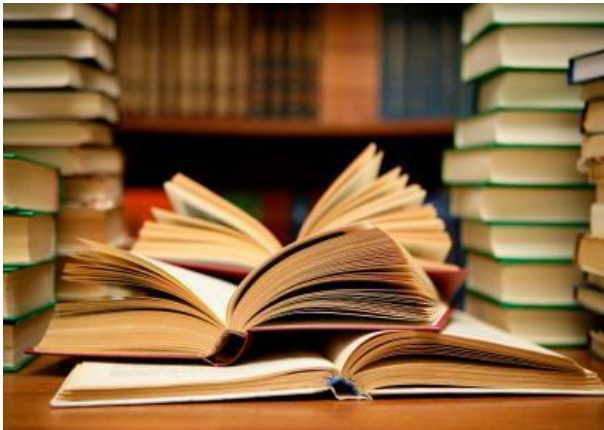# Negative leadership
The dark side!

All is not well in the sparkly world of leadership!

- Abusive, Aggressive, Bad, Bullying, Corrupt, Destructive, Laissez-faire, Narcissistic, Psychopathic, Toxic, Tyranical, Unethical, Undermining..... and lots of other "lovely" labels

- Fascinated by the topic? See:
  - Babiak, P. & Hare, R. (2006). *Snakes in suits*, New York. Harper Collins
  - De Haan, E. & Kasozi, A. (2014). *The Leadership Shadow*. London. Kogan Page
  - Schyns, B. & Hansbrough, T. (2010). *When leadership goes wrong*, Charlotte, North Carolina. Information Age Publishing
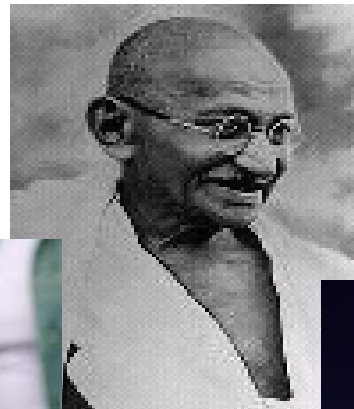
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Relevance of negative leadership

- How much coverage in the text books?

- How much discussed in the media?

Relevance (1)

- Research has focused too much on finding out about effective leaders (Schyns & Hansborough, 2010)

- Leadership typically portrayed as robust, stable and coherent (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003)

Relevance (2)

- But is the picture really this "rosy"?
- Well-being, stress, health, turnover are all related to destructive leadership
- Negative leadership is bad for business
- Ineffective / bad leaders have much **stronger effects** (Einarsen)

- Classic leadership classifications describe:
  - Autocratic, democratic and Laissez-faire (Lewin, Lippit & White 1939, White & Lippitt, 1968)

- Autocratic - Linked to Theory X (McGregor, 1960)

- Democratic – Linked to Theory Y

- Laissez-faire

Laissez-faire leadership

Until recently considered the worst it can get. But this is not the case!

Abusive supervision

Tepper (2000)

- non-physical forms of hostility by supervisors against direct reports, verbal and non-verbal

- Examples:

- "ongoing manifestations of hostility"

- Can and does cause
  - Increased anxiety and more family problems (Hoobler & Brass, 2006)
  - Increased labour turnover (Tepper, 2000)

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Bullying

Workplace aggression

- Many of the same behaviours as abusive supervision, BUT implied that this is a conscious decision
  - See Baron & Neuman (1998)
- By the leader
  - Ferris *et al.* (2007)
- By others
  - Hoel & Cooper (2001)

- Supervisor behaviour intended to physically or psychologically harm a worker or workers (Schat *et al.*, 2006)
- By leaders
- By others

See also: Vicarious bullying and workplace aggression E.g. Hoel & Cooper (2001)

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Petty Tyranny

- use of power and authority oppressively, capriciously and vindictively (Ashforth, 1994, 1997)

- See sources of Power e.g. (French & Raven, 1958, Etzioni, 1975)

- Examples:

- "Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it" (William Pitt, the Elder, 1770)

- "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." (John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, 1887)

Toxic leadership – Lipman-Bluman 2005

- Numerous destructive behaviours AND certain dysfunctional personal characteristics

- Toxic leaders: first charm, then manipulate, and ultimately leave their followers worse off than they found them."

- Inconsistency also causes issues:

- Serious and enduring poisonous effects on individuals, families, organi: communities, and even entire societies

Narcissistic leadership

Those in power positions who are   preoccupied with
adequacy, power, beauty, status,   prestige a[...]
reactive and self-deceptive (Kets de Vries 2004)

Overwhelming sense of entitlement

Trample on those who obstruct

Other nasties

- Unethical leadership
  - Leader behaviours that do not serve the collective (Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke & Van Knippenberg, 2010)
- Corrupt leaders
  - Intentionally through commission or omission (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Rodriguez, Uhlenbruck & Eden, 2005; Wesche et al., 2010)
- Unauthentic leadership
  - Immoral, low ethical standards, lack self-knowledge and self awareness, unreliable, and non-genuine (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1991; Ford & Harding, 2011)

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Destructive leadership

- "The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interests of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging its goals, tasks, resources and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates"

Einarsen et al. (2007:208)

Prevalence

- **Not well researched**
- See: Aasland et al. (2010); Einarsen (2010) & Tepper (2000)
- It is not unusual
- There are cultural differences (see for example: Rayner, 2005)
- Constructive leadership is by far the most prevalent (Einarsen, 2010)
- Caution should be taken with labels (Shaw, Erickson & Harvey, 2011)
- So negative leadership is common but not prevalent

Prevalence – Corrupt and unethical

- Better known about in the "High profile" cases
  - Enron, Bhopal, Barings etc.
- But what about the cases where results are hidden?
- How effective are "whistle-blowing" policies?
  - Enron whistle-blower could not get re-employment
- Are there contextual factors that increase the likelihood?
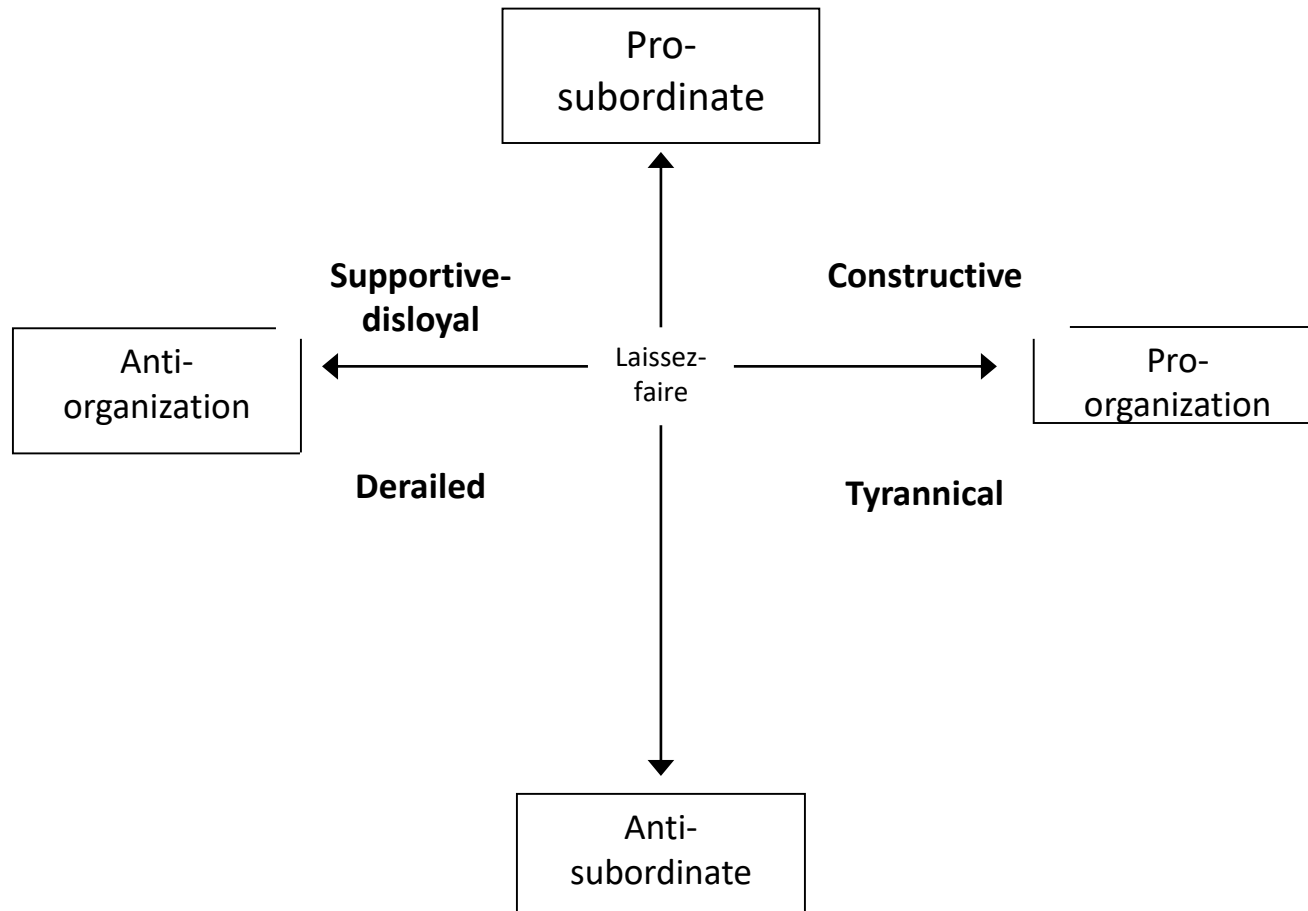
Context of negative leadership (1)

- Antecedents of destructive leadership (Bardes & Piccolo 2010)
  - Characteristics of the leader
  - Characteristics of the followers
  - Characteristics of the environment
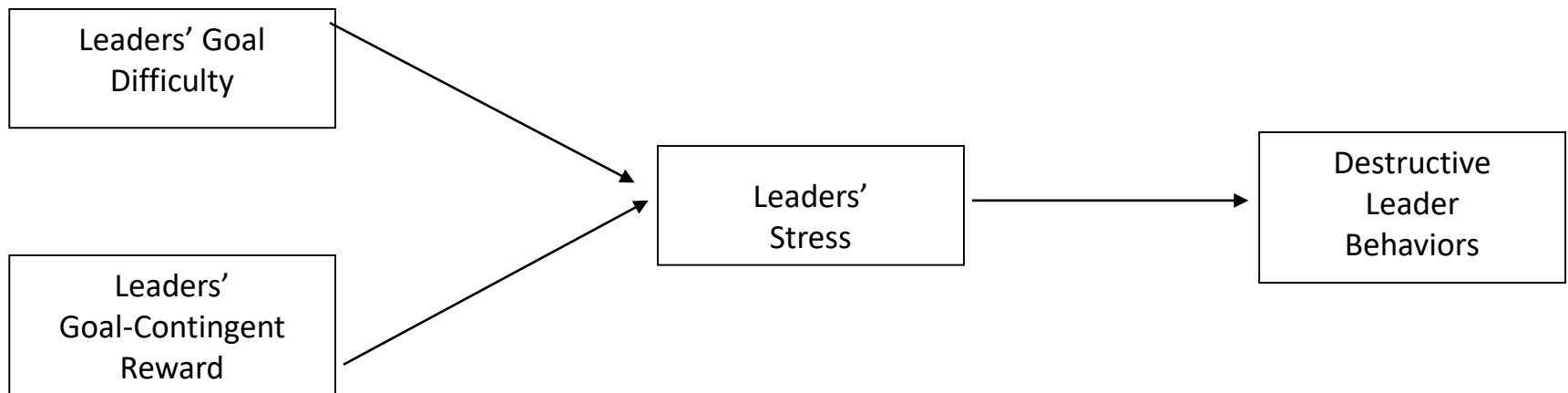
Why do we put up with it?

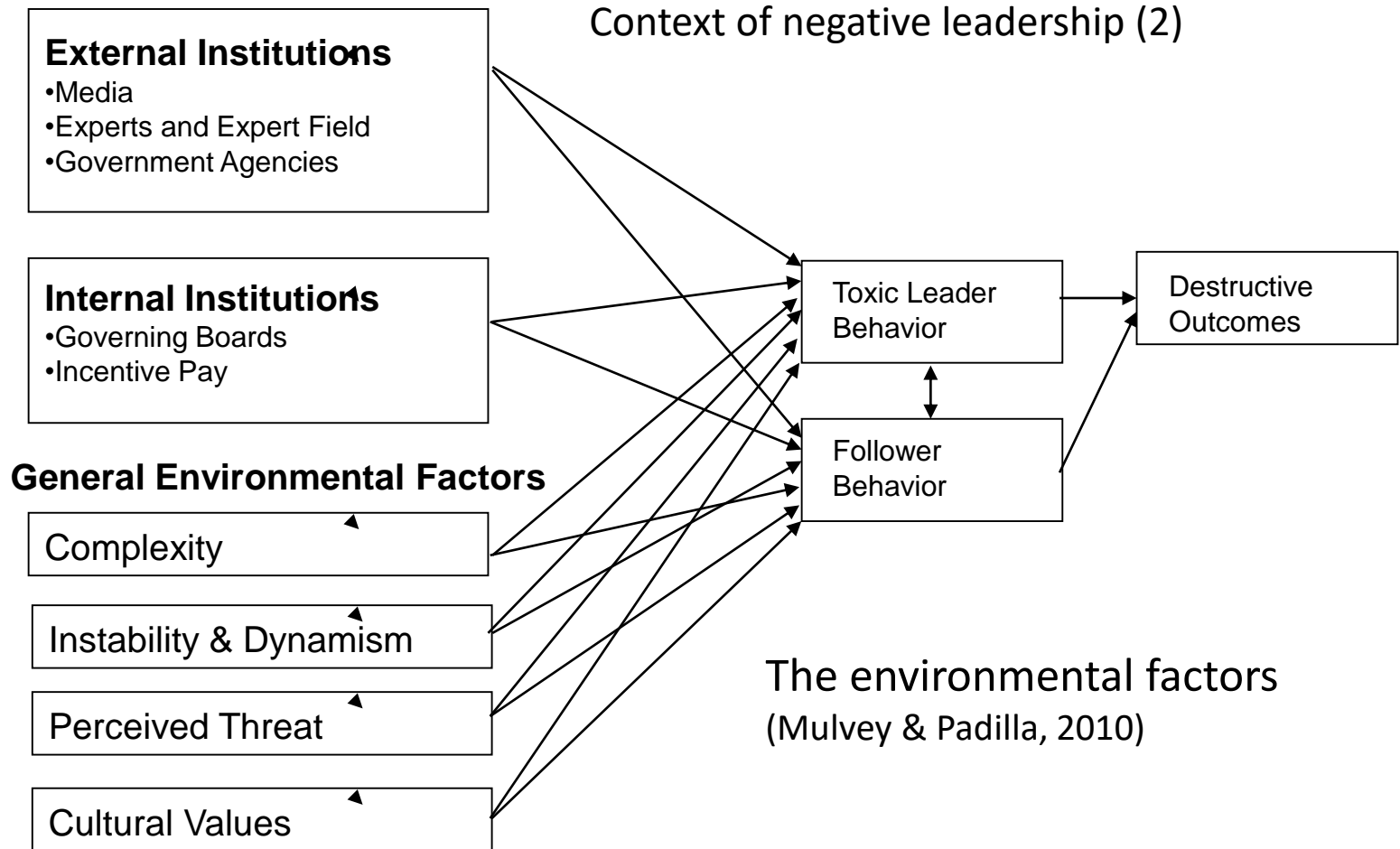- People are susceptible to toxic leaders
  - Many can be charming – at first!
- In crises, rapid change, and turbulence in everyday life, these people can seem strong
- Organisational acceptance
  - Cultural norm?
- Cloned recruitment
  - Once you have them they recruit in their own likeness
- Negative leadership is contagious
  - See for example Godkin & Allcorn (2009)

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Einarsen's model

Pro-subordinate

Supportive-disloyal   **Constructive**

Anti-organization   ← Laissez-faire →   Pro-organization

Derailed   **Tyrannical**

Anti-subordinate

Context of negative leadership (2)

External Institutions
•Media
•Experts and Expert Field
•Government Agencies

Checks and balances

Internal Institutions
•Governing Boards
•Incentive Pay

General Environmental Factors

Complexity

Instability & Dynamism

Perceived Threat

Cultural Values

Toxic Leader Behavior

Follower Behavior

Destructive Outcomes

The environmental factors
(Mulvey & Padilla, 2010)

See also Wang et al (2010) the "Dual Process model"

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