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**Me, Myself And I:**

**Theory and Effects of Self-Interested Leaders**

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*...and to work with great people“. Steve Jobs*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation analyses negative leadership behavior. The dark side of leadership has received growing interest over the last years and has been termed by many authors as destructive leadership. Several researchers have concluded that destructive leadership is a complex phenomenon (e.g., Schilling, 2009; Thoroughgood et al., 2012) and that current empirical constructs only represent a part of the destructive behaviors leaders may show (Krasikova et al., 2013). I argue that leaders' self-interest is an important dimension when describing destructive leadership. However, in current conceptualizations of destructive leadership it does not warrant the attention it deserves. In this dissertation, I will thus examine two specific manifestations of leader's self-interest: Exploitative and Narcissistic Leadership.

In the first part, I introduce the dimension of leaders' self-interest and propose to include it as a key component in frameworks describing destructive leadership. Based on this, I introduce a new concept, "Exploitative Leadership", which is mainly characterized by high levels of leader self-interest. I develop a scale to measure the construct, establish its psychometric properties, consider the nomological validity of exploitative leadership by examining its linkages with related leadership constructs, and establish discriminant and convergent validity.

In the second part, I will focus on narcissistic leadership. As a manifestation of self-interest, narcissism has received some research attention. However, research to date has produced conflicting findings regarding the impact of leader narcissism on performance. The aim of this dissertation was to gain further insights into this relationship and to examine which behaviors of narcissistic team leaders are conducive versus obstructive for team performance. For this purpose, I conducted a two-study field investigation with nascent entrepreneurial teams. First, I found a curvilinear relation between team leader narcissism (rated by followers) and team performance (expert rating) such that medium levels of

narcissism were most beneficial for team performance. Then, I used qualitative interviews to highlight that the behaviors that leaders with a medium level of narcissism tended to show were qualitatively different, that is, more effective than the behaviors of leaders with high or low levels of narcissism. I describe patterns of behaviors, which indicate that narcissists show effective as well as ineffective leader behaviors. However, it is not the behaviors per se but rather the combination of these behaviors that foster or hinder team performance. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

***A GOOD LEADER TAKES A LITTLE MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF THE  
BLAME, A LITTLE LESS THAN HIS SHARE OF THE CREDIT.***

***ARNOLD H. GLASOW***

**1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

For many years, leadership was described as fundamentally positive: As being about “doing the right things” (Bennis & Nanus, 2007). Leadership research has focused on positive leadership constructs and on describing how effective leaders behave. The literature has been dominated by research on charismatic and transformational leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). These describe leaders as inspiring and motivating employees through a clear vision and being a role model. More recently, research has increasingly focused on leaders self-awareness and their moral perspective, for example in authentic leadership (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

All in all, leadership research has largely focused on behaviors that use positive ways of influence. However, the media regularly reports stories about leaders using authority and destructive methods of influence, rather than leading through an inspiring vision and values. Recently, the New York Times sparked a discussion about leadership practice with a report about Amazon, the electronic commerce company, as a “bruising workplace”. They alleged “the company is conducting an experiment in how far it can push white-collar workers to get them to achieve its ever-expanding ambitions.” (Kantor & Streitfeld, 2015, August 15). In Germany, Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, was announced as winner of the world’s “worst boss” award at the 3rd International Trade Union Confederation World Congress in Berlin, because Amazon treats its workers as if they are robots.

Examples like these have sparked research investigating the dark side of leadership and in recent years this resulted in a range of contributions (for a review see Schyns &

Schilling, 2013). However, the question: “What is destructive leadership?” has led to different answers.

Einarsen and colleagues (2002) defined destructive leadership as “the systematic and repeated behaviors by a leader, supervisor or manager that violate the legitimate interest of the organization by undermining and/or sabotaging the organization's goals, tasks, resources and effectiveness and /or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates.” (p. 207). In a similar vein, Krasikova and colleagues (2013) described destructive leadership as a framework categorized around two manifestations: Destructive leaders can encourage followers to pursue destructive goals or use destructive methods of influencing followers’ behavior. Moreover, Schyns and Schilling (2013), in their review of destructive leadership, have described it as “a process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive” (p. 141). I have only mentioned three examples here, and will discuss further conceptualizations in chapter one (see also Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, & Jacobs, 2012), however, these examples do show that different authors describe destructive leadership in a different ways and there is no agreed understanding what this phenomenon encompasses.

Besides attempts to define the complex phenomena of negative leadership, a range of constructs describe and measure different destructive leader behaviors. Examples are abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000), petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002) and strategic bullying (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007). Interestingly, the first destructive leadership constructs stem from the bullying literature (Tepper, 2000) and still today the most influential constructs in the destructive leadership literature are genuinely abusive forms of leadership. The most researched construct



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is abusive supervision (Schyns & Schilling, 2012) which refers to “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Petty tyranny was described “as one who lords his or her power over others” (Ashford, 1994, p. 755). Social undermining captures leader behaviors “intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation” (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002, p. 323). Ferris and colleagues (2007) introduced strategic bullying, where followers are put in a “position of weakness or helplessness, which reinforces and strengthens the leader's own power, and increases the probability of goal accomplishment” (p. 198). Further, despotic leadership (de Hoog & den Hartog, 2008) describes the degree to which leaders are domineering, controlling, and vengeful. Overall, these concepts clearly show that destructive leadership has its roots in the bullying literature and a many constructs focus on leaders being abusive and humiliating towards followers.

Abusive supervision and related concepts have produced important insight into the (mostly highly detrimental) outcomes and mechanism of this kind of leadership behavior (for a review see Schyns & Schilling, 2012; Tepper, 2014). However, leaders that “push white-collar workers to get them to achieve their ever-expanding ambitions” such as is reported in Amazon, are less accurately described by abusive leader behaviors. The leaders in Jeff Bezos’s organization seem to be focused on pushing own goals, exploiting employees and acting in a self-interested way. And Amazon is no exception: In some industries behaviors that benefit the leader are the norm (Erdogan, Liden, & Kraimer, 2006). Rodgers and colleagues (2013) quoted that managing directors in investment banking take the biggest part of the compensation from deals. In law firms, partners take credit for successful cases, even though associates do most of the groundwork.

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In the following chapters, I will consider how these self-interested behaviors of leaders can be systematically integrated into leadership research to allow us to gain a better understanding of their impact. In the leadership literature, there are different conceptualizations of how leader behavior can be understood. Among the earliest is the behavior paradigm of leadership (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, Goode, & Day, 1963). According to this approach, leader behavior can be classified along two dimensions: Behaviors that initiate structure and behaviors that indicate consideration for the followers. In a more recent conceptualization, DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, and Humphrey (2011) distinguish between task-oriented and relational-oriented leader behaviors. Task-oriented behaviors comprise initiating structure, giving directive, or leading tasks, whereas relational-oriented behaviors encompass consideration, empowerment, participative, or nurturing leadership (i.e., also behaviors regarding the follower). The literature on destructive leadership has adopted this idea and considered the dark side of it. Among the most influential attempts is the work of Einarsen and colleagues (2007), which I will focus on further in the following chapter. They distinguished between destructive leader behaviors targeting the follower (i.e., abusive behaviors) versus behaviors targeting the organization (i.e., leaders that undermine the organization, for example by stealing from it). While this framework has produced important insights, I argue that it does not cover the full spectrum of destructive leadership. Leaders focusing on own goals and behaving with the primary focus to further their self-interest are not clearly classified, even though leaders behaving in a self-interested way is clearly an important phenomenon. I argue that destructive leadership research would benefit from a sound conceptual understanding of the phenomenon of leader self-interest, an integration into current taxonomies, as well as a suitable way of measurement.

Thus, in the second chapter of this dissertation I will ask the question: *How can leader self-interest be systematically integrated into frameworks of destructive leadership to advance theory of leadership behavior to allow us to understand and measure this behavior of*

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*(destructive) leaders more precisely?* To address this question, I propose a new concept, Exploitative Leadership, to conceptualize leader self-interest. I will develop a reliable and valid measure to allow empirical studies of this construct. I will follow well-established procedures of scale development (see Hinkin, 1995, 1998) and use a three-phase process: First, after establishing the theoretical foundation of exploitative leadership, I will propose preliminary items. Then, I will describe the refinement of the newly developed scale and assess its basic psychometric properties by applying a combination of exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic approaches. Next, I will consider the nomological validity of exploitative leadership by examining its linkages with related leadership constructs, establishing discriminant and convergent validity. Finally, I will focus on the relations of exploitative leadership with follower outcomes, considering individual as well as a team level effects.

In chapter three, I will draw attention to the manifestation of self-interest that probably comes to mind first: Leader narcissism. When talking about leader self-interest, in the literature, the phenomenon of narcissists in leadership position (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006) plays an important role. Narcissists, individuals that are high on the personality dimension of narcissism (Raskin & Terry, 1988), are said to have two faces (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). On one side, narcissists are self-obsessed, exploitative of others, and arrogant. On the other side, they are often seen as extraverted, charming, and confident and having a compelling vision of the future (Emmons, 1987; Paulhus, 1998). Because of this bright side, narcissists can represent the prototypical leader and thus often make it to leadership positions (Brunell et al., 2008; Judge et al., 2006; Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & McIlwain, 2011). In fact, in the preface of his book on narcissism and politics, Post (2014) stated that: “If one were to strip from the ranks of political figures all those with significant narcissistic personality traits, those ranks would be perilously impoverished.” Similarly, many CEOs were said to be narcissistic, for example Steve Jobs (Apple), Bill Gates (Microsoft), and Jeff

Bezos (Amazon). While these CEOs were in the news for being self-interested leaders and difficult to work for, they were also praised for their vision and bringing their companies to outstanding performance. This opposing view of narcissists in leadership positions is reflected in one of the major questions in this line of research: “Is it good or bad for a leader to be narcissistic?” (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Research has produced conflicting findings, with some studies showing positive (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007), negative (Nevicka, et al., 2011) or no relation (O’Reilly et al., 2013) between leaders’ narcissism and performance of teams and organizations. These inconsistent findings point to the fact that the relationship may not be that simple. In a recent meta- analysis of leader narcissism (Grijalva, et al., 2015) the authors propose, and found evidence for, a curvilinear relationship between leader narcissism and leader effectiveness. Moreover, an item response analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Ackerman, Brent Donnellan & Robins, 2012) revealed that in fact, individuals with high levels of narcissism tend to confirm destructive aspects (e.g., arrogance and exploitativeness) whereas individuals with medium levels of narcissism confirm constructive aspects of narcissism (e.g., confidence). This suggests that productive narcissistic leaders may have an optimum medium- level of narcissism, although to date there is no empirical evidence for this.

Thus, in the third chapter, I investigate the relationship between leader narcissism, as a manifestation of self- interest, and performance and ask: *How does leader self-interest impact team performance?* Besides establishing the nature of the relationship, I aim at obtaining further insights as to which behaviors of narcissistic team leaders can explain the relationship.

In concordance with Grijalva and Harms (2014), I believe that the entrepreneurial context is particularly interesting for studying the effects of narcissistic leadership as communicating a compelling vision, being confident and selling yourself are crucial to entrepreneurial success (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998). Thus, I will present a two–

study field investigation of nascent entrepreneurial teams using a multimethod-multisource approach. First, I will test the hypothesis that the relationship between leader narcissism and team performance is curvilinear. Next, I will examine leadership behaviors of team leaders in more detail to shed light on the processes underlying the proposed curvilinear effect of team leader narcissism and team performance. As quantitative methods would be insufficient to capture the nuances of narcissistic leadership behaviors, I choose a qualitative approach, using qualitative interviews with both team leaders and team members.

### **RESEARCH APPROACH AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

I have used a combination of qualitative and quantitative as well as experimental methods to advance our understanding of the different behaviors destructive leaders can show. This answers the call for combination of methods (Bryman, 2004; Simonton, 1995) to research the complex topic of leadership.

Specifically, I draw attention to leaders self-interest: A phenomenon that was recognized as important both in the business world as well as in the research literature, however, so far it was not given the empirical focus it warrants. By focusing on leader self-interest, this dissertation contributes to the literature on leadership in six ways:

First, it extends theory of destructive leadership by adding an additional dimension to the two-dimensional framework of Einarsen and colleagues (2007). By framing leadership research around two dimensions, the research community may have overlooked important behavioral manifestations of the complex phenomenon of leadership, which I aim to shed light on.

Second, I introduce a new construct of destructive leadership that covers self-interested behaviors and helps us understand the full range of behaviors leaders may show: Exploitative leadership. To ensure that this new concept can be utilized by researchers, using well

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established methods of scale development and validation, as well as an experimental approach, I contribute to the leadership literature in a third way by providing a reliable and valid measure for exploitative leadership.

Fourth, in six additional studies, I investigate the effects of exploitative leadership on followers' work related outcomes and its relationship with other (destructive) leadership constructs, and thus further contribute to our understanding of destructive leadership.

Fifth, I investigate in how far self- interested leadership may be beneficial or detrimental for an organization. Specifically, I contribute to the literature on leader narcissism by providing an answer to one of its main questions "is it good or bad for a leader to be narcissistic" (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). For this, I test a curvilinear relationship between team leader narcissism and performance of nascent entrepreneurial teams.

Finally, using qualitative methods, this dissertation contributes in a sixth way by examining patterns of behaviors of narcissistic leaders. In doing so, I advance our understanding of leadership behavior by providing evidence that it is not the behaviors per se, but to gain a full understanding of self-interested leaders, we need to look at the patterns of behaviors they show.

In the following chapters two and three, I will describe these research approaches, their theoretical basis and results in detail and discuss findings, contributions and limitations. In chapter four, I will conclude with a discussion of the general contributions of this dissertation.

### **2. SHEDDING LIGHT ON LEADERS' SELF-INTEREST: THEORY AND MEASUREMENT OF EXPLOITATIVE LEADERSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

*Please imagine the following scenario: Your boss assigned you to a high priority project under a lot of time pressure. You have put a lot of effort into it, were asked by your boss to work weekends and sacrifice training and professional development activities to reach the deadline. Now the project is completed and you are very proud of the outcome. Your boss, charming as ever, seizes the task of presenting the results to the customers, who are very impressed and invite him to present it at a prestigious convention. Your boss happily tells you that he has been invited on that all expenses paid trip. He gets all the fame for the successful project and, upon his return, even the desired promotion for advancing the company's reputation. You, however, do not get any credit for your work in the project.*

When asking employees about their experience with leaders, behaviors such as those described in the above scenario are often reported and, in some industries, they are even said to be the norm. Concordantly, leadership research has recently broadened its scope to increasingly investigate the negative side of leadership (for a review see Schyns & Schilling, 2013), commonly referred to as destructive leadership (e.g., Krasikova, Green, & LeBrenton, 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). The landscape of destructive leadership is characterized by a multiplicity of constructs (Krasikova et al., 2013) and several researchers have concluded that destructive leadership is a highly complex phenomenon (e.g., Schilling, 2009; Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, & Jacobs, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on a working paper by Schmid, Pircher-Verdorfer, & Peus (2014), currently under review at the Journal of Management.

While the current constructs produced important insights into the effects destructive leaders have (Schyns & Schilling, 2013), in this chapter I contend that my understanding of destructive leadership is still not exhaustive and that there remains a so far neglected element that warrants further scrutiny. A leader behaving in a way that is exceedingly self-interested and exploitative of others, like the leader in the beginning example, is a recurring conception in destructive leadership, which, in my view points to its relevance. Yet, explicit theorizing and empirical insights are scarce. I argue that this is due to a lack of a sound conceptual understanding of the phenomenon, a lack of integration into current taxonomies, as well as a lack of a suitable way of measurement.

With these gaps in mind, the intended contribution of my work is threefold. First, referring to existing models of destructive leadership behavior, I propose to systematically integrate leaders' self-interest into the conceptual space of destructive leadership. Second, on this basis I argue for the concept of exploitative leadership, thus providing a new perspective that complements our understanding of possible behaviors destructive leaders may show. Third, I introduce a psychometrically sound instrument to measure exploitative leadership and provide evidence of construct validity.

### **LEADER SELF-INTEREST**

The literature shows that the phenomenon of leaders behaving genuinely self-interested is a recurring theme in several areas of current leadership research.

First, a string of experimental research indicates that leaders often display self-serving biases and benefit themselves at the expense of others (see Stouten, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2005; Stouten & Tripp, 2009; van Dijk & de Cremer, 2006). This research also suggests that leaders tend to feel entitled to take more for themselves, even if they did not contribute more (de Cremer & van Dijk, 2005, Stouten & Tripp, 2009).



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Second, when discussing antecedents of destructive leadership, two leader characteristics are frequently mentioned: Narcissism (e.g., Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009) and Machiavellianism (e.g., Deluga, 2001). Both are self-interested at their core. Narcissists are characterized by being aggressive, arrogant and exploitative of others (Emmons, 1987; Paulhus, 1998), and by taking credit for others' accomplishments (Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, Hoffman, Kuhnert, & DeMarree, 2008; Rauthmann, 2012). Machiavellians employ deceptive interpersonal tactics (Shapiro, Lewicki, & Devine, 1995) and can be convincing liars to further their interest (DePaulo & Rosenthal, 1979; Geis & Moon, 1981).

Third, the importance of self-interest is further reflected in recent theoretical papers on the dark side of leadership. Most notably, Williams (2014) has recently argued that leader self-serving behaviors can be understood as a function of power. Specifically, Williams (2014) defined self-interested leader behaviors to include any action in which a leader uses his or her power with the primary intention to benefit the self. In a similar vein, Krasikova and colleagues (2013) argued that the leader's goals are key to understanding destructive leadership, especially when leaders face difficulties in achieving them.

Fourth, explorative interview studies on the nature of destructive leadership similarly found evidence for the importance of self-interest in destructive leadership. Schilling (2009) found that, among other behaviors, destructive leaders achieve personal goals at the expense of others, blame followers for mistakes, take credit for their achievements, and use pressure to get tasks done. Similarly, May, Peus and Frey (2010) found that among the behaviors mentioned most often in interviews were descriptions referring to leaders pursuing their self-interest by acting egoistically, exerting pressure on followers, overburdening followers or placing inappropriately low job demands, which hindered followers' development by not providing learning opportunities.

Fifth, when reviewing the literature on published constructs of destructive leadership, it seems that the idea of leader self-interest has been frequently proposed. Below, I will therefore explore where and to what extent leader self-interest can be found in existing constructs.

### **Leader Self-Interest in Destructive Leadership Constructs**

Transformational leadership, as part of the charismatic leadership tradition, is a key concept that describes desired leadership behaviors (Bass, 1998; Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, in the light of ethics of such behaviors, the dark side of this concept has been discussed. Barling and colleagues (2008) have described the concept of *pseudo transformational leadership* i.e., leaders using their influence for absolute power and personal gain. In a similar vein, House and Howell (1992, p. 84) defined *personalized charismatic leadership* as “leadership which (a) is based on personal dominance and authoritarian behavior, (b) serves the self-interest of the leader and is self-aggrandizing and (c) is exploitive of others”. Comparably, De Hoogh and Den Hartog, (2008, p. 298) described *despotic leadership* as “personal dominance and authoritarian behavior that serves the self-interest of the leader, is self-aggrandizing and exploitative of others”. However, when looking at the instruments that have been developed to measure these concepts, one can see that they cover only very specific parts of the underlying definitions. While pseudo transformational leadership has been operationalized via specific scores on the transformational leadership measure (i.e., low idealized influence and high inspirational motivation, see Barling, Christie, & Turner, 2007), the personalized charismatic leadership scale (Popper, 2002) is referring to egoistic behaviors (i.e., using power for personal benefit). Further, the despotic leadership items (De Hoog & Den Hartog, 2008) assess the degree to which leaders are domineering, controlling, and vengeful.

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The most influential constructs in the destructive leadership literature are genuinely abusive forms of leadership, such as *petty tyranny* (Ashford, 1994), *abusive supervision* (Tepper, 2000; 2007), and *supervisor undermining* (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). A petty tyrant has been described “as one who lords his or her power over others” (Ashford, 1994, p. 755). Tepper (2000) has defined abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Similarly, social undermining captures leader behaviors “intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation” (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002, p. 323). Although these concepts do not explicitly include self-interest in their definitions, in related measures, they capture self-interested behaviors with one or two items (especially in the sense that the leader takes credit for followers work or uses their authority for personal gain). In a similar vein, Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, and Harvey (2007) introduced the idea that leaders may also use less hostile forms of influence to foster personal goals. Still, in their concept of *strategic bullying*, followers are put in a “position of weakness or helplessness, which reinforces and strengthens the leader's own power, and increases the probability of goal accomplishment” (Ferris et al, 2007, p. 198).

There is a further concept stemming from an adjacent stream of literature, which warrants attention, namely *negative mentoring* (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simons, 2004). This perspective has been developed outside the leadership landscape and describes negative experiences in the mentoring relationship such as a lack of mentor expertise, differences of values and work styles, as well as unfavorable attitudes of the mentor. Interestingly, negative mentoring also includes mentors behaving self-interested such as e.g., taking credit for the mentees’ work.

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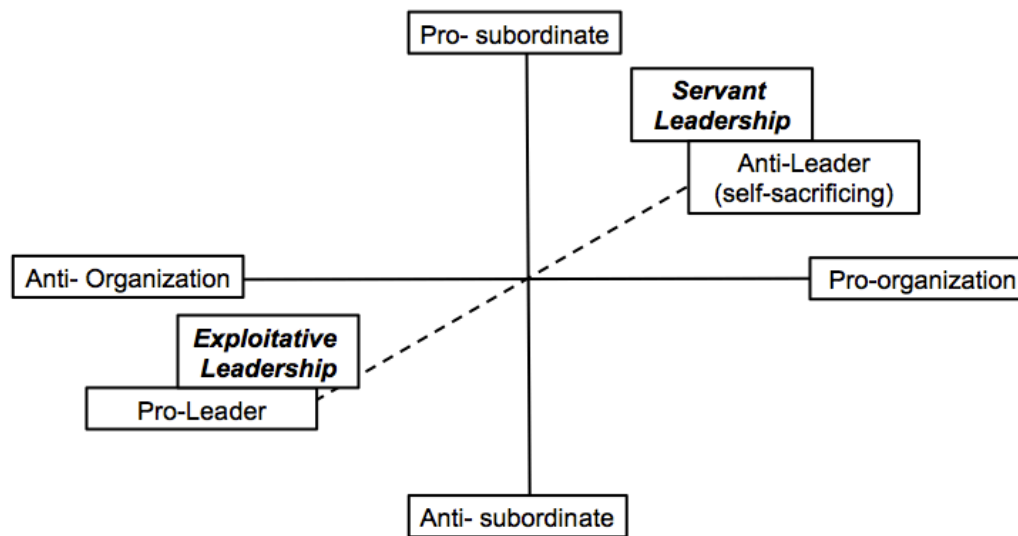
In summary, leader self-interest represents a recurring theme indicating that it is indeed a key characteristic of destructive leadership. However, when looking at existing taxonomies of destructive leadership, leader self-interest is not explicitly integrated.

The most influential work that aims to integrate the diverse landscape of destructive leader behaviors is probably that of Einarsen and colleagues (2007). They introduced a typology describing destructive leadership along two dimensions: The degree to which the leader's actions are directed against the organization and the degree to which the behavior is directed against the followers (for a further conceptualization, see also Thoroughgood et al., 2012). So called anti-organizational behavior involves any type of action violating the legitimate interests of the organization, such as stealing, working towards goals that are not the organization's, or otherwise sabotaging the organizational effectiveness. Anti-subordinate behaviors include bullying or harassment. In the light of the above literature review, I argue that leader self-interest seems to play a central role in destructive leadership and should therefore be integrated into taxonomies.

### **Integrating Leader's Self-Interest into Taxonomies of Destructive Leadership**

I propose that the two dimensional model of Einarsen and colleagues (2007) should be expanded by the additional leader dimension of self-interest as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Integrating Leader Self-Interest



The leader dimension represents a continuum with altruistic and self-sacrificing leader behavior on the one end. To stay within Einarsen and colleagues' (2007) terminology, this is referred to as the "anti-leader side". Choi and Mai-Dalton defined self-sacrificial leadership as "the total/partial abandonment, and/or permanent/temporary postponement of personal interests, privileges, and welfare in the (a) division of labor, (b) distribution of rewards, and/or (c) exercise of power" (1999, p. 399). In a similar vein, servant leadership is a concept that explicitly replaces leaders' self-interest with concern for followers' development and leaders' humility (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011). While the phenomena of self-sacrificing leadership and servant leadership are well established empirically (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1999; de Cremer, 2006; de Cremer, Mayer, Schouten, & Bardes, 2009; Liden et al., 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011), empirical constructs that comprehensively describe the opposite side of the continuum are still a dark area. On the opposite end of the continuum is a leader who is genuinely self-interested. I call this the "pro-leader side" in order to stay within Einarsen et al.'s (2007) terminology. For such leaders, their self-interest is more important than their followers' or the organizations' needs and they

are likely to exploit others to reach their goals. A leader high on this dimension of pro-leader behavior is what I call an exploitative leader.

### **INTRODUCING EXPLOITATIVE LEADERSHIP**

An exploitative leader is essentially self-interested and treats followers as a means to self-serving ends. I agree with Williams (2014) who referred to self-serving leadership behavior when a leader uses their power with the primary intention to benefit themselves. While the intention is always to further their self-interest, occasionally, there may be side effects that lead to benefits for the followers or the organization. Williams (2014) offered the example of a leader who looks to receive a performance bonus. They do everything to increase their teams' productivity and as a result of that, the team members receive bonuses too. Nevertheless, the key aspect is that the leaders' self-interest is at the center. Accordingly, Williams (2014) argues that regardless of whether the direct and immediate impact of leaders' behaviors on others is positive, negative, or neutral, leaders who only prioritize their own interest will in the long run have a negative net impact on their organization. I concur with this view.

In the direct leader-follower relationship, leaders' exploitative manner can manifest itself in different ways. While such behaviors are well comprehensible at the intuitive level, there has been surprisingly little research explicitly conceptualizing and distinctly measuring actual exploitative behaviors.

In the present work I draw on two interview studies of negative leadership by Schilling (2009) as well as by May and colleagues (2010). Both studies found descriptions of specific behaviors that can be described as exploitative, such as leaders acting egoistically and manipulating others for their advantage, leaders exerting pressure on followers and overburdening followers. Or, on the other side, leaders placing inappropriately low job

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demands, thus hindering followers' development by not providing learning opportunities. It is important to note that these aspects are also, to a certain extent, represented in current constructs of destructive leadership, as detailed above. Specifically, the aspects of behaving self-interested or egoistically, taking credit for followers work and undermining development seem to be relevant themes. I took these and the interview studies as the basis for my initial conceptualization of exploitative leadership and assumed the following four key characteristics:

First, the behaviors are characterized by the fact that leaders that are high on the dimension of self-interest and are thus likely to act egoistically. The most obvious indicator for this is that exploitative leaders prioritize their goals over the needs of others. Furthermore, such leaders are likely to take credit that is not due to them. Similar to the leader in the beginning scenario, exploitative leaders may take credit for a project that went well and use it to benefit themselves, although the majority of the contribution was achieved by someone else. This is also resonated in experimental studies that describe leaders may develop a tendency to take credit for achievements from followers (e.g., de Cremer & van Dijk 2005; Stouten & Tripp, 2009; Stouten et al., 2005; van Dijk & de Cremer, 2006).

Second, prioritizing egoistical and self-interested goals is often expressed by the leader using influence tactics such as putting an exceeding amount of pressure on followers or manipulating followers. In the aforementioned interview studies (May et al., 2010; Schilling, 2009), it was often reported that leaders would put exceptional, and seemingly unwarranted, pressure for performance and harsh timelines on followers in order to reach goals that benefitted the leaders' self-interest. Leaders may do this by exerting pressure or, rather than overt aggression, using clandestine and manipulative behaviors (e.g., leaders playing others off against each other to benefit themselves).

Third, exploitative leaders would not hesitate to delegate additional tasks to followers,

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even if followers are already overloaded. The leader may do this in an overtly friendly way, for example by being exceedingly pleasant to ensure their interests are met, which clearly distinguishes this construct from many other forms of destructive leadership that are rooted in the bullying literature (e.g. Tepper, 2000).

Fourth, on the other side, exploitative leaders may under challenge followers, continuously giving them tedious tasks that the leader doesn't want to do themselves, or to hinder followers' career advancement, for example by keeping a team member that is useful to the leader, close. Therefore, exploitative leaders do the opposite to what is central in many positive leadership concepts, such as transformational (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1993) or servant leadership (e.g., Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011), where the leaders' role is to be a coach and mentor to followers and to help them develop and grow.

Based on the points discussed above, I derived the following working definition as the basis for my operationalization of exploitative leadership. Exploitative leadership was for the purpose of the following studies preliminarily defined as *“Leadership with the primary intention to further the leader’s self-interest. Such leaders exploit others by (1) acting egoistically, (2), exerting pressure and manipulating followers, (3) overburdening followers or, (4) on the other hand, consistently under challenging followers, allowing no development.”*

In the following parts, I will endeavor to make the concept of exploitative leadership measurable, by following well-established procedures of scale development (Hinkin, 1995, 1998). Then, I consider the nomological validity of exploitative leadership by examining its linkages with related leadership constructs, establishing discriminant and convergent validity. Finally, I focus on the relations of exploitative leadership with follower outcomes.



### **MEASURING EXPLOITATIVE LEADERSHIP**

In the following section, I present the scale development process. After having established a working definition of exploitative leadership, I first generated preliminary items. Then, I refined the newly developed scale and assessed its basic psychometric properties by applying a combination of exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic approaches.

#### **Item Development**

For item development, I followed deductive and inductive processes as outlined by Hinkin (1995,1998) in his recommendations regarding scale development practices. Initial content specifications were developed based on the aforementioned working definition of exploitative leadership derived from the interview studies of May and colleagues (2010), Schilling (2009) and current literature. On this basis, I used Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) with 16 participants (mean age of the participants was 42.4,  $SD = 10.6$ , 9 were male, 7 female). The aim was to obtain specific behavioral examples of exploitative leadership as an important basis for item generation, an approach that has been successfully used for the generation of items in other recent developments of measures assessing leadership (e.g., Peus, Braun & Frey, 2012; Thoroughgood et al., 2012). Specifically, respondents were recruited through snowball sampling, starting with the authors' personal network. All participants were currently in employment. They completed an online critical incident survey where they were provided with the working definition of exploitative leadership and asked to describe three situations in which a leader they encountered (i.e., a leader they worked for directly or indirectly), behaved in an exploitative manner (as grounded in the working definition or based on any other potential form of exploitation they have experienced). In sum, 29 critical incidents were obtained and then content analyzed by using the procedures proposed by Mayring (2000). By following this approach, the coding process started from prior formulated categories of analysis, namely the four initial components of

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exploitative leadership taken from the working definition (i.e., the four dimensions of exploitative leadership: 1. acting egoistically, 2. exerting pressure or playing followers off against each other, 3. overburdening followers, and 4. under challenging followers, allowing no development). For each category, explicit definitions, examples and coding rules were developed in order to specify the conditions under which a particular text passage can be coded with a category. Two independent coders (i.e., two graduate research assistants who were not familiar with the research project) were instructed to perform the analysis of the 29 critical incidents, using the software MAXQDA. Based on the coding rules (including rules for distinguishing the categories), a total of 85 text passages were assigned to the deductive categories. Sixteen passages were coded with the category "other leadership behavior", indicating that the coders did not identify any exploitative leadership behaviors in the respective passages. Example statements for each dimension were:

1. Acting egoistically: *"I was asked to write a communications plan (...) in the next meeting my boss presented it as the plan he developed".*

2. Exerting pressure or playing followers off against each other: *"(...) leader put three members in competition with each other to reach a target (...) they were promised certain resources and independence for the "winner". After the target was met, leader took resources for himself."*

3. Overburdening followers: *"The leader agreed to take over a task...shortly before the deadline, it was delegated, asking to complete it within the next 24-hours...own, urgent work was piling up too (...) had to be put aside".*

4. Under challenging followers: *"(...) assigned demeaning tasks or tasks for lower level employees (...) could easily be done by leader themselves".*

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In summary, this procedure did not reveal qualitatively new forms of perceived exploitative leadership. After that, the authors discussed each coded text passage to agree on the content and to deduct item wording for each category of exploitative leadership. Thus, based on theoretical considerations and the behaviors described in the critical incidents, I generated 40 initial items, representing the 4 factors identified above. Then, I asked 7 members of a leadership research group at a research university (all of whom had extensive experience conducting research on leadership) to rate the items in terms of conceptual fit (“How well does the item represent facets of exploitative leadership?”) on a scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1 = *not at all* to 4 = *very well*). Finally, the same expert panel rated item clarity using a 4-point scale (1 = *very unclear* to 4 = *very clear*) and suggested item improvements (“What would make the item easier to understand?”). Based on the responses, I made adjustments to the items to improve clarity. One item was excluded, because it was rated as unclear by all raters, and 39 items were used for further analysis.

### **Study 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis**

After having developed the preliminary items, I conducted Study 1 and used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in order to assess the new measure's psychometric properties and factor structure for scale refinement.

#### **Sample and Procedures.**

The sample consisted of 154 employees from different industries. Snowball sampling was used to recruit potential respondents. Specifically, participants were contacted through the authors' personal networks and asked to forward the online survey to people in their networks. Pre-requisite for participating in the survey was that participants were employed full time (full-time refers to .75 FTE which equates to 30 or more hours per week of a 40 hour work week) and had been working for their leader for at least 6 months. The mean age of the

participants was 34.9 ( $SD = 11.5$ ); 56% were male and 87.2 % had a university degree. The majority of the participants worked in the for-profit sector (75.5 %), the average tenure in the current position was 3.5 years ( $SD=4.4$ ), and all participants worked in Germany.

### **Measures.**

Respondents were asked to rate their immediate supervisors in terms of exploitative leadership behaviors using the 39 items derived from the item development process. The items were scored on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*).

### **Results.**

Based on these data, I conducted a principal component analysis with promax (oblique) rotation of the 39 items and used the eigenvalues-greater-than-1 criterion, the scree test as well as parallel analysis to test for the number of factors to be retained. Using the eigenvalues-greater-than-1 criterion, five factors emerged which explained 68.39 % of the variance. Whereas the scree test suggested either a two or three-dimensional solution, parallel analysis suggested three factors. Following Costello and Osborne (2005), I ran several factor analyses setting the number of factors extracted to the number of factors suggested by the scree test and parallel analysis, and in following steps, at numbers above and below those numbers. Based on this procedure, the 5-factor structure clearly appeared to best balance psychometric criteria with theoretical considerations and interpretability (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012). Below, the five factors are described in detail.

Factor 1 was identified by the highest loadings of items from the acting egoistically and the exerting pressure facets. Included here were descriptors such as “My leader takes it for granted that my work can be used for their personal benefit”. To distinguish this empirically derived dimension from the theoretical dimension described above, this factor

was labeled *genuine egoistic behaviors*.

High loadings on descriptors pertaining to the initial acting egoistically facet such as “My leader benefits from my work without sharing the praise” characterized Factor 2. I labeled this factor *taking credit*.

Factor 3 confirmed the *exerting pressure* dimension and included also items of the overburdening followers facet. Descriptors with high loadings on this factor included “My leader puts me under pressure to reach their personal goals” and “My leader puts me under time pressure”.

Some items of the initial exerting pressure facet loaded on a separate factor describing *manipulative leader behavior*. Specifically, this fourth factor involved items such as “My leader plays me and my colleagues off against each other to reach their goals”.

Finally, high loadings on items such as “My leader does not allow me to develop professionally, as their goals are priority” formed Factor 5 which was now labeled *undermining development*.

Next, since I intended to develop an economical, yet reliable and valid measure, I selected three items per sub-scale, resulting in a total of 15 items for the final exploitative leadership measure (see Table 1). Item selection was based on the revealed factor loadings (i.e., by deleting items with factor loadings less than .40 and high cross-loadings) as well as theoretical and semantic considerations (see Henson & Roberts, 2006). The reliability in terms of internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) was very good for all 5 sub-scales: Genuine egoistic behaviors,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Taking credit,  $\alpha = .86$ ; Exerting pressure,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Undermining development,  $\alpha = .81$ ; Manipulating,  $\alpha = .86$ ; as well as for the overall scale,  $\alpha = .94$ .

*Table 1: Items included in the 15-Items measure of exploitative leadership*

Expl_ego1	Takes it for granted that my work can be used for his/her personal benefit.
Expl_ego2	Sees employees as a mean to reach his/her personal goals.
Expl_ego3	Values the achievement of his/her own goals over the needs of the employees.
Expl_pres1	Puts me under pressure to reach their goals.
Expl_pres2	Increases my workload without considering my needs, in order to reach their goals.
Expl_pres3	Does not consider my workload when new tasks need to be assigned.
Expl_und1	Gives me tedious tasks, if he/she can benefit from it.
Expl_und2	Does not give me opportunities to further develop myself professionally, because his/her own goals have priority.
Expl_und3	Gives me boring routine tasks when he/she can benefit from it.
Expl_tc1	Uses my work to get him/her self noticed.
Expl_tc2	Passes the teams work off as their own.
Expl_tc3	Uses my work for their personal gain.
Expl_man1	Plays me and my colleagues off against each other to reach their goals.
Expl_man2	Manipulates others to reach their goals.
Expl_man3	Does not hesitate to manipulate or deceive employees in order to reach their goals.

*Note.* ego= genuine egoistic behaviors, pres= exerting pressure, und= underchallenging followers, tc= taking credit, man= manipulating followers. Original items were in German

### **Brief Discussion.**

This study set out to investigate the underlying factor structure of the newly developed measure. The starting point of the analysis was my working definition of exploitative leadership covering four dimensions (i.e., acting egoistically, exerting pressure and manipulating followers, overburdening followers, under challenging followers). Results of EFA, however, indicated that the nature of exploitative leadership is best reflected in five dimensions (i.e., genuine egoistic behaviors, taking credit, exerting pressure, underchallenging followers, manipulating followers), measured with 15 items. Practical concerns lead us to keep the number of items relatively low. In fact, a general challenge in organizational behavior research is that employees and organizations tend to be reluctant towards time consuming, long surveys (which may be especially true for surveys on sensitive matters such as destructive leadership). Moreover, recent research on scale development has consistently shown that short scales are not necessarily inferior to longer assessment instruments, if designed carefully (see Ziegler, Kemper, & Krueger, 2014; Ziegler, Poropat, &

Mell, 2014). Rather, they are particularly useful for research purposes within correlational designs (in contrast to individual decision-making such as personnel selection). Further support for this approach comes from recent scale development efforts in leadership research stating that three items per dimension is an adequate number to optimally strike the balance between length and accuracy (Liden, Wayne, Meuser, Hu, Wu, & Liao, 2015).

### **Study 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

In study 2, the 15-item measure derived from the EFA in the previous study was administered to a separate sample. Then I used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the hypothesized factor structure.

#### **Sample and Procedures.**

The sample covered 490 participants from different industries. Again, snowball sampling was used to recruit potential respondents. Participants were contacted through the network of part-time students who were enrolled in an executive MBA program offered at a large university in Germany. Again, pre-requisite for participating in the survey was that participants were employed full time and had been working for their leader for at least 6 months. The mean age of the participants was 35.37 ( $SD = 9.54$ ). 46.5% were female and had on average 11.57 years ( $SD = 9.67$ ) of working experience. All of the participants worked in the for-profit sector and all participants worked in Germany.

#### **Measures.**

Respondents were asked to rate their immediate supervisors in terms of exploitative leadership behaviors on the newly developed 15-item scale on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*).

### Results.

The factor structure of the exploitative leadership measure was tested by comparing the fit of three different models. The first was a one-factor model in which all 15 items loaded on one single exploitative leadership factor. The second was a first-order factor model in which items loaded onto their respective factors and the five factors are allowed to correlate. The third was a second-order factor model in which items loaded onto their respective factors and the five factors loaded on a second-order latent exploitative leadership factor. As shown in Table 2, results indicate a poor fit for the one-factor model. The best fit was obtained for the first-order factor model. Although the fit for the first-order factor model was only marginally better than for the second-factor model, the revealed difference turned out to be statistically significant ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 34.13$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

Table 2.: Results of confirmatory factor analyses (Study 2)

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
One-factor model	1262.17**	90	14.02	.71	.78	.16	
First-order factor model	226.97**	80	2.83	.95	.97	.06	1035.19**
Second-order factor model	261.10**	85	3.07	.95	.97	.07	1001.07**

Note.  $\Delta\chi^2$  represents the difference in  $\chi^2$  values between the respective model and the one-factor model, \*\* $p < .01$

### Brief Discussion.

This study used CFA and confirmed the five-factorial structure of exploitative leadership in a separate sample. According to the results, the exploitative leadership construct seems to be best represented by five separate but strongly correlated facets, describing different attributes of the construct (McGartland, Rubio, Berg-Weger, & Tebb, 2001).



### **NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK ANALYSIS**

In this section, I examine the nomological network and investigate discriminant and convergent validity by taking other relevant constructs into consideration. Whereas convergent validity reflects the extent to which a measure shows a convergence with similar constructs, discriminant validity refers to the degree to which a measure is able to discriminate between distinct constructs (Bagozzi, Youjae, & Phillips, 1991). Considering the danger of construct proliferation in destructive leadership (Hershcovis, 2011), to show the relevance of the new scale, discriminant validity seems especially crucial.

I report the results of two studies that investigate indicators of convergent and discriminant validity of the newly developed exploitative leadership measure. In study 3, I contrasted exploitative leadership with servant leadership as a leadership style I consider on the opposite end of the continuum of leader interest. Then, in study 4, I related exploitative leadership to similar destructive leadership constructs.

#### **Study 3: Exploitative Leadership and Servant Leadership**

As argued before, I assume exploitative leaders to be high on the dimension of leader self-interest. A type of leadership that has explicitly been described as being characterized by low levels of self-interest is servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders are humble and use their power responsibly to develop and empower their followers and establish a genuine relationship with their teams. This notion of leadership is built around genuine altruism and emphasizes the need to replace self-interest with service to others (Van Dierendonck, 2011). This stands in direct contrast to my definition of exploitative leadership. Exploitative leaders see their self-interest first and as more important than their followers' needs or goals. They would exploit and use followers for

their personal advantage. Because of this opposing approach to leadership, I refer to servant leadership to establish discriminant validity and assumed:

*Hypothesis 1: Exploitative leadership is negatively related to servant leadership.*

### **Sample and Procedures.**

I recruited 240 participants via snowball sampling. Criteria for participation in the survey were, again, that participants were employed full-time and had been working for their leader for at least 6 months. Potential participants were contacted through the authors' personal networks, ensuring that not the same participants were contacted as in previous studies, and were asked to forward the survey to their colleagues. Furthermore, business students in a class on empirical research methods were asked to support the data collection by sending the link to their personal networks. In terms of demographics, 48% percent were male and 44 % had a university education. The mean age was 33.8 ( $SD=12.5$ ). The majority of the participants worked in the profit sector (78 %), average tenure in the current position was 3.6 years ( $SD=4.6$ ) and all participants worked in Germany.

### **Measures.**

Respondents were asked to answer the 15 items of the newly developed exploitative leadership scale. Servant leadership was measured with the 14-item scale developed by Ehrhart (2004). Since no German version of this measure was available at that time, I translated the survey into German using the standard method of back-translation (Brislin, 1970). First, the items were translated into German by two bilingual speakers who were not familiar with the scale. Then, two different bilingual speakers independently back-translated the items into English. Based on their comments, a few linguistic modifications were necessary to create the final version of the servant leadership measure (sample item: "My supervisor makes the personal development of employees a priority"). All leadership-related

constructs were rated on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*).

### Results.

Because Ehrhart's (2004) Servant Leadership measure was used for the first time in a German speaking context, I first tested its factorial validity. A confirmatory factor analysis including all 14 servant leadership items showed adequate fit with  $\chi^2(77) = 149.181$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.937$ ; TLI = .94, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .06.

I again tested the factorial validity of the exploitative leadership measure by using CFA. In line with the previous studies, I confirmed the first-order factor model to best fit the data with  $\chi^2(80) = 199.833$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.498$ ; TLI = .93, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08 over the one-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 423.85$ ;  $\Delta df = 10$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and the second-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 25.62$ ;  $\Delta df = 5$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

As Table 3 shows, the correlations between the exploitative leadership dimensions and servant leadership were negative (with  $r$  ranging from -.54 to -.69,  $p < .001$ ) thus confirming Hypothesis 1.

Table 3: Correlation matrix: exploitative leadership dimensions and servant leadership (Study 3)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Genuine egoistic behaviors	2.34	1.10	(.87)						
2. Exerting pressure	2.23	1.11	.75	(.86)					
3. Undermining development	1.87	.94	.58	.63	(.82)				
4. Taking credit	2.02	1.02	.72	.64	.55	(.89)			
5. Manipulative leader behavior	1.75	1.02	.72	.72	.46	.67	(.91)		
6. Exploitative leadership: Index	2.06	.88	.90	.88	.75	.85	.85	(.94)	
7. Servant Leadership	3.23	.84	-.61	-.61	-.54	-.55	-.58	-.69	(.93)

Note. All correlation coefficients are statistically significant with  $p < .001$

Numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are the Cronbach's Alphas.

### **Brief Discussion.**

This study demonstrated discriminant validity by showing a negative relation between exploitative leadership and servant leadership. While this is a first indication for validity, next, I was interested in showing how exploitative leadership is distinct from other measures of destructive leadership. For this purpose, in study 4, I tested the exploitative leadership scale against other destructive leadership constructs.

### **Study 4: Exploitative Leadership and Other Destructive Leadership Constructs**

While there is a broad variety of existing concepts in the field of destructive leadership, I aimed at keeping in line with the previous argument and focused on covering the behaviors described by Einarsen and colleagues (2007) in their model. Einarsen and colleagues (2007) describe behaviors along two dimensions: The follower and the organization, whereas exploitative leaders are high on the newly introduced third dimension of leaders interest. I consider a compelling approach to show conceptual distinction of exploitative leadership by explicitly comparing it to constructs that are covering the other two dimensions (i.e., organization-directed behaviors and follower-directed behaviors). Because of the constraint in time participants had for answering the survey, I used the most prototypical constructs that are related to these two dimensions (e.g., abusive supervision, Tepper, 2000; destructive leadership, Thoroughgood et al., 2012). Because of the conceptual differences and overlaps previously discussed, I expected that exploitative leadership would be positively related to these constructs while also containing distinctive components that are not considered by them.

### **Sample and Procedures.**

I collected data from 330 employees from various industries in Germany via a professional provider of international access panels. Sixty-four percent of the respondents

were male with an average age of 42.3 years ( $SD = 10.5$ ). They had an average organizational tenure of 11.2 years and an average group tenure of 7.1 years ( $SD = 6.7$ ). In terms of education, 32 % had a university degree.

### **Measures.**

In this study, I again administered the newly developed 15-item exploitative leadership scale. Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate their immediate supervisor in terms of related concepts of negative leadership. To cover the dimension of follower-directed destructive leadership behaviors I used three concepts from current research. First, I assessed abusive supervision by using the German version (Schilling, 2013) of Tepper's (2000) 15-item *abusive supervision scale* (sample item: "My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid"). Furthermore, I used the sub-scale of *subordinate-directed destructive behavior* from Thoroughgood et al. (2012), which contains 14 items in total (e.g., "My supervisor is confrontational when interacting with subordinates"). Finally, I included three sub-dimensions of *negative mentoring* (Eby et al., 2004) that seem particularly relevant for the validation purposes. For this purpose, I adapted the items to the current leader as the target focus. The first dimension is labeled as *manipulative behaviors* and includes 11 items that partially overlap with my notion of exploitative leadership (e.g., "When I am successful, my leader takes more credit than he/she deserves") whereas others do not (e.g., "I am intimidated by my leader"). The second relevant sub-dimension was *distancing behaviors*, which covers 7 items. Again, some items are similar to exploitative leadership (e.g., "My leader is preoccupied with his/her own advancement") whereas others are clearly distinct (e.g., "When I interact with my leader he/she does not give me his/her full attention"). The last sub-dimension was *mismatch between mentor and mentee* with 9 items (e.g., "The personal values of my leaders are different from my own").

To assess the dimension of *organization-directed destructive leader behavior* I used

the respective sub-scale taken from Thoroughgood et al. (2012), containing 11 items in total (e.g., “My supervisor lets violations of company policy slide”). Again, all leadership-related constructs were rated on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*).

### **Results.**

In line with the previous studies, I first tested the factor structure of the exploitative leadership measure. Once again, the first-order solution showed a good model fit ( $\chi^2(80) = 179.822$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.248$ ; TLI = .97, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .06) and was slightly preferable over a second-order factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 16.951$ ,  $\Delta df = 5$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and clearly preferable over a one-factorial solution ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 273.789$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 4 reports the descriptive statistics and the correlations among the variables under investigation.

Table 4:  
Correlation matrix: exploitative leadership dimensions and other destructive leadership measures (Study 4)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Genuine egoistic behaviors	2.52	1.15	(.89)											
2. Exerting pressure	2.48	1.09	.83	(.89)										
3. Undermining development	2.20	1.03	.77	.72	(.86)									
4. Taking credit	2.33	1.16	.88	.78	.76	(.92)								
5. Manipulative leader behavior	2.15	1.12	.83	.75	.77	.83	(.91)							
6. Exploitative leadership: Index	2.34	1.01	.95	.89	.88	.93	.92	(.96)						
7. Abusive Supervision	1.77	.85	.70	.66	.71	.71	.79	.78	(.96)					
8. Negative mentoring: manipulative behavior	2.16	.95	.81	.75	.78	.85	.82	.88	.83	(.95)				
9. Negative mentoring: mismatch within the dyad	3.10	1.03	.63	.59	.52	.55	.55	.62	.50	.62	(.96)			
10. Negative mentoring: distancing behavior	2.42	1.00	.80	.77	.73	.78	.76	.84	.73	.90	.68	(.92)		
11. Subordinate-directed destructive leader behavior	2.05	.92	.73	.69	.70	.73	.77	.79	.86	.85	.63	.81	(.96)	
12. Organization-directed destructive leader behavior	1.57	.84	.53	.49	.63	.58	.65	.63	.81	.74	.33	.60	.80	(.96)

Note. All correlation coefficients are statistically significant with  $p < .001$ . Numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are the Cronbach's Alpha

To further examine discriminant validity, I used structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS using items rather than item parcels as indicators of the relevant construct and examined a series of nested models. Specifically, I calculated the difference between a model, which allowed the correlation between a particular exploitative leadership dimension and a specific destructive leadership construct to be constrained to unity (i.e., constrained model) and another model, which allowed the correlations to be free (i.e., unconstrained model). This procedure was employed on each pair of constructs. Discriminant validity can be demonstrated if the unconstrained model fits the data better than the constrained model (Bagozzi et al., 1991). Results of this procedure are reported in Table 5, confirming that exploitative leadership and its sub-dimensions is sufficiently distinct from other forms of destructive leadership.

Table 5: Results of discriminant validity analysis (Study 4)

<b>Abusive Supervision vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Genuine egoistic behavior	602,29 (134)	896,90 (135)	294,61 (1)***
Taking credit	595,62 (134)	998,10 (135)	402,47 (1)***
Exerting pressure	607,75 (134)	918,46 (135)	310,72 (1)***
Undermining development	555,22 (134)	741,45 (135)	186,23 (1)***
Manipulation	625,78 (134)	837,34 (135)	211,56 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	1445,17 (404)	2673,26 (405)	1228,09 (1)***
<b>Negative Mentoring: Manipulative Behaviors vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Genuine egoistic behavior	433,99 (76)	535,82 (77)	101,83 (1)***
Taking credit	434,57 (76)	511,25 (77)	76,68 (1)***
Exerting pressure	431,03 (76)	612,28 (77)	181,24 (1)***
Undermining development	446,24 (76)	550,31 (77)	104,07 (1)***
Manipulation	424,46 (76)	556,65 (77)	132,19 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	1254,89 (298)	1510,89 (299)	256,01 (1)***
<b>Negative Mentoring: Distancing Behaviors vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)



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Genuine egoistic behavior	142,37 (34)	240,64 (35)	98,26 (1)***
Taking credit	150,72 (34)	344,12 (35)	193,40 (1)***
Exerting pressure	149,43 (34)	272,60 (35)	123,17 (1)***
Undermining development	172,89 (34)	297,49 (35)	124,60 (1)***
Manipulation	139,54 (34)	320,53 (35)	181,00 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	780,62 (208)	1020,77 (209)	240,15 (1)***
<hr/>			
<b>Negative Mentoring: Mismatch vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Genuine egoistic behavior	246,96 (53)	600,63 (54)	353,67 (1)***
Taking credit	261,44 (53)	825,23 (54)	563,79 (1)***
Exerting pressure	228,12 (53)	602,49 (54)	374,37 (1)***
Undermining development	243,76 (53)	574,38 (54)	330,62 (1)***
Manipulation	257,62 (53)	735,75 (54)	478,13 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	891,44 (251)	2502,13 (252)	1610,69 (1)***
<hr/>			
<b>Destructive leader behavior: against the subordinate vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Genuine egoistic behavior	449,87 (118)	670,76 (119)	220,89 (1)***
Taking credit	434,74 (118)	775,69 (119)	340,95 (1)***
Exerting pressure	452,06 (118)	718,04 (119)	265,99 (1)***
Undermining development	447,91 (118)	626,69 (119)	178,78 (1)***
Manipulation	487,17 (118)	693,33 (119)	206,16 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	1237,73 (376)	2103,60 (377)	865,87 (1)***
<hr/>			
<b>Destructive leader behavior: against the organization vs.</b>	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Genuine egoistic behavior	370,08 (76)	814,76 (77)	444,68 (1)***
Taking credit	350,19 (76)	896,32 (77)	546,12 (1)***
Exerting pressure	339,82 (76)	786,87 (77)	447,05 (1)***
Undermining development	359,36 (76)	626,17 (77)	1919,94 (1)***
Manipulation	360,26 (76)	757,60 (77)	397,34 (1)***
Exploitative Leadership-Index	1112,26 (298)	3032,20 (299)	1919,94 (1)***

Note. \*\*\*p<.001.

### **Brief Discussion.**

Taken together, the data confirms that the dimensions of exploitative leadership are positively related to other forms of negative leadership while also significantly distinguishable from them. With this, I provided first empirical indications that exploitative leadership represents a valuable additional perspective that allows us to measure a more comprehensive range of destructive behaviors leaders may show.

### **RELATIONS OF EXPLOITATIVE LEADERSHIP WITH FOLLOWER OUTCOMES**

The results of the previous studies yielded support for the five-dimensional nature of the exploitative leadership construct and provided evidence for convergent and discriminant validity. Building on this and in an effort to constitute the predictive validity of exploitative leadership, the following studies were designed to investigate the relations of exploitative leadership with employee outcomes. Acknowledging the multi-level nature of leadership, I first test relations with individual follower outcomes and second, team level effects of exploitative leadership. With this approach, I concur with Schyns and Schilling (2013) who argued that destructive leadership would impact the individual as well as the team. To this purpose, three studies were conducted that referred to perceived exploitative leadership behavior in a real organizational context.

#### **Study 5: Exploitative Leadership and Individual Follower Outcomes**

In this section, I delineate the expected effects of exploitative leadership on selected follower outcomes, which are commonly examined in leadership research and correspondingly used to assess criterion validity (most notably, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, well being and deviance). While current conceptualizations of destructive leadership, and mainly abusive supervision, already offer a great deal of insight

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into relations with outcomes (for a review see Schyns & Schilling, 2013), I expected exploitative leadership to account for unique variance in outcomes beyond what abusive supervision alone offered. Below, I explain this assumption in more detail. Prior research has successfully used (in)justice theory as the primary explanatory framework for understanding how abusive supervision works (Mackey et al., 2015; Tepper, 2000). Justice theory traditionally assumes three primary justice forms: distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice (Fortin, 2008). Interactional justice seems particularly relevant, since it refers to how leaders treat their followers (Bies, 2001). There is abundant evidence in the literature that abusive supervision can be seen as a substantial source of perceived disrespect (see e.g., 2001), thus representing a serious violation of interactional justice (Bies & Tripp, 2001). This is reflected in Tepper's (2000) results where the highest correlation between abusive supervision and justice perceptions was found for interactional justice ( $r=-.53$ ), followed by procedural justice ( $r=-.48$ ) und distributive justice ( $r=-.39$ ).

While abusive supervision seems to be particularly impairing interpersonal fairness perceptions, I argue that exploitative leadership would to a greater extent trigger perceptions of distributive and procedural injustice (although I see that it also impairs respectful treatment). Behaving exploitatively is per definition akin to being unfair. The Encyclopedia Britannica, for instance, defines the term "exploit" as "to make use of meanly or unfairly for one's own advantage". This notion has been adopted in the field of organizational justice where behaving exploitatively is often seen as the antipode of behaving fairly (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). This notion is rooted in exchange theory (Blau, 1964; see Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005 for an overview) and posits exploitation as a violation of principles of reciprocity (Lind, 2001). As such, it is plausible that exploitative leaders violate perceptions of distributive fairness to a stronger extent (by constantly taking more than they give). Furthermore, it is plausible to assume that exploitative leaders are also more likely to violate perceptions of procedural fairness, since their decisions are predominantly based on self-

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serving motives, which undermines process control and decision control of followers (see Fortin, 2008). In summary, whereas destructive leadership is generally related to perceptions of overall unfairness, I argue that to understand the effects of different behavioral components of destructive leadership, it is valuable to consider different elements of justice.

Moreover, I contend that exploitative leadership occurs more frequently and is more prevailing, thus representing a more common form of destructive leadership (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010). This notion is supported by the data. In fact, the mean scores of exploitative leadership ( $M = 2.06$ ) revealed in the previous study were noticeably higher than the mean score for abusive supervision ( $M = 1.49$ ). Taken together, since exploitative leadership represents an additional source of perceived injustice and is furthermore a phenomenon that is more prevalent in followers' experiences, it is highly plausible that it will explain more variance in relevant outcomes. Below, I delineate the outcomes under investigation in this study.

A recent meta-analysis of destructive leadership (Schyns & Schilling, 2013) examined the negative impact on work related attitudes and found that *job satisfaction* is the most commonly examined construct. Job satisfaction was described as a match between the work situation and the expectations, motives and needs of the employee (Büssing, Bissels, Fuchs, & Perrar, 1999). Not surprisingly, given that abusive supervision is unlikely to meet the needs or expectations of the followers, most notably fairness expectations, many studies found a negative relation (e.g., Tepper, 2000). In line with the arguments provided above, I argue that exploitative leader behaviors represent an additional source of unfairness, undermining employee satisfaction. Based on this, I assumed:

*Hypothesis 1: Exploitative leadership is negatively related to job satisfaction, controlling for abusive supervision.*

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*Organizational commitment* refers to employees' psychological attachment to the organization and their identification with it (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The influence of leadership on organizational commitment is well documented (e.g., Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) showing organizational commitment is higher for employees whose leaders encourage participative decision-making and are supportive and concerned for their followers' development. Research has consistently shown that high quality relationships of followers to their leaders can spill over to the organization since leaders are perceived as agents for the larger organization (Levinson, 1965). Thus, through their relationships with subordinates, leaders can "encourage the development of a positive identification with the organization and create among peers and subordinates a degree of personal commitment and identification" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 555). In turn, negative leader behavior is expected to result in diminished psychological attachment to an organization (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). This is supported by research showing a negative relation between psychological attachment (measured as affective commitment) with abusive supervision (Burriss, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Duffy & Ferrier, 2003). Along the same line of argumentation, I assume that leaders exploiting their followers are likely to affect broader negative feelings about the organization as a whole and thus hamper organizational commitment.

*Hypothesis 2: Exploitative leadership is negatively related to organizational commitment, controlling for abusive supervision.*

*Workplace deviance* is defined as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, p. 556). Bennett and Robinson (2000) have argued that employees are more likely to engage in such behaviors when they feel they are being treated unjustly, such as would be likely with a leader that abuses or exploits. In fact, the critical role of leaders in the emergence of workplace deviance is well established in

organizational behavior research. According to the causal reasoning model of counterproductive behavior (Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002) leaders can trigger workplace deviance by treating employees inequitably or unjustly. Deviant behaviors can restore a sense of justice that was upset by destructive leadership. This has been shown empirically for abusive supervision by several studies (e.g., Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper et al., 2009). Again, I assume that a leader who exploits followers and takes unjustified credit for their work will uniquely increase feelings of injustice that may be restored through workplace deviance. Therefore, I hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 3: Exploitative leadership is positively related to workplace deviance, controlling for abusive supervision.*

Employee well-being, according to a recent meta-analysis, is among the most frequently studied outcomes in destructive leadership (Schyns & Schilling, 2013) and continuously shows a negative relation (Hobman, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2009; Rafferty, Restubog, & Jimmieson, 2010; Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). In Tepper's (2000) pioneering study, abusive supervision predicted emotional exhaustion and anxiety through the mediating effect of perceived fairness. In a similar vein, Wu and Hu (2009) showed that abusive supervision can evoke stress and subsequently emotional exhaustion by overriding the emotional demands that are necessary to cope with the requirements of a job. Accordingly, research has shown that *burnout*, operationalized by the concepts of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), is positively related to abusive supervision (e.g., Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012). Since feeling exploited too evokes negative emotions (Vohs, Baumeister, & Chin, 2007) and uniquely triggers perceptions of unfair treatment, I assume similar effects for exploitative leadership.

*Hypothesis 4: Exploitative leadership is positively related to burnout, controlling for abusive supervision.*

**Sample and Procedures.**

This study used the same sample as in study 3 (please see Study 3 for a detailed description of the sample).

**Measures.**

Participants were asked to complete the 15-item *exploitative leadership* measure. Furthermore I controlled for abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) as the most commonly used construct (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). To assess *abusive supervision*, the German version (Schilling, 2013) of Tepper's (2000) 15-item abusive supervision scale was used (sample item: "My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid"). All leadership-related constructs were rated on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (frequently, if not always). With regard to criterion validity I used a single-item measure of overall job satisfaction ("Overall, I am satisfied with my job"). Single-item measures have shown to reliably measure the construct of job satisfaction (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997). Affective commitment was assessed with five items, developed by Felfe, Six, and Schmook (2002), based on Meyer and Allen's commitment approach (1991). A sample item was "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization" ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Items on job satisfaction and affective commitment were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Burnout was measured with 10 items from the German version (Büssing & Perrar, 1992) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli, Leiter, 1996). Five items covered emotional exhaustion (sample item: "I feel emotionally drained from my work") and five items referred to depersonalization (sample item: "I just want to do my job and not be bothered"). For the purpose of the following analysis, I collapsed the two dimensions and used the index. Responses were anchored on a 6-point frequency scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*). Finally, workplace deviance was assessed with seven items from the German version (Zettler & Hilbig, 2010) of the Bennett and Robinson measure (2000),

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covering organizational deviance (3 items, e.g., “I come in late to work without permission”) and interpersonal deviance (4 items, e.g., “I acted rudely toward someone at work”). Again, for the purpose of the following analysis, I collapsed the two dimensions and used the index. All items were rated on a 7-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*daily*).

### **Results.**

Table 6 reports the descriptive statistics, the inter-correlations as well as the reliability coefficients of the variables under investigation.



Table 6  
*Correlation matrix: exploitative leadership dimensions and follower outcomes (Study 5)*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Genuine egoistic behaviors	2.34	1.10	(.87)										
2. Exerting pressure	2.23	1.11	.75	(.86)									
3. Undermining development	1.87	.94	.58	.63	(.82)								
4. Taking credit	2.02	1.02	.72	.64	.55	(.89)							
5. Manipulative leader behavior	1.75	1.02	.72	.72	.46	.67	(.91)						
6. Exploitative leadership: Index	2.06	.88	.90	.88	.75	.85	.85	(.94)					
7. Abusive Supervision	1.49	.60	.73	.73	.57	.69	.73	.81	(.92)				
8. Job Satisfaction	3.72	.96	-.64	-.62	-.58	-.58	-.56	-.69	-.62	(n.a.)			
9. Affective Commitment	3.42	1.00	-.53	-.44	-.48	-.49	-.39	-.54	-.45	.67	(.90)		
10. Burnout	2.97	1.23	.56	.53	.57	.50	.43	.60	.51	-.69	-.64	(.92)	
11. Deviance	2.08	.89	.32	.34	.29	.27	.30	.37	.25	-.29	-.37	.39	(.74)

*Note.* All correlation coefficients are statistically significant with  $p < .001$ . Numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are the Cronbach's Alpha

## 2. EXPLOITATIVE LEADERSHIP

In line with the procedures described above, I tested whether the dimensions of exploitative leadership differ from abusive supervision. Once again, I used SEM using items rather than item parcels as indicators of the relevant construct (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002) and examined a series of unconstrained (i.e., the correlation between a sub-dimension of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision was freely estimated) and constrained (i.e., the correlation was fixed to 1.0) models. Results of this procedure are reported in Table 7. Again, the data indicate that the dimensions of exploitative leadership are positively related to abusive supervision while also significantly distinguishable from it.

*Table 7 Results of discriminant validity analysis (study 5)*

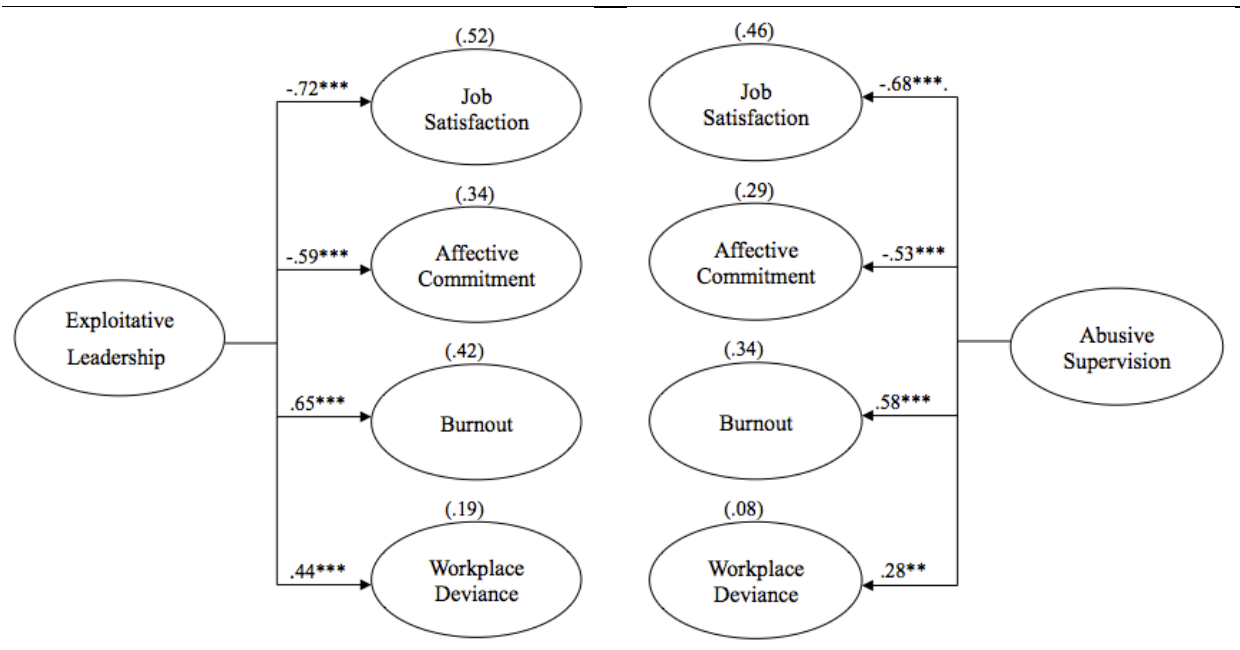
Abusive Supervision vs.	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2(df)$	$\chi^2(df)$	$\Delta\chi^2(df)$
Genuine egoistic behavior	443.14 (134)	466.33 (135)	23.18 (1)***
Taking credit	427.29 (134)	455.30 (135)	28.01 (1)***
Exerting pressure	510.04 (134)	539.85 (135)	29.80 (1)***
Undermining development	511.84 (134)	554.92 (135)	43.07 (1)***
Manipulation	513.06 (134)	546.96 (135)	33.90 (1)***

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

To test criterion and incremental validity of the exploitative leadership measure I applied SEM, again using items as indicators of the latent constructs. In a first step, I modeled the separate effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on the outcomes (see Figure 2).

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Figure 2: The separate effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on outcomes (Study 5)



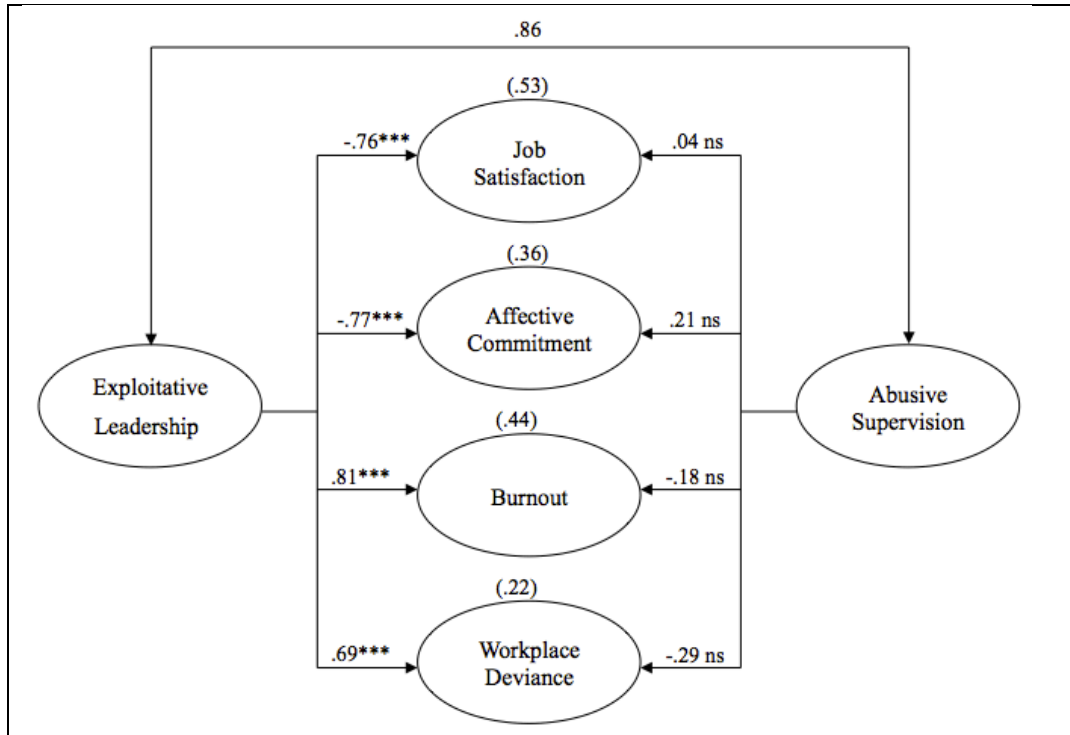
Note. \*\*\*<.001, \*\*<.01. The numbers in parentheses are the proportions of explained variance.

Results show that both abusive supervision and exploitative leadership significantly predict the outcomes. Notably, and in line with the correlational pattern, exploitative leadership was a stronger predictor explaining higher percentages of variance in the outcome variables, thus confirming Hypotheses 1,2,3, and 4.

Next, I included both predictors (i.e., exploitative leadership and abusive supervision) simultaneously in the model and allowed them to correlate (see Figure 3).

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Figure 3: The simultaneous effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on outcomes (Study 5)



Note. \*\*\*<.001, \*\*<.01. The numbers in parentheses are the proportions of explained variance.

Results demonstrate that, despite the high covariance between the two predictors (i.e., .86), the addition of exploitative leadership significantly increased the amount of explained variance in the outcomes above and beyond abusive supervision.

Nonetheless, there are some additional patterns in these results that require further attention. Upon inclusion of both predictors in the model, the regression coefficients related to the effects of exploitative leadership increased. Moreover, the regression coefficients pertaining to abusive supervision were nonsignificant and in the opposite direction of the correlations among those variables, indicating the presence of negative suppression (Maassen & Bakker, 2001; Tzelgov & Henik, 1991). In other words, the portions of variance in the abusive supervision variable that negatively relate to positive outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, commitment) and positively relate to negative outcomes (i.e., burnout, deviance) were suppressed when exploitative leadership was entered into the regression model. Though the coefficients should not be interpreted as accurate estimates of the true relationships between

the variables, the results can still be interpreted based on the relative strengths with which the predictors influence the outcome (see Thoroughgood et al., 2012). In fact, from the separate analysis of the correlational pattern of the two predictors follows that exploitative leadership is associated with the outcomes to a greater extent. This pattern was supported by relative importance analysis, which allows a more precise understanding of the specific role of each predictor, especially when the predictors are substantially correlated as in this data (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011). Specifically, I followed the procedures proposed by Lorenzo-Seva, Ferrando, & Chico (2010) in order to obtain measures of relative importance. Results (see Table 8) confirmed that for all outcomes, exploitative leadership drove the prediction to a higher extent.

*Table 8: Relative Importance Analysis (Study 5)*

Predictors	Outcome	95% confidence interval	
		Lower	Upper
	Job Satisfaction		
Abusive Supervision	48,40	38,90	57,70
Exploitative Leadership	51,60	42,30	61,10
	Affective commitment		
Abusive Supervision	35,70	27,00	48,70
Exploitative Leadership	64,30	51,30	73,00
	Burnout		
Abusive Supervision	36,90	27,70	46,10
Exploitative Leadership	63,10	53,60	71,90
	Deviance		
Abusive Supervision	28,70	22,80	46,20
Exploitative Leadership	71,30	53,70	77,20

*Note.* The numbers indicate percentages of explained variance in the respective outcome.

Finally, I compared two nested SEM models. Whereas in the first model, the path from abusive supervision to the criterion variables was fixed to zero, in the second model the

path from exploitative leadership to the criterion variables was fixed to zero. Fixing the path from abusive supervision to the criterion variables did not significantly reduce model fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 4.83$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ , ns.). In contrast, dropping the path from exploitative leadership to the criterion variables yielded a significantly worse fit to the data ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 67.30$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In sum, these results support the incremental validity of exploitative leadership in this data.

### **Brief Discussion.**

In this study, I demonstrated predictive validity of exploitative leadership for relevant employee work-related outcomes. The findings show that exploitative leadership has a significant negative relation with individual job satisfaction and work commitment, whilst increasing followers' burnout and workplace deviance. This is in line with previous research on destructive leadership, pointing to the destructive nature of exploitative leadership.

I recognize that the high correlation between abusive supervision and exploitative leadership may have produced less precise estimates of regression coefficients (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003), making the results somewhat difficult to interpret. This however is partially compensated by relative weight analysis showing that exploitative leadership explains relevant proportions of variance in the outcomes. Most important, however, is the fact that, in terms of explained variance, exploitative leadership showed incremental validity for the outcomes over abusive supervision. Although this supports the value of exploitative leadership when aiming to understand destructive leadership, further evidence for predictive and incremental validity needs to be gathered. In order to show more compelling support, I thus attempted to replicate this study.

### **Study 6: Replicating the Relations of Exploitative Leadership on Individual Follower Outcomes**

In the previous study I found first evidence that the addition of exploitative leadership significantly aids in explaining the variation in relevant outcome variables over and above abusive supervision. Since incremental validity is crucial when a new scale is introduced, in study 6 I seek to replicate these results in a separate sample.

#### **Sample and Procedures.**

I collected data from 282 employees from various industries in Germany via a professional provider of international access panels. Fifty-four percent of the respondents were male and the mean age was 42.3 (SD =11.5). They had an average organizational tenure of 11.4 (SD=10.2) years and an average group tenure of 6.6 years (SD = 6.0). In terms of education, 24 % had a university degree and 71% worked in the profit sector.

#### **Measures.**

In this study, the same measures as in study 5 were used. That is, participants were asked to complete the 15-item exploitative leadership measure as well as the abusive supervision scale (Tepper, 2000). Furthermore, indicators of affective commitment, job satisfaction, burnout, and workplace deviance were assessed (see study 5 for a detailed description of the scales used).

#### **Results.**

Table 9 reports the descriptive statistics, the inter-correlations as well as the reliability coefficients of the variables under investigation

Table 9  
*Correlation matrix: exploitative leadership dimensions and follower outcomes (Study 6)*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Genuine egoistic behaviors	2.47	1.15	(.88)										
2. Exerting pressure	2.39	1.10	.83	(.90)									
3. Undermining development	2.09	.99	.73	.73	(.84)								
4. Taking credit	2.19	1.14	.80	.79	.75	(.90)							
5. Manipulative leader behavior	2.11	1.15	.81	.76	.74	.80	(.92)						
6. Exploitative leadership: Index	2.25	1.00	.92	.90	.87	.92	.91	(.96)					
7. Abusive Supervision	1.71	.81	.65	.68	.72	.71	.76	.77	(.96)				
8. Job Satisfaction	3.46	1.03	-.56	-.53	-.54	-.52	-.55	-.59	-.59	(n.a.)			
9. Affective Commitment	3.37	1.05	-.54	-.53	-.50	-.50	-.52	-.57	-.51	.74	(.92)		
10. Burnout	3.23	1.23	.55	.57	.51	.49	.52	.58	.56	-.72	-.65	(.94)	
11. Deviance	1.92	1.01	.20	.21	.22	.20	.20	.23	.37	-.27	-.24	.30	(.83)

*Note.* All correlation coefficients are statistically significant with  $p < .001$ . Numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are the Cronbach's Alpha



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By using CFA I again confirmed that the exploitative leadership measure is best represented by a first-order factor model with  $\chi^2(80) = 160.594$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.007$ ; TLI = .97, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .06, yielding a better fit than a one-factor solution ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 292.24$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and a second-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 24.82$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Next, in keeping with the previous studies, I again examined a series of unconstrained and constrained models, showing that the dimensions of exploitative leadership are positively related to abusive supervision while also significantly distinguishable from it (Table 10).

*Table 10: Results of discriminant validity analysis (Study 6)*

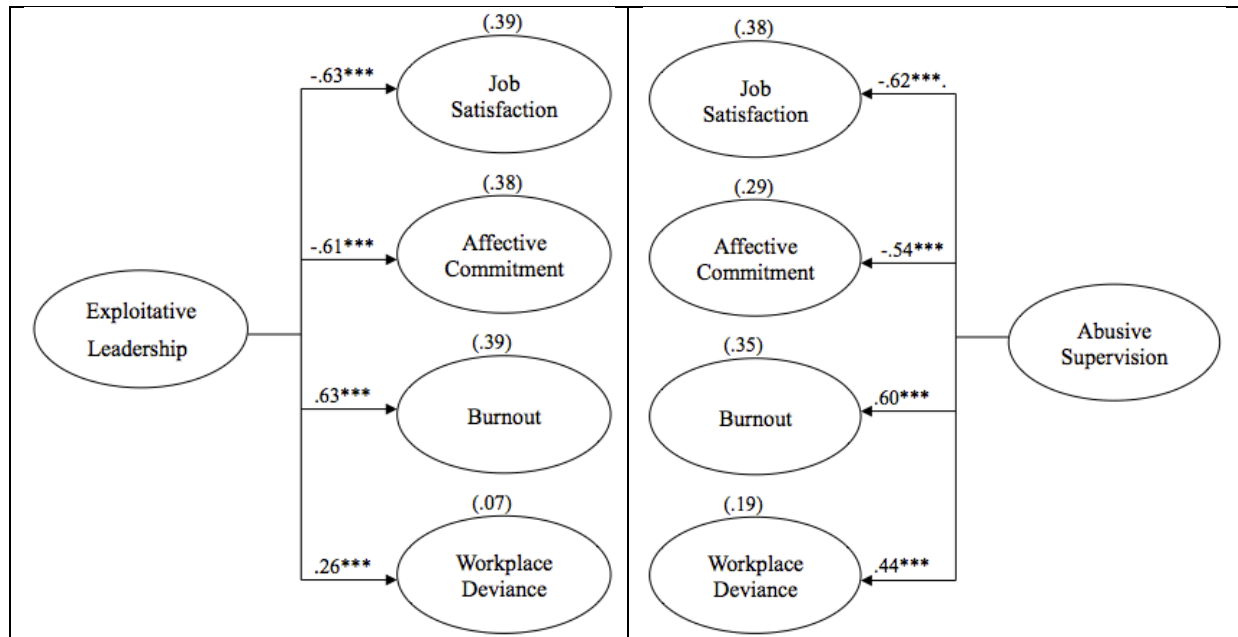
Abusive Supervision vs.	Unconstrained Model	Constrained Model	Difference
	$\chi^2(df)$	$\chi^2(df)$	$\Delta\chi^2(df)$
Genuine egoistic behavior	523.28 (134)	548.89 (135)	25.61 (1)***
Taking credit	520.88 (134)	534.12 (135)	13.24 (1)***
Exerting pressure	525.99 (134)	547.50 (135)	21.51 (1)***
Undermining development	501.91 (134)	520.78 (135)	18.87 (1)***
Manipulation	556.55 (134)	569.96 (135)	13.41 (1)***

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Next, in attempting to replicate the results on criterion and incremental validity from the previous study, I again used SEM and modeled the separate effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on the outcomes (see Figure 4).

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Figure 4: The separate effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on outcomes (Study 6)

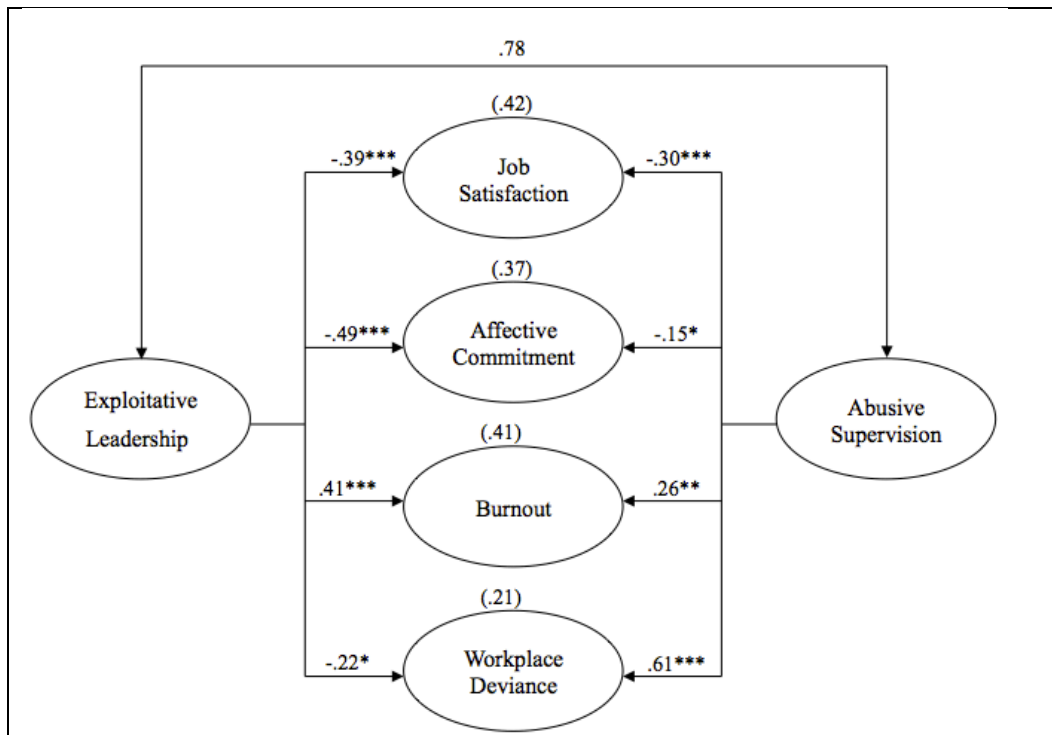


Note. \*\*\*<.001, \*\*<.01. The numbers in parentheses are the proportions of explained variance

In line with the results of study 5, abusive supervision and exploitative leadership significantly predicted the outcomes. Furthermore, the most important result is that the addition of exploitative leadership in the model again improved the prediction of the outcomes beyond what abusive supervision alone offered (see Figure 5).

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Figure 5: The simultaneous effects of exploitative leadership and abusive supervision on outcomes (Study 6)



Note.  $*** < .001$ ,  $** < .01$ . The numbers in parentheses are the proportions of explained variance

However, some result patterns of this study are notably different from the previous study. First, in this sample the covariance between the two predictors was weaker (i.e., .78). Second, the predictive value of exploitative leadership was less pronounced relative to abusive supervision. This is also reflected in relative importance analysis (see Table 11), which, in contrast to the previous study, showed a more modest pattern regarding the relative contribution of exploitative leadership. The most striking difference, however, refers to workplace deviance, which was clearly better predicted by abusive supervision in this sample. This pattern was further corroborated when both predictors were simultaneously included in the model (see Figure 5). Here, again, the path from exploitative leadership to workplace deviance yielded an opposite sign indicating the presence of negative suppression (Maassen & Bakker, 2001; Tzelgov & Henik, 1991).

Table 11: Relative Importance Analysis (Study 6)

Predictors	Outcome	95% confidence interval	
		Lower	Upper
	Job Satisfaction		
Abusive Supervision	49.60	39.10	59.60
Exploitative Leadership	50.40	40.10	60.70
	Affective commitment		
Abusive Supervision	40.10	31.60	50.60
Exploitative Leadership	59.90	49.30	68.30
	Burnout		
Abusive Supervision	47,60	37,70	56,70
Exploitative Leadership	52,40	43,30	62,30
	Deviance		
Abusive Supervision	78,20	69,10	81,50
Exploitative Leadership	21,80	18,40	30,80

*Note.* The numbers indicate percentages of explained variance in the respective outcome

Third, as in study 5, I again examined two nested models in order to test the incremental validity of exploitative leadership beyond abusive supervision. In this sample, contrary to the previous study, fixing the path from abusive supervision to the criterion variables to zero did significantly reduce model fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 55.14$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, dropping the path from exploitative leadership to the criterion variables yielded an even worse fit to the data ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 69.98$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### **Brief Discussion.**

This study was able to support the pattern of results of the previous study to a considerable extent. Most notably, results confirm that exploitative leadership meaningfully contributes to predictive efficacy when added to abusive supervision. However, whereas the overall prediction of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and burnout appeared to be quite stable (although with clearly smaller effects), the pattern for workplace deviance was rather different. In fact, in this sample exploitative leadership showed significantly less importance

in the prediction of workplace deviance. This explains why removing abusive supervision from the SEM model resulted in reduced model fit.

A potential explanation for the obtained differences is of course random error. Systematic error can stem from specific sample characteristics. In fact, both samples differed with regard to age ( $M_{\text{study5}}= 33.84$ ,  $M_{\text{study6}}=42.32$  ,  $p<.001$ ), group tenure ( $M_{\text{study5}}= 4.0$ ,  $M_{\text{study6}}= 6.6$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and education (44% academics in study 5 vs. 24% in study 6). Moreover, among the outcomes, deviance represents the most overt behavior that requires harming implicit or explicit organizational norms (Martinko et al., 2002). The occurrence of this varies strongly across individuals and situations (Hershcovis, Turner, Barling, Arnold, Dupré, Inness, & Sivanathan, 2007), and thus samples. As such, the true nature of the difference remains speculative and is left to future research. At this point, however, a comment on the high correlation between exploitative leadership and abusive supervision is warranted. Although exploitative leadership is analytically distinct from abusive supervision, they appear to be empirically related, which interferes when trying to account for their unique influences. Nonetheless, the overall pattern that emerged from the results indicates that exploitative leadership enhances the prediction of the outcomes under investigation. Thus, I safely conclude that exploitative leadership indeed adds explanatory value to destructive leadership.

### **Study 7: Distinct Outcomes of Exploitative Leadership**

Next, my aim was to show even more compelling evidence for discriminant validity. I argue that if a construct is able to predict very distinct outcomes, this can be regarded as a particularly strong indicator of its uniqueness (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac & Woehr, 2007). Thus, I conducted a further, in this case experimental, study that contrasts the exploitative leadership concept with follower directed destructive leadership behaviors and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors, and tests whether exploitative leadership was able to provide unique information in predicting specific outcome variables.

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Schaubhut, Adams and Jex (2004) as well as Thau and Mitchell (2010) and Tepper (2007) argued that destructive leadership is a threat to the self-worth of the followers. This has for instance been shown experimentally for abusive supervision (Burton & Hoobler, 2006) and is discussed as a mechanism to explain important outcomes, such as organizational deviance (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007). However, in how far the self-worth of a follower is threatened, depends on the level of hostility a leader shows. Certain follower directed destructive leadership behaviors (most notably, abusive supervision) are rather high on hostility and would very directly harm the self-esteem of the followers (Burton & Hoobler, 2006), for instance, by ridiculing followers in front of others or even telling them they are incompetent. Exploitative leaders, by taking credit for work or manipulating followers to further their own self-interest, are lower on hostility and would not directly attack their followers' self-esteem. This experience of destructive leadership is likely paralleled by negative emotions, since a very proximal effect leaders have is the one on their followers' emotions (see e.g., Bono & Ilies, 2006; Bono et al, 2007; Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005). The emotion that is most closely related to self-worth threat is shame. This has been shown in studies that investigate the construct of "face" (Ho, 1976; Tracy & Tracy, 1998) and shame as a social emotion induced when embarrassed in front of others or "loosing face". Abusive supervisors are likely to cause shame since they attack the followers' self-worth in front of the team (Tepper, 2000). Exploitative leaders, on the other hand, would not directly attack their followers' self-worth, therefore feelings of shame and other related negative emotions (e.g., guilt, anxiety) should be less pronounced. Rather, followers may see that their work is indeed good when their leader takes credit for it. This may induce the opposite of the feeling of shame (Tracy & Robins, 2007): pride. I can safely assume, that leaders who harm the organization are unlikely to instill pride in their followers. Correspondingly, they may reflect badly on their followers, being conscious of what the leader is doing and not preventing this, may similarly lead to feelings of shame.

Taken together, I predicted:

*Hypothesis 1a: Exploitative leaders cause a lower feeling of shame compared to follower directed destructive leadership behaviors and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Exploitative leaders cause higher feelings of pride in their followers compared to follower directed destructive leadership behaviors and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors.*

When confronted with self-worth threatening interactions Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu and Hua (2009) argued that followers feel a need to empower themselves. A very strong way to empower themselves is turnover (Tepper et al., 2009), since a follower, who has the intention to leave the job, is less dependent on their supervisor (Tepper et al., 2009). I will expect exploitative leadership, just like follower directed destructive leadership and organization directed destructive leadership, to relate to turnover intention, as previous research has shown (Tepper, 2000). I therefore predict that all three leadership styles will cause followers to reconsider their employment options.

However, since the degree of self-worth threat will influence the degree of empowerment necessary, I argue that the urgency of the turnover intention will vary. Since follower directed destructive leadership behaviors represents a more direct attack on the person, they would cause followers to consider immediate turnover (i.e., leaving the situation immediately). I argue that exploitative leaders pose less of a self-worth threat to followers, therefore the need to leave the situation should be less immediate. As argued above, since organization directed destructive leadership behaviors are more distal and do not harm the individual directly, the effect is more difficult to predict. It may be that a leader harming the organization confronts followers with behaviors that run against their feeling of justice, or on

the other hand, the anti-organizational behavior of the leader may be too far away to impact the follower. Therefore I will only specify a hypothesis for follower directed destructive leadership.

*Hypothesis 2: Follower directed destructive leadership behaviors cause higher immediate turnover compared to exploitative leadership.*

**Sample and Procedures.** I designed a scenario study using a separate sample (sample E) to test the predictions. Building on prior research on leadership that has successfully used the vignette method (e.g., de Cremer, 2006; van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkerma, 2014), I created three hypothetical scenarios for exploitative leadership, follower directed destructive leadership behaviors and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors by covering the core elements of each construct.

Participants for this study were recruited via an open online survey conducted within the network of three Master students. Pre-requisite for participating in the survey was that participants were employed full. In total, 297 participants took part in the online survey and were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental groups (92 in the exploitative leadership, 113 in the follower directed destructive leadership, and 92 in the organization directed destructive leadership condition). 136 were female, mean age was 25.64 (SD= 7.04), the majority of the participants worked in the for-profit sector (95.6%).

For the manipulation, after presenting respondents with the scenarios, they were asked to rate them in terms of exploitative leadership, follower directed destructive leadership behaviors, and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors to test whether the manipulation of the independent variable was successful. Exploitative leadership was assessed by 6 items of the exploitative leadership scale ( $\alpha = .87$ ), follower directed destructive leadership behaviors by 6 items from the abusive supervision scale by Tepper (2000,  $\alpha = .89$ )



and organization directed destructive leadership behaviors by 7 items from the anti organizational leader behavior sub-scale (Thoroughgood et al., 2012,  $\alpha = .92$ ).

Then, after the manipulation check, the dependent measures were assessed. Emotions were measured by using the 20-item German PANAS measure (including the items: proud, shame; Krohne, Egloff, Kohlmann, & Tausch, 1996). For behavioral intentions, items were adapted from Kirchmeyer and Bullin (1997) to assess immediate turnover with a single item ('I would hand in my notice immediately') as well as turnover intentions ('I would start looking for a new job').

**Results.** The manipulation check was tested by a one-way ANOVA. The results revealed a significant effect of leadership style manipulation on the perception of exploitative leadership,  $F(2, 235) = 7.41, p < .001$ . Post-Hoc tests indicated that the exploitative leadership manipulation was indeed perceived as being more exploitative ( $M = 4.33; SD = .76$ ) than the follower directed destructive leadership behaviors ( $M = 3.95; SD = .80$ ),  $p = .005$ , and than the organization directed destructive leadership behaviors ( $M = 3.87; SD = .75$ ),  $p = .002$ .

The results showed a significant effect of leadership style vignette on the perception of follower directed destructive leadership behaviors,  $F(2, 237) = 109.339, p < .001$ . Post-Hoc tests indicated that the follower directed destructive leadership behaviors vignette was indeed perceived as being more abusive ( $M = 4.44; SD = .64$ ) than the exploitative leadership ( $M = 3.02; SD = .83$ ),  $p < .001$ , and than the organization directed destructive leadership behaviors ( $M = 3.00; SD = .75$ ),  $p < .001$ .

Furthermore, I found a significant effect of leadership style vignette on the perception of organization directed destructive leadership behaviors,  $F(2, 238) = 109.662, p < .001$ . Post-Hoc tests indicated that the organization directed destructive leadership behaviors vignette was indeed perceived as being more organization directed destructive leadership ( $M =$

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4.10;  $SD = .78$ ) than the follower directed destructive leadership ( $M = 2.38$ ;  $SD = .80$ ),  $p < .001$ , and than the exploitative leadership ( $M = 2.4$ ;  $SD = .84$ ),  $p < .001$ . Taken together, this pattern shows that the leadership manipulations were successful.

With regard to the focal outcome variables, first a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used with the leadership manipulation as independent variable and emotions, as dependent variables.

The results of the MANOVA revealed a multivariate effect of the leadership manipulation on emotions,  $F(40, 430) = 4.406$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .29$ . One-way ANOVAS for each emotion showed the following: For shame, I found a significant effect of the leadership vignette ( $F(2, 233) = 16.131$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Post-Hoc analyses revealed that shame was indeed lower in the exploitative leadership condition ( $M = 2.24$ ) than in the follower directed destructive leadership condition ( $M = 3.26$ ),  $p < .001$ , or the organization directed destructive leadership condition ( $M = 3.38$ ),  $p < .001$ , thus confirming Hypothesis 1a.

For pride, I found a significant effect of the leadership vignette ( $F(2, 233) = 4.4$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Post-Hoc analyses revealed that pride was indeed higher in the exploitative leadership condition ( $M = 2.26$ ) than in the follower directed destructive leadership condition ( $M = 1.78$ ),  $p \leq .05$ , no significant effect was found for the organization directed destructive leadership condition ( $M = 1.91$ ),  $p = ns$ , thus partly confirming Hypothesis 1b.

Second, MANOVA was used with the leadership manipulation as the independent variable and turnover as dependent variables to test Hypothesis 2.

The results of the MANOVA revealed a marginally significant multivariate effect of the leadership manipulation on turnover intention,  $F(4, 486) = 2.24$ ,  $p = .064$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .018$ . One way ANOVAS showed the following: For immediate turnover I found a significant effect of the leadership vignette ( $F(2, 243) = 3.586$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Post-hoc analyses revealed that immediate

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turnover intention was indeed lower in the exploitative leadership condition ( $M= 2.01$ ) than in the follower directed destructive leadership condition ( $M= 2.39$ ),  $p \leq .05$ , thus confirming Hypothesis 2. No significant effect was found for the organization directed destructive leadership condition ( $M= 2.3$ ),  $p = ns$ , thus partially confirming Hypothesis 2. For general turnover intention, as predicted, I found no significant effect of the leadership vignette ( $F(2, 243)= 1.7$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Post-Hoc analyses revealed that no significant effect were found,  $p = ns$ , as expected.

**Discussion.** In this study, I was able to establish that exploitative leadership does indeed influence differential outcomes compared to leaders behaving in a follower directed destructive manner or leaders behaving in a manner that harms the organization. Exploitative leadership caused lower levels of shame compared to follower directed destructive leadership behaviors or organization directed destructive leadership behaviors, thus confirming Hypothesis 1a. I argued that this may be due to the fact that they offer a lower threat to the followers self-worth. Abusive supervisors may cause shame since they attack the person's self-worth in front of the team (Tepper, 2000). Exploitative leaders, on the other hand, would not directly attack their followers self worth, therefore feelings of shame were less pronounced. Rather, followers may see that their work is indeed good when their leaders takes credit for it and may even be rewarded as a result of their followers work. Accordingly, I found that in the exploitative leadership condition higher levels of pride were reported compared to follower directed destructive leadership, however not for organization directed destructive leadership, thus only partially confirming Hypothesis 1b. Based on this, I also found that followers of exploitative leaders showed lower immediate turnover intentions, lending support for Hypothesis 2 and suggesting that the dimension of time may play an important role.

Taken together, the data does indeed reveal that exploitative leaders do influence

followers substantially different from other destructive leaders. Besides clear indications for discriminant validity, the results of this study provide insights for predictive validity, which needs to be established further, preferably within a real organizational context.

### **Study 8: Effects of Exploitative Leadership Within a Team Context**

While I established the expected relations with individual level outcomes, I have not considered how exploitative leadership may affect the team. Moreover, the question of possible mediating mechanisms remains open. I thus addressed these in Study 8.

Destructive leadership is a phenomenon that affects individual followers directly and most research has focused on effects destructive leadership has on individual work outcomes (for a review see Schyns & Schilling, 2013). However, in leadership research, team and cross-level effects are commonly examined and key to understanding the full effect leadership has (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007). Studies were able to show that individual follower work outcomes are influenced by direct interactions with a leader, but also by leadership behavior directed toward other team members (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Chen et al., 2007). Moreover, in a recent meta-analysis Schyns and Schilling (2013) called for team level data in the area of destructive leadership. With this study I aim to address this gap, while at the same time gaining further insights into exploitative leadership and its outcomes.

Peus, Braun and Frey (2012) positioned that the negative perceptions an individual develops of a leader, can spread to the team through social and emotional contagion processes and thus create a shared negative perception of the leader, described as adverse leadership. I assume similar social contagion processes for exploitative leadership. Thus I assume that an employee, who witnesses or becomes aware of the leader treating a colleague in an

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exploitative manner, can be influenced by this experience. This would create a shared perception of exploitative leadership in the team influencing the individual followers.

Since job satisfaction is a key concept in organizational behavior that has shown to influence performance, turnover etc. (Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992), in Study 8 I examined the cross-level effect of exploitative leadership on job satisfaction more closely. Moreover, earlier in this chapter, I found that job satisfaction is an outcome that is influenced by exploitative leadership. Assuming a shared perception of exploitative leadership in the team, I further assume that an individual team member's job satisfaction will be influenced by this team level perception of exploitative leadership.

*Hypothesis 1: Exploitative leadership on a team level will be negatively related to individual followers job satisfaction.*

To establish possible mechanisms of this effect, I started by asking the question: What does being exploited cause in people? According to the literature, feeling exploited is a response to an inequitable exchange outcome. It involves having trusted the other party to be fair but ultimately being taken advantage of. Opportunity to exploit others can be found in situations where there is information asymmetry (Vohs et al., 2007) such as can be found in a leader-follower relationship. Being exploited can thus be described as a feeling of being treated unjustly. I propose that exploitative leadership would consequently create a feeling of disequilibrium and the negative effects this has on followers are well established (for a review see Colquitt, Scott, Rodell, Long, Zapata, Conlon, & Wesson, 2013). Most notably is stress (Elovainio, Kivimäki, & Helkama, 2001), defined as a response to an event that exceeds the ability to cope and that is composed of negative emotional and cognitive states (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

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It is well established that leaders behavior can be a source of stress (e.g., Offermann & Hellmann, 1996; van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill, & Stride, 2004) and specifically destructive leadership has been linked to increased levels of stress among followers (e.g., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006).

A central function in the stress process is the cognitive appraisal of a stressor, according to the cognitive-relational theory. How stressful an event we encounters is, is defined by how we appraise the event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Events can either be evaluated as a challenge or as a threat. This appraisal can mediate the stressfulness of an event and the effect this has on the individual (Peacock & Wong, 1990). Lyons and Schneider (2009) showed that the leadership style can influence how subordinates evaluate stressful work tasks. They found that individuals with transformational leaders appraised stressful events as a challenge rather than a threat, while individuals with transactional leaders were more likely to see stressful event as a threat. Exploitative leaders don't encourage followers or make them feel safe. By taking credit for hard work and blaming followers, exploitative leaders should rather make followers see stressful events as a threat. It is furthermore well established that job stress and job satisfaction are negatively related (for a review see Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992).

Based on these findings, I hypothesized that stress appraisal is an important mechanism to explain the relation between exploitative leadership and job satisfaction. As argued before, I assume that this effect will also work across levels. A leader that exploits members of a team will create a shared perception of exploitative leadership in the team (Braun, Peus et al., 2013) that will influence how an individual team member approaches a stressful event. Hence, the team-level perception of exploitative leadership would influence individual stress appraisals and consequently individual job satisfaction.

Specifically, I hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2: This relationship between exploitative leadership on a team level and job satisfaction on an individual level will be mediated by the individual followers' appraisal of a stressor as a threat.*

### **Sample and Procedure.**

Data for sample F were collected in a medium sized IT and communication company in Germany. 28 leaders (82.6 % men, 17.4 % women; mean age 41.33 years, average tenure in the current leadership position was 3.5 years) and their teams participated in the survey (198 team members, 63,6 % men, 36.4 % women, mean age: 35.5, 72.9 % worked for their leader for less than 5 years). Team size ranged from 1 to 11 (mean = 5.5,  $SD = 2.7$ ). After excluding for missing data, 119 team members in 28 teams (i.e., working for 28 leaders) were included in the final multi- level analysis.

Leaders were invited during an information session to participate in the study and were promised feedback on their leadership style in return for participation. In order to reduce biases due to common methods (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), data collection from employees took place at two points of measurement separated by six weeks. At measurement point 1, team members rated their leaders' exploitative leadership behavior. At measurement point 2, team members rated their appraisal of stressful events and their job satisfaction.

### **Measures.**

Participants were asked to complete the newly developed 15-item exploitative leadership measure ( $\alpha = .94$ ). Responses were given on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (frequently, if not always).

To assess *stress appraisal*, participants were asked to think about a stressful event they encountered in the workplace in the last month, subsequently they completed the threat

dimension of the threat challenge stress questionnaire (Peacock & Wong, 1990) using a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (frequently, if not always). A sample item was: “stressful events strongly detract me”,  $\alpha = .77$ .

*Job satisfaction* was measured with six items from the Work Description Inventory by Neuberger and Allerbeck (1978),  $\alpha = .85$ . Items asked for the satisfaction with different areas of the job, and participants' rated these using a 7-point faces-scale (Kunin, 1955).

### **Results.**

Given the nested structure of the data (followers nested in teams), I used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to test the hypotheses. Specifically I used HLM 7.0 with restricted maximum-likelihood (RML) estimation for data analysis.

First, I examined the viability of aggregating individual scores of exploitative leadership to the team level. For this purpose, I calculated within-group agreement ( $r_{wg}$ , see James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984), intraclass correlations (ICC[1]), and the reliability of the means (ICC[2]; for a detailed discussion of data aggregation issues see LeBreton & Senter, 2008). For overall exploitative leadership, the average  $r_{wg}$  was .88 (Mdn=.92), the ICC(1) was .19 ( $p < .05$ ) and the ICC(2) was .44. These results provided empirical support that it was appropriate to analyze exploitative leadership at the team level and model cross-level effects.

Second, I followed the procedure outlined by Zhang, Zyphur and Preacher (2009) for testing multilevel mediation. In this case, the influence of aggregated exploitative leadership represents the antecedent at the team level whereas the stress appraisal mediator and the job satisfaction criterion reside at the individual level, thus I have a 2-1-1-mediation model (Zhang et al., 2009).



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Analyses were based on group-mean centered level-1 variables and uncentered level-2 variables (i.e., ‘centered within context’, as suggested by Zhang, Zyphur, & Preacher, 2009). The null model revealed that job satisfaction varied significantly between teams ( $\chi^2(27) = 5.66, p < .001$ ), and multilevel modeling was suitable for testing the proposed relationships. Next I predicted job satisfaction (the level-1 outcome) by exploitative leadership on team level (the level-2 predictor), while also including exploitative leadership on an individual level, to be able to differentiate effects at the individual and the team level (Zhang et al., 2009). Team level exploitative leadership had a marginally significant negative effect on job satisfaction ( $\gamma = -.45, p = .10$ ), whereas individual level perceptions of exploitative leadership were related by  $\gamma = -.33, p < .10$ . The regression weights indicate that the effect of team perception on job satisfaction is much larger than the effect of individual perception and may thus be considered as practically relevant. I conclude that the results pointed to an effect of team perception of exploitative leadership on job satisfaction, as expected in Hypothesis 1, although only marginally significant. Also, I was able to show a significant effect of exploitative leadership on the mediator stress as a threat (level-1;  $\gamma = .47, p < .05$ ).

Next I tested whether the mediator had a significant effect on the outcome. Stress as a threat (level-1) had a significantly negative effect on job satisfaction ( $\gamma = -.27, p < .05$ ). I simultaneously entered stress as a threat on level 2 ( $\gamma = -.89, p < .001$ ), revealing strong team level effects. In a final step I tested for partial mediation by simultaneously regressing job satisfaction on the independent variable (i.e., exploitative leadership) and the mediator (i.e., stress). Examination of the mediation seemed legitimate since the relationship was marginally significant  $p = .10$ . This decision was further supported by Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, and Petty (2011) who question the practice to use the significance of the relationship of predictor and dependent variable to determine whether or not to proceed with mediation analysis. They propose to focus on the magnitude of the indirect effect instead. I entered out level-2 mediator on level 2 and simultaneously on level 1, as suggested by Zhang and colleagues (2009). In

this model, exploitative leadership on a team level was not significantly related to the outcome anymore ( $p=.87$ ), whereas the stress to outcome relation was still significant ( $\gamma = -.27, p < .05$ ). Stress as a threat on level 2 showed to be significantly related as well ( $\gamma = -.90, p < .05$ ). In a next step, to ensure I differentiate between the individual and team level effects of exploitative leadership too (Zhang et al., 2009), I simultaneously entered exploitative leadership at an individual level. Neither the level-2 exploitative leadership construct ( $p=.85$ ) nor the individual level exploitative leadership construct ( $p=.14$ ) were significantly related to the outcome anymore. However, now the mediation seems to be explained by stress as a threat on level 2 ( $\gamma = -.82, p < .05$ ), while stress on level 1 was non significant ( $p=.61$ ).

### **Brief Discussion.**

The results of this study indicate that exploitative leadership does need to be considered to influence the team. It seems that, as Peus and colleagues (2012) posited, the negative perceptions an individual develops of a leader can spread to the team and create a shared negative perception of the leader as exploitative. This shared perception furthermore influences job satisfaction of individual followers. Although the data only showed marginally significant effects, this does point to the importance of further investigating this relation. Correspondingly, previous studies on abusive supervision have found that the shared perception of abusive supervision influences social- and task-related group outcomes (Priesemuth, Schminke, Ambrose, & Folger, 2014). I consider that exploitative leadership may work in a similar way.

Stress, as a mechanism, is relevant to be considered when aiming to explain the relationship between exploitative leadership and job satisfaction. Although my results are not conclusive and do not show a full mediation across levels, I would like to stress that future research needs to investigate this in more detail.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

A leader behaving in a self-interested and exploitative way is a common theme in the literature on destructive leadership. Nevertheless, the topic has received little systematic research attention. In this chapter I propose to systematically integrate leaders self-interest into taxonomies of destructive leadership and introduce the concept of exploitative leadership as a behavioral approach to understanding this phenomenon.

Exploitative leadership is best described as leadership with the primary intention to further the leader's self-interest by exploiting others, conceptualized as five dimensions: genuine egoistic behaviors, taking credit, exerting pressure, undermining development, and manipulating. The results of the multi-study research strategy provide converging evidence that exploitative leadership is a useful variable for understanding the spectrum of destructive leadership. I produced evidence that the dimensions of exploitative leadership are positively related to other forms of negative leadership while also significantly distinguishable from them. Among the most significant findings of the present studies is that exploitative leadership accounts for additional variance in relevant outcomes above and beyond abusive supervision.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

In the current chapter, I present a definition, instrument development and construct validation of exploitative leadership, thus an important first step in establishing its legitimacy in leadership research. In this regard, it is important to note that I do not position exploitative leadership as a stand-alone construct, but rather as a complementary concept that will enrich our view of destructive leadership and allow us to capture destructive leader behaviors in a finer-grained way. Theoretically speaking, the most important implication of my approach is that the measurement of exploitative leadership provides information on destructive

leadership that was before unavailable or less adequately obtained (Hunsley & Meyer, 2003). Of course, I do not neglect that exploitative leadership shares a considerable deal of variance with similar constructs. Nevertheless, I argue that exploitative leadership is analytically distinct from other forms of destructive leadership (i.e., they are so defined as to identify different aspects of a certain phenomenon) while empirically interwoven to a certain extent (i.e., they can go hand in hand but may differ with regard to severity and frequency of occurrence).

That said the inevitable question arises of how leadership research and practice can best benefit from considering the construct of exploitative leadership. In my view, the goal for destructive leadership research should be to have an overarching approach and operationalization that encompasses all possible behaviors. Hence, exploitative leadership will add most value to destructive leadership research if it is integrated with other construct to allow us to measure the full range of destructive behaviors as well as their unique contingencies and effects. By extending the range of behaviors operationalized and integrating measures, giving researchers a test battery at their disposal that would allow them to choose, according to research questions or the environment, the most relevant scales. Likewise, practitioners, for the purpose of leadership development, will be able to assess relevant behaviors in a more nuanced manner, allowing for more tailored interventions.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite its contributions, my work it is not without limitations. First, in most stages of the measurement development process, I relied on convenience sampling, using web-based online surveys. However, I specified participation criteria (i.e., be employed full-time) in order to avoid student samples, a frequently used basis in the development of other leadership measures. In line with this, other leadership researchers have stressed that the use of a heterogeneous composite samples, including respondents from diverse industries, prevents

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mono-sample bias and fosters generalizability of the results (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Moreover, in study 8, I collected data from one organizational setting, which also allowed us to investigate multilevel data, thus corroborating the organizational validity of exploitative leadership.

Second, while it makes the most sense that followers are the best equipped to rate their leader and their own work-related attitudes, response bias is still a concern. However, the factor analysis results indicate that the psychometric structure of the exploitative leadership measure appears to be stable across different samples, and is sufficiently distinct from related constructs. Further, in Study 8 I collected data from employees and leaders at different points of time and thus, in summary, it is unlikely that all of the results can be attributed to response bias. So, each of the studies had specific limitations, but I am confident that the strengths of each help compensate for the weaknesses of the others.

Naturally, given the constitutive nature of my work, additional research will be needed to specify the underlying theoretical processes of exploitative leadership in greater detail.

First, establishing the construct validity of exploitative leadership remains an ongoing process and thus, I encourage future studies to investigate the nomological network of the exploitative leadership construct more thoroughly. At this early stage of the development of the measure for exploitative leadership, I examined the most common outcomes. Future studies are necessary to further assess the validity of this measure in a broader range of samples and with further outcomes and mechanisms.

Second, an intriguing question is also that of the interplay between different forms of destructive leadership and their differential processes and effects. Given the somewhat ambiguous effects on deviant behaviors in study 5 and 6, future research should investigate how and under which conditions different forms of destructive leadership are related to workplace deviance, preferably using experimental and qualitative approaches. Related to

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this, leadership scholars should emphasize distinct reactions of followers to exploitative leadership and other destructive leadership behaviors in more detail. It is plausible to assume that exploitative leadership may trigger specific forms of retaliatory behaviors against the leaders versus, for example, abusive supervision. This, however, may strongly depend on followers' attributional style as well as implicit expectations and assumptions about the qualities of leaders (Peus, Braun; Frey, 2012). This corresponds with current research suggesting that implicit leadership theories also include unfavorable attributes of leaders (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Furthermore, the experience of time may play an important role in the process of exploitative leadership. I can conceive that exploitative leadership, due to its less hostile and aggressive nature, may take more time to unfold negative effects on followers, in contrast to abusive supervision and its variants.

Third, future research should consider the follower perspective in more detail. Although I found first indications that exploitative leaders create a shared perception among followers, differences in the individual experience of exploitative leadership are likely. Specifically, individual characteristics and dispositions of followers should be taken into account, since they may influence how exploitative a follower perceives a leader. For example, it is plausible that a narcissistic follower may overestimate their contribution to a task or project (John & Robins, 1994) and may thus believe credit was unjustly taken. Furthermore, self-serving biases of followers, thus attributing success to themselves (Miller & Ross, 1975), may also lead them to perceive a leader as more exploitative.

Fourth, a key question for future research is why leaders engage in exploitative behaviors. In line with Krasikova et al. (2013), I assume that exploitative leadership can be seen as a result of perceived goal blockage. Accordingly, leaders are more likely to exhibit exploitative behaviors when they experience difficulties achieving their personal goals, no matter whether these goals are compatible with organizational goals or not. Perceptions of

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goal blockage, however, are a product of contextual and dispositional factors (Krasikova et al., 2013). Leaders' goal achievement can be thwarted by contextual factors, such as limited resources (e.g. information, budget, and time) or followers lacking capabilities and motivation. On the other hand, individual characteristics with an inherent link to self-interest are likely to trigger perceptions of goal blockage. Most notably, leaders with a narcissistic and Machiavellian tendency, self-enhancement values or personalized power motivation may be prone to exploit others and further their self-interest (Krasikova et al., 2013; Williams, 2014). Williams (2014) furthermore argued that, since the position of leadership is desirable, leaders that face threat to their power are prone to resort to prioritizing their self-interest. I believe that the leaders feeling of insecurity in their job may be an important antecedent. Thus, factors such as fear, uncertainty, work pressure or high expectations from upper management may cause leaders to be exploitative. Whereas many may not become abusive under these conditions, taking credit for their followers work and expecting them to work day and night may be behaviors leaders turn to when under pressure themselves.

Fifth, Krasikova and colleagues (2013) have stressed the complexity in examining the volitional nature of destructive leadership. Thus, future research on exploitative leadership would benefit from including data obtained from leaders to better understand their choices and behaviors. An interesting research question in this regard refers to culture- or industry-specific differences. In certain industries or national cultures, leaders that constantly take more for themselves may be the norm and therefore, a leader that was socialized as such, may not even realize they cause harm.

### **Conclusion**

For theoretical and practical reasons, research is interested in understanding as much as possible about the nature of destructive leadership. By extending the range of theoretical and measureable behaviors of destructive leadership, I hope to allow leadership research to

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take into account a more complete picture of destructive leadership behaviors. As research in this highly relevant field continues to mature, considering exploitative leadership behaviors is a path worth traveling as well.



#### **3. THE PATTERNS OF NARCISSISM:**

#### **EVIDENCE FOR A CURVILINEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADER NARCISSISM AND TEAM PERFORMANCE<sup>2</sup>**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship, a context in which selling yourself, being highly confident, and communicating a compelling vision is crucial to success (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998), is an environment that has produced many prominent examples of leaders who were labeled as narcissists by the popular business press. Leaders such as Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or Larry Ellison are both admired for their great success but also criticized for their treatment of their employees (Shah & Mulla, 2013; Sharma & Grant, 2011). While they have been praised for their passion, vision, and innovation, they have been denounced for their lack of empathy, arrogance, and for being oversensitive to criticism (Gladwell, 2002; Maccoby, 2000). This illustrates why narcissists are said to have two faces (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005): Next to being extraverted, charming, and confident, there seems to be a dark side of narcissism characterized by exploitativeness, aggressiveness, and arrogance (Emmons, 1987; Paulhus, 1998). It is therefore not surprising that Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006, p. 619) stated that “the literature on narcissism in leadership is mainly devoted to answering one question: Is it good or bad for a leader to be a narcissist?”. Attempts to answer this question have produced mixed results. Whereas some studies found leaders’ narcissism to have a positive effect on organizations (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007), others found no effect (O'Reilly, Doerr, Caldwell, & Chatman, 2013) or even a negative effect on performance (Nevicka, Ten Velden, De Hoogh, & Van Vianen, 2011). A recent meta-analysis by Grijalva, Harms, Newman,

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter is based on a working paper by Schmid, Knipfer, & Peus (2014), currently under review at the *Leadership Quarterly*.

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Gaddis, and Fraley (2015) further examined these heterogeneous findings and argues for a *curvilinear* relationship suggesting that a medium level of narcissism may be beneficial for leadership effectiveness, whereas high levels are detrimental.

The goal of this research was to examine the relationship between leader narcissism and team performance in an entrepreneurial setting and to obtain further insights into this relationship. Thereby, I seek to address two aspects that to my knowledge have not yet been taken into account in research on narcissism: First, I propose and test a curvilinear effect of narcissism on team performance using external ratings of team performance rather than subjective evaluations of leader effectiveness (Grijalva et al., 2015). Second, I aim at obtaining further insights as to which behaviors of narcissistic team leaders underlie this curvilinear relationship. Therefore, I use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowing us to deepen the understanding of narcissistic leader behaviors and how behaviors relate to team performance.

#### **Specifics of the Entrepreneurship Context**

Entrepreneurship is defined as the “processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities” (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218). It is an environment in which bold and transformative innovations and decisions are needed. It is also a situation that is characterized by unclear outcomes and a lot of ambiguity, a so-called *weak* situation. Weak situations involve high ambiguity, uncertainty, and need for orientation (Shamir & Howell, 1999). Under such conditions, people rely on someone who has a clear vision and is a powerful team leader, someone who can reassure them with their self-confidence (Campbell & Campbell, 2009; Maccoby, 2000; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). In line with this, previous research on entrepreneurial teams has pointed towards the significance of the lead entrepreneur for the success of the entrepreneurial endeavor (Bryant, 2004; Cogliser & Brigham, 2004; Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Vecchio, 2003). Leadership is, at the

same time, considered a neglected area of entrepreneurship research (Antonakis & Autio, 2007) and, to date, we do not know much about which specific leadership behaviors are effective in new venture creation (Hmieleski & Ensley, 2007). This is especially true for nascent entrepreneurial teams in the pre–founding phase, a phase qualitatively distinct from later stages but crucial for new venture creation (Bergmann & Stephan, 2013; Foo, Sin, & Yiong, 2006). Nascent entrepreneurial teams typically lack well–defined goals, structures, and work processes (Foo et al., 2006) and face the challenge of developing a shared vision and team goals for their entrepreneurial endeavor (Ensley, Pearce, & Hmieleski, 2006; Fernald, Solomon, & Tarabishy, 2005; Vyakarnam, Jacobs, & Handelberg, 1999). This calls for a lead entrepreneur who creates the vision and convinces other team members to follow this vision (Baum et al., 1998; Cooney, 2005), indeed something narcissists have shown to be good at (Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010). In fact, earlier research suggests that narcissists are more likely to be founders of surviving firms than those lower on narcissism (O'Reilly et al., 2013). However, the positive effect of narcissistic tendencies of an entrepreneur may turn into “a curse” (Grijalva & Harms, 2014, p. 121): Overconfident entrepreneurs may be self–defeating in the long run since those entrepreneurs are likely to make very risky decisions and to ignore signals of difficulties and failure (Hayward, Shepherd, & Griffin, 2006). I thus argue that a medium level of narcissism may be beneficial, very high levels of narcissism (as well as very low levels of narcissism) may be obstructive in the entrepreneurship context.

Based on these at least ambivalent considerations, I think it is well worth investigating narcissists as leaders of nascent entrepreneurial teams.

#### **Narcissists as Leaders**

The concept of narcissism goes back to the Greek myth of Narcissus, the young man who fell in love with his own image. Based on this ancient tale, Freud (1914) introduced the concept of narcissism. Nowadays, it is defined by the American Psychological Association

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(Miller, Widiger, & Campbell, 2010) as a set of behaviors described by predominant patterns of grandiosity along with a need for admiration and lack of empathy.

In their review of narcissism in organizations, Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, and Marchisio (2011) regard narcissism as being explained by three components, namely the self, interpersonal relationships, and self-regulatory strategies. The narcissistic self is characterized by a sense of being unique, vanity, a sense of entitlement, and a desire for power and esteem. Narcissistic relationships contain low levels of empathy and emotional intimacy and can range from exciting and engaging to manipulative and exploitative. Moreover, narcissists focus on maintaining inflated self-views. For example, narcissists seek out opportunities for attention and admiration, tend to show off and take credit for others' achievements. In line with this, narcissists have been characterized by a sense of personal superiority (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004; John & Robins, 1994), grandiosity (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), and dominance, as well as by being assertive (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006), desiring power (Emmons, 1987), and longing for attention and confirmation of their superiority (Bogart, Benetsch, & Pavlovic, 2004). Furthermore, narcissists have been described as lacking true empathy and therefore being exploitative, taking credit for others' accomplishments, and shifting blame to others (Brunell et al., 2008; Rauthmann, 2012). They demand unquestioning devotion and loyalty from followers (Harwood, 2003; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissistic leaders are more self-serving than their more humble counterparts and tend to allocate scarce organizational resources to themselves (Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006). When confronted with criticism or negative feedback, they frequently react with aggressive and hostile behaviors (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Vazire & Funder, 2006).

However, the first impression narcissists make on others stands in sharp contrast to the negative descriptions summarized above. In fact, narcissists' self-enhancement usually

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appeals to other people (Brunell et al., 2008; Paulhus, 1998). Narcissists are perceived as interesting, charming, and interpersonally skilled (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Deluga, 1997). They are seen as confident and extraverted (Campbell et al., 2004; Emmons, 1987; Judge et al., 2006) and thereby portray the image of a prototypical effective leader (Campbell et al., 2004; Emmons, 1987; Judge et al., 2006; Paulhus, 1998; Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003). This is one reason why narcissists are likely to be chosen as leaders (Brunell et al., 2008; Judge et al., 2006; Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & Mollwain, 2011), a fact that may in turn explain the seemingly high number of narcissists in CEO positions.

Not surprisingly, considering the two sides of narcissists, research to date suggests that a narcissistic leader can have positive as well as negative effects on organizations: On the positive side, narcissists are more likely to be seen as inspirational, to succeed in situations that call for change, and to be a force for creativity (Deluga, 1997; Maccoby, 2000; Spangler, Gupta, Kim, & Nazarian, 2012). U.S. presidents' narcissism, for example, was related to increased attribution of presidential effectiveness (Deluga, 1997; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). On the negative side, narcissistic leaders have been shown to be more likely to violate integrity standards (e.g., Blickle, Schlegel, Fassbender, & Klein, 2006; Brunell, Staats, Barden, & Hupp, 2011), to reject negative feedback (Kernis & Sun, 1994), have unhappy employees, and create destructive workplaces (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008). Narcissists are willing to take advantage of others and would do so at the cost of others (Campbell, Bush, Brunell, & Shelton, 2005).

Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al. (2011) showed that team leaders' narcissism was associated with lower team performance; this effect was explained by the fact that narcissistic leaders seemed to inhibit information exchange among team members. Furthermore, leader narcissism has been reported to relate to lower job performance and less organizational

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citizenship behavior among subordinates (Judge et al., 2006). In contrast, Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) found leader narcissism to be positively related to strategic dynamism, that is, the degree to which a firm's strategy adapts to changing environments. Furthermore, companies with narcissistic CEOs experience more volatile performance, meaning that they make far more profits—but also heavier losses.

In a recent meta-analysis on narcissism and leadership, Grijalva et al. (2015, p. 1) conclude that “research has not produced consensus concerning whether narcissistic leaders hinder or benefit their organizations”. The authors further argue that the level of narcissism is crucial: Medium levels of narcissism represent rather effective aspects of narcissism, such as confidence and a strong vision, and these would be beneficial for performance. High levels of narcissism, however, represent ineffective aspects, such as arrogance and exploitativeness, and those would be detrimental for performance. In fact, Grijalva et al. (2015) found evidence for a curvilinear effect of narcissism on perceptions of leader effectiveness, suggesting that a medium level of narcissism is optimal, whereas both very low and very high levels are detrimental. This conclusion is supported by a recent evaluation of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) conducted by Ackerman, Donnellan, and Robins (2012). The authors showed that individuals high in narcissism confirm items that represent rather destructive aspects of narcissism such as feelings of entitlement, superiority, and grandiosity. On the contrary, individuals with a medium level of narcissism confirmed items relating to rather effective aspects of narcissism such as confidence and assertiveness.

Based on these findings I propose a curvilinear relationship between team leader narcissism and team performance. Specifically, I assume that low levels of narcissism will not be beneficial for entrepreneurial team performance because the entrepreneurial context calls for a strong team leader who is confident and ready to make bold decisions. Similarly, high levels of narcissism expressed in low empathy, a tendency to exploit others, a sense of

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entitlement, arrogance, and aggression will be detrimental for team performance. Finally, I propose that a medium level of narcissism will be most beneficial in the entrepreneurship context because it represents rather effective characteristics of narcissism such as confidence and assertiveness.

*Hypothesis 1: The relationship between team leader narcissism and team performance is curvilinear such that team performance is highest when team leader narcissism is at a medium level and team performance is low at low as well as high levels of team leader narcissism.*

A second goal of this research is to explore the mechanism that drives this effect. In a second study, I therefore investigated the behavioral patterns of team leaders with different levels of narcissism and examined the relationship between these patterns of leadership behaviors and team performance. Based on the argumentation above, I assume that medium levels of narcissism are associated with effective leader behaviors such as showing confidence and assertiveness, whereas very low as well as high levels of narcissism are likely to be related to ineffective leadership behaviors such as unassertiveness and timidity on the one hand and exploitativeness and dominance on the other.

*Hypothesis 2: Medium levels of narcissism are associated with effective leadership behaviors, whereas low and high levels of narcissism manifest in ineffective leadership behaviors.*

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

To test the above stated hypotheses, I conducted a two–study field investigation of nascent entrepreneurial teams using a multi–method and multi–source approach: In Study 1, I tested the hypothesis that the relationship between leader narcissism and team performance is a curvilinear one, using a survey to assess followers’ perceptions of team leader narcissism

and expert ratings of team performance with regard to business planning. In Study 2, I examined leadership behaviors of team leaders in more detail to shed light on the processes underlying the proposed curvilinear effect of team leader narcissism and team performance. As quantitative methods would be insufficient to capture the nuances and particular meanings of narcissistic leadership behaviors, I chose a qualitative approach for Study 2 using qualitative interviews with both team leaders and team members.

#### **STUDY 1: CURVILINEAR EFFECT OF LEADER NARCISSISM ON TEAM PERFORMANCE**

##### **Sample and Procedure**

To test Hypothesis 1, I gathered data in collaboration with an innovation and start-up center which offers entrepreneurial training for start-ups, spin-offs, and new business concepts in Germany. This context allowed us to study nascent entrepreneurial teams working on the development of a business model in a four months long entrepreneurial training program. The training program is offered on a regular basis for students as well as professionals and is advertised at the local technical university and beyond. Having a concrete business idea was not required for participation; instead, the training program focused on support for idea generation and selection as well as business planning.

Participants enrolled individually and met at the so-called “idea fair”, where preliminary business ideas were presented and teams were formed. Every team then nominated a team leader whose role it was to guide the team’s work on the business model, report to the instructors of the training program, and taking responsibility for the submission of the final business plan at the end of the training program, which the teams submitted after three months of weekly training sessions and continuous off-class teamwork. Before the evaluations of the business plan were made available to the teams, I administered a survey to assess followers’ perceptions of their team leader’s narcissism. The participants were also



asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the research. Participation was voluntary and had no impact on the final evaluation of the business plan. An entrepreneurship expert who had several years of training and coaching experience in the context of entrepreneurship evaluated the teams' business plans. Teams received their performance evaluations several weeks after submission of the business plan to avoid potential biases in their assessment of team leader narcissism.

The final sample included 140 team members (follower only) from 58 teams of three to five team members (41.4 % with three team members, 53.4 % with four team members). Participants were on average 23.6 years old ( $SD = 3.3$ ). 21,4 % of the participants were female and 15.7 % were international participants.

#### **Measures**

**Team leader narcissism.** Narcissism was measured with seven forced-choice items from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006), which is the most widely used scale in research on narcissism in leadership (Grijalva et al., 2015). The German version was taken from Schütz, Marcus and Sellin (2004). A sample item is "He/she thinks, he/she is a special person" versus "He/she thinks he/she is no better or worse than other people." To increase reliability, the final narcissism score was calculated based on six items ( $\alpha = .64$ ;  $N=139$ ). Since I had very little missing data (1.4% to 7.1%), I refrained from data imputation and instead calculated the scale mean only if ratings for at least three items were available. Although the reliability of the narcissism measure was modest, it is acceptable for a forced-choice item scale (e.g., Jackson, Neill, & Bevan, 1973) and also comparable to the reliability reported in previous research (e.g., Ames et al., 2006; Goncalo, Flynn, & Kim, 2010; Iliescu, Ispas, Sulea, & Ilie, 2015).

Prior to aggregation of team leader narcissism to a team-level variable, I calculated  $r_{wg}$ ,  $ICC(1)$ , and  $ICC(2)$  as indicators for within-team agreement and between-team variance and tested for significance of the  $ICC(1)$  values. For team perceptions of leader narcissism,

the average  $r_{wg}$  was .97, which indicates high within-team agreement (Bliese, 2000). The  $ICC(1)$  was .27 ( $p < .01$ ), indicating a medium to large team effect (Bliese, Halverson, & Schriesheim, 2002), and the  $ICC(2)$  was .47. Given the rather small team size, these values are acceptable (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000) and imply that the aggregation of individual ratings to a team-level variable was adequate and justified. The high within-team agreement further indicates that the individual perceptions of leader narcissism among team members were consistent, giving us confidence that the aggregated measure of narcissism is an adequate representation of team leaders' narcissism. Final narcissism scores on the team-level varied between .00 and .83 ( $M = 0.24$ ,  $SD = 0.21$ ).

**Team performance.** Expert ratings of the quality of the submitted business plans were used as a measure of team performance (this has been done before by e.g., Weisz, Vassolo, & Cooper, 2004). The business plan covered all aspects typically required in a full business plan that investors would request for screening; it included six to eight pages presenting the team's description of the product/service, the team's expertise, potential customers, competitors, marketing and sales strategy, implementation plan, opportunities and risks, and financials. In order to avoid potential common source bias, an entrepreneurship expert who had several years of experience in training and coaching of entrepreneurial teams and was blind to the research objective rated the business plan based on predefined assessment criteria using a scale ranging from 1.0 (very poor) to 10.0 (outstanding).

The evaluation criteria had been developed by the program lead entirely independently of this research and take into consideration factors that are of interest to potential investors and bankers (the detailed evaluation criteria can be found in the appendix). The team performance scores ranged between 4.00 and 10.00 ( $M = 8.19$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ).

**Control variables.** I included team size as well as age and gender of the team leader as control variables.

## Results

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables on the team-level.

*Table 1: Descriptives and Intercorrelations of Study Variables*

<b>Study Variable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Team Leader Narcissism					
Team Performance	-.225°				
Team Leader Age	-.115	-.038			
Team Leader Gender	.223°	-.086	.186		
Team Size	-.125	-.126	.095	-.159	
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.24</i>	<i>8.19</i>	<i>24.25</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>3.64</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>0.21</i>	<i>0.24</i>	<i>3.08</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>0.58</i>

°  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

*Note:*  $N = 58$ .

In Hypothesis 1, I postulated that the relationship between team leader narcissism and team performance is a curvilinear one such that medium levels of narcissism are associated with higher team performance, whereas low and high levels of narcissism relate to lower team performance. I used hierarchical ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression analyses to test this hypothesis (see Table 2). I entered the control variables, namely, age and gender of the team leader as well as team size in Step 1. In Step 2, I entered the linear term of team leader narcissism, and in Step 3, I entered the squared term of team leader narcissism to test whether

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the squared term of team leader narcissism explains significant variance in the dependent variable team performance above and beyond the linear term of leader narcissism, which would provide evidence for the proposed curvilinear relationship (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2002).

Team leader narcissism showed a marginally significant negative relation with team performance ( $\beta = -.241, p < .10$ ). This suggests that the more narcissistic the team leader was perceived, the worse the team performed in the end. In Step 3, the linear term was not significant ( $\beta = .702, ns$ ) providing the basis for the more nuanced predictions of a curvilinear relationship of team leader narcissism and team performance. In fact, the quadratic term proved to be significant and explained variance in addition to the linear term for team performance ( $\beta = -.987, p < .05$ ). The inclusion of the quadratic term of leader narcissism into the regression equation resulted in an improvement of the  $R^2$  from .077 to .160,  $F(1, 49) = 4.861, p < .05$ .

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

Model	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
1	(Constant)		1.72	3.86
	Team Size	0.13	0.29	0.92
	Gender TL	0.10	0.40	0.70
	Age TL	0.07	0.06	0.05
2	(Constant)		1.72	4.56
	Team Size	0.12	0.28	0.87
	Gender TL	0.16	0.40	1.11
	Age TL	-0.03	0.06	-0.22
	TL Narcissism	-0.24	0.83	-1.70°
3	(Constant)		1.69	3.79
	Team Size	0.08	0.28	0.57
	Gender TL	0.16	0.39	1.16
	Age TL	0.02	0.05	0.13

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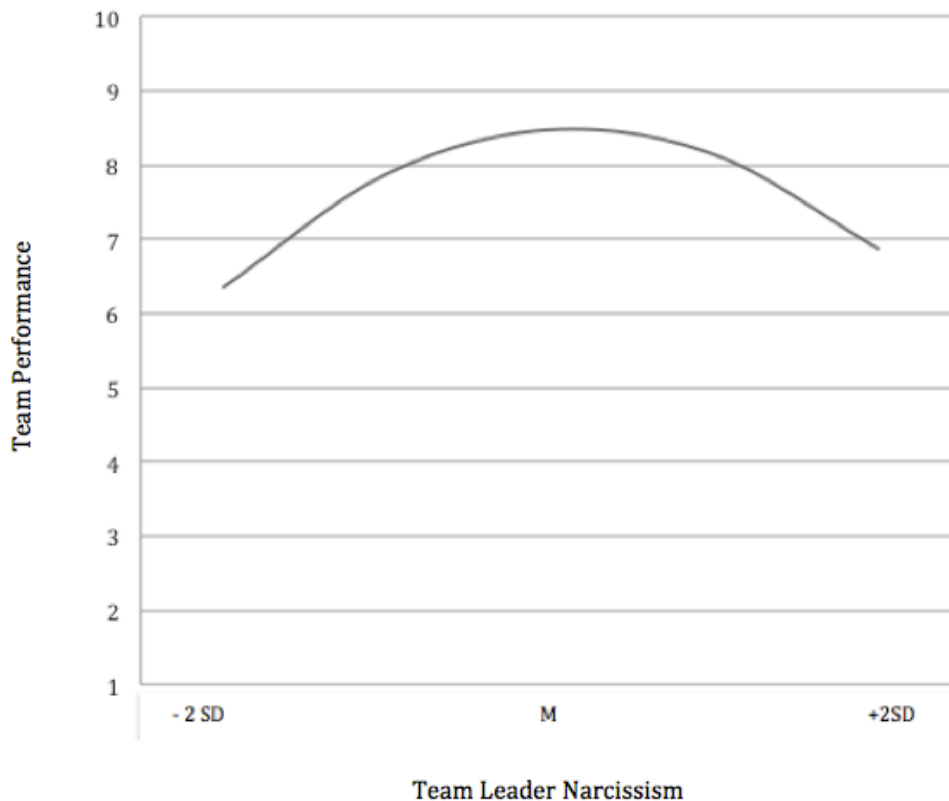
TL Narcissism	0.70	2.62	1.56
TL Narcissism*TL Narcissism	-.99	3.40	-2.21*

$R^2 = .16, \Delta R^2 = .08, F(1, 49) = 4.86, p < .05$

<sup>o</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

To visually explore the found relationship, I followed the recommendation of Cohen and Cohen (1983) and calculated the outcome variable, team performance, by inputting different values for team leader narcissism (the mean, two standard deviations below the mean to two standard deviations above the mean). As predicted, the results showed an inverted U-shaped relationship between team leader narcissism and team performance (see Figure 1). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was fully supported.

*Figure 1: Curvilinear Effect of Team Leader Narcissism on Performance.*



*Note:* To aid interpretation, team performance values were calculated using regression coefficients of a hierarchical regression analysis without controls and non-standardized values for team leader narcissism ( $y = 7.99 + 3.63*x - 6.82*x^2$ ).

#### **Discussion**

I hypothesized that team leader narcissism is related to team performance of nascent entrepreneurial teams and that this relationship is curvilinear. The results of Study 1 fully support the hypothesis. The data showed that team performance was highest when team leader narcissism was at a medium level and lower under low and high levels of team leader narcissism. To my knowledge, this is the first study to empirically demonstrate the curvilinear relationship of leader narcissism and team performance.

While the results of Study 1 clearly support earlier propositions that high levels of narcissism are associated with ineffective behaviors (the “dark side of narcissism”), whereas medium levels are likely associated with effective behaviors (the “bright side of narcissism”) (Ackerman, Donnellan, & Robins, 2012; Grijalva et al., 2015), to my knowledge, no empirical research to date has explored concrete leadership behaviors associated with low, medium, or high levels of narcissism. The aim of Study 2 was thus to further explore which specific leader behaviors underlie the curvilinear effect found in Study 1. Based on Grijalva et al. (2015) and Ackerman, Donnellan, and Robins (2012), I assumed that a medium level of narcissism is associated with effective behaviors, whereas a high level of narcissism is related to ineffective behaviors. I further hypothesized that a very low level of narcissism is detrimental for team performance. Study 2 sought to be particularly sensitive to the different behavioral patterns that leaders with low, medium, and high levels of narcissism show towards their followers and how these behavioral patterns impact performance. Therefore, in order to test Hypothesis 2, I conducted in-depth, qualitative interviews with a subsample of the team leaders as well as team members who had already participated in Study 1.

#### **STUDY 2: BEHAVIORAL MECHANISMS – EFFECTIVE VERSUS INEFFECTIVE NARCISSISM?**

##### **Sample and Procedure**

At the very end of the training program, I invited team leaders as well as team members to discuss several aspects of their teamwork in individual interviews. Participation was voluntary. Altogether, I conducted 19 interviews. Since I wanted to examine leader behaviors and their relation to both the narcissism score as well as the team performance, criteria for inclusion in data analysis was that both scores were available from the survey described in the methods section of Study 1. Four interviews had to be excluded from data analysis because either the narcissism score or the team performance score was not available. The final sample included 15 participants (eight team leaders, seven team members without leadership responsibilities). Six participants (40 %) were female. Whereas in Study 1 I focused on the team members' perspective, in Study 2 my aim was to reach a more complete understanding of narcissistic leaders' behaviors. I therefore included team members as well as team leaders in the interviews to contrast their perceptions. Based on the interviews, I was able to gather data on concrete leadership behaviors for 10 team leaders (based on interviews with team leaders as well as with team members). In order to avoid that the behaviors of one particular team leader be oversampled, I included only one interview for each of the 10 team leaders, resulting in a final sample of eight team leaders and two team members.

All interviews were conducted in person either in German or English and lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews were based on a semi-structured interview guideline with a sequencing of questions from more general to specific, pursuing deeper understanding of major themes of the interview. More specifically, respondents were first asked to sketch out the quality of teamwork and to recall successes and failures. Further questions focused on concrete leadership behaviors in these situations and beyond and how team leaders had responded to any critical incidents during teamwork. Accordingly, each interview covered the

same range of topics; however, themes that emerged during the interview and that were of particular significance to individual participants were elaborated in order to follow relevant lines of inquiry.

Several measures were taken in order to minimize potential researcher bias in data collection: To ensure highest data quality, the two interviewers held a degree in social sciences, received extensive training in research methods, and had substantial interview experience at their disposal. Both interviewers conducted practice interviews and received feedback in order to ensure that they followed the interview guideline in the same way.

#### **Data Coding**

Interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis. I used a combination of deductive and inductive analysis techniques to identify relevant leadership behaviors and specify their differential effects on team performance (for a similar approach see Gardner, 2012). This combination was used because narcissism is already well described in the literature (therefore a deductive approach was used) but also to ensure that additional behaviors were not omitted (therefore an inductive approach was used).

**Deductive development of codes.** Deductive development of preliminary codes was based on items and response frequencies of the NPI scale provided by Ackerman, Donnellan, and Robins (2012): In order to develop codes that would characterize medium levels of narcissism, I chose items for which response frequencies were medium to high ( $> .50$ ). Ackerman, Donnellan, and Robins (2012) argue that those items describe moderate levels of narcissism rather than extreme behaviors (e.g., “I like to take responsibility for making decisions”, proportion endorsed was .57, i.e., 57 % of the participants agreed with this item). To develop codes that represent behaviors that are characteristic of high levels of narcissism only, I chose items for which response frequencies were rather low (e.g., “I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve”, proportion endorsed was .21, i.e., 21 % endorsed this item). In the next step, I developed higher order codes to represent medium versus high levels



of narcissism based on the selected items from the NPI scale, for example, *Assertiveness and Influence* (medium) versus *Grandiosity* (high) in the example above. Deductive development of codes resulted in a list of codes for both medium and high levels of narcissism summarized in Table 3.

**Inductive development of codes.** In order to cover all salient categories of narcissistic leader behaviors reported in the interviews as well as to develop codes for low levels of narcissism, I additionally performed an inductive analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This analysis followed a three-step sequence ranging from descriptive summaries to the development of higher-order concepts that required comparative analysis, synthesis, and interpretation across the interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the first step of analysis, two researchers read and re-read the interview transcripts and compiled interview-specific descriptive summaries individually (Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to document emerging major themes and preliminary conclusions about leadership behaviors. In a second round of analysis, the researchers compared major themes from different interviews to identify similarities and differences with regard to leadership behaviors across all interviews and developed preliminary codes to describe leadership behaviors that emerged from the interviews (King, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the third round of data analysis, the researchers contrasted interviews in order to specify leadership behaviors for three groups of team leaders, namely, those with low levels of narcissism, those with medium, and those with high levels of narcissism based on the team ratings of team leader narcissism assessed in Study 1. This step involved several rounds of individual work and joint discussion. Step 3 resulted in a list of inductive codes augmenting the deductive codes and describing different leadership behaviors associated with low, medium, and high narcissism (see Table 3). Wherever possible, I adopted terminology consistent with prior literature on leadership behavior and/or narcissism.

*Table 3: Coding Categories for Qualitative Data Analysis.*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Low identification with leadership role <sup>1</sup>	Do not refer to themselves as leaders, do not perceive themselves as a leader
Equality <sup>1</sup>	See themselves as not better or worse than anybody else
Accommodating behaviors <sup>1</sup>	Avoid making decisions, balancing, fair, motivating
Being there for others <sup>1</sup>	Put the team members needs before their own, take over tasks for the team
Confidence as a leader <sup>2</sup>	Self-perception as good leaders, confidence with regard to their leadership responsibilities
Assertiveness and influence <sup>2</sup>	Stir and decide, but with an openness to others opinion
Clear goals <sup>1</sup>	Have a vision, explicate clear goals
Participative leadership <sup>1</sup>	Have an awareness for the needs of others, decisive leaders who integrate everybody's opinions
Convinced of being a born leader <sup>2</sup>	Self-perception as exceptional leader, deeply convinced of their leadership ability
Grandiosity <sup>2</sup>	Express that they were more capable and more special than others, they deserve to be treated differently, upset when they don't get what they deserve
Showing off <sup>2</sup>	Steal the limelight, show off
Exploitativeness <sup>2</sup>	Exploit the team, followers are regarded as an ends to a mean, excessively high expectations of others
Dominance <sup>2</sup>	Authoritative, give orders and do not listen to others suggestions or ideas, team members are ignored/omitted

*Note:* <sup>1</sup> Coding category derived from inductive analysis (see methods section);

<sup>2</sup> Coding category derived from deductive analysis (see methods section).

**Coding procedure and reliability checks.** To finalize the coding scheme of (narcissistic) leadership behaviors, I compared and integrated codes stemming from deductive development of codes (deductive codes) and inductive analysis (inductive codes). Two researchers coded the interviews using the final codes by assigning codes to every text

segment that described leadership behaviors. Based on a detailed analysis of the coding of three random interviews, I adapted the coding scheme and recoded the interviews. The interrater reliability was checked based on a subset of five interviews. Overall agreement with the coding scheme was very good (Cohen's  $\alpha = .90$ ).

#### **Results**

The following results were based on data about leadership behaviors for 10 team leaders. Of these, two team leaders were low in narcissism with NPI values ranging from .06 to .11, five team leaders with medium levels of narcissism ranging from .17 to .50, and three team leaders high in narcissism with an NPI score ranging from .67 to .83 (all NPI scores are based on other-ratings by the team members). Overall, 454 text segments were coded using the coding scheme depicted in Table 3.

I assumed that medium levels of narcissism are associated with effective leader behaviors such as assertiveness and confidence, whereas high and low levels of narcissism are related to ineffective leadership behaviors such as exploitativeness or accommodating behaviors, respectively. To test this assumption, I compared and contrasted coding frequencies for these three groups of team leaders by creating a code-by-level of narcissism matrix (see Table 4). Each column presents coding frequencies for one specific group of team leaders (low, medium, high narcissism) as well as overall coding frequencies. This was followed by a detailed qualitative investigation of leadership behaviors that were typical for team leaders with low, medium, and high levels of narcissism. In this qualitative investigation of leadership behaviors, I took two perspectives: a) the leader perspective in order to illustrate the leaders' self-description of their own beliefs, intentions, and behaviors, and b) the team members' perspective in order to cover followers' perceptions of behaviors and the impact those behaviors had on their followers.

In line with this, the results are structured as follows: For each group (team leaders with low, medium, or high levels of narcissism), I will first present and summarize the coding

frequencies; I will focus on typical, that is, the most frequent codes. Then, I will provide sample statements of team leaders to further illustrate their beliefs, intentions, and behaviors. This leader perspective will be contrasted with sample statements of team members about their team leaders' behaviors. Based on both the coding frequencies and the qualitative description of leader behaviors, I will discuss patterns of behaviors that emerged for leaders with either low, medium, or high levels of narcissism. Finally, I will relate these patterns of team leader behaviors back to team performance to further examine the effect of leadership behaviors on team performance.

#### **Team Leader Behaviors Associated with Low Levels of Narcissism**

**Coding frequencies.** For team leaders who had a *low* NPI value, I mostly found the category *being there for others*, which meant these team leaders put the team members' needs before their own and, for example, took over tasks that were unattractive. The second most frequent code was *low identification with leadership role*, which meant that they would not refer to themselves as leaders or show any affinity with this role. Moreover, *accommodating* behaviors with a focus on creating a good and balanced atmosphere in the team and by refraining from making decisions were salient only for team leaders low in narcissism. They, however, also showed *participative leader* behaviors, such as integrating everybody's ideas and showing concern for the needs of others (see Table 4).

*Table 4: Coding Frequencies by Level of Narcissism.*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Low identification with leadership role	4	4	0	8
Equality	2	3	0	5
Accommodating behaviors	5	0	0	5
Being there for others	6	2	0	8
Confidence as a leader	7	5	2	14
Assertiveness and influence	4	5	0	9
Clear goals	2	0	2	4

Participative leadership	5	12	3	20
Convinced of being a born leader	0	5	19	24
Grandiosity	0	10	11	21
Showing off	0	0	11	11
Exploitativeness	0	11	30	41
Dominance	2	14	25	41

*Note:* Table displays absolute numbers.

**Team leaders' self-description of leadership behaviors.** To describe the behaviors recalled by the team leaders low in narcissism, I can summarize that they focused very much on creating a nice atmosphere in the team and on being there for others (e.g., "If one of the team members had a wish, [I tried to] realize it."). They had a serving attitude to leading the team, were hard-working and happy to take over tasks that others did not want to do (e.g., "I took care of the tasks that were left over."). These team leaders would not talk about themselves as team leaders at all (e.g., "We were all equal in our group.") and were also not referred to as a leader by others (e.g., "[I saw myself] not really as a team leader."). Thus, those team leaders treated everyone equally and shared the decision-making with the whole team. Team leaders explicitly stated that they did not wish to be superior to the team members (e.g., "I would rather lead from within the team and not stand above the team.").

**Team members' description of their team leader's behaviors.** When I contrasted team leaders' statements with team members' descriptions, I found that the above described leader behaviors were perceived as problematic by the team members: While team members appreciated that nobody took the center stage (e.g., "Nobody steals the limelight or wants more attention than the others."), they also reported a lack of structure (e.g., "At the meetings there was always a lot of chaos."), and complained that decisions took long and involved a lot of discussion (e.g., "[...]there was a lot of chattering."). Team members of team leaders with low levels of narcissism reported that they wished for more structure (e.g., "At the next meeting I wanted to have a plan because I cannot work like that.").

#### **Team Leader Behaviors Associated with Medium Levels of Narcissism**

**Coding frequencies.** Team leaders who had a *medium* level of narcissism reported as the most frequent categories *dominance*, meaning behaviors that are authoritative, and *exploitativeness*, meaning to see others as a means to an end. However, these behaviors were reported less frequently than for highly narcissistic team leaders (see next section and Table 4). Furthermore, *participative leadership* behaviors were reported rather often, that is, for example, the leader asking team members for their opinions and involving them in decision making.

**Team leaders' self-description of leadership behaviors.** Team leaders reflected that team members had individual needs and took them into consideration (e.g., "We had different backgrounds and therefore all had different views and priorities."). Those team leaders acted as "doers": They took on responsibility and focused on task achievement (e.g., "I took over organizing: When do we meet – what do we do?"). Their statements showed that they were convinced to be good at organizing and that this is one reason that they were chosen as the team leader (e.g., "I guess organizing is something I am good at."). These team leaders speak of themselves as a team leader and felt comfortable with this role (e.g., "I did a good job at this and had a lot of ideas for the project"). If needed they were also dominant in decision-making and took actions necessary to proceed with the team project (e.g., "I put pressure on them – things had to happen").

**Team members' description of their team leader's behaviors.** When I analyzed the team members' statements about these team leaders, I found that team members perceived the dominance and authority of their leaders as constructive (e.g., "He was always open; he was also never authoritarian, but also not anti-authoritarian."), and that they appreciated that their team leaders were keeping an eye on the team's progress towards the project goals (e.g., "She always had the overview of what were the next steps [...] no need to worry about that [...]").

Furthermore, they seemed to highly appreciate the participative leader behaviors (e.g., “He gave everybody the opportunity to contribute.”).

#### **Team Leader Behaviors Associated with High Levels of Narcissism**

**Coding frequencies.** For team leaders *high* in narcissism, I found three categories as the most frequent, namely *exploitativeness*, *dominance*, and *being convinced of being a born leader*. Moreover, *grandiosity* and *showing off* were frequent codes, too (see Table 4).

**Team leaders’ self-description of leadership behaviors.** Team leaders tended to exploit others to reach their goals and saw the team members as a means to an end (e.g., “I wouldn’t hesitate to kick someone out if they screwed up.”); the leaders own vision was pushed on others without asking them, rather than having a shared vision in the team (e.g., “I clearly communicated my shared vision to the others.”). Team leaders high on narcissism had very high expectations of others; when they did not get what they deserved, they reacted emotionally and usually rejected the other person (e.g., “[The team member] pissed me off [...] and I kept my distance.”). Furthermore, they treated others with dominance and showed very authoritarian decision-making (e.g., “Whatever I told them they were doing, no fuss” or “I told them clearly for the presentation, we do it like this and this.”). Highly narcissistic leaders did not invite or even ignored team members’ ideas (e.g., “I had most of the business plan done and then one of the guys was insisting hard on doing some changes, but I did not want to do those changes because of my convictions.”, or “I didn’t include their ideas, but I don’t feel bad because they were really not as good.”). These leaders made comments that pointed to feeling superior to others and indicate a feeling of grandiosity (e.g., “I made a lot of [...] plans, and my guys didn’t even understand the plans, purely from an intellectual level.”). They perceived themselves as exceptional leaders and did not share the stage with other team members (e.g., “Since I am the most communicative person of the team, I decided to do it [an important presentation] on my own.”).

**Team members’ description of their team leader’s behaviors.** When analyzing team members’ statements about their team leader’s behavior, I found that team members perceive their team leaders’ dominance and showing off behavior as problematic since this behavior impeded their ability to contribute to the progress of the project (e.g., “But with someone who talks and talks, you never get a chance to say anything.”). Team members also complained that their team leaders saw only themselves and not the team (e.g., “He had a problem with seeing the team because he really likes being the center of attention.”).

### **Patterns of Behaviors and their Relation with Team Performance**

As the previous section shows, leaders with different levels of narcissism did show the same kind of behaviors, but in different combinations. In a next step, I therefore analyzed the patterns of behaviors leaders showed and how those related to team performance. Table 5 shows the coding frequencies by team performance.

*Table 5: Coding Frequencies by Team Performance.*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Low identification with leadership role	4	0	4
Equality	3	0	3
Accommodating behaviors	0	0	0
Being there for others	2	4	6
Confidence as a leader	2	11	13
Assertiveness and influence	1	4	5
Clear goals	2	2	4
Participative leadership	5	9	14
Convinced of being a born leader	4	1	5
Grandiosity	14	1	15
Showing off	5	0	5
Exploitativeness	31	0	31
Dominance	18	9	27

*Note:* Table displays absolute numbers.



With regard to the behaviors associated with team performance, it was exactly the patterns of behaviors shown by leaders high in narcissism that were associated with *low* team performance (*exploitativeness, dominance, showing off, and grandiosity*). When I related the above-described behaviors of team leaders moderate in narcissism back to team performance, I found that it was exactly these team leader behaviors that were associated with *good* team performance (*dominance, participative leadership, confidence as a leader*).

Whereas both team leaders with a high and those with a medium level of narcissism showed dominant and exploitative behaviors, team leaders with a medium level of narcissism showed these in combination with participative behaviors. This combination seemed to have a positive impact on performance, whereas the combination with *grandiosity* and *showing off*, that leaders high in narcissism showed, was detrimental for performance. Therefore the second hypothesis, assuming that medium levels of narcissism are related to effective behaviors, was confirmed.

#### **Discussion**

I hypothesized that different levels of narcissism are associated with different leader behaviors and that these behaviors have a differential effect on team performance. More specifically, I assumed that a medium level of narcissism is associated with effective leader behaviors and higher team performance, whereas both low and high levels of narcissism are related to ineffective leader behaviors and are therefore detrimental for team performance. The results support Hypothesis 2: A medium level of narcissism was associated with effective leader behaviors, namely, *confidence as a leader, participative leadership, and dominance*, which were in turn related to good team performance; in contrast to that, high narcissism was associated with ineffective leadership behaviors such as *dominance, exploitativeness, and grandiosity*, which impacted team performance negatively in the end. The results of Study 2 further indicate that some behaviors are salient for both team leaders high in narcissism as

well as team leaders with a medium level of narcissism (e.g., *dominance*); this suggests that not single behaviors but rather patterns of behaviors need to be considered when examining the impact narcissism has on team performance.

When further examining these patterns of behavior, highly narcissistic leaders showed mainly behaviors that were task-related (*dominance, exploitative*) and behaviors that were putting the leaders themselves in the center of attention (*born leader, grandiosity*). Leaders with a medium level showed a combination of task-structuring behaviors (*dominance*) and behaviors that showed consideration for the team (*participative leadership*). Team leaders with low levels of narcissism showed behaviors that were team-related only (*participative leadership, accommodating behaviors, being there for others*).

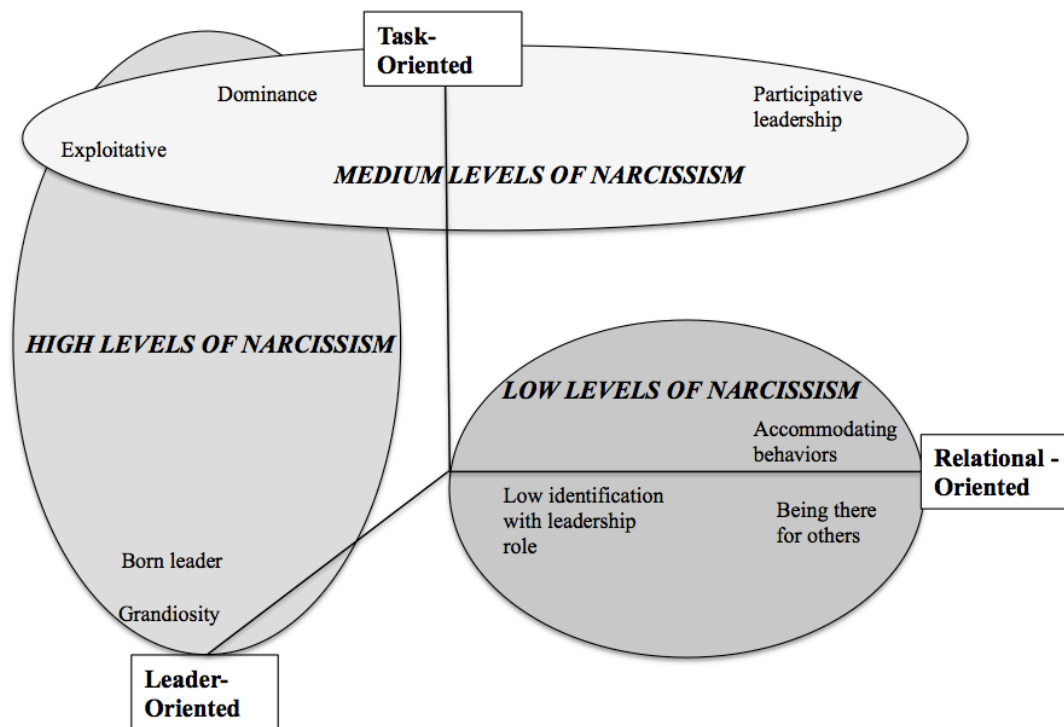
The interpretation of behaviors as either task- or relational-oriented is nicely in line with earlier studies of the behavior paradigm of leadership (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, Goode, & Day, 1963). According to this approach, leader behavior can be classified based on two dimensions, namely, behaviors that initiate structure and behaviors that indicate consideration for the followers. In a more recent conceptualization, DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey (2011) also distinguish between task-oriented and relational-oriented leader behaviors: Task-oriented behaviors comprise initiating structure, directive, or task leadership; relational-oriented behaviors encompass consideration, empowerment, participative, or nurturing leadership. Recent qualitative investigations of leadership styles have used this paradigm to understand leader behaviors (Peus, Braun, & Knipfer, 2014).

I argue that team leaders' behaviors reported in the interview study can also be grouped into task-oriented and relational-oriented behaviors. However, I found that these two dimensions are not sufficient to account for all the behaviors reported in the interviews. Additionally, leaders high in narcissism showed behaviors that were mainly focusing on showing themselves in a positive light and highlighting themselves as a leader (*born leader, grandiosity*). I therefore argue that to adequately categorize the behaviors of narcissistic

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leaders, we need to add a third dimension, namely, leader-oriented behaviors. Figure 2 depicts the three dimensions, the behaviors, as well as the patterns of behaviors that the three groups of leaders showed in Study 2.

Figure 2: Dimensions, Behaviors, and Patterns of Behaviors.



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Whereas leaders high in narcissism mainly showed behaviors that were high on the dimension task-oriented and leader-oriented, leaders with a low level of narcissism focused on relational-oriented behaviors only and on behaviors very low in leader-orientation. Both patterns had a detrimental effect on entrepreneurial team performance. Earlier research has argued that neither only task-orientation nor only relational-orientation leads to high performance but that a combination of both shows the best results (Fisher & Edwards, 1988). In fact, this combination of both is what leaders with a medium level of narcissism had – and these were also the leaders that led their teams to success.

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Research to date has found conflicting findings regarding the impact narcissistic leaders have on performance, leaving the question whether a narcissistic leader is good or bad for a team unanswered. The aim of this chapter was to shed further light on this by considering a curvilinear relationship of team leader narcissism and team performance. I conducted a two-study field investigation in the entrepreneurial context, using a mixed-method and multi-source approach. To test the hypothesis that a medium level of team leader narcissism is most beneficial for team performance, I first tested a curvilinear relationship between team leader narcissism and team performance using a quantitative approach (Study 1). Second, I aimed at obtaining further insights as to which behaviors of narcissistic team leaders underlie this curvilinear relationship. Using a qualitative approach, I investigated the patterns of behaviors that relate to team performance (Study 2).

To my knowledge, this research is one of the first to show a curvilinear effect of team leader narcissism on team performance: Team performance was highest when team leader narcissism was at a medium level and low when team leader narcissism was either low or high. These results may explain the previous conflicting findings on the relationship between leaders' narcissism and performance (e.g., Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011) since they suggest that we need to differentiate among different levels of

narcissism, considering not only low and high but also the medium level of narcissism. My findings are in line with Grijalva et al. (2015) who reported first evidence for a curvilinear effect focusing, however, on subjective ratings of leader effectiveness as an outcome. My study extends these findings by considering expert ratings of team performance as an outcome.

Second, my research highlight that leader narcissism exerts effects on the team-level in the context of entrepreneurship. Although the significance of leadership in entrepreneurship has been long established (Bryant, 2004; Cogliser & Brigham, 2004; Vecchio, 2003), empirical examinations of concrete leadership behaviors are lacking (for an exception see Hmieleski & Ensley, 2007). This chapter answers earlier calls to integrate entrepreneurship research with leadership research to learn more about the concrete leadership behaviors that contribute in moving a new venture forward. The results imply that narcissistic tendencies of the lead entrepreneur are beneficial only if they are at a medium level; low and high narcissism of the lead entrepreneur are both rather detrimental to entrepreneurial performance. The current research contributes to our understanding of the success factors in entrepreneurial teams, which has been called for earlier (e.g., Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001; Hisrich, Langan-Fox, & Grant, 2007).

Third, I answer Klotz, Hmieleski, Bradley and Busenitz `s (2014) call to study the processes and emergent states through which leaders influence entrepreneurial performance: The results of Study 2 suggest that narcissists show two sides, namely, effective behaviors that further performance and ineffective behaviors that hinder team's performance. Previous research has shown that narcissistic leaders hinder team performance by inhibiting the exchange of information in the team (Nevicka, Ten Velden, et al., 2011). My research provides further understanding of these results because I found that leaders with a medium level of narcissism showed participative leadership behavior, that is, despite showing dominant behaviors, they still invited team members' ideas and facilitated the exchange of

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these ideas, whereas those leaders that were high in narcissism were dominant and hindered active engagement of their team members. Other authors have discussed the two faces of narcissism before (e.g., Maccoby, 2000; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006) but, to my knowledge, this study is one of the first to investigate this phenomenon empirically. The specific leadership behaviors that the lead entrepreneur showed towards the team differed between team leaders with medium and high levels of narcissism. This is in line with earlier propositions to differentiate an adaptive versus a maladaptive side of narcissism (Ackerman et al., 2012).

These findings also extend the state of the research on leadership by pointing towards the significance of patterns of behavior: The results show that the simple differentiation of “good” versus “bad” leader behaviors do not appropriately characterize the complex interplay of leader behaviors. Rather, my findings suggest that I need to consider the combination of single behaviors when examining leadership effects: Whereas both medium and high narcissistic team leaders exhibited dominant behaviors, it was only in combination with exploiting and showing off behaviors of highly narcissistic team leaders that it led to detrimental effects on team performance. In combination with participative leadership behaviors, which the moderate narcissists showed, dominance instead contributed to the success of the team. Earlier research on team members’ voice found that the possibility to participate in decision-making and contributing own ideas had a positive effect on team performance (e.g., Kim, MacDuffie, & Pil, 2010; Wagner, 1994).

These patterns of behavior can be described based on the dimensions of task-oriented and relational-oriented leadership behaviors (DeRue et al., 2011). For narcissistic leaders, I found that leaders high in narcissism showed behaviors that mainly focused on showing themselves in a positive light and highlighting themselves as a leader. I therefore argue that to adequately categorize the behaviors of narcissistic leaders, we need to add a third dimension,

namely, *leader-oriented*. This is also in line with recent conceptualizations of exploitative leadership that also point towards the significance of this third, leader-oriented dimension to describe negative leadership behaviors (Schmid, Pircher-Verdorfer, & Peus, 2014).

#### **Contributions**

I believe that this chapter contributes to research on various levels and to multiple areas of leadership research. First, I contribute to the field of leadership by striving to integrate my findings into conceptualizations of leadership behavior (DeRue et al., 2011) and extending the theory by contributing a new dimension to the conceptualization. Furthermore, the results suggest that patterns of behavior are a key to understanding leaders' impact. Narcissistic leaders show effective as well as ineffective leader behaviors, but it is not behaviors per se but rather the combination of these behaviors that foster or hinder team performance.

Second, I contribute to the growing body of research on narcissists as leaders. Most importantly, this study sheds further light on the question whether it is “good or bad for a leader to be narcissistic” (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006, p. 619). The results imply that narcissism “may be both a blessing and a curse”(Grijalva et al., 2015, p. 121), and that narcissist do indeed have two sides to them, meaning they show effective as well as ineffective leadership behaviors.

Third, I contribute to the literature of entrepreneurship. Grijalva and Harms (2014) have argued before that entrepreneurship is an area in which narcissists may thrive; they have raised the question whether high levels of narcissism are connected to entrepreneurial failure. I was able to shed further light on this: In fact, I found that high levels of narcissism are detrimental for entrepreneurial team performance. Moreover, the data indicate that low levels of narcissism can have a negative impact on team performance, too: These leaders showed mainly relational-oriented behaviors at the cost of task-oriented behaviors.

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Fourth, I contribute on a methodological level. In this research, I investigated a curvilinear relationship, which often proved to be the most realistic representation of reality; however, in the majority of leadership research to date, this has been overlooked (Grijalva et al., 2015). Hayes and Preacher (2010) have argued before to model nonlinearity rather than transforming variable scores to enable the application of standard methods that assume a linear relationship because only appropriate models allow for valid conclusions about nonlinear relationships. I therefore recommend researchers to consider curvilinear effects when examining leader personality and behavior and their effects on performance outcomes. In doing so, researchers may well advance theory in new, and likely more valid, directions.

Fifth, I contribute by highlighting the importance of taking a multi-source approach. Leader behaviors and their impact on followers' attitudes and performance are commonly examined by evaluating followers' perceptions of leader behaviors (for a review see Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). This is why I chose to investigate the team members' perception of their team leaders' behaviors. Yet, this would be only the first step towards a full understanding of the effect of team leader narcissism on team performance. The motives and beliefs that the leader holds will obviously prompt certain behaviors (see implicit follower theories; e.g., Sy, 2010) but only asking the team leaders themselves allows us to assess these beliefs and motives. I thus argue that a multi-source design that takes into account the team leaders' perspective as well as the team members' perspective is needed to comprehensively answer the question which behaviors leaders with different levels of narcissism show and how these behaviors relate to team performance.

And sixth, leadership researchers have called for mixed methods studies as these have the ability to provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Simonton, 1995). The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is in line with calls to integrate qualitative methods to obtain a "profound sense of the realities of leadership" (Bryman, 2004, p. 763). One of the strengths of this study, therefore, is the use of multiple sources (team



leaders, team members, and expert ratings of team performance) and the use of multiple methods (quantitative survey plus qualitative interviews). By complimenting the quantitative study (Study 1) with a qualitative study (Study 2), I help to understand that it is not only true that leaders with a medium level of narcissism show effective leadership behaviors but that, in fact, it is a specific pattern of behaviors that best represents the behavior of a leader and that finally determines the effect on team performance.

#### **Limitations and Future Research**

While this study provides important contributions, its limitations nevertheless need to be considered. Whereas biases pertaining to single sources and common methods might operate (Bryman, 2004), I aimed at using multiple sources for assessment of the key constructs, namely, the team members' ratings of leader narcissism and expert ratings of team performance in Study 1 and team leaders' as well as team members' reports on leadership behaviors in Study 2. A major strength of this study is, in my view, the integration of expert ratings for team performance. In addition, the evaluation of the written business plan was obtained several weeks after I administered the survey, thereby being a second point of measurement. Yet, longitudinal designs would be promising to investigate further the relationship of team leader narcissism and team performance.

I measured team leader narcissism using the NPI, which is widely used (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). It has also been criticized before for its potential multi-factorial nature mixing adaptive and maladaptive aspects of narcissism. But what was seen as critical before proved to be valid to cover all, both adaptive and maladaptive, aspects of narcissism in this study. However, the calculation of a sum score over all items in this study resulted in a rather low reliability. Even though other researchers have found a similar level of reliability for the NPI narcissism score, future research should investigate the found relationship of narcissism and team performance, explicitly accounting for the multi-factorial nature of the NPI. Ackerman et al. (2011), for

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example, provided support for a three-factor solution consisting of Leadership/Authority, Grandiose Exhibitionism, and Entitlement/Exploitativeness; they argued that the different factors have differential effects on outcomes, which is well in line with the findings of Study 2.

In Study 2, I used a qualitative approach with voluntary sampling. Although I cannot exclude response biases, I am confident with regard to my conclusions because the sample covered a wide range of leader narcissism scores, well representing low, medium, and high leader narcissism. Still, a further possible limitation is the relatively small sample size. The problem with small sample sizes is the generalizability from the sample to a population of interest. Furthermore, one needs to be aware that interview data are a subjective reflection of experiences rather than objective accounts of reality. However, I argue that a qualitative approach was appropriate for understanding which behaviors are related to a specific level of leader narcissism and how leadership behaviors relate to team performance. Future research should replicate the findings using a larger sample and adding quantitative measures.

I chose to investigate the (curvilinear) relationship of narcissism and team performance in a very specific context, namely, nascent entrepreneurial teams. Earlier theorizing has proposed that in this context, the effects of leadership and narcissism specifically, may be even more pronounced than in the organizational context: Entrepreneurial teams in the pre-founding phase act in a ‘weak’ situation characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and risk and a low level of structure and routinized activities. As argued in the theory part of this chapter, this context requires confident leaders who are able to convince their followers with their enthusiasm and excitement; this context might thus be very sensitive with regard to the effects of narcissism. Future research in other contexts is needed to replicate these findings.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study makes a substantial contribution to current research on narcissism in leadership and to both the leadership as well as the entrepreneurship literature. I took a multi-method and multi-source perspective in investigating leader narcissism in entrepreneurial teams. The study revealed that leaders' narcissism is curvilinear related to team performance such that medium levels of narcissism are most beneficial for performance. Moreover, leaders with a medium level of narcissism tended to show more effective leadership behaviors whereas leaders high as well as those low in narcissism showed behaviors that were rather ineffective. I describe patterns of behavior that show that narcissists have two sides to them: They do show effective as well as ineffective leader behaviors, but it is not the behaviors per se but rather the combination of these behaviors that foster or hinder team performance.

### 4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary of Findings

A leader behaving in a self-interested way is a common theme in the literature on destructive leadership. Nevertheless, the topic has received little systematic research attention. In this work, I argued that this is due to a lack of a sound conceptual understanding of the phenomenon of leaders self-interest and a lack of integration into current taxonomies. To address this gap, in chapter two, I investigated the question:

*How can leader self-interest be systematically integrated into frameworks to advance theory of leadership behavior and allow us to precisely understand and measure this behavior of (destructive) leaders?*

I propose to systematically integrate leader self-interest into taxonomies of destructive leadership. The most influential taxonomy today (Einarsen et al., 2007) describes destructive leader behavior around the two dimensions of the follower and the organization. I proposed to introduce a third dimension: The leader. The leader dimension represents a continuum with altruistic and self-sacrificing leader behavior on the one end and genuinely self-interested leader behavior on the other. Based on this theoretical extension of the framework for destructive leadership, I introduced the concept of exploitative leadership as a behavioral approach to understanding this phenomenon of self-interested leadership.

Exploitative leadership is described as leadership with the primary intention to further the leader's self-interest by exploiting others, conceptualized as five dimensions: genuine egoistic behaviors, taking credit, exerting pressure, undermining development, and manipulating. The results of the multistudy research strategy provide evidence that exploitative leadership is a useful construct allowing us to understand leader self-interest and thus ultimately the spectrum of destructive leadership. Results produced evidence that the dimensions of exploitative leadership are positively related to other forms of negative

leadership while also significantly distinguishable from them. Among the most significant findings of the studies is that exploitative leadership accounts for additional variance above and beyond abusive supervision and thus adds value to the landscape of destructive leadership.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I studied the question:

*How does leader self-interest impact team performance?*

I focused on leader narcissism as a common manifestation of leader self-interest and shed light on the question, whether it is good or bad for a leader to be narcissistic (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). To this purpose, I took a multi-method and multi-source perspective in investigating leader narcissism in entrepreneurial teams. The study revealed that leaders' narcissism is curvilinearly related to team performance such that medium levels of narcissism are most beneficial for performance. Moreover, results indicate that leaders with a medium level of narcissism tend to show more effective leadership behaviors whereas leaders high as well as those low in narcissism showed behaviors that were rather ineffective. Furthermore, I described patterns of behavior that show that narcissists have two sides to them. They do show effective as well as ineffective leader behaviors, interestingly it is not the behaviors per se, but rather the combination of these behaviors that foster or hinder team performance.

### **Main Contributions for Theory and Practice**

The main contribution of this dissertation certainly is that I draw attention to leaders self-interest: A phenomenon that was recognized both in the business world as well as in the research literature, however, so far it was not given the empirical focus it warrants.

Whereas current frameworks for leader behavior have mainly proposed two dimensions (Einarsen et al., 2007; Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, Goode, & Day, 1963; DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011), I introduced a third dimension (i.e., the

#### 4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

leader) to allow us to comprehend the complex phenomenon of leader behavior in a more nuanced way and contribute to theory building in leadership research.

In chapter two, I extend the range of theoretical and measurable behaviors of destructive leadership by introducing the construct of exploitative leadership. With this I hope to allow leadership research to take into account a more complete picture of destructive leadership behaviors. As research in this highly relevant field continues to mature, considering exploitative leadership behaviors is a path worth traveling as well.

Moreover, in chapter three, I have investigated in how far a self-interested leader may be beneficial or detrimental for an organization. Importantly, results show that it is not simply certain behaviors, but to fully understand self-interested leaders, we need to look at the patterns of behaviors they show. Again, these behavioral patterns can be best described along three dimensions: Task-oriented, relational-oriented and leader-oriented. This further supports the approach to extend current two-dimensional frameworks of destructive leadership to fully understand leadership behavior.

While I have discussed avenues for future research in detail in chapters two and three, I would like to highlight that in my view, the main overall contribution of this dissertation, adding an additional dimension to understanding leadership behavior, will need to be further investigated. By framing leadership research around two dimensions, the research community may have overlooked important behavioral manifestations of the complex phenomenon of leadership.

Moreover, a notable finding in this dissertation is that the specific behavioral patterns of leaders may be highly impactful in a distinct way. While future research needs to investigate this further for destructive leaders, I would also encourage future research to apply this insight to positive leadership constructs.

### **Implications for Practice**

Practice has long understood that destructive leadership comes in many different shapes and sizes. This dissertation has advanced our understanding of how these can be conceptualized. By extending the range of destructive behaviors made measurable, practitioners have a bigger pool of constructs at their disposal, thus allowing them to choose, according to the situation or the environment, the most relevant. Practitioners, e.g. for the purpose of leadership development, will be able to assess relevant behaviors in a more nuanced manner, allowing for more tailored interventions.

Specifically important for practitioners to consider is the distinct impact behavioral patterns of leaders can have. For example, in the selection of leaders, considering the pattern of behaviors a (prospective) leader shows rather than focusing on isolated behaviors will likely lead to better hiring decisions. These decisions will in the long run lead to a more constructive organizational culture, rather than a “bruising workplace”, such as the New York Times alleged Amazon had. Important to consider is however, that the growing focus on profit and time pressure may mean that leaders are rewarded for self-interest, and thus humble leaders find it more difficult to advance.

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