“seeks to manipulate others to achieve his or her own ends” (Kessler et al. 2010, p. 1869). Afterwards, other authors (Geis & Moon 1981; Fehr, Samsom & Paulhus 1992; Corral & Calvete 2000; McHoskey 2001; Rauthmann 2011; Jones & Paulhus 2009; Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka 2009; Kessler et al. 2010; Walter, Cole & Humphrey 2011) continued the research based upon Christie’s and Geis’ work.

Machiavellian personalities present hostile features which can become toxic for others (Rauthmann 2001, p. 1). They hold a “cynical view of human nature” and consider it weak and thus a target for social pressure (Fehr, Samsom & Paulhus 1992, p. 78; Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4). They reckon others as objects or means for personal manipulation (Kessler et al. 2010, p. 1870). By only viewing others for utilitarian aim (Kessler et al. 2010), Machiavellians do not have any ethical or moral conviction (Jones & Paulhus 2009). They strongly believe that through trickery they can get whatever they want. We can doubtlessly infer that these persons are careless about human beings and are only “control and power focused”.

*“The end justifies the means” (Jones & Paulhus 2009, p. 93).*

Some authors (Kessler et al. 2010; Paulhus & Williams; 2002; Petrides et al. 2011) empirically found a negative correlation between Machiavelism and emotional intelligence. Moreover, according to Kessler et al. (2010, p. 1877), Machiavellian people are *alexithymic*, i.e. “not able to connect to others emotions”. In others words, Machiavellians do not have the ability to perceive one’s and others’ emotions.

However, for us emotional intelligence and Machiavellian are tied. This is why we closely looked at how these authors have constructed their empirical research and we discovered that they did not use an accurate approach. Indeed, they tied emotional intelligence scale (EQ) to the Big Five Model, which encompasses: agreeableness, consciousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness (Hogan, Hogan & Kaiser 2003, p. 11). Hence, they use a model that only portrays the “bright side” of personality (Hogan, Gordon, Curphy & Hogan 1994, p. 15) and do not include the dark side. However, emotional intelligence definition includes readiness and management of one’s and others emotions for either bad or evil ends (Fambrought & Hart 2008, p. 749; Kessler et al. 2010, p. 1879).

Hence, comparing Machiavellian (MACH) to EQ is not completely accurate. Indeed, Austin, Farrelly and Moore (2007, p. 182) share our idea, and explored the *dark side of emotional intelligence* in an empirical test by comparing Machiavellianism to emotional manipulation. The result was a positive relation between the two. Therefore, empirically, Machiavellian people are emotional manipulators who use their emotional skills. To support this idea, Whiten and Byrne (1997, p. 1) argue the existence of “The Machiavellian Intelligence”. Whiten and Byrne (1997, p. 1) evocate the idea that “intelligence began in social manipulation, deceit and cunning cooperation”. Furthermore, Corral and Calvete (2000, p. 4) regard Machiavellian persons endowed with “practical intelligence and emotional control”. Jones and Paulhus (2009, p. 94) also claim that Machiavellians have “superior intelligence” regarding the comprehension of others in social interactions. Thus, we can conclude that there is somehow a link between emotional intelligence and Machiavellianism.

Machiavellian people have a range of “manipulative tactics” they could use during their interpersonal interactions (Fehr, Samsom & Paulhus 1992, p. 78; Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4), for example, lying, flattering, cheating, and stealing, all unethical and antisocial behaviours (Jones & Paulhus 2009). Moreover, they can use “self-monitoring”, also called “impression management” (Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4; Jones & Paulhus 2009, p. 95). Self-monitored people are strongly sensitive about what others think: they greatly care about their appearance, performance, and never show any flaw to be perceived as always perfect (Geis & Moon 1981; Jones & Paulhus 2009). This stratagem leads them to be flexible and adapt themselves to any situation. They will take others’ perceptions as guidelines for monitoring their own self-presentation” (Corral & Calvete 2000, p. 4)

*Machiavellian people are as chameleons that change colour to adapt themselves when they encounter opportunist situations.*

We strongly believe that Machiavellian individuals can read people and can in advance know what others will feel. As Jones and Paulhus (2009) assert, Machiavellians are more advanced in “theory of mind”. By anticipating their emotions they determine followers’ naivety and assess whether they could be future manipulation targets. According to circumstances and followers’ personality, Machiavellian leaders will carry out the required behaviours to manipulate. In other



words, they can analyze the whole environment and use their own emotions and others' to accomplish what they want. They can either produce “negative impression management tactics” (Jones & Paulhus 2009, p. 97) as threat, or supplication to get others to follow because of fear or empathy. Another method is when they use “positive impression management tactics” (Jones & Paulhus 2009, p. 97) such as exemplification, whereby they demonstrate integrity and responsibility, or self-promotion and ingratiation. Fehr, Samson and Paulhus (1992, p. 90) advance another form of manipulation known as *facial manipulation*. This term defines the use of facial expression by leaders to let others know what they want. For instance, they can intimidate or scare their followers by over-expressing an angry face.

### **5.2.3. Utilization of fear and intimidation**

Fear is a strong negative emotion that emanates from situations of threat, conflict, uncertainty, danger, risk or difficulty to overcome a particular situation (Cure, n.d. p. 2, p. 6, p. 8). This environment often emanates from a *punitive culture* instituted by the leader, i.e.: the fear to speak, to be stupid, to feel awkward, or to make mistakes (Cure, n.d, p. 3). By spreading fear and stress, leader can better control his or her workplace surrounding. Indeed, scared followers move away from the issue by looking for social support from their peers, or even from the leader: under pressure, people need protection. Fineman and Stephen (2003, p. 76) explain in their books that fear is one of the reasons that individuals follow a leader, and since scared people are weaker and more vulnerable, they become easy targets to manipulate.

*“Fear is the most powerful and fundamental of emotional states”* (Cure, n.d., p. 8).

Many people are unable to know whether they were emotionally abused. Even emotional abuse does not seem to be severe at first glance, but its impact can be dramatic.

#### **5.2.3.1. Emotional Narcissist abusers**

Narcissistic leaders are more likely to be emotional abusers because they are capable of anything to achieve their personal goal. The meaning of Narcissism is being obsessed with one's self. Narcissistic people are empoisoned by the “hubris” or “custer” syndrome: the illness of victory (Lawson 2011). Because of this alienated state, they cannot accept failure, errors, or lack of respect (Lawson 2011; Hogan,

Hogan & Kaiser 2003). They blame the followers who did not achieve results worthy of their expectations, have a strong “sense of entitlement” and superiority, hence “addicted to compliments” (Kets de Vries 1994; Paulhus & Williams 2002; Petrides et al. 2011). Because they only see themselves “in the mirror”, they refuse suggestions or ideas from others (Paulhus & Williams 2002; Lawson 2011). They only hear and see what they want (Kets de Vries 1994, p. 18) as if they were into an imaginary bubble where the world revolved around them. As Lawson claims (2011, p. 5), they “structure an external world” that supports their selfish viewpoint of a perfect world, display of power, or to fulfil a grand illusion”. They are completely disconnected with reality and live under their own illusion (Kets de Vries 1994, p. 25). Their egoist goals and strong desire for success push them to use unscrupulous stratagems like deception, manipulation, or intimidation that results in the destruction of their followers (Lawson 2011).

*Narcissists treat their followers as pawns in a chess game, they take them, and put them in the good place to win.*

To narcissists only the goal counts. These persons have a psychological need for domination. Hogan, Hogan and Kaiser (2003) consider them arrogant individuals who have a neurotic need to “be admired, praised, and obeyed”. They claim (2003) that arrogant persons only expect success, and when their expectations are not reached, they become frustrated and explode with “*narcissistic rage*” (Hogan, Hogan & Kaiser 2003).

Narcissists’ lack of insight is due to their high sense of grandiosity and their goal orientation (Lawson 2011, p. 8). By “insight” we mean that they dismiss empathy and cannot experience what others feel (Kets de Vries 1994). Regarding this assessment, we can be confused and pretend that narcissists are not emotionally intelligent. However, their strong self-esteem leads to conclude that they are able to manage at least their own emotions and play with them to manipulate others. To have a better understanding: leaders can become really angry – either unconsciously or not – and convey this emotional state to others in order to show that “I am the boss”, “You are a simple sheep to follow the hierarchical rule”.

*“As with all narcissistic leaders, an inglorious end was on the horizon” (Lawson 2011, p. 9).*

Narcissists can become strongly “self-destructive” during the pursuit of fame as Kets de Vries (1994, p. 27) states: “Glory is fleeting but obscurity lasts forever”. Their over confidence and irrational decisions leads to situations from which they cannot recover. They create a neurotic organization characterized by a “poorly functioning organization” (Kets de Vries 1994, p. 28). Unfortunately, this personally predominates our society, as Lawson (2011, p.10) says “they dominate the organizational structure by continually searching and assimilating power, taking responsibility for successes and transferring blame for their failures to others in order to feed an ever expanding psychological need for power, adoration and superiority”.

### **5.2.3.2. Emotional Psychopath abusers**

*“His motivation was not to preserve his patients’ teeth; it was to enhance his bottom line”* (Kantor 2006, p. 2).

In literature (Rauthmann 2001; Visser et al. 2010; Petrides et al. 2011), psychopaths are manipulators, disagreeable, irresponsible, merciless, cold, “thrill-seeking”, and erratic. According to Kantor (2006, p. 1), psychopathy is an “Antisocial Personality Disorder”, including selfishness and low levels of empathy, kindness and altruism.

According to Kantor (2006), psychopathology is present in everyday life. We believe that many bosses cleverly conceal a psychopathic mask, therefore leaving them with some level of “toxicity”. Psychopath leaders are talented liars and flannels; they are untruthful with everyone, so the people with whom they relate can no longer distinguish between reality and fantasy because they are duped by the psychopathic leader.

*Psychopath is “the one who honks remorselessly at people who do not move fast enough [...] and blames everyone else of his or her accidents”* (Kantor 2006, p. 1).

They present personality disorders: “exaggerations of [...] personality styles that are present to varying degrees within every individual” (Kantor 2006, p. 15). Psychopaths suffer from “Masochistic Personality Disorder” a “maladaptive

behaviour” (Kantor 2006, p. 14): they over feel and over express their emotions. This makes them being unpredictable and frightening.

The definition of psychopathy can be completed with this: “involves the use of interpersonal manipulation” (Visser et al. 2010, p. 2). Considering this, we can expect psychopath leaders to be very emotionally intelligent, and cunning, bearing in mind their capacity to manipulate others through the handling of their emotional states. However, many empirical studies (Paulhus & Williams 2002; Petrides et al. 2011) conclude that they are unable to recognize - as narcissistic leaders also do - emotions in others because of their antisocial skills. Thus, they found a negative relation between psychopathy and emotional intelligence.

Nevertheless, Visser et al. (2010, p. 1) smartly argued: “there is evidence that psychopathic individuals show no deficits in theory of mind tasks which assess the ability to determine what others are thinking, feeling, or believing and are positively associated with Emotional Intelligence”. We thus infer that psychopaths are emotional manipulators.

#### **5.2.4. Utilization of charm**

*“Leadership is a strange mixture of alchemy, romantic, idealism and reason”* (Kaiser, Hogan & Hogan 2003, p. 2).

##### **5.2.4.1. Emotional Charismatic abusers**

Charismatic leaders are more likely to be emotional abusers through the use of their charisma. Their “divinity” can be dangerous and could lead to abuse through manipulation (Metcalf & Metcalf 2005; Judge et al. 2008; Kaiser & Hogan 2006; Sankwosky 1995; Kilduff, Chiaburu, Menges, 2010; Bligh & al 2007). As Conger (n.d. cited in Judge et al. 2008, p. 336) stated, charisma can be employed for good or nasty intentions.

*“Charisma is a form of influence, it can be used for good or evil”* (Judge et al. 2008, p. 337).

Charismatic leaders begin by seducing their followers when expressing “irresistible emotions connection” (Fineman 2003, p. 79) such as being kind, pleasant, inspirational, brave, and fearless. They are “colourful”: good at communication and “at calling attention to themselves” (Hogan, Hogan & Kaiser 2003; Lipman-Blumen

2005). They take care of their physical appearance and like to appear pleasant and entertaining. Charismatic leaders propose grand visions, and become the hero of their followers by showing strong confidence in themselves and their visions (Sankowski 1995, p. 64; Kaiser & Hogan 2006, p. 16; Metcalfe & Metcalfe 2005, p. 54). They show interest for others, and it comes natural to them to be “people magnets”, easily attracting others (Fineman 2003, p.78; Kaiser& Hogan 2006, p. 16). But in reality, these enticing leaders hide a mischievous mask.

Those seduction ploys create emotional states in followers’ minds such as: trust, passion, respect, happiness, compassion and even love. People “feel pleasure and pride in identifying in them, to get inspired by all they say and do” (Fineman 2003, p. 79). They believe that they are strongly connected with the leader and lost the volition to question themselves because they merely obey (Dasborough 2002, p. 7). In reality, these clever strategies are used to seduce followers into succumbing to the leader’s charm. Thus, charismatic leaders get *symbolic status*, and are represented as “figure parents” since followers consider their opinion and approval as they would do with their own parents. This power creates unavoidable dependency on the leader (Sankowski 1995). At this stage, followers are psychological vulnerable and can become interesting toys for leaders to manipulate.

*Leaders enchant, beguile others to then exploit them.*

Charismatic individuals are “masters of emotional control” (Kilduff, Chiaburu, & Menges 2010, p. 141). They are *mischievous*, charming, and attractive. They enquire for favours and are “emotionally demanding”. This means that by helping their followers achieve positive outcomes, they demand their respect in return, and this approval is marked by a demand for power and results in emotional enslavement.

Followers fall “in the thrall of toxic leaders, who first charm, then manipulate and ultimately leave their followers worse off than they found them” (Lipman-Blumen 2005, p. 1). *Charisma can be a dangerous power...*

#### **5.2.4.2. Emotional Servant abusers**

Servant leadership is a concept developed by Robert Greenleaf in 1977 (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2003, p. 2) and considered as the “ideal leadership” model inspiring organizations to reach this standard (Spears 2010, p. 26). According to

Spears (2010, p. 26), servant leaders have ethical and caring behaviours, tend to merely focus on others and meet their needs (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2003, p. 2, p. 3). They are nurturing and aid their followers in the enhancement of their personal skills (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2003, p. 4; Spears 2010, p. 26). They help give them a vision (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2003, p. 4). They possess many positive skills such as empathy and being good listeners. Thus we can believe that they are not self-interested. However, as charismatic leaders, servant leaders can conceal a diabolic mask.

By showing themselves as altruistic (i.e. thinking only for their followers' well-fare) servant leaders obtain trust and credibility. Their favours in reality endear the followers to the leaders. This is no longer a relation of "giving-receiving" but a mutual relationship about "giving – giving". In other words, the leader expects by giving them services to receive something from the followers. Cleverly, servant leaders with poor motives influence followers not by using their charisma, like charismatic leaders do, but by offering their services (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2003, p. 6). Thus, service itself is a form of manipulation. Indeed, as Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003, p. 7) claim, "according to the principle of reciprocation, when you do something for another person they are psychologically obliged to return the favor".

Therefore if leaders are too nice to you, they perhaps have a manipulative goal in mind. Followers are blinded by this appeal, and cannot refuse the service demanded by the servant leaders. This is a perverted manipulation.

### **5.2.5. Utilization of trust and authenticity**

*"Many leaders walk a fine line of moral probity"* (Bass & Steidlmeier 2006, p. 4).

#### **5.2.5.1. Pseudo – Transformational leader**

Burns (1978) was the first to depict "transformational leadership" style and identified it as "a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into moral and agents" (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987, p. 648). In literature many authors (Burns 1978; Kuhnert & Lewis 1987; Bass 1985; Brown, Treviño 2006; Dasborough 2002) consider this leadership style as a positive asset. These leaders inspire people to accomplish visions in harmony with their personal and

psychological needs (Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 2). As Dasborough (2002, p. 4) claims, transformational leaders are a “positive force operating to achieve legitimate organizational objectives”. In this way, true, ethical and moral leaders reach the followers respect and trust (Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 2). Once trust is gained, they feel connected to the leader and motivated to fulfil the vision. They present involvement, commitment, loyalty towards the leader (Bass 1996, p. 24).

However, transformational leaders can be either ethical or unethical depending on their motives (Bass 1985). The borderline between ethical leader and unethical leader is blurred. Indeed, leaders can *appear* “authentic” by displaying behaviours that empower people to accomplish a common goal, when in reality they are creating this true leader persona to manipulate. Dasborough (2002, p. 8) recognizes a “dark side” of transformational leaders. Because of their certain charisma, and inspirational motivation, they have the “potential for opportunistic behaviours” (Barling, Christie & Turner 2011, p. 2943). These leaders are called *pseudo-transformational leaders* (Bass 1996; Parry & Proctor-Thomson 2002; Homrig 2001). “Pseudo-transformational leaders as failing to uphold the standard required for leadership to be transformational – that it “must rest on a moral foundation of legitimate values” (Barling, Christie & Turner 2011 p. 2944).

*Their vision is faddish ... They are inventors of fantasies.*

At first glimpse, both types present similar behaviours: they influence and inspire followers to complete a vision (Barling, Christie & Turner 2011, p. 2493; Dasborough 2002, p. 8). They have what Barling, Christie and Turner (2007, p. 853) call the same “inspirational motivation”. Indeed, both require the same good communication skills (e.g.: using metaphors and rhetoric) to promote each of their visions. But if we take a closer look, we may observe a sharp difference among their motivation (i.e. their “idealized influence”) (Barling, Christie & Turner 2011, p. 2945). Barling, Christie and Turner defined it (2011, p. 2945) as “idealized influence” or “the values, morals, and ethical principles of a leader, and is manifest through behaviours that suppress self-interest and focus on the good of the collective”. Transformational leaders, also called “socialized charismatic leaders” are energized to empower others, while pseudo transformation leaders are animated by self-serving reasons (Bass 1996, p. 16, Barling, Christie & Turner 2011, p. 2943;

Dasborough 2002, p. 8; Barling, Christie & Turner 2007). Thus, false transformational leaders inspire through “deception and false promises” (Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 853). Under a “presupposed authentic” mask, they conceal their true (i.e. bad) intentions. Therefore, “inspirational motivation is one of the elements of transformational leadership that helps pseudo-transformational leaders appear transformational and what inspires people to follow them” (Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 853)

*“In their efforts to accent the positive, to make inspiring appeals, to maintain the enthusiasm and morale of followers, they may be manipulative”* (Bass & Steidlmeier 2006, p. 4).

Their purpose is to use their emotional skills to seem empathic and agreeable at first to gain trust and look authentic (Dasborough 2002, p. 12). When the followers fall into their emotional trap they cannot get out of it, and as soon as this happens the leader begins to display unethical behaviours that later become harmful and toxic. They display aggressive manners in shaping organizational culture with false promises, fear, threat and punishment (Bass 1996, p. 15, Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 854). They undertake “favoritism, victimization, racial superiority and “social Darwinism” (Bass & Steidlmeier 2006, p. 3). Those leaders are also called “personalized leaders” because of their selfish outlook (Dasborough 2002,; Bass, 1996; Barling, Christie & Turner 2007).

When we take into account their differences, “real” transformational leaders are “intellectually stimulating” and take account of others’ opinions and encourage them to think critically. On the other side, false leaders impose their ideas and manipulate information for self-interest. They lead a culture of “unquestioning” and obedience (Barling, Christie & Turner 2007, p. 854). They censor opposite views by inducing an abusive supervision and enduring public shame and negative commentaries for failures. While authentic leaders “nurture followers’ intellectual talents”, false leaders overwhelm this asset (Barling, Christie & Turner 2011, p. 2947). The latter only evaluate people as a tool to help them to reach their personal goal.

Leaders generate a sense of “personalized identification”: followers view leader as ‘self-referential’. Followers become dependent on the leader and do not dare to go against him or her (Bass 1996, p.15).



*“They may have the public image of a saint but privately are deceptive devils”*

(Bass & Steidlmeier 2006, p. 4).

Related to the “Toxic Triangle”, presented in the chapter 1, we can make a connection. Indeed, the *toxic culture* (i.e. utilization of fear, charm or trust) shaped by the leader can be viewed as a “conducive environment” favourable to manipulation and thus, toxicity. For instance, by creating a surrounding, people are scared and negative emotions arouse from it. This firm can be viewed as a “treat”, which is one of the components of the “conducive environment”. Furthermore, the followers, presented in this section, are “conformers”, indeed; they are *vulnerable, weak, and low in self-esteem* and thus an easy target for manipulation. The others are viewed as less naïve and thus less likely to be manipulated and to fall into the trap of toxicity. We also introduced charisma and narcissism in this section, two features of destructive leadership that can be found in the toxic triangle, which are using to manipulate.

#### **5.2.6. Summarizing Matrix**

Regarding the amount of information, we will present underneath a matrix (figure 12) summarizing the features of each emotional abusive leader.

**Figure 13: Features of Emotional abusive leaders presenting a probable toxicity**

<b>Emotional abusive leaders</b>				
<b>NARCISSISM</b>	<b>PSYCHOPATHY</b>	<b>CHARISMATIC</b>	<b>SERVANT LEADER</b>	<b>PSEUDO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER</b>
Hubris syndrome: big ego, sense of entitlement	Disagreeable, cold and anti-social	Seductive: "magnet skill"	Nurture others	Liar
Need of domination, power, admiration and obeisance	Liar	Good at communication	Altruist	Imposer of ideas
Do not accept failures ("narcissist rage")	Unpredictable and impulsive	Hero: "parent figure"	Possess many positive skills	Consider human as a tool for manipulation
Illness of the victory : people are considered as a pion's check	Irresponsible	Evoque positive emotions	Human focuss	Present the same behaviors than true leader but hold unethical values
Evoque negative emotions	Untrustfull		Eoque positive emotions	Creator of fantasies
	Frightening			Evoque positive and negative emotions
	Evoque negative emotions			

Source: authors' chart

### **5.3. Emotional intelligence as a MIND CONTROL “TOOL”**

---

*So far we have seen how leaders can use emotional intelligence to manipulate and create toxicity. Nevertheless, emotional intelligence is also an “empoisoned gift” when leaders use it to alter followers’ mind and frames of reference in order to create/install confusion. In this part/section, we will present/describe three processes of “mind alteration” which are: brainwashing, hypnotisation and sense-giving.*

---

#### **5.3.1. Brainwashing**

*Master control leaders “keep them unaware that they are being moved along a path of change that will lead them to serve interests that are to their disadvantage” (Singer 2003, p. 147)*

“Empoisoned leaders of toxins” can brainwash their followers to transform them into *string-operated puppets*. Singer (2003, p. 148) sees brainwashing as “cleansing the mind” and defines it as an “exploitative manipulation of one person by another” (2003, p. 147). While some of you may believe that this strategy is only used in extreme circumstances, during and after World War II by Hitler (e.g. when he set up the military training for the future soldiers to be ready to salve the third Reich) brainwashing is used by business leaders today even when they are unaware of producing mind alterations of any sort.

Brainwashing is also called “coercive persuasion”, “manipulation”, “though reform”, “mental control”, “behaviours control” and “mind control” (Singer 2003, p. 147; Dermott 2006, p. 1). Once “mind control” (i.e., the possession of others’ mind) is reached, leaders can make “whatever” they want with their followers. Even though this metaphor could seem very intense, it is not far from reality.

*“Mind control comes under the umbrella of persuasion and influence” (Dermott 2006, p. 1).*

Singer (2003, p. 157) describes three phases that followers go through while they are being indoctrinated. The first one is “unfreezing”: followers’ inner frames of reference are destabilized by the new culture and rules imposed by the leader (Singer 2003, p. 157). At this point, people cannot make sense of what is going and

they become confused while having their attitudes distorted. In other words, *control mind leaders* manipulate others under circumstances that they create: they shape a world that makes people manipulable. *Brain washer leaders* establish “programs” which allow them to master the followers’ minds. One example can be seen when the leaders control both the physical environment, and the time frame (Singer 2003 p. 150, p. 152). They request their followers to work every day and on weekends, all while demanding high quality results. By imposing deadlines and thus inducing stress, anxiety and fear, they get them to do their job (Singer 2003). They entail followers to feel powerless and inferior because they cannot go against the leader’s bidding (Singer 2003, p. 152).

In order to avoid fear and anxiety, followers comply with leader’s requests. This is the second stage which is named “changing” (Singer 2003, p. 157). By recurrently seeing common behaviours within the company; people become adept of it. This social or peer pressure has a meaningful impact for the process of though reform (Singer 2003; Dermott 2006). People cannot do anything else than adopting the same “*required* behaviours” than their peers. This is called “mystical manipulation” (Singer 2003, p. 155). Gradually and unconsciously, people engage into a “social adaption” and alter their behaviours and beliefs (Singer 2003, p. 150).



“Brainwashing [...] is an invisible social adaptation”  
(Singer 2003, p. 150).

Source: Carfantan 2006

Through this picture, followers’ frames of reference are altered and followers become “lost” because they cannot give a meaning of what it is happening. Afterwards, when “mind controlled people” are becoming part of this system, leaders reinforce their power to keep people under their control and insure that old behaviours are erased and new ones are indoctrinated. They cause “mental torture”

to their followers, i.e.: threat, intimidation, confusion, embarrassment, deception and lie to them (Wilson 2001, p. 25). This decreases their “energy and vitality level” (Wilson 2001, p. 26; Singer 2003, p. 154).

They induce rewards and punishments at the same time (Singer 2003, p. 151; Wilson 2001; p. 28) that make people feel oppressed and tired of working hardly in order to avoid punishment and gain reward. *Mental master leaders* confront them to a world without any questions, gossip, no “nattering rule”, and resistance (Singer 2003, p. 154). They make people feel wrong and bad when they do not conform to the system. Moreover, these leaders use “confession” (Singer 2003, p. 155): when people spontaneously reveal stories from their lives the information later gets used to further manipulate them. This is the third and last stage: “refreezing” (Singer 2003, p. 158). At this stage, people are fully dependant on the system and the leader (Dermott 2006). “Indoctrinated followers” are under the influence of the leader and cannot reverse his or her power on them.

Therefore, “though-reform” destabilizes followers’ sense of self. It destroys their identity and so ability to think critically, and it undermines their emotional control and awareness (Singer 2003; Dermott 2006). Received cues in this alienated environment make people vulnerable because they no longer know who they really are. The key success of this operation is to keep people unaware that they are going to be manipulated or controlled (Singer 2003, p. 147, p. 152). Mind control attempts to make people “neurotic” and “separate a person from his or her own knowing, intuition, common of sense and guidance” (Wilson 2001, p .1).



*Leaders enter in our mind as a virus and contaminate it by creating irreparable damages.*

Source: Cherise 2013

We perceive leaders as this virus. This relationship between *mind master leaders* and *indoctrinated followers* can be called: “cultic leadership” (Dermott 2006). Dermott (2006, p. 1) defines it as an “intimate relationship where one person abuses his or her power to manipulate and exploit others”. Therefore, mind control

is a technique that deeply and meaningfully disrupts followers' identity (values, beliefs, preference, behaviours, relationship) and creates a new "pseudo-personality" (Dermott 2006, p. 1).

### **5.3.2. Hypnotization**

*"Honey gathers more flies than vinegar"* (Singer 2003, p. 149).

Brainwashing conveys a picture of followers acting as "robots" with their spirit possessed by the leader. Hypnotization, a "deep and subtle alteration or distortion of the brain of a human being" (Wilson 2001, p. 2) can be tied to the brainwashing procedure. Indeed, both concern the mind alteration, possession and manipulation. Hypnotic leaders manipulate people to be disconnected to the reality by mastering their thoughts (Dermott 2006). In reality, hypnotization is used to charm others, while brainwashing is managed to create a fearful surrounding where people feel obliged to be part of and convert it (Wilson 2001).

Hypnotic leaders provoke a moment whereby followers fall under "trance states": they become unconscious and are not in control of their mind anymore (Dermott 2006). They disseminate in followers' soul a pleasant feeling in order to enchant them by using charming and flattering words. People then feel connected to the hypnotic person (Wilson 2001). Once they reached their subconscious, and attained their "mental barrier", trust is build and leaders can freely continue their *path of manipulation* though their mental card. They become possessor of their mind and manipulate them to do whatever they want.

As brainwashing, hypnotization is part of "the art of persuasion" (Conger 1998). Persuasive leaders have the ability to move others towards new positions that they do not currently hold. They institute credibility and a sense of connection with their followers through emotional links.

### **5.3.3. Sensegiving process**

*"Leadership is "the process (act) of influencing"* (Bryman 1997, p. 276).

We can tie mind control with sensegiving process. Indeed, successful leaders who are able to convince others to fulfil the vision are called "manager of meaning" (Smircich & Morgan 1982; Bryman 1997). They articulate a compelling world by altering followers' reality view (Weick 1995). They change the way that followers

perceive the world around them. In other words, leaders bring them their new contact lens to make people see what they want.

As brainwashing process, managers of meaning *enact* their own environment including values, habits, expectations called “recipe” (Smircich & Stubbart 1985) or “frame of reference” (Weick 1995). We can thus assume that managers of meaning can use their power of sensegiving to convey a vision that fulfils their own interest. Then, they enact a “manipulative surrounding” by moulding culture of either charm or fear. By giving their own (selfish) view of their request organization; they alter their followers’ sensemaking (Lundgren 2012, pers. comm. 17 December).

## 5.4. How toxicity is “injected” within the company?

---

*In this part, we attempt to convey our interpretation about how toxicity emerges within the company and create an “alienated surrounding”. According to us, leaders “bitten” by a diabolic kiss can contaminate their followers which in turn destroy completely the environment around them. Indeed, empoisoned leaders create empoisoned followers.*

---

*Intoxicated” leaders act as snakes, with their venom they empoison their surrounding which becomes afterwards toxic itself...*

### 5.4.1. Sense-making process, Appraisal Theory and Affective Event Theory

When human beings experience an event, automatically they are bombarded with stimuli. Among these puzzled pieces of information, people need to select. This process is called “sense making” (Weick 1995): we simply make sense of what is “out there” in order to get meaning. Weick (1995) label “cues” as puzzled pieces and “extracted cues” as the ones that our brain consciously or unconsciously “bracket” in order to convey a meaning. In order to made sense, our brain combines cues and frames of reference (i.e. our previous knowledge) (Weick 1995).

According to the “Appraisal Theory” (AP) (Manstead 2005, p. 484), “emotions arise from the meaning that an individual attaches to an event”. In other words, when people give sense to their surrounding, they mindlessly feel either positive or negative emotions in congruent with their reality’s construction.

Through their emotional understanding, people label and categorize their feeling. According to the nature of their emotional response, they will undertake different behaviours (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008, p. 512; George 2000, p. 1029; Chopra & Kanji 2010, p. 977). If it includes positive emotions such as happiness, followers will be motivated to work, enjoying their job, and achieve greater performance. For instance, people in a good mood have a favourable perception of their environment and are more likely to avoid blame, failures and will be more helpful towards others (George 2000). However, if they feel bad, sad, stressed or anxious, these negative emotions will have a harmful impact on their behaviours and perception. This phenomenon is called “Affective Events Theory (AET)”. This theory explains



(Ashkanasy, Daus 2001, p. 5) that emotional states influence our behaviours, job performance and job satisfaction. If people are happy and satisfied with their job they will be happy and produce positive emotional contagion. Furthermore, they will undertake pro-social behaviours. However, if people feel unhappy they will convey negative emotions leading to “anti-citizenship behaviours” or “counterproductive behaviours”. Followers’ behaviours become in turn toxic. Indeed, they express less commitment, satisfaction and performance but also more anxiety and aggressiveness.

#### **5.4.2. Emotional contagion**

*Negative emotions are like an illness; besides of being contagious, they can be destructive...*

As explained above, sense-making arouses emotions and occur in a social context (Lazányi 2009, p. 104). Thus, our sense-making is influenced by our peers’ interpretations and thus by their emotions.

“Employees are not emotional islands” (Barsade & Bernstein 2011, p. 1). Rather, they are taken into a “whirl” of shared emotions. Emotions as viruses, they are contagious (Doherty 1997, p. 131). While this phenomenon was well known by Darwin since 1872, the “emotional contagion” research and its theory were established by Elaine Hatfield and her colleagues (1994, cited in Doherty 1997, pp. 131 -132). Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1993, p. 5) define it as being “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronise facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally”. They more precisely call it the “primitive emotional contagion” by its automatic character. Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1993, p. 5) refer to emotional contagion as an “incontrollable reflex”.

Unconsciously, all human beings experience this emotional “mimicry” (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson 1993; Doherty 1997; Barsade 2002; Barsade & Gibson 2007). Indeed, our sensory neurons convey information that emanate from facial expressions to our hypothalamus, a zone of our brain allowing the understanding of perceptions (Doherty 1997, p. 133). Sierra (2006) explains this phenomenon: “mirror neurons”, we mimic the same shape of the face just by looking at someone. Therefore, if someone is smiling, you smile in return. Ashkanskhy and Daus (2001,

p .9) also label this process the “matching effect”. People catch and are infected by others’ emotions.

Our facial muscles, by moulding a shape, convey information concerning our emotional state (Doherty 1997, p. 133). Thus, employees with a sufficient level of emotional intelligence can automatically perceive and receive others’ emotions through facial feedback.

Individual emotions can quickly become social and collective (Barsade 2002, p. 644; Barsade & Gibson 2007, p. 42). Barsade (2002, p. 644) talks about “group emotional contagion” and defines it as “the transfer of moods among people in a group”. Regarding this assessment, contagion can become dangerous and toxic (Schwartz 2012). The energy of a members’ team could be drained (Schwartz 2012). Thus, emotional contagion is a social influence (Barsade 2002, p. 646) being able to entail the contamination of common emotional states within the company.

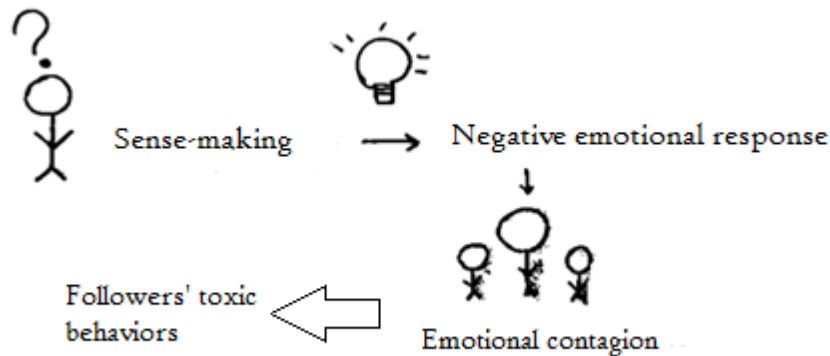
*Once the first domino is pushed, the others follow....*

Followers expressing negative emotions can, besides contaminating their peers, transform their company to toxicity. Indeed, people compare others’ mood and respond in congruence with this information (Barsade 2002). Thus, emotions are “social information” which allow answering the question: *how should I feel and thus behave?* (Barsade 2002, p. 647) In other words, collective moods are “indications of the state of their environment” (Barsade & Gibson 2007, p. 45). Negative moods are the signal that something is wrong in the company. As Barsade (2002, p. 667) claims, “People are ‘walking inductors’”, they are “continuously influencing the moods and then the judgment and behaviours of others”.

The root of negative emotions *could be* the consequence of the “toxic culture” shaped by the leader (Goldman 2009, p. 45). Indeed, if the leader shapes a culture with frequent layoff, people get scared about “who will be the next?” (Goldman 2009, p. 49) Employees’ anxiety concerning the organisation’s health can be deciphered through their face and voice. This feedback can quickly spread a common mood of anxiety within the company undermining their commitment (Borner 2012). Also, if the company is steeped with overtime tasks, people can get a common, collective burnout, what Goldman (2009, p. 51) call “epidemic of burnout”. As “group emotions influence work outcomes” (Barsade 2002, p. 645);

negative emotional contagion can lead to toxic organization marked by demotivation, unhappiness, absenteeism and burnout.

**Figure 14: How toxicity is “conveyed” within a company via sensemaking, AT and AET**



Source: authors' chart

### 5.4.3. Attribution theory

*“All people are “naïve psychologists” who have an innate desire to understand the causes of behaviours ad outcomes” (Jones & Bartlett n.d, p. 148).*

The “Attribution Theory” is suggested by Fritz Heider in 1958. In his study, Heider proposed an explanation about how people evaluate events or behaviours (Jones & Bartlett n.d; Malle 2011; McLeod 2010; Weibell 2011). According to this theory (Jones & Bartlett n.d, p. 148), human beings psychologically need to understand the reasons of behaviours and answer to the noteworthy question: *why?* Attribution is based upon the way people perceive others. In order to get the answer of *why*, people “extract invariance out of variance” (Malle 2011, p. 73). In other words, people attempt to find the cause or reason of behaviours (i.e.: variance) by researching their motive (i.e. invariance) influenced by feelings, beliefs, values, perceptions, intentions, motives, traits, wishes, and sentiments (Malle 2011, p. 73).

This is what followers attempt to do: they attribute a label to the leader: either true or false in order to decide which action to undertake. The invariance (i.e. the root of the motive) will determine that chosen label. If the leader’s motive is selfish, the follower will nominate him or her as insincere and a manipulator. Followers make sense of leaders’ behaviours through their perception of their intentions (Dasborough 2002, p. 10).

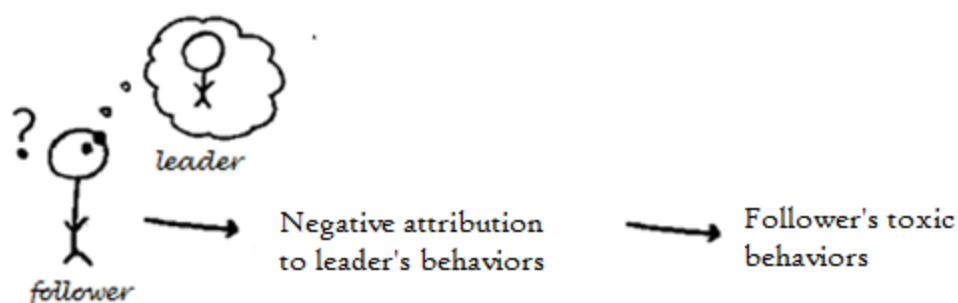
However, “emotional intelligence of leaders will influence their ability to influence the members’ perceptions [...]” (Dasborough 2002, p. 5). Therefore, charismatic, servant, narcissist, psychopath, Machiavellian, pseudo-transformational leaders can be really good at concealing their real personality by conveying a picture of good and trust to their followers. Thus, followers’ discernment concerning the distinction between true from false will depend upon their emotional intelligence level (Dasborough 2002, p. 5). The more people are emotionally intelligent, the more they can differentiate manipulator from influencer (which is based on ethical values). We can affirm that people who have low emotional skills are more likely to be a target of manipulation, hypnotization or indoctrination (brainwashing).

Furthermore, followers’ mood will also influence their attribution of the leader. People who are in good mood will address a positive perception while others in bad mood will present a negative attribution and label the leader as deceitful.

Therefore, followers’ behaviours depend upon their perception, interpretation and attribution of the leader’s intention (Dasborough 2002, p. 22). If they attribute a label of *false leader*, they react in response to this feeling. Often, these persons will show demotivation. Then, if other followers interpret this same way, the company’s durability can be compromised.

Thus, the perception of followers has a profound impact for the health of a company. Indeed, the leader-member relationship has a profound impact on employee motivation and work effectiveness. If the relation is “consumed” by toxins, a toxic organization is created.

**Figure 15: How toxicity is “spread” within a company with Attribution Theory**



Source: authors’ chart

#### **5.4.4. Inner and outer theatre**

The outer world represents our external, physical and social environment: either professional or familial (Crabtree & Crabtree n.d.). The outer world is pure imagination: we create it according to the way we perceive it. The inner world is our inside (mind, soul) encompassing beliefs, emotions and values and is constructed through life experiences. Therefore, our outer world is a depiction of our inner world. As Bruton quote (2009, n.p.): “The world outside is a mirror of the world inside”. If you look into the mirror you will see which world you create and thus which person you are.

If we believe that everything is possible and see life through rose-coloured glasses, we will create this surrounding where everything is beautiful. But if we only perceive life as dark and gloomy, we will create a sad life. Thus, our inner world determines the outer world. As Freud said (n.d. cited in Beystehner 1998, p. 1) the mind is the controller of the body.

Relating to leadership, it can be said that if the leader possesses a dark inner world, thus a blurred and drab personality, or “negative life themes”, i.e. if he or she possesses a “destructive image of the world” (O’Connor et al. 1995, p. 539), as viewed in the Toxic Triangle chapter number 1, he or she is going to reproduce this world on the outside. As P Daudi (2013, 3 April), in a personal conversation, said during one of our meetings, “we can only reproduce the world that we are messenger for”. Therefore if the leader’s inner word is tainted of toxicity, he or she will create a toxic surrounding.

As the inner world is shaped by our experiences, it is evolving over time and is influenced by our outer world. Indeed, our outer world is the social interaction with others and thus represents our experiences. If the surrounding is toxic, the follower’s outer world is in turn toxic. This could have a harmful impact on followers’ inner world. Their mindset could be contaminated and their health undermined (as for instance higher pressure of their nervous system).

This contaminated inner world influences followers’ decisions and actions. Indeed their personalities are altered: they are more nervous, anxious and disagreeable. Once the inner world is constituted, it is difficult to change it. It represents who we are and if toxicity enters into our lives, it leaves an “indelible fingerprint”. This latter

negatively influences family relationships and darkens their inner world and outer world. This is a dangerous and endless cycle.

## 6. CHAPTER 3: This is the time for stories ... NARRATIVES PART

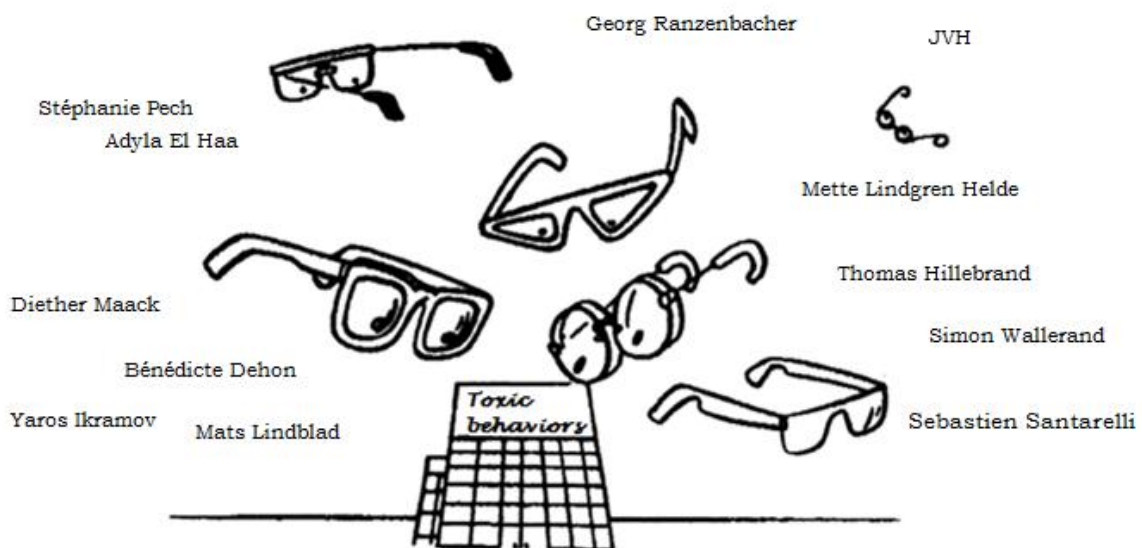
---

*“When I entered within a company, I could feel if something was wrong just by looking at people’s behaviours” (M Lindgren Helde 2013, pers. comm. 12 April).*

---

During the interviews we considered consultants as observers of a specific reality, and our role is to convey “*their voice*”. We believe that stories were the source of our knowledge. Indeed, thanks to them, diverse categories emerged and have been created. Each of these represents the perception of toxic behaviours as seen by the narrators. Each category covers one or more tales, and they are categorized according to our interpretation of each code (i.e.: their “toxic behaviours’ signs”) as shared by our narrators.

**Figure 16: Toxic Behaviours Signals “viewed” by our consultants**



Source: authors’ chart, modified after Morgan 2006, p. 341

## 6.1. “When I entered everything was silent”

- **Story 1: Mette Lindgren Helde**

Her mission was to provide training to a team. When she entered the designated room, at her amazement, everyone was mute. *“People were standing in front of me and when I asked them a question, nobody dared to answer me”*. According to her, when people were afraid to speak, it was a sign something was wrong. After spending a few days with this company, she considered the problem as serious, and decided to speak with the leader. However, *“it was a lost cause”*: he did not want to talk with her about this issue. As she said: *“he wanted to keep the problem under the water”*. According to Mette, this leader lacked “responsibility” and awareness of his leadership role. *“He created a culture of fear, lack of confidence where people become merely mute”*.

- **Story 2: Adyla El Haa**

During one of her missions, Adyla met a boss who was screaming all the time. She told me: *“he shouted at people as they were dogs”*. *“People were afraid to make a wrong step ... otherwise the boss would be really angry”*. *“Just by looking at him, I knew that he was the boss”*. Adyla often heard the interns say that they were fed up. She could read fear in their eyes: the kind of fear one had walking into the company and to meet the boss and his anger. *“When I was talking with them, I could see that they were unmotivated to work. Some of them were completely absorbed by this fear and became entirely white, even shaking when the boss entered in the room”*.

- **Story 3: Thomas Hillebrand**

*“When I entered, everything was silent”*. When he came in the company, Thomas Hillebrand felt awkward, besides the quiet atmosphere, people always came and left on time in the company. *“They were not motivated to make supplementary hours”*. *“People did just their job without having fun”*. According to him, *“fun is the key of motivation”*! After spending many days at the firm, he found the root of this silence: the boss was frightening everyone. He has created an ambiance of fear because of his controlling personality. *“People were afraid and even did not dare to raise the hand for asking questions”*. The leader behaved as a king, and constantly told his



subordinates: *"I am always right". "If I am not right the first rule comes in place"*. If he believed something was wrong, he raised his voice and threw a fit.

- **Story 4: Diether Maack**

He never met a boss presenting toxicity, but one of his relatives did. The company that employed his relative was set up by two friends, who were also the leaders. *"In this company, per year, there was a 40% turnover: people either left the company because of their incapacity to bear the stress, or were fired before breaking under the pressure"*. One of the bosses was really aggressive and if something did not please him, he would become angry and shout at his subordinates. *"He made people feel really bad, because they start to believe that they really made a huge fault, even if it was not one"*. He led people with terror. *"If everything was perfect, he did not react"*. *"For him it was normal to do things perfectly"*. The boss also liked to humiliate, either by email or face-to-face in his office. *"People were afraid when they were called into his office; they knew that it was not question to receive a tap on their shoulders, but to be given a roasting"*. The relative left the company and during his carrier he often repeated to Diether: *"I was working as in concentration camps"*. This strong quotation is only a reflection of how he felt, we stress that there is no political comparison.

**Figure 17: The signals of toxicity emerging through the category: "Everything was silent"**



Source: authors' craft and drawing

## **6.2. The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow**

- **Story 5: Thomas Hillebrand**

During one of his missions, Thomas encountered a pretentious boss who only thought about himself. *“He never puts others before himself, but always behind”*. If the company produced good results, he claimed all the merits. He always pretended to be “the best” and achieved marvellous exploits. When Hillebrand was in the company, people were doing their job but without motivation. According to Thomas, *“people need to be rewarded when they succeed”*. Employees did not give the best of themselves because they knew in advance that their leader would receive all the merit regardless. By only looking at his own reflection of glory, the leader excluded all people without neither sharing information, nor success: this way obligated others to constantly ask for his approval, facilitating his job and landing all the achievements. The others barred in themselves, and many ended up leaving the organisation.

- **Story 6: Yaros Ikramov**

He worked in a company where the salary depended on the team’s performance. Each team had an assigned coach (leader) who taught the profession of consultant to the other employees. Every year, each member of the team was evaluated by the leader that assessed their evolution and analyzed if they would had a potential promotion. Ikramow’s coach was *“THE boss”*, and here is how he was described: *“My boss did not tell me what I wanted to know but what I had to know”*. As an example: *“I am the boss, and you follow what I say to you”*. He was really good and earned a lot of money for his team. However, Ikramov was often frustrated because he had to take constantly the leader’s criticism and ideas without ever questioning anything and if Ikramov did, his coach responded: *“How many do you earn per month?” “I guess less than me, I crush you!”*

- **Story 7: Georg Ranzenbacher**

During his first mission, he encountered an “old fashion leader” who was responsible for absolutely everything. *“She created a cosy ‘cocoon’ where everybody felt good”*. *“She created a family and considered each employee as her child”*. While at first glance this story seems good, if we take a closer look, there are some problems below the surface. Because of her behaviour: *“people simply stopped*

thinking, because they did not need to anymore". "Big Mama was there anyway". People did not question her; they did not provide criticism or feedback. "People were completely dependent on the leader". "She did everything and was the sun that enlightened their life". Without her the company was paralyzed. Everything revolved around her. When Georg worked at this company he asked the employees' opinion and they answered him: "we have to ask to 'Big Mama'". She educated her "children" to think: *no discussion*. One hundred workers depended on her at all time. If she was sick or weak, the entire organisation would collapse. Even though she wanted the best for her employees, "she 'said' what the best was for them, rather than asking them what would be the best for them".

**Figure 18: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow"**

**The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow**

*Toxic signal: "robot attitude"*

- **No motivation:** people act like "robots", they only do their job and without expressing fun
- **Cocoon family:** people feel good but do not personally grow



Source: authors' chart and drawing

### 6.3. Work, work ... and work!

- **Story 8: Bénédicte Dehon**

She worked for a pharmaceutical company where the employees were always stressed. The boss was a small woman but she possessed enough charisma to inspire respect. "When she entered the room, everybody stayed silent". "When she came and asked people something, they immediately stopped their previous task without discussion". She expected high standards of work for her interns. During her first day, Bénédicte saw everyone running around, so focused on their own tasks to ignore their surroundings completely. One of the firm's interns once told her: "when you arrived, everybody bet money on how long you would resist at the company" "Here everybody burned out: they could not stand the pressure" Bénédicte

compared the boss to Margaret Thatcher: “*the iron woman*”, the one who requires nonstop work by imposing her strong will and personality. The leader demanded delivery on tight deadlines leaving the workers with countless tasks. She was not as tough with everybody: If she liked you, she would be nicer. As Bénédicte told me, “*It is better to quake in one’s shoes*”. She really hated this mission because the internal stress affected everyone else, included her. She encountered many depressed employees who were either on sick leave, or left the company because of the excessive pressure and stress.

- **Story 4: Diether Maack**

To come back to Dieter’s relative; the two bosses also demanded a high standard of work. His friend worked very hard in an attempt to be rewarded: he worked overnight and weekends, without ever receiving any gratification. Even when he thought his job was fantastic, the aggressive boss repeated to him “*you can do better; you just do your minimum*”. Afterwards, his friend was affected by depression because of his incapacity to bear the extreme stress, pressure, discouragement, fatigue and disappointment.

**Figure 19: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Work, work and work!"**



**WORK AND WORK !**  
*Toxic Signal: stressed people*

- People are submerged of tasks
- People are running all the time everywhere
- Burnout

Sources: Picture by Marenne 2010 modified by the authors and author’s chart

#### **6.4. Everything should be perfect**

- **Story 9: JVH**

During one of his missions, JVH worked for a client in the tobacco sector. The boss of the company was a perfectionist and too demanding on himself and others. He decided to standardize everything by creating codes for each task. People had to strictly follow the estate settlement rules: if the team had to present a PowerPoint,

they would have specific rules to follow for the effect, the colour, the font, and the number of bullets for each slide. Before each presentation the boss required people to send him the PowerPoint to review it. If only one section of the guideline was not followed, he sent it back by email and wrote: *“Correct it”*. *“He never used “please” when asking”*. *“He was such a perfectionist that he even measured the document’s margins before printing”*. This perfectionism, his routines and exigencies were terrorizing his subordinates. *“People begun to adapt and developed their own form of obsession”*. *“They became paranoid, to the point of checking anything that would undermine quality”*. Followers were in the incomprehension: for them all his actions represented details. However, for the leader it was a time saving. This misunderstanding is due to lack of communication: the boss never explained his actions, for instance he asked for the same person to clean his office and no one else. Often JVH heard people calling the boss a mad man, but behind his “madness” there was clever logic; keeping a set staff to perform specific tasks (as cleaning the office) allowed him to know who was responsible if something went missing or was damaged. His ideas were really good but the guidelines too strict and the enforcer too inflexible on them.

**Figure 20: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Everything should be perfect!"**

**Everything should be perfect !**  
*Toxic Signal: perfectionism*  
People become paranoid: only focus on the quality  
Burnout



Sources: Picture by Le pays des Arécomiques 2012 modified by the authors and authors' chart

## 6.5. Be cool, relax!

- **Story 10: JVH**

JVH worked for a pharmaceutical firm with an extremely cool boss...too cool. He never gave deadlines to his subordinates, nor put any pressure on them. People were used to have slow procedures and constant routines. *“People were simply unmotivated and got bored to work so slowly”*. They had the impression they were doing nothing. JVH tied this slow working fashion to a *prudent culture*. People had to do everything very carefully by taking all the time they needed. *“People did not care at their job anymore; they were completely uninterested because there was not enough stress.*

- **Story 11: JVH**

During another mission, JVH encountered a “paternalist leader” who communicated informally with everyone. He behaved as a *father* and was really friendly. He let others do their job as they wanted; he did not put pressure at all. However, being too kind affected his image as leading professional: he was more a friend than a boss, and was constantly curious to know about each gossip and personal story. This created confusion in his followers’ mind because they could not distinguish between private and professional life and some of them felt harassed by his way to intrude in their personal affairs. In the end, this ambiguity made people feel uncomfortable, self-conscious and even stressed, which contributes not a good working environment.

**Figure 21: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Be cool, be relax"**



Source: Picture by Kroll 2012, modified by the authors and authors’ chart

## 6.6. Followers possessed “the rein”

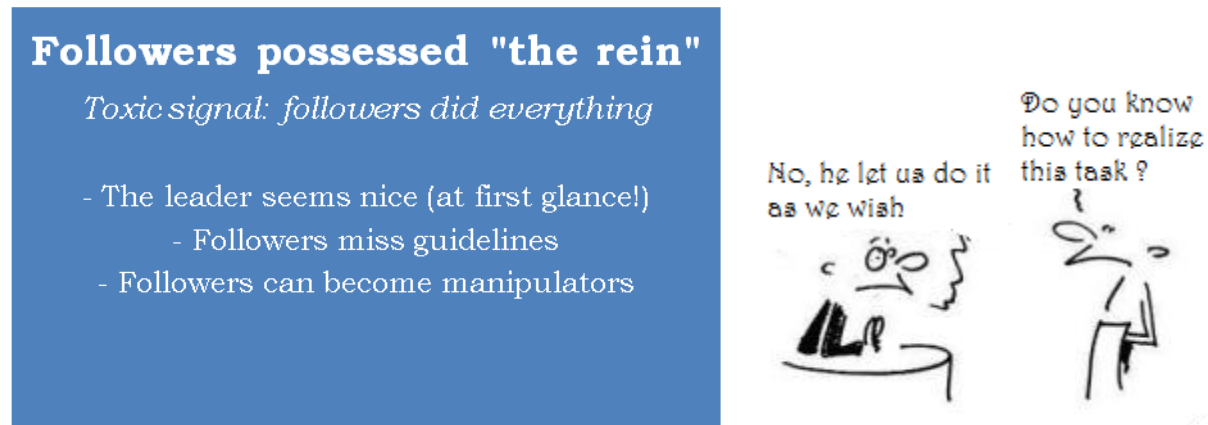
- **Story 12: Sebastien Santarelli**

Sebastien Santarelli is a consultant for an IT department, and his mission involves installing software within firms. *“My client was fake and a liar”*, he told me. He encountered this case of a worker manipulating his boss, *“My client was smiling at me and appeared really nice, but in reality, he was manipulating me behind my back”*. Since Santarelli only offered to service for one day, it was in the client’s interest to convince his manager that the relationship went wrong (i.e.: negative feedback: the consultant was aggressive, for instance). By doing so, the client could diminish cost while appearing more efficient to the leader. In reality, the client could easily manipulate his IT manager, who knew nothing about technology: *“IT manager had problems of authority and let others govern at his place because of his incompetency”*.

- **Story 13: Mats Lindblad**

His mission involved solving the problem of dissatisfaction among team members within a company. He closely followed the manager behaviour and found the problem: the generous amount of freedom he allowed to the employees during the project’ launch. *“At the beginning of the project, he did not put any pressure on his subordinates and let them execute the task as they wished”*. *“He really seemed friendly ... but at first glance!”* By allowing them to do whatever they wanted, without giving any direction, the leader compromised the success of the project. *“They received so much freedom that at the end they were lost”*. When at the end of the project, people presented poor results. *“His face became red, and he became really angry”*. He completely changed behaviours, *“I did not recognize him anymore”*. According to the boss, people should know how to manage the project. As Mats said, *“people need direction”*

**Figure 22: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Followers possessed 'the rein'"**



Sources: Picture by Cowblog 2011, modified by the authors and authors' chart

## **6.7. It is like that and not otherwise, 'I' decide!**

- **Story 14: Simon Wallerand**

Simon had an "unpredictable" and "inflexible" boss: "Once he had an idea, he would not change it for me" "But if it was better for him to change it, he did it without asking my opinion". One day, Wallerand needed to return to his native country for important familial reasons. His boss accepted but imposed his own date at least until two days before the departure, when he changed his mind and told him "We need you for the current project; you will not leave the next week". "He did not care about my request and he told me: if the project needs Wallerand, you have to stay". Simon characterized him as "introverted" and "anti-social". "He clearly did not have any personal life, "Even in Maurice Island, he was with his computer". His boss assumed everybody was like him, only focused on his job. Often, he called Simon Wallerand at 8 pm to talk about work. "My boss intruded in our private life". Also, Simon had to constantly be defensive, as before entering his boss' office: "how is he going to react?" His inflexibility scared Simon, because he could not predict any of his reactions.

- **Story 15: Sebastien Santarelli**

Santarelli (the consultant who installs softwares for different companies) has encountered a client who requested him to install a program to have "absolute control"; thanks to this program, the boss could check everything with full

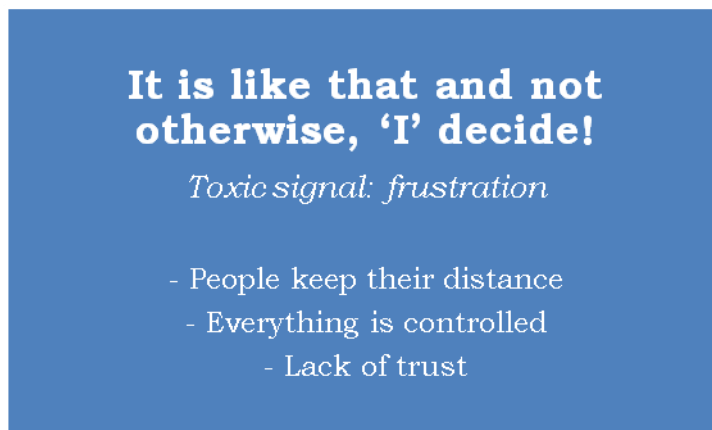


discretion. *“She even wanted to rummage through people’s personal emails box”*. This program allowed her to see and control everything, without her employees knowing anything about her privacy intrusion. For example, she found out by peeping in his email account that one of the workers wanted to change his car for a BMW. Her need of constant control and fear of surprises led her to call him in the office, and told him: *“I do not want that you buy this car, it will convey the image of a firm that throws money down the drain”*. Even if people did not know about this “spy program”, they had doubts over her honesty, and felt like they had to protect themselves at all times, instead of committing to the job and the company. *“She was a spy”*. *“She deteriorated the work atmosphere with her leadership style”*.

- **Story 16: Stéphanie Pech**

Pech worked for a firm where the leader *“electrified his followers”*, she called him the “crisis manager”. According to Pech, during the crisis, organizations need this type of leadership in order to make things move faster, however this works only for short term visions. During the interview she expressed her feeling to me: *“when I was in this organization, I thought to be in military army: people executed orders without flinching”*. After two years with this leadership style, she discovered that something was wrong. Indeed, each year, people were free to give their evaluation concerning their satisfaction about the leader. This time, the company received a *“tsunami of answers”* where people responded with what they had to suffer during those two years. Even if this leader fixed the company financially, he was destroying the human capital. Indeed, after five years, people fell into depression. *“People even took pills before entering the conference class because they were so stressed”*. He was really charismatic, tall, strong and frightful. When he asked to his subordinates to prepare a dossier, he completely ignored the day of meeting. People were really frustrated to have worked for nothing. In order to keep his supremacy, he only shared half of the necessary information. In the company everybody called him: *“the boss”*. For Pech, it is a pejorative expression meaning: *“the person who is always lecturing others”*. After his departure the company was left totally weak and destroyed because he possessed all the major information, and people did not know anything about the real issue that allowed the survival of the company. *“He was as the orchestra who had the all view”*. Even though he was brilliant and a visionary he was too present, *“he took the place of others”*.

**Figure 23: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "It is like that and not otherwise, 'I' decide!"**



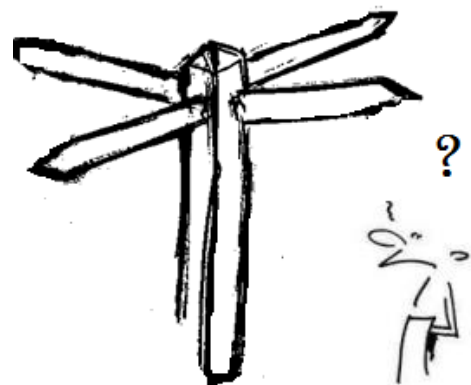
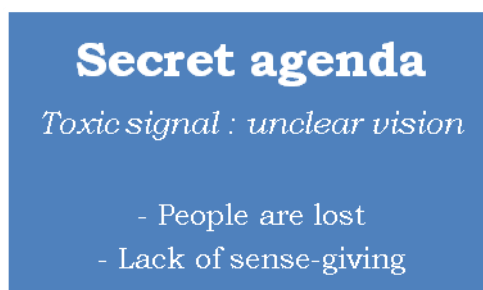
Source: author's chart

## 6.8. Secret agenda

- **Story 17: Mats Lindblad**

During his mission, Mats encountered a manager (President) with a strong and good vision: *"provide the best care service"*. However, the Vice President (VP) was a liar who was pretending to follow this vision to fulfil his own goals: money and fame. Nonetheless, thanks to his good skills and grounded experience, he was seen as a good professional and trusted by his followers. *"He was really mysterious, and was speaking with dead eyes"*. According to Mats, the Vice President did not have a heart and was really cold. Even if followers were confused about the way he acted, they thought that *"he was probably right and we were wrong"*.

**Figure 24: The signals of toxicity emerging through our category: "Secret agenda"**



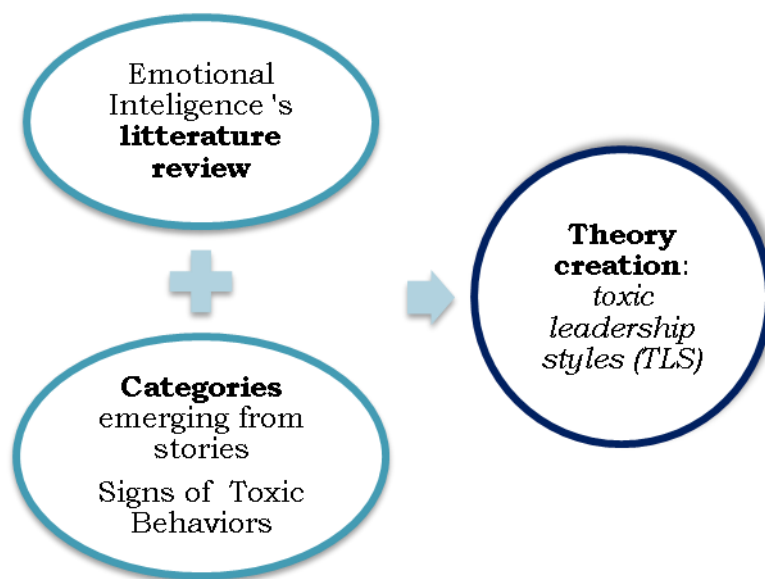
Source: Picture by Cowblog 2011, modified by the authors and authors' chart

## 7. CHAPTER 4: Toxic Leadership Styles .... CREATIVE PART

---

*A thesis should be creative.* In this part, we are going to use the “substantive theory” of Glaser and Strauss (1967) in order to create our own theory, which is the explanation and description of *toxic behaviours*. Through our stories, we have found diverse “signals of toxic behaviours” that are now linked to our literature review in order to create the “Toxic Leadership Styles”, as shown in the diagram below.

**Figure 25: Our process of theory creation**



Source: authors' chart, inspired by Strauss & Glaser 1967.

We have labelled these styles by animal names. Indeed, *a thesis should be attractive*; our readers should *feel* the volition and interest to read it. In order to fulfil this mission, we have chosen the *metaphoric*. In this way, the readers can easily identify themselves with the animal. Furthermore, by associating the image with the words, people can have a better understanding and recall. We strongly believe that the metaphor gives life to the picture. The world is complex but the image association is less so. Firstly, for each animal that we have chosen, we will explain their principal features in order to share a common frame of reference with our readers.

*A thesis should be imaginative.* We view the animal world as the company and we compare the social activity of these animals with the one of the leader. In his book, Garreth Morgan (2006) also used metaphors to explain the company. He saw it as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformations and instruments of domination. “The use of metaphor implies *a way of thinking and a way of seeing* that pervades how we understand our world generally” (Morgan 2006, p. 4).

**Figure 26: Our personal interpretation of each animal**



Source: authors' drawing

We would like to underline that the different styles of toxic leadership after specified are not considered as the “features” of the leader but as an entire process: *the ambiance of the company created by the way leaders behave.* In our literature review we have focused on the manipulative part for personal ends but thanks to our stories we have found that toxic leadership is also created by leaders who want well-fare of their company. Nonetheless (certainly) unconsciously their actions lead to toxicity. Therefore, we have separated our theory in two main parts: the Chameleon Leadership Style (linked directly to our literature review) and the Elephant Leadership Style (new emerged concepts).

For each style, we will describe the leader’s behaviours (the way he or she creates toxicity) and its impact for the well-being for the entire surrounding. When we use

the capital letter it is to speak about the leader and the small letter is to talk about the animal.

## **7.1. The Chameleon Leadership Style ... MANIPULATION**

The first type of Toxic Leadership Style uses manipulation to achieve personal goals. We call this type of leadership: *chameleon* (also Machiavellian) because of its cleverness of changing colour in order to adapt itself to its surrounding. We consider Machiavellian leaders (chameleon style) deeply emotionally intelligent. Indeed, by really knowing themselves, they can choose the accurate endeavours (i.e.: allowing them to take advantage) according to the situation. In front of “vulnerable, weak and easily manipulable” followers, these leaders will use *charm*. While with resistant and strong followers, they will use *fear*. And for naive followers who believe anything they will use *trust*. The Chameleon Leadership Style encompasses: The Wolf, The Praying Mentis, and The Octopus.

### **7.1.1. The Wolf**

The wolf lives in packs and the group is governed by a strict hierarchy. There is the dominant group (alpha group) and then other wolves in a lower level. The alpha group leads all the vitals activities as the coupling, the territory defence, the hunting. In order to avoid others females being coupled, the alpha female can become extremely aggressive towards them (Larousse, n.d.)

- ***Culture tainted by fear and narcissism***

The Wolf is the leader and the others are the followers. We perceive the pack as the company and thus its pride. In order to defend its pack, the wolf is able to hunt and kill other animals. It is clever and uses aggression to show *who the leader is*. In the animal world, there is no pity. If you are too weak, you are eaten. We view the Wolf as a leader who uses aggression to scare people and obtain their respect, even forced, in order to control them. The use of this strategy (intimidation) is popular in our literature review of narcissistic leaders. As the wolf, narcissists are dominators, admired and obeyed. If something goes wrong, the wolf growls to express his anger. The narcissist shouts at people and launches into a “narcissist rage” when something does not please him. Indeed, they do not support failures, disrespect or blame. The followers working in this environment are afraid to make a wrong step and thus prefer not to act; as followers in the story 2 with our consultant Adyla. The culture of fear set up by this type of leader entails a surrounding where people

keep silent as in the stories 1,2,3,4 with the category: “*When I entered, everything was silent*”. The Wolf decides everything, takes all the decisions and does not let others take the lead. This was the case in story 16 with the leader who was an “electrifier” of persons, HE decides! By controlling everything they decrease the possibility of losing their place and keep the throne and manipulate others. This was the case in story 15 where the leader used software to access personal data of each of her subordinates in order to control everything. The Wolf Toxic Leadership Style encompasses the categories: “*The boss was in the sun while the others were in the shadow*” and “*It is like that and not otherwise, I decide!*”

- ***Impacts for the environment’s well-being***

People are completely terrorized and do not dare to ask questions or give their opinions. They do not enjoy their job, while “*fun is the key of motivation*” (T Hillebrand 2013, in pers. comm. 29 April) and commitment. As P Magonet (2013, 25 April), in personal communication said during the interview, when fear is present within a firm, there is no communication. “*When there is no dialogue, people do not understand their tasks and can more easily make mistakes and the leader can be more likely angry and aggressive*” (P Magonet 2013, in pers. comm. 25 April). Furthermore, people stop to propose ideas or suggestions. The consultant Georg Razenbacher has encountered the situation where one follower wanted to present a really good idea but the leader rejected it directly. After proposing their concepts two or three times, frustrated people give up. As G Ranzenbacher (2013, 29 April), in personal communication said, “*if the leader never let people make mistakes, they never know and do not grow up*”. By letting them reflect, they grow up. By being aggressive, imposing their idea, the Wolf leaders are toxic in the sense that they decrease followers’ fun, commitment and personal development. As M Lindblad (2013, 18 April), in personal communication said, “*everybody needs to be listened*”. Also, Wolf leaders never give any feedback. While positive or negative are both really important as our Professor Mette and our consultant Mats told us continually. Indeed, people should know their assessment in order to know their weakness and strength and evaluate.

### **7.1.2. The Praying Mentis**

The praying mentis is well known to be a predator which eats the males during or after the coupling. When the insect is starving, it has the ability to find vulnerable preys to quench its hunger. The praying mentis uses its velvet legs to convey an

enchancing image to its males. Then, once the praying mentis succeed to seduce them, it catches them with its legs and afterwards, devours them (Larousse, n.d.).

- ***Culture colored with seduction, charm and charisma***

According to our description, the praying mentis can be metaphorically associated with a leader who uses charm to manipulate others. Once followers succumb to the leader's charm, they become vulnerable and easily manipulable. We interpret this type of leadership: *the Praying Mentis style*. According to our interpretation and assimilation with the characteristics of the insect, we found through our stories one leader who represents really well the *Praying Mentis leadership* type. It concerns the story 7 with Georg Ranzenbacher and his “*Big Mama*” leader. Big Mama was the mother, the sun, the hero of the company. People admired and respected her. She took care of her employees as children and by doing so, she created positive emotions (e.g.: trust, safety). Thanks to her strong charisma, she attracted others and caught them, as the praying mentis, under her control.

- ***Use of hypnotization***

Big Mama created by using flattering words and by being a “mother figure” to her followers, a *beautiful world* where they felt good and where they perceived the company as secure and stable: there were no major external risks for them. People felt disconnected to the reality and let themselves be blindly guided by her. Followers became completely dependent on her and thus manipulable. Indeed, all the time they needed her approbation for the realization of tasks. Metaphorically, we perceive Praying Mentis leadership as the process in which leaders use “seduction games” in order to hypnotize followers. Once, they are hypnotized, we can say that the leader, as Big Mama, becomes the possessor of their mind as she decided everything and employees stopped thinking on their own.

- ***Impacts for the environment's well-being***

*The Praying Mentis leadership style* is toxic. Indeed, as everything depends on the leader. If he or she gets sick, the entire system could fall by the wayside. Also, by imposing only her ideas, deciding everything and not listening to others, “*Big Mama compromised the personal growth of their followers*” (G Ranzenbacher 2013, pers. comm. 29 April). Indeed, by not questioning themselves anymore, they undermined their capacity to reflect. Since, Big Mama never let them try anything; she never let them fail. In other words, she never let them learn. This Prayer Mentis leader lacked

trust and according to Georg Ranzenbacher (2013, 29 April), in personal communication, leaders should take the risk “*to close the eyes*” and trust people by letting them do their job. As Georg Ranzenbacher (2013, 29 April), in personal communication said, “*if you never fall down, you never have the chance to stand up again*”. “*You only succeed if you try*”. People who live in this type of company either leave the company because they cannot fulfil their need for development or stay under the control of the leader because they are merely satisfied with the system. Slowly, these latter people become a kind of “robot” missing reflection and consciousness. The leader has pushed on the button of “execution without reflection”.

### **7.1.3. The Octopus**

The octopus is characterized by its capacity to change its shapes and colours. It is viewed by other animals as unpredictable and thus as a robust predator (Larousse, n.d.). When we think about this characteristic (i.e. unpredictability), we have the image of an octopus hidden under the water and while we did not expect it, it surged out of the water to bite us. The Octopus leadership style can take two different forms, either the form of a leader who creates fear by changing his or her mind all the time, or a leader who wants to seem trustful (while he or she is not) to followers due to their competencies.

- ***Culture watered with fear and psychopathy***

The Octopus can be interpreted as a lunatic leader by the way he or she frequently changes behaviours, humour and ideas. With this kind of person you never know how to perceive him or her: *is he or she lying to me?* Liar and unpredictable are two main features of Psychopathy found in our literature review. Unconsciously, by being moody, the leader creates a fear filled work atmosphere. Indeed, people endlessly wonder if today the leader would be in a good mood or not. This stress creates fear because people have to be ready and flexible for any situation. Octopus leaders can be viewed by the followers as impulsive because they can overreact at any time. The leader of the story 13 is an Octopus leader. Indeed, Simon Wallerand never relied on him because he changed his mind all the time. He (2013, 13 April), in personal communication told me during the interview: “*I know that if I have to ask him something, I have to prepare myself by the fact that if he says yes today, he would probably say no tomorrow*” “*I lost the envy to talk to him*”. The octopus is a solitaire animal, as the psychopath leader who is introverted, antisocial and cold.



This was the same for the leader of Simon: he did not possess any private life and everything was focused his job.

- ***Impacts for the environment's well-being***

The relationship between the leader and followers is broken. They cannot trust the leader anymore and keep their distance in order to protect themselves. Some of them, such as Simon, shun completely the leader in order to avoid his or her volatile behaviours. The impacts on the followers are both fear and stress.

- ***Culture consumed with trust and pseudo-transformational leader***

We can also link the Octopus leadership style to pseudo transformational leader. Indeed, the Octopus leader is a good liar and can easily conceal the true from the false. In the story 17, the Vice President of Mats has well hidden his real personality and intentions. As an octopus, the Vice President was mysterious; nobody really understood what he was doing, however, they accepted it because they perceived him as being extremely competent and trustful. He was, however, really cold, as Mats (2013, 18 April), in personal communication said: *“he was speaking with dead eyes”*. He was telling something green but doing something red. By this we mean that he was lying to others by saying to them: *“We will achieve successfully the vision together ... for the welfare of the company”* (M Lindblad 2013, pers. comm. 18 April). But then in reality, he behaved the opposite way.

- ***Impacts for the environment's well-being***

People blindly follow the leader towards the fulfilment of his or her secret agenda. In the case of Mats' story it was towards fame and money. According to Mats, people did not understand the reason for his actions and therefore became confused. While, as Mats Lindblad (2013, 18 April), in personal communication said, *“good leaders should simplify the world and propose a clear and understandable vision”*.

## **7.2. The Elephant Leadership Style – WELFARE FOR THE COMPANY**

We have chosen the metaphor of the elephant because we perceive this animal as protector of its family. However we also perceive it as “clumsy”. In this section, the three other types of leaders wish the well-being of their company but they bring toxicity by the manner they lead.

### 7.2.1. The Queen Bee

In the hive, the queen bee is considered as the “mother”. Its unique mission is to lay eggs. After the eggs hatch, the worker bees feed the larvae. The worker bees execute all the tasks in the hive including: the harvest of food, the regularization of temperature and the cleaning and the defence of the hive. These workers bees are constantly in movement in order to check on the eggs and larvae (Larousse, n.d.).

- **Culture of high quantity tasks - mixture of fear and charisma**

The Queen Bee is the leader and the worker bees are the followers. We assimilate the Queen Bee toxic leadership style with the image of a company where everybody is moving and working all the time, as the worker bees. In the story 8, with the consultant Bénédicte Dehon, the small but charismatic boss can be tied to *Queen Bee toxic leadership style*. She can be viewed as the Queen in the hive that makes people work without rest. With her charisma she reined with terror.

- **Culture of high quality request - mixture of fear and charisma**

A Queen Bee leader also exists when he or she imposes and demands high quality of followers. The queen bee checks everything in the hive before laying eggs. Once everything is perfect it lays eggs (Larousse, n.d.). The leader of the story 9 was the same: if the files were not perfect as he wished, the presentation could not be led.

- **Impacts for the environment's well-being**

The Queen Bee leadership style is toxic because leaders demand and force respect among their subordinates by using charisma, fear and intimidation. Then, once followers are “subjugated”, the leader requires *work, work and more work!* The consequences for the followers are stress and pressure leading to burnout, sickness, depression and/or departure from the company. As in the story 9, leaders can become “paranoid” by always searching for quality. We call it *emotional contagion* phenomenon: people become as the leader: perfectionist. In his story, JVH qualified his leader's client firm as “work-a-holic”. By putting stress on others, “*they bring stress home*” (JVH 2013, in pers. comm. 23 April). Their inner world is contaminated with stress and undermines the relationship with their outer world: social interaction (i.e. family and friends). According to JVH (2013, 23 April), in personal communication, “*when supplementary house becomes the rule, it goes out of the professional context*”. Leaders can also harass. Adyla has encountered a

leader who called people constantly to ask where they were in the work process. She also called people's homes at any time. *"People with this over stress made more mistakes"*. *"This was not a condition to work!"* (A El Hajjaji 2013, in pers. comm. 14 April).

### **7.2.2. The Snail**

The snail is an animal considered to be extremely slow. We perceive it as sensitive, fearful and inoffensive. Under its carapace it feels safe and protected.

- ***Culture marked by slow-slow working procedure***

The Snail leaders are so afraid of making mistakes and causing failures that they undertake each task gently and meticulously. They create a culture where people have to take the necessary time in order to avoid any mistakes. They create this way by a "protector carapace", as the snail, whereby they feel under the control of the situation. In the story 10, the leader of JVH is part of the Snail Leadership Style as he has never imposed any deadlines to his subordinates.

- ***Impacts for the environment's well-being***

People feel uninvolved and unmotivated. They feel bored at work, and do not feel any pressure. They merely do not care! This "no-commitment" can have negative impacts for followers who lose the volition to work for the company and as such risk leaving, jeopardizing deliverables and outcomes.

### **7.2.3. The Otter**

The otter is an extremely friendly and sociable animal. It can either live alone or in a group (Larousse, n.d.).

- ***Culture embracing kindness – paternalist and laissez-faire leader***

We interpret the image of an Otter as a leader who is "overnice" and lets people do their job freely. The leader can be considered as a "parent figure" because he or she seems to take care of his or her "children". Indeed, as in the story 11, the leader of Mats was always interested in others by asking them many questions about their week-end ... their private life.

The Otter Style represents also a "laissez-faire" leader who does not give any "guideline" or plans and lets people do their job the way they wish. Like the leader

in the story 13 with the consultant Mats, who firstly was super nice and said to people “*In one month, the mission should be finished; I let you do your job, up to you*” (M Lindblad 2013, in pers. comm. 18 April).

- ***Impacts for the environment’s well-being***

By being too kind, the leader can go out of the employment sphere and as JVH told me, it can become toxic for the followers. Indeed, people can feel uncomfortable, even harassed. They can also feel discomfort, insecure and stressed. The result is that people keep distance to protect themselves.

By giving too much freedom, the Otter is toxic. Indeed, by not providing any guidelines, people feel insecure and lost: *what do we have to do and how?* Then people are afraid to do something wrong, as in the story 13. “*People need direction*” (M Lindblad 2013, in pers. comm. 18 April).

## 8. CHAPTER 5: This is time for your first lesson ... DETOXIFICATION PART

---

In this part, we will be your “teacher” and we will try to give you some advice in order to avoid toxicity in a company. *How can we detox toxins in leaders?*

*A theory should be used for practical use* (Glaser & Straus 1967, p. 3). Our Toxic Leadership Styles can be used by consultants in order to erase toxicity through coaching and education.

### 8.1. Detectors of toxins



Source: Yücel 2012

Detectors of toxins are consultants who come in a company and observe surroundings: the comportment of leader, followers and their inter-relationship. By examining each piece of “received cues”; the consultant should be able to decipher the root of the problem: *why people behave in that way*. If it is the leader who for instance screams (representing the toxic behaviours signs), then the consultant can refer to the Toxic Leadership Style which is the Wolf and read about the way the leader behaves. We strongly believe that the consultant needs to work and stays for a sufficient time to really observe the reality. Once he has “categorized” the style of the leader, he can work with him or her and attempt to erase his or her toxins.

This is below the matrix of our *Toxic Leadership Styles* and the “toxic behaviours signs” that have emerged through our stories.

**Figure 27: Toxic Leadership Styles (TLS)**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Wolf</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong hierarchy</li> <li>• Leader does everything</li> <li>• Silent ambiance: scared people</li> <li>• Aggressive leader: shouts at people</li> <li>• "Forced respect"</li> <li>• Leader only sees him/herself: does not listen to and care for others</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Praying Mentis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak followers: absolutly depedent on the leader</li> <li>• Leader decides of everything: "parent figure"</li> <li>• Has the respect</li> <li>• Attractive leader</li> <li>• Leader takes care of others</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Octopus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable</li> <li>• Liar: dissimulates "something blurred"</li> <li>• Lunatic: changes constanly his/her mind</li> <li>• Solitaire</li> <li>• Cold: introverted, antisocial</li> <li>• Mysterious</li> <li>• Competent</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Queen Bee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work work and work: many tasks requested by the leader and high quality</li> <li>• Competent leader</li> <li>• "Forced respect"</li> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Burnout</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Snail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow working cadence: no deadline</li> <li>• Leader is afraid of failures</li> <li>• Independent followers</li> <li>• Unmotivated followers : no stress</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Otter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kind leader: more a friend than a leader</li> <li>• Free followers</li> <li>• Harassement: no limit between the professional and private sphere</li> <li>• Distant relationship between leader and followers</li> </ul>

Source: authors' chart

## **8.2. Coaching to erase toxicity**

*“Everybody came to me in order to share their problems ... even for few minutes” “I felt like a psychoanalyst”* (JVH 2013, in pers. comm. 23 April).

Many of our consultants (as Sebastien, Adyla, JVH) were the listener of people’s stories. The future consultants of *“toxicity elimination”*, once they will enter in a company, they should be a teacher, a psychoanalyst more than an observer and listen with patience to the story of each individual (both followers and leader). The *consultant of toxicity elimination* should have the ability to see the big picture and grasp the entire reality to make sense of it.

During each interview, the consultants bring forward many insights including their experiences and stories. This important information identifies the role of leadership. Now we will share a list of advice of how to erase toxicity when the consultant will encounter Toxic Leadership Styles.

*Understanding toxic behaviours is the first step to avoid it.*

### **8.2.1. COMMUNICATION**

*“Leaders are the persons who have the feeling of their team”* (D Maack 2013, in pers. comm. 19 April).

The consultants in the situation of Wolf, Praying Mentis, Octopus and Queen Bee Styles should try to work with the leader’s communication skills. Leaders should listen to others and as JVH (2013, 23 April), in personal communication said, *“identify and understand their needs”*. According to JVH there would be 6 types of followers according to their needs: the need to follow as a “robot”, of routines, to bring new idea, of security, of reconnaissance (need rewards and pride) and of power. We strongly believe that leaders should *“connect their vision for both the company’s and employees’ needs”* (JVH 2013, in personal comm. 23 April). By asking them what are their dreams and needs, people are motivated and inspired to work. They have fun when they enjoy their job.

### **8.2.2. TRUST**

The consultants who meet the Wolf, Praying Mentis, Queen Bee and Snail Styles should educate leaders to trust their followers and delegate tasks. As Georg Ranzenbacher (2013, in pers. comm. 29 April) said during the interview, *“failure is*

*the key to improvement*". When people feel involved and responsible they are more motivated. They feel that they create change: they are not a simple painting that tourists look at; they are "the" creator of this painting.

### **8.2.3. STOP TO BE A STAR!**

The consultants who encounter the Wolf, Praying Mentis or Queen Bee Styles should teach leaders to stop to think that they are the king of the orchestra, but rather that they have to also put others in front of the scene. "*Leaders should also look at themselves in the mirror and think about their responsibility and how others perceive them*" (M Lindgren Helde 2013, in pers. comm. 12 April). A leader, rather than just control, should guide others. They also should let people give opinions. By thinking and reflecting people get personally involve.

### **8.2.4. STOP TO BE A FRIEND OR A PARENT!**

The consultants who encounter the Praying Mentis or Otter Styles should encourage these leaders to stop being overnice and taking others on as their "friends" or "children". A leader is not a friend or a parent; there is a professional relationship to respect.

### **8.2.5. FEEDBACK AND REWARD**

*"People need to feel that they are in the good way"* (D Maack 2013, in pers. comm. 19 April).

The consultants who encounter the Wolf, Praying Mentis, Octopus, Queen Bee Styles should teach leaders to give both positive and negative feedback. As Mette said, "*feedback allows people to know their weakness and strength*". Also, the consultants should teach to leaders that when people are successful rewards are an asset. Indeed, it gives people the volition to do better and the celebration of it allows tying their relationship.

### **8.2.6. KNOW YOURSELF**

*"Know yourself before leading others"* (Daudi 2012).

For all the Toxic Behaviours Styles, the consultants should ask the leader: "*who are you*"? According to Mette, self-awareness allows understanding the leadership role.



As Thomas Hillenbrand said, by knowing themselves, leaders can meet their strengths and weakness. “*Leaders should also love themselves*”. “*If you cannot love ourselves you cannot love others*” (T Hillebrand 2013, in pers. comm. 29 April). By “loving one’s self” we do not infer to “the ego”, but more to the *inner world*. We believe that people who do not love themselves possess problems in their inner world and thus create an outer world of trouble. People with a “healthy” inner world are more likely to respect others. Once the leader really knows him or her, he or she will be able to lead others. The role of the consultants is to be the *psychoanalyst* and try to understand their inner world in order to ascertain the reason of their endeavours. By knowing yourself, you could be an example and avoid any toxicity in yourself.

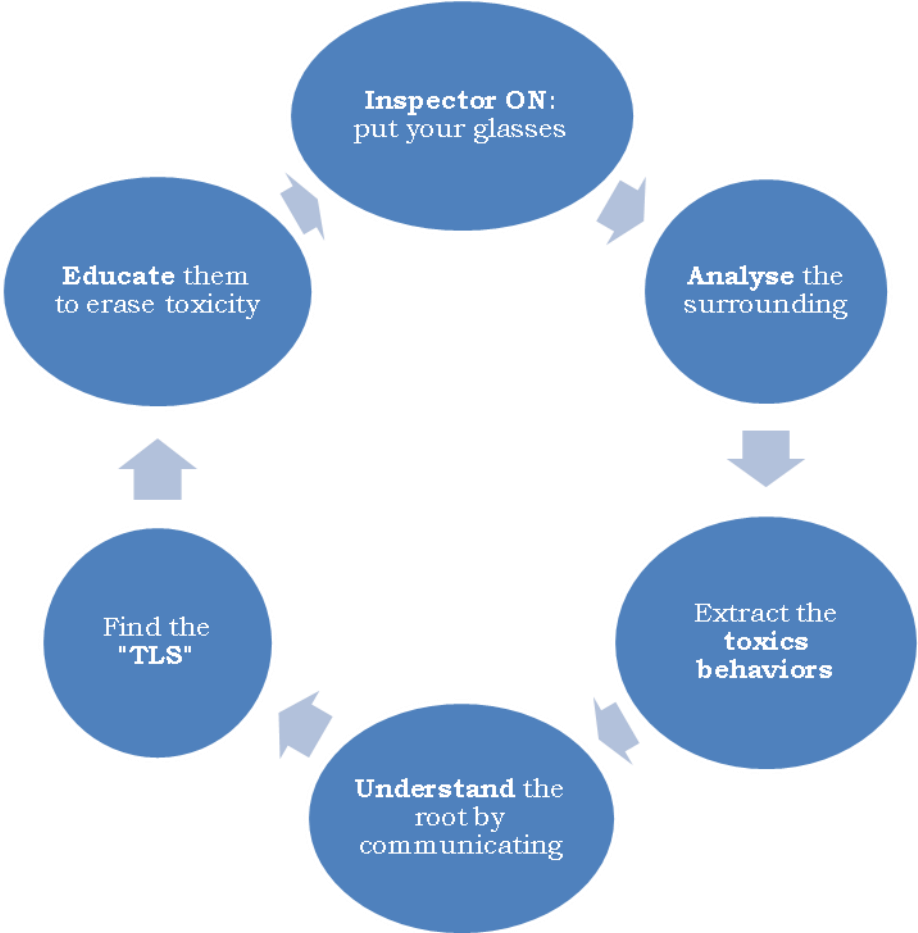
### **8.2.7. IT IS NOT FINISHED! The ball is now in our court...**

We would like to emphasize that this list of recommendations (to “erase toxicity”) is just a start and can be continually modified. Because our theory is formed through social interaction it is thus changeable over time.

NOW it is your turn to play the role of consultant. We will provide our plan, guidelines (figure 27) in order to fulfil your future mission. GOOD LUCK!

The first step consists of wearing your “glasses” and looking around: analysing the surrounding is (the second step). As we assume that followers can create toxicity, you should observe both leader’s and followers’ behaviours. During the analysis your interpretation should be based on toxic behaviours signals provided in figures 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Once you have “extracted” signals, the next stage is to understand the root: *why he or she (the leader) or them (for followers) behave in that way*. To understand the root of toxicity you can refer to the toxic triangle viewed in chapter 1: *it is the environment, features of the leader or followers that bring about toxicity?* You should communicate as a psychoanalyst, let them talk and try to understand their inner world and outer world (*how they perceive the world*). Then, once you have depicted the “Toxic Leadership Style” referring to the figure 25, you will be aware of their toxicity. The last stage consists of teaching and educating him or her or them in order to erase toxic behaviours.

**Figure 28: The process of the consultant of toxicity elimination**



Source: authors' chart

## The limitations of our thesis

---

Since our interviews were based on the perception of our narrators, our theory belongs to a *social science*, thus it can be changed and be reviewed by other researchers. Moreover, due to its social character, we affirm that our research is limited as we only had a sample of fifteen consultants, which made our result incomplete. Indeed, the list of *toxic behaviours signals* could be extended indefinitely.

Also, our research could be perceived differently depending on who is carrying the “glasses” and who the observer is. In other countries such as China or Japan, we believe that people will interpret toxicity differently. Therefore we restrained our research to the European culture, as we only interviewed consultants in Europe. According to us everything is interpretative, the animal choice representing a kind of leader is purely imaginative; by consequence our readers can see them in a different way. However, being aware of this, we made our best to justify to our readers the pertinence of our decision.

During the entire process of our thesis’ construction, we uncovered some mistakes we made. By “mistakes” we do not mean errors that we made but rather an opportunity to learn from it and develop our self-awareness. Our main mistake was to start making interviews without establishing a set of questions that guide us. By “set of questions” we do not mean the questionnaire, because we did it, but the list of questions that came in our mind during the interviews: *what will this information bring to us?*

At the beginning, we thought that it would be easier to begin the interviews by merely “following” our feeling (based on answers we received) and then classifying the replies. Our purpose was to avoid influencing people with our questions. But due to the large amount of data we collected, it appeared useful to go back and to possess a “predetermined set of questions” (Corbin & Morse 2003). As our teacher and consultant M Lindgren Helde (2013, 12 April), in a personal communication, advised us during the interview: *“it would be better if you provide a context with key issues to people”*. She gave us some clues and feedback which were related to Corbin and Morse’s theory (2003). In this way, we framed a limit with our narrators

and the interviews were better. Moreover, thanks to her insightful advice, we have had a clear vision and we knew which path to follow afterwards.

We have also framed our research to the business area and thus to formal leaders, as we viewed the “work contract” as it is the key relation connecting the leader with their followers. We chose formal leaders because for most of our narrators, they were perceived as people possessing the “status” of leader due to hierarchal position within the company.

Furthermore, we mainly focused our attention on leaders who “contaminate” their surroundings. However, through our researches we found out that followers can also bring toxicity and be the root of it.

Finally, the issue: “good leaders can have bad outcomes and bad leaders can have good outcomes” (P Elsass 2012, pers. comm. 24 October) was really interesting. However, due to time restriction, we had to make a choice. As we were more attracted by the understanding of the emergence of toxicity and the way leaders manipulate others, we then decided to focus on these two aspects. Our second reason is the volition to learn from our research. Indeed, we view our thesis as a *learning process* and our aim is to bring something new in order to “educate” our readers. This issue was more related to an “observation” and an acknowledgment of the reality.

## Future research issues

---

We strongly believe that our theory could be used by future companies, which will encounter *toxic behaviours*. We hope that they will be inspired by our work to make positive change and to ensure a “*healthier company*” whereby all its members would feel good. We encourage companies to become the “observer of the reality” and put the “glasses” on its nose and keep looking around. Indeed, throughout our interviews we often felt uncomfortable because some stories were really sensitive and emotive (some of our narrators shared with us part of their really painful situations). Sometimes, as we were aware of this phenomenon, we wanted to “jump” into these companies and try to solve the problem by applying our theory in order to instruct the leader. We hope that these companies will be interested in hiring a consultant who enables them to see the “big picture” and to apply our model in order to “decipher” what the toxic behaviours are. We also hope that other researchers will pursue our work for the well-being of the society.

Throughout our thesis, we feel strongly involved in being a good future leader. In this way, we believe that our thesis is not only designed for the business area, but also for the private life. Anybody should be inspired by our thesis in order to avoid toxicity in their surroundings. Indeed, during the development of our thesis, every insightful concept was deeply applied by each of us. We would be happy and grateful if our readers, and especially future students, could learn from our work. We strongly believe, as already mentioned, the key of change is the *awareness*. Our thesis is closely tied with a thesis elaborated by one of our classmates: “leading oneself”. We believe that before leading others, you must first know yourself. We wish that readers would be inspired by our work and discover through the reading that there are possible toxins and they will work on it to erase them and so insure (their) personal growth.

Therefore, as we limited our research to the business area, “opening the door” to the “society area” would be really a good idea. Hence, new studies could be conducted to explain *how toxicity is presented in our classroom, in our life in general*. By doing so, as we have concentrated our research to formal leaders, it would be really relevant to undertake the following issue: *do formal leaders possess more toxins than informal leaders?*

As we did not talk about the “good leaders can have bad outcomes and bad leaders can have good outcomes” (P Elsass 2012, pers. comm. 24 October) issue, we found it nonetheless really innovative. Other researches could investigate the question: “*Do we need toxicity in the business area?*” We think (throughout our stories) that some leaders do not want to hurt their followers, but some of them only find the respect by imposing fear; the only way, according to them to lead : with toxicity.

Furthermore, as we did not speak about culture or gender difference, it would be also interesting to study this following issue: *do women leaders present higher level of toxicity than men?*

Finally, as we mainly focused our intention on leaders and their toxicity, we found interesting to enlarge the subject on “toxic followership” and *how followers manipulate the leader?*

## It is time to ... CONCLUDE

---

Throughout the “Leadership Management in International Context” program, we learned *how to become a good leader* and how to transform ourselves into “*multipliers*”. However, talking about leadership without speaking about “gloomy” leaders is a misconception of what leadership is. We cannot deny the existence of it. Hence, leadership is not only about “good leaders” with bravery and goodness. Leadership is a *mixture* between them and either the ones who have unscrupulous and selfish ends (and use manipulation to fulfil their desire), or the ones who want the welfare of others but miss the steps of success. In both cases they lead to toxicity.

**Figure 29: “Allegory of the Good and the Evil leadership”**



*Leadership is a mixture of charm, fear, manipulation, persuasion, lack of vision, dependence, trust ....*

Source: Linnaeus University 2011

We took this painting to represent and personalize our idea of leadership. This fresco, painted between 1337 and 1339 by *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, represents the “allegory of the Good and the Evil leadership” (Daudi 2013, p. 13). In this fresco in

the foreground, sitting on the throne, we can see the figure of the *Justice*. On each side of him, two angels are represented on the “Balancea” (Daudi 2013, p. 13). On the left hand side, the angel is rewarding one citizen while another is being punished. This represents the “Justitia distributive”: “the commanding and rewarding authority” (Daudi 2013, p. 13). But on the right side, two other citizens are being treated and punished as slaves. This represents the “Justitia commutativa”: symbol of “executive power” (Daudi 2013, p. 13). This fresco is a good metaphor of what leadership is. Even if in our thesis we do not refer to the word “evil”, the idea behind this painting is relevant. Indeed, we perceive leaders as Chameleons who change the way to lead according to the person in front of them. Depending on the type of followers and on their needs, the leader either rewards or punishes by setting up a *toxic culture*.

***How do leaders’ toxic behaviours “contaminate” our surrounding in the context of business area, and how can we erase them?***

Through the “toxic triangle” (Padilla et al. 2007), we have attempted to understand how toxicity emerge. The answer is: “toxic” leadership shall arise through several variables we should take into account: the leader, his or her followers, and the environment. Leaders’ behaviours appear to be influenced by themselves (charisma trait, or need for power, etc.), by their followers’ needs (security, ambition, etc.), and by the environment (instability or threat, etc.). So, “toxic” leadership is a function of these three components. Our purpose was to summarize all the signs you may find in leaders’ traits, in followers, or in the environment, which will give you the awareness or the self-reflection necessary to spot a “toxic” leadership.

Moreover by *setting up a culture favourable to manipulation*, leaders’ toxic behaviours might “contaminate” our surrounding. The “toxic culture” undermines the wellbeing of followers, who at their turn become intoxicated and then contaminate their surroundings. Leaders can use fear in order to scare others and demand too much from them (The Wolf), or charm to seduce and make them blind (The Praying Mantis), or “trust” to create a feeling of safety (The Octopus). Through our stories, we also found out different ways that lead to toxicity by setting other kinds of culture: “relentless work” (The Queen Bee), “over-kindness” (The Otter) and the “fear-culture” and “slow way of working” (The Snail). All of them “can” contaminate their firm and create a *sick company*.



The way to erase toxins in toxic leadership style is first to be aware of the presence of toxicity. Then observation and analysis of the whole surrounding become the best tools. Thanks to the matrix of “toxic behaviour signals”, toxins can be deciphered. Then, the consulting work can start....

# Our learning

---

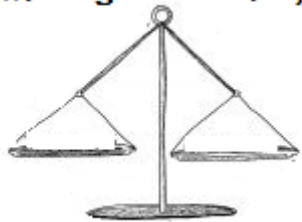
*Do we need toxicity to lead others?*

After writing our thesis, this question, one of our future issues, has come into our mind. We think that toxicity is needed to lead and to achieve company's goals. As we saw with Steve Job' case, he succeed really well with a high level of toxicity due to his narcissistic behaviour and need for power. However the success is in the expense of followers' well-fare.

Therefore, we believe that a *right well-balance of toxicity* is needed. Meaning that leaders need a certain amount of narcissism, charisma, need for power and ambition to lead, without it we believe they cannot lead. Therefore, it depends on how leaders are using these characteristics and for which purpose. As we can see on the following figure, each leaders need to find their own balance.

**Figure 30: The well balance of toxicity**

**Well right balance of toxicitey**



Source: The Daily Dose 1996, modified by the authors

Furthermore, as far as we finished our “baby”, it appears that everyone had, has or will have a “toxic” behaviour in his or her life. Indeed after writing this thesis, we were able to identify some “toxicity” in our behaviours. That is why we would take a moment to identify our own toxic leadership style which has been illustrated in the chapter four.

*Doriane Bourdoux: The Snail*

I identify myself as the snail because I had a very slow rhythm of work during this thesis. I did not feel stressed by the deadline unless for the last couples of week. When the deadline is quite long, as it was for the thesis, I have some difficulties to work efficiently. I like working under pressure, the emergency of the situation allows me to push my abilities to overcome my limits. Also, I can identify myself as

the snail because I was too kind during the feedback session. I was afraid to hurt my colleagues' feelings my colleagues so I tried to avoid saying negative points. To conclude, I would say that this work with Manon was the most difficult work I have ever done. During these last months, I really learnt how to work in team. As you will read it, Manon and I hold personality traits, but at the end we found our own balance between the Snail and the Queen Bee.

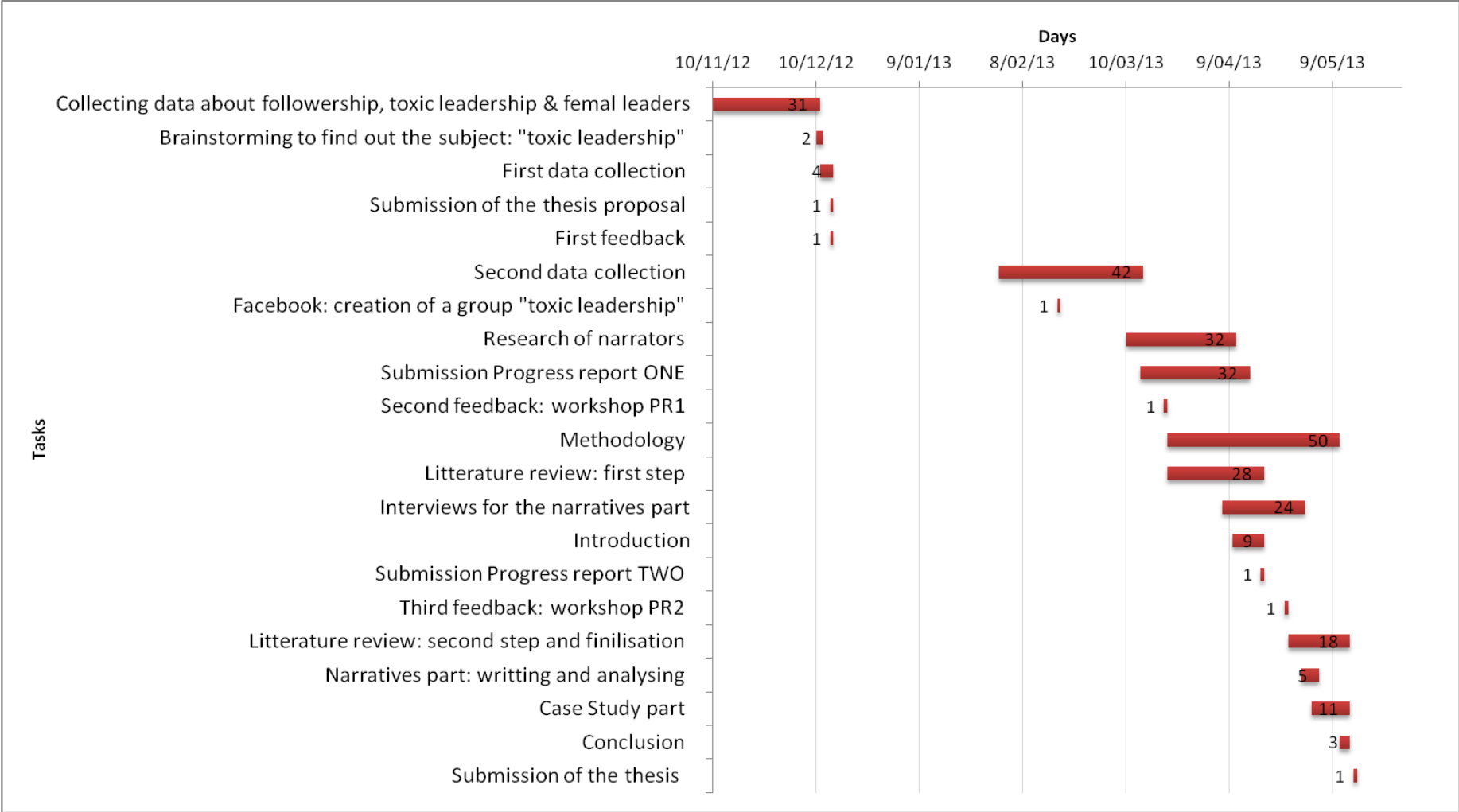
*Manon Delabelle: The Queen Bee*

I identify myself to the Queen Bee because I am a perfectionist I ask for myself and for the others a high quality of work. I need to see that everything will be well done. I delegate tasks but in the end, I always checked everything. I show some toxicity because, even if I delegate the work, this endeavour shows that I did not trust entirely my colleague Doriane. This way of working sometimes weakened our relationship because of asking her to work at a high quality level. Moreover, by requiring strict deadlines, I gave her my stress. As we have seen, emotions are contagious. Nonetheless, I am really happy because it was worth it, as we said toxicity is good to achieve goals. Being aware of it, I have tried my best to avoid emotional overreactions by keeping my over stress under the water. At the end, we were glad to create our baby and, actually, we are still laughing over our fuss, it was a really good experience and we both personally evolved from it.

*We hope this reading helped you to better ...*

*... discover "who" you are before leading others ...*

# Our time plan: Gantt chart



## References

---

- Arbnor, I & Bjerke, B 2009, *Methodology for creating business knowledge*, 3rd edn. Sage Publication Inc.
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1939, Cambridge, Harvard (H. Rackham (trans.)).
- Ashby, MD & Miles, SA 2002, *Leaders Talk Leadership, Top Executives Speak Their Minds*, Oxford, University Press.
- Ashkanasy, N & Daus, C 2001, 'Emotion in the Workplace: The New Challenge for Managers', *Academy of Management Executive*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 76-86.
- Aubrey, D 2012, 'The Effect of Toxic Leadership', *Strategy Research Project*, pp. 1-30.
- Austin, EJ, Farrelly, D, Black, C & Moore, H 2007, 'Emotional Intelligence: Machiavellianism and emotional manipulation'. *ScienceDirect*, vo. 43, no. 1, pp. 179-189.
- Bandura, A 1982, 'Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency', *American Psychologist*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 122-147.
- Barker, RA 2011, 'The nature of leadership', *SAGE Publications*, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 469-494.
- Barling, J, Christie, A & Turner, N 2007, 'Pseudo-Transformational Leadership: Towards the Development and Test of a Model', *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 81, no. 4, pp. 851-861.
- Barsade, S & Bernstein, JF 2011, 'FOR BETTER RESULTS, EMOTIONAL CONTAGION MATTERS', viewed 23 April 2013, [executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu/wharton-at-work/1102/emotional-contagion-1102.cfm/](http://executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu/wharton-at-work/1102/emotional-contagion-1102.cfm/)
- Barsade, S & Gibson, D 2007, 'Why Does Affect Matter in Organizations?', *Academy of Management Perspectives*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 36-59.
- Barsade, S 2002, 'The Ripple Effect: Emotional Contagion and Its Influence on Group Behavior', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 644-675.
- Bass, BM & Steidlmeier, P 2006, 'Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership', viewed 4 April 2013, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.152.4873>.
- Bass, BM 1990, *Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*, New York Press: Free Press.

Bass, MB 1996, *A new paradigm of leadership: an inquiry into transformational leadership*, Alexandria, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Bennis, W & Nanus, B 2004, *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, HarperBusiness.

Bennis, W & Thomas, J 2002, 'Crucible of leadership'. *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 80, no. 9, pp. 39-45.

Bennis, WG & Thomas, RJ 2007, *Leading for a Lifetime*.

Beystehner, KM 1998, 'Psychoanalysis: Freud's Revolutionary Approach to Human Personality', viewed 25 April 2013, [www.personalityresearch.org/papers/beystehner.html](http://www.personalityresearch.org/papers/beystehner.html) 24/04/2013 pages 1-18/

Bligh, M, Kohles, J, Pearce, C, Justin, J & Stovall, J 2007, 'When the Romance is Over: Follower Perspectives of Aversive Leadership', *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 528-557.

Bligh, MC & Kohles, JC 2009, 'Romance of Leadership', in ML John & MA Hogg (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, London UK, SAGE Reference.

Borner, P 2012, 'How emotional contagion disrupts a firm's culture', viewed 23 April 2013, [www.peterborner.com/2012/02/06/how-emotional-contagion-disrupts-a-firms-culture/](http://www.peterborner.com/2012/02/06/how-emotional-contagion-disrupts-a-firms-culture/)

Bostock, W 1995, 'Evil, Toxic and Pathological Categories of Leadership: Implications for Political Power', *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 57-71.

Brown, M & Treviño, L 2006, 'Ethical Leadership: A review and future directions', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 6, pp. 595-616.

Bruton, R 2009, 'Reflections: The world outside is a mirror of the world inside', viewed 24 April 2013, [www.helium.com/items/1564701-your-outer-world-reflects-your-inner-world/](http://www.helium.com/items/1564701-your-outer-world-reflects-your-inner-world/)

Bryman, A 1997, 'Leadership in Organizations', in SR Clegg, C Hardy & WR Nord (ed.), *Handbook of Organization Studies*, Sage Publication, London, pp.166-187.

Carfantan, S 2006, 'Philosophie et spiritualité', viewed 24 April 2013, <http://sergecar.perso.neuf.fr/cours/langag7.htm/>

Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (CNRTL) 2012, *Etymologie of manipulation*, viewed 18 April 2013, <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/manipulation>

Chaleff, I & Lipman-Blumen, J 2008, *The art of followership - How great followers create great leaders and organizations*, Jossey bass, San Francisco.

- Cherise, J 2013, 'Solving PC Issue: Professional Computer Virus Removal', viewed 23 April 2013, [http://fixingcomputervirus.blogspot.se/2013\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html/](http://fixingcomputervirus.blogspot.se/2013_04_01_archive.html/)
- Chopra, P & Kanji, K 2010, 'Emotional intelligence: A catalyst for inspirational leadership and management excellence', *Total Quality Management*, vol. 21, no. 10, pp. 971-1004.
- Ciulla, J 2003, *Ethics and Leadership Effectiveness*, Cengage Learning.
- Conger, JA 1990, 'The Dark Side of Leadership', *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 44-55.
- Conger, JA 1998, 'The Necessary Art of Persuasion', *HBR*, vol. 79, no. 4, pp. 87-95.
- Corral, S & Calvete, E 2000, 'Machiavellianism: Dimensionality of the Mach IV and its Relation to Self-Monitoring in a Spanish Sample', *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 3-13.
- Côté, S & Golden, B (n.d.), 'Emotional Intelligence and Managerial Burnout', viewed 20 April 2013, [http://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/management/speaker\\_series/pdfs/PAPER/C3%204t%20C3%A9Golden.pdf](http://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/management/speaker_series/pdfs/PAPER/C3%204t%20C3%A9Golden.pdf)
- Cowblog 2011, *Nourriture dangereuse!*, viewed 24 April 2013, <http://lancien.cowblog.fr/nourriture-dangereuse-3118336.html/>
- Crabtree A & Crabtree J (n.d.), 'The world of the inner mind', viewed 23 April 2013, [www.joannecrabtree.com/psychotherapyarts/innerMind/innerMind.html/](http://www.joannecrabtree.com/psychotherapyarts/innerMind/innerMind.html/)
- Cure, L (n.d.), 'Emotions in the workplace: fear and organizational behaviors', viewed 22 April 2013, <http://innovativeconnectionsinc.com/sites/default/files/publications/fear-summary.pdf>
- Dasborough, M 2002, 'Emotion and attribution of intentionality in leader-member relationships', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 40, pp. 2-34.
- Daudi, P 1986, 'Generating Knowledge and the Theory of Discourse', ch. 3 in *The Discourse of Power in Managerial Praxis*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Daudi, P 2013, 4FE425 *On the art of leading other through the art of leading oneself* online course materials, Semester 1, 2013, Management Consulting and Change Management, Linnaeus University.
- Dermott, D 2006, 'What is mind control?', viewed 20 April 2013, [www.decision-making-confidence.com/mind-control.html/](http://www.decision-making-confidence.com/mind-control.html/)
- Doherty, RW 1997, 'The emotional contagion scale: a measure of individual differences', *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, vol. 21, no.2, pp. 131-154.



- Drucker, P & Ito, M 2005, 'Toxic Leadership: A conceptual Framework' in J Lipman-Blumen (ed.), *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians*.
- Dyck, D 2001, 'The toxic workplace', *Benefits Canada*, vol. 25, pp. 52-57.
- Elsass, P 24th October 2013. The dark side of leadership, FE5540 - Leadership in international context, Lecture material. Linnaeus University.
- Fambrough, M & Hart K 2008, 'Emotions in Leadership Development: A Critique of Emotional Intelligence', *Advances in Developing Human Resources, Sage Publication*, vol. 10, no. 5, pp. 740-758.
- Fehr, B, Samsom, D & Paulhus, DL 1992, 'The construct of Machiavellianism: Twenty years later' in CD Spielberger & JN Butcher (ed.), *Advances in personality assessment* (Vol. 9, pp. 77-116). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Fineman, S 2003, *Understanding Emotion at Work*, e-book, Ebrary, SAGE Publications Ltd. (UK).
- Fisher, C & others 2004, *Researching and Writing a Dissertation for Business Students*, Pearson Education Ltd.
- Freud, S 1939, *Moses and monotheism*. New York: Knopf.
- Freud, S 1957, 'The history of the psychoanalytic movement', in J Strackey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (pp. 617-633).
- Gangel, K 2007, *Surviving Toxic Leaders: How to Work for Flawed People in Churches, Schools, and Christian Organizations*, e-book, viewed 22 March 2013, <http://ebookbrowse.com/dts-toxic-leader-kenneth-gangel-pdf-d50966894>
- Geis FL & Moon TH 1981, 'Machiavellianism and Deception', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 766-775.
- George, J 2000, 'Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence'. *SAGE Publications*, vol. 53, no. 9, pp. 1027-1055.
- Glaser, B & Strauss, A 1967, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*.
- Goldman A, 2006, 'High toxicity leadership Borderline personality disorder and the dysfunctional organization', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, vol. 21 no. 8, pp. 733-746.
- Goldman, A 2009, *Transforming Toxic Leaders*, Stanford.
- Hatfield E, Cacioppo JL & Rapson RL 1993, 'Emotional contagion', *Current Directions in Psychological Sciences*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-13.
- Higgs, M 2009, 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Leadership and Narcissism', *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 165-178.

Hofstede, G 1991, *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G 2013, 'The avoidance of certainty collectivism and a high power distance', viewed 1 May 2013, <http://geert-hofstede.com/index.php>.

Hogan J, Hogan, R & Kaiser, RB 2003, 'Management derailment: personality assessment and mitigation' in S Zedeck (ed.) *American Psychological Association Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hogan, R Curphy, GJ & Hogan, J 1994, 'What We Know About Leadership: Effectiveness and Personality', *American Psychologist*, pp. 1-33.

Hogan, R, Raskin, R, & Fazzini, D 1990, 'The dark side of charisma, in KE Clark & MB Clark (ed.), *Measures of leadership*, pp. 343-354.

Hollander, EP 1992, 'The essential interdependence of leadership and followership', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 71-75.

Holt, R 1946, 'Level of aspiration: Ambition or defense?' *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 398-416.

House, RJ & Howell, JM 1992, 'Personality and charismatic leadership', *the Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 81-108.

Howell, JM & Shamir, B 2005, 'The role of followers in the charismatic leadership process', *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 30, no.1, pp. 96-112.

Isaacson, W 2011, *Steve Jobs*, Editions Jean-Claude Lattès.

Jan, J & Goerge, T 2011, 'The Relationship of Emotional Intelligence to Job Stress, Affective Commitment and Turnover Intention among Restaurant employees', viewed 20 April 2013, [http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1180&context=gradconf\\_hospitality/](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1180&context=gradconf_hospitality/)

Jones, D & Paulhus, D 2009, 'Machiavellianism' in MR Leady Hoyle (ed.), *Individual differences in social behaviors*, (chapter 7, pp. 93-108) New York Guilford.

Jones, FB 2011, 'Authentic Leadership: The 21st Century Imperative?', *Business Leadership Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 1-6.

Judge T, Piccolo, R & Kosalka, T 2009, 'The bright and dark sides of leader traits: A review and theoretical extension of the leader trait paradigm', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 20, pp. 855-875.

Judge, T & Bono, J 2001, 'Relationship of core self-evaluations traits-self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability—with job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 86, pp. 80-92.

Judge, T & Kammeyer-Mueller, J 2012, 'On the value of aiming high: The causes and consequences of ambition', *Journal of applied psychology*, vol. 97, no. 4, pp. 758-775.

Judge, TA, Woolf, EF, Hurst, C & Livingston, B 2008, 'Leadership' in J Barling & CL Coope (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 1, Micro Approaches (pp. 334-352)

Kaiser, R & Hogan, R 2006, 'THE DARK SIDE OF DISCRETION, Leader Personality and Organizational Decline' in J Antonakis, R Hooijberg, J Hunt, K Boal, & W Macey (ed.), (pp. 1-25), *Strategic Leadership of Organizations*.

Kantor, M 2006, *The Psychopathy of Everyday Life*, Praeger.

Kellerman, B 2004, *Bad leader*.

Kellerman, B 2007, 'What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers', *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 85, no. 12, pp. 84-91.

Kelley, RE 2008, *Rethinking followership*, in J Bass (ed.), ch. 1, *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations*.

Kessler, S, Spector, P, Borman, W, Nelson, C, Bandelli, A & Penney, L 2010, 'Re-Examining Machiavelli: A Three-Dimensional Model of Machiavellianism in the Workplace', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 8, pp. 1868-1896.

Kets De Vries, MFR 1994, 'The leadership mystique', *The Academy of Management Executive*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 2-30.

Kilduff, M, Chiaburu, D & Menges, J 2010, 'Strategic use of emotional intelligence in organizational settings: Exploring the dark side', *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 30, p.p. 129-152.

Kroll 2012, 'Le Soir', viewed 24 April 2013, [http://mediatheque.lesoir.be/v/le\\_kroll/646fev2412.jpg.html/](http://mediatheque.lesoir.be/v/le_kroll/646fev2412.jpg.html/)

Kuhnert, KW & Lewis, P 1987, 'Transactional and transformational leadership: A constructive/developmental analysis', *Academy of Management*, vol. 12, no. 4, p.p. 648-657.

Larousse, n.d., 'abeille' viewed 6 May 2013, <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/vie-sauvage/abeille/178185>

Larousse, n.d., 'escargot' viewed 6 May 2013 <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/escargot/49305>

Larousse, n.d., 'loup' viewed 6 May 2013, <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/loup/66702>

Larousse, n.d., 'loutre' viewed 6 May 2013, [http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/vie-sauvage/loutre\\_dEurope/184814](http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/vie-sauvage/loutre_dEurope/184814)

- Larousse, n.d., 'mante' viewed 6 May 2013, <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/mante/68039>
- Larousse, n.d., 'pieuvre' viewed 6 May 2013, [http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/vie-sauvage/pieuvre\\_ou\\_poulpe/184019](http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/vie-sauvage/pieuvre_ou_poulpe/184019)
- Lawson, D 2011, 'Custer Syndrome: A Failure of Organizational Leadership', *Liberty Business Review*, Spring, pp. 1-14
- Lazányi, K 2009, 'The Role of Leaders' Emotions', *APSTRACT*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 103-109.
- Le pays des Arécomiques 2012, *Dessin(s) du jour*, viewed 24 April 2013, <http://30120eccehomo.eu/category/humour/dessins-du-wb/>
- Linnaeus University 2012, *The good and the evil leadership*, viewed 14 April 2013, [http://lnu.se/education/programmes/ealm1/the-good-and-the-evil-leadership?ec\\_vt=English&l=en&mode=print/](http://lnu.se/education/programmes/ealm1/the-good-and-the-evil-leadership?ec_vt=English&l=en&mode=print/)
- Lipman, J 2006, *The allure of toxic leader: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians--and How We Can Survive Them*.
- Lipman-Blumen, J 2005, 'Toxic Leadership: When Grand Illusions', Masquerade as Noble Visions", *Leader to Leader*. Spring, pp. 1-16.
- Lipman-Blumen, J 2005, *The allure of toxic leader*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lipman-Blumen, J, Riggio, R & Chaleff, I 2008, *The art of followership: how great followers create great leaders and organizations*, San Francisco, CA.
- Locke, E 1996, 'Motivation through conscious goal setting', *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, vol. 5, pp. 117-124.
- Lundgren, M 2012, 4FE420 *Leadership as sensemaking -Management of meaning*, online course materials, Semester 2, 2013, Leadership as Construction of Meaning, Linnaeus University.
- Luthans, F, Peterson, SJ, & Ibrayeva, E 1998, 'The potential for the "dark side" of leadership in post-communist countries', *Journal of World Business*, vol. 33, pp. 185-201.
- Lyons, L 2011, 'I would like my life back: Corporate Personhood and the BP Oil disaster', *University of Hawai Press*, vol. 34, pp. 96-107.
- Maccoby, M 2000, 'Narcissistic Leaders, the incredible pros, the inevitable cons'. *Harvard business review*, vol. 78, no. 1, pp. 69-77.
- Malle, B 2011, 'Attribution Theories: How People Make Sense of Behavior'. *Theories in social psychology*, pp. 72-95.

- Manstead, T 2005, 'The social dimension of emotion', *The Psychologist*, vol. 18, no. 8, pp. 484-487.
- Marenne, M 2010, 'Restaurer une qualité de vie au travail', viewed 20 April 2013, [http://www.martinemarenne.be/m2\\_stress.html/](http://www.martinemarenne.be/m2_stress.html/)
- Maslow, H 1970, *Motivation and personality*, (2nd ed.), Harper & Row, New York
- Mayer, J Salovey, P & Caruso, D 2000, 'Emotional Intelligence as Zeitgeist, as Personality, and as a Mental Ability' in R Bar-On & JDA. Parker (ed.). *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence. Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School, and in the Workplace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mayer, J, Roberts R, Barsade S 2008, 'Human Abilities: Emotional Intelligence', *The Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 59, pp. 507-536.
- McClelland, DC 1975, *Power: The inner experience*, New York, NY: Irvington.
- McHoskey, JW 2001, 'Machiavellianism and personality dysfunction', *Personality and Individuals Differences*, vol. 31, pp. 791-798.
- McLeod, S 2010, 'Attribution Theory', Viewed 22 April 2013, <http://www.simplypsychology.org/attributiontheory.html/>
- Metcalfe, BA & Metcalfe, JA 2005, 'Leadership: Time for a New Direction?' *SAGE Publications*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 51-71.
- Morgan, G 2006, *Images of Organization*, SAGE.
- Munro, K 2001, 'Emotional abuse the more common form of abuse', viewed 22 April 2013, <http://kalimunro.com/wp/articles-info/sexual-emotional-abuse/emotional-abuse-the-most-common-form-of-abuse>
- O'Connor, J, Mumford, M, Clifton, T, Gessner, T, & Connelly, M 1995, 'Charismatic leaders and destructiveness: Anhistoriometric study', *Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 6, pp. 529-555.
- Offerman, LR, J 2004, When Followers Become Toxic, *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 82, no. 1, pp. 54-60
- Oxford Dictionaries 2013, *manipulate*, viewed 20 April 2013, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/manipulate>
- Padilla, A & Hogan, R & Kaiser, R 2007, 'The toxic triangle: Destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments', *The leadership quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 176-194
- Parry, K.W & Proctor-Thomson, S.B 2002, 'Perceive integrity and transformational leaders in organizational settings', *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vo. 35, No. 2, pp. 75-96.

Paulhus, D & Williams, K 2002, 'The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy', *Journal of Research in Personality*, vol. 36 pp. 556-563.

Pelletier, KL 2011, 'Leader toxicity: An empirical investigation of toxic behavior and rhetoric', *Sage publication*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 373-389.

Petrides KV, Vernon, P, Schermer, JA, Veselka, L 2011, 'Trait Emotional Intelligence and the Dark Triad Traits of Personality', *Twin Research and Human Genetics*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 35-41.

Petrides, KV 2011, 'Ability and Trait Emotional Intelligence', *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Individual Differences*, First Edition, pp. 665 - 678.

Pettigrove, G 2007, 'Ambitions', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 53-68.

Plato 1993, *The Republic*, Dent/Everyman, Translated by A.D. Lindsay.

Power, P 2004, 'Leadership for tomorrow: Once more, with feeling', *MT ELIZA business review*, pp. 43-49.

Rauthmann, JF 2011, 'The Dark Triad and Interpersonal Perception: Similarities and Differences in the Social Consequences of Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy', *Social Psychological and Personality Science* vol. 000, no. 00, pp. 1-10.

Robinson, J & Topping, D 2012, 'The rhetoric of power: a comparison of Hitler and Martin Luther King', *Journal of management*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 194-210.

Rockwell, D 2011, 'Leaders are manipulators?', viewed 25 March 2013, <http://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2011/02/16/leaders-are-manipulators/>

Roter, A 2012, 'What is Workplace Abuse', viewed 23 April 2013, <http://www.aboutleaders.com/bid/143275/What-is-Workplace-Abuse>

Rotter, JB 1966, 'Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement', *Psychological Monographs*, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 1-28.

Salovey, P & Mayer, J 1990, 'Emotional Intelligence', *Imagination, cognition and personality*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 185-211.

Sankowski, D 1995, 'The Charismatic Leader as narcissist: Understanding the Abuse of Power', *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 57-71.

Schwartz, T 2012, 'Emotional Contagion Can Take Down Your Whole team', *Harvard Business Review, HBR Blog Network*, viewed 23 April 2013, <http://blogs.hbr.org/schwartz/2012/07/emotional-contagion-can-ta.html/>

Show, JB, Erickson, A & Harvey, M 2011, 'A method for measuring destructive leadership and identifying types of destructive leaders in organizations', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 575-590.

- Sierra, K 2006, 'Why angry/negative people are bad for your brain', viewed 23 April 2013, [www.estatevaults.com/bol/archives/002606.html/](http://www.estatevaults.com/bol/archives/002606.html/)
- Singer, MT 2003, 'The Process of Brainwashing, Psychological Coercion, and Thought Reform', *Cults and New Religious Movements, A Reader*, pp. 147-159.
- Slattery, C 2009, 'The dark side troubling times at the top of leadership', viewed 20 March 2013, [semannslattery.com/file\\_download/156/](http://semannslattery.com/file_download/156/)
- Smircich, L & Morgan, G 1982, 'Leadership: The Management of Meaning', *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 257-273.
- Spears, LC 2010, 'Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders', *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 25-30.
- Stone, AG Russell, RF & Patterson, K 2003, 'Transformational versus Servant Leadership: A Difference in Leader Focus', *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable*, viewed 4 April 2013, [http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2003/stone\\_transformation\\_versus.pdf](http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/stone_transformation_versus.pdf)
- Strauss, A & Corbin, J 1994, 'Grounded Theory Methodology', *Handbook of qualitative research*, pp. 273-285
- Takala, T 2005, 'Charismatic Leadership and Power' *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 45-57.
- Tavanti, M 2011, 'Managing Toxic Leaders: Dysfunctional Patterns in Organizational Leadership and How to Deal with Them', viewed 18 April 2013, <http://works.bepress.com/marcotavanti/32>
- The daily house 1996, *Pole Vault Up Creativity Mountain*, viewed 30 May 2013, <http://thedailydose.com/2011/08/18/pole-vault-up-creativity-mountain/>
- Visser, B, Bay, D Cook & Myburgh, J 2010, 'Psychopathic and antisocial, but not emotionally intelligent', *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 644-684.
- Walter, F, Cole M & Humphrey R 2011, 'Emotional Intelligence: Sine Qua Non of Leadership or Folderol?' *Academy of Management Perspectives*, pp. 45-59.
- Weick, KE 1995, *Sensemaking In Organizations*, SAGE Publications, California, (Chapters 1-3).
- Weierter, S 1997, "Who wants to play "Follow the Leader?" A theory of charismatic relationships based on routinized charisma and follower characteristics'. *Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 8, pp. 171-193.

Whiten, A & Byrne, R 1997, *Machiavellian Intelligence II, Extensions and Evaluations*, Cambridge University Press.

Willet, B 2010, 'What Isn't Manipulated?', viewed 23 April 2013, <http://www.safehaven.com/article/16285/what-isnt-manipulated/>

Wilson-Starks, KY 2003, 'Toxic leadership. Transleadership', viewed 18 April 2013, <http://www.transleadership.com/ToxicLeadership.pdf/>

Wislon, L 2011, 'Hypnosis and brain washing', The Center For Development, viewed 20 April 2013, [www.drlwilson.com/ARTICLES/HYPNOSIS.htm\\_p1-63/](http://www.drlwilson.com/ARTICLES/HYPNOSIS.htm_p1-63/)

Yin, RK 1994, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition, SAGE Publication Inc.

Yücel, F 2012, 'Big Brother is Watching You: Feedback for Professionals', viewed 25 April 2013, <http://fatihyucel.wordpress.com/tag/feedback/>

Yukl, G 2006, *Leadership in organizations (6th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.



# APPENDIX

---

## Questionnaire of the consultants' interview

- 1) What is "leadership" for you?
- 2) What is a leader for you?
- 3) What is a good leader for you?
- 4) For how many organizations have you already worked for?
- 5) For how many would you like to work for again? Why?
- 6) How was the atmosphere? How did people work?
- 7) Whether the atmosphere was bad, why?
- 8) How was the relation between employees and the boss?
- 9) How will you label the client's boss?
- 10) Would like to work with him or her, if not why?
- 11) What is a "toxic leader" for you?
- 12) Do you will label this boss of toxic one?
- 13) Can you tell me please some stories, anecdotes where toxicity was presented in one of your client firm?



## Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

---

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.

## **Lnu.se**

Linnaeus University  
SE-391 82 Kalmar/SE-351 95 Växjö  
Telephone +46 772-28 80 00