

Even Elias Edvardsen

## **Self-Disclosure in Leadership**

A Q-Methodological Study of 20 Leaders'  
Subjectivity on Self-Disclosing in Workplace  
Relationships

Master's thesis in Counselling

Supervisor: Jonathan Reams

Co-supervisor: Hannah Svennungsen

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Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences  
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning



Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology



*"Sincerity, that is, non-deceiving, means "putting forth one's whole being", technically known as "the whole being in action" ... In which nothing is kept in reserve, nothing is expressed under disguise, nothing goes to waste. When a person lives like this, he is said to be a golden-haired lion: he is the symbol of virility, sincerity, wholeheartedness; he is divinely human"*

*(Karen Horney, 1946, p. 163)*



## Abstract

In recent decades there appears to be an increasing interest for understanding leadership as a relational phenomenon. Scholars have advocated for relational transparency and self-disclosures playing a pivotal role for creating positive outcomes such as trust and openness in organizations, yet there appear to be few empirical accounts that explore leaders experience with self-disclosing in workplace relationships. This thesis project is a contribution to this discourse and seeks to answer the research question: *What is leaders' subjective experience of self-disclosures in the context of workplace relationships?*

To answer this question, 20 Norwegian leaders from a variety of leadership contexts were recruited and participated in a Q-methodological sorting. These participants sorted a set of 36 statements designed from both naturalistic and theoretical sources. A four-factor solution was chosen from the factor analysis and interpreted with the intention of answering the research question. In addition, four leaders representing each of the four factors participated in post-sorting interviews to nuance the interpretations.

The four factors that emerged were named; Factor 1: *I feel a freedom and permission to be personal at work*; Factor 2: *My role is to communicate expectations and create a culture of high accountability*; Factor 3: *I value integrity and relational transparency, but experience norms of conformity as limiting*; Factor 4: *I am relationally transparent when I feel safe*. The factor viewpoints *could* indicate that norms of intimacy and organizational culture influenced the leader's willingness to self-disclose, but also more individual elements such as implicit voice theories and personal values.

The factor configuration was further discussed in light of a sub-research question: *What factors may facilitate or limit leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships?* In my discussion chapter I answer this question by discussing the factor configurations from different theoretical perspectives. I argue that self-disclosure in leadership is a complex psychosocial phenomenon, and due to its complex nature might benefit from being understood through a holistic framework.





## Sammendrag

I de siste tiårene har det oppstått en økende interesse for å forstå lederskap som et relasjonelt fenomen. Forskere i feltet har argumentert for at relasjonell transparens og det som betegnes som «self-disclosure» (selv-avsløring, min oversettelse) spiller en viktig rolle for å skape positive utbytter som tillit og åpent i organisasjoner. Likevel synes det å være et fåtall empiriske studier som utforsker hvordan ledere opplever selv-avsløring i relasjoner på arbeidsplassen. Denne masteroppgaven er et bidrag inn i denne diskursen og søker å svare på forskningsspørsmålet: *Hva er lederes subjektive erfaring med selv-avsløring i kontekst av relasjoner på arbeidsplassen?*

For å svare på forskningsspørsmålet, ble 20 norske ledere fra et bredt spekter av lederskapskontekster invitert til å gjennomføre en Q-metodisk sortering. Deltakerne sorterte et sett med 36 utsagn designet fra både teoretiske og naturalistiske kilder om selv-avsløring i lederskap. En firefaktorløsning ble valgt på grunnlag av faktoranalyse og fortolket med intensjonen om å besvare forskningsspørsmålet. Videre deltok fire ledere som representerte de fire faktorene i et post-sorteringsintervju for å nyansere resultatet.

De fire faktorene ble fortolket og kalt: Faktor 1: *Jeg føler en frihet og tillatelse til å være personlig på jobb*; Faktor 2: *Min rolle er å kommunisere forventninger og skape en kultur av høy ansvarlighet*; Faktor 3: *Jeg verdsetter integritet og åpenhet, men erfarer at normer relatert til konformitet som begrensende*; Faktor 4: *Jeg er villig til å være åpen når jeg føler meg trygg*. Faktorsynene kunne indikere at normer relatert til intimitet og organisasjonskultur påvirker leders grad av åpenhet i selv-avsløring, men også at individuelle elementer som nærvær/fravær av implisitte stemme teorier og personlige verdier.

Faktorsynene ble videre diskutert i lys av underproblemstillingen: *Hvilke faktorer fasiliterer eller begrenser lederes villighet til selv-avsløring i relasjoner på arbeidsplassen?* I diskusjonskapitlet ser jeg på hvordan faktorsynene kan forstås opp mot ulike teoretiske perspektiver. Jeg argumenterer for at selv-avsløring i lederskap er et komplekst psykososialt fenomen som kan være tjent med å bli forstått gjennom et holistisk rammeverk.



## Preface

As I arrive at the final steps of writing this thesis, I cannot help but to feel deeply grateful. A self-disclosure from my end would be that I've found great joy and challenge along this narrow path. It is truly a privilege to be able to dedicate so much time into an area of great academic interest, and hopefully some of this engagement shines through the words in this thesis.

I first and foremost want to express my gratitude towards my teachers and mentors at the master's program in counselling at NTNU. You've all played a part in making these last two years awesome and transformative—I truly feel more human now.

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To my participants: Without your time, effort and trust, there would be no thesis. To those of you who I got to meet in person, thank you for trusting me by sharing your stories and experiences.

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Lastly, on a personal note, I want to disclose my love and gratitude to my girlfriend. Thank you for being the person you are and supporting me through the process of writing my thesis.



Even Elias Edvardsen

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Authenticity is said to be a buzzword among leaders today (Rosh & Offermann, 2013) and the line between organizational life and our private lives are increasingly being challenged and blurred (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). To face the ever-growing complexity, uncertainty and demands for interdependency in organizational life, scholars advocate that leaders are challenged to get more personally involved and vulnerable in their workplace relationships (Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2018). Prominent voices in the field of leadership theories present us with an imperative that leaders would benefit from acting in accordance with their ‘true selves’ in workplace relationships and that this will generate positive outcomes for the organization (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Kets de Vries, 2006; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). To be authentic, some have suggested that leaders present their ‘true selves’ (as opposed to a ‘fake self’) by displaying high levels of openness, self-disclosure and trust in close relationships (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Although this may sound attractive, it does not appear that scholars have considered exploring the phenomena related to self-disclosure and relational transparency at the level of lived experience, as leadership studies in general have been directed towards using quantitative approaches and creating normative accounts (Alvesson, 2019). I therefore grasped the opportunity to explore this relatively unexplored realm of leadership for my thesis project.

In this thesis, my aim is to explore Norwegian leaders experience and subjectivity towards self-disclosure in workplace relationships. My hope is that this can be a contribution in bringing new perspectives to the existing discourse I touched upon previously. In order to generate a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, I will utilize a Q-methodological approach to explore my research question. This is mainly due to the proposition that Q-method is highlighted as being suitable for studying human subjectivity in a holistic and systematic way (Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The empirical data in this thesis is based on 20 Q-methodological sortings, where leaders working in different organizational contexts, have sorted a set of 36 statements related to self-disclosure in workplace relationships. In the next section the research question will be presented, followed up by a reflection on why doing a leadership study on this topic is relevant from the perspective of counselling, some comments on the research question and a presentation on the structure of this thesis.

## 1.1. The research questions

The main research question for this thesis project is as follows:

*What is leaders' subjective experience of self-disclosures in the context of workplace relationships?*

Before I examine the components in my research question, I want to address the question why doing a leadership study is relevant from the viewpoint of counselling. Fikse (2013) addressed this question in her dissertation, but I also want to offer some reflections on this matter. I think that exploring my research question can be an interesting endeavor from the perspective of counseling research, since leadership in today's organizations is characterized by accelerating change, growing complexity and interdependency (Joiner & Josephs, 2007), as well as a calling for literature that explores more the relational space in which leadership is practiced (Edmondson, 2012; Schein & Schein, 2018). In the field of counselling, there have already been many contributions towards understanding how relationships develop and the role of self-disclosure in the helping encounter. Bridging these two fields, of leadership and counseling, could in my view contribute to a more nuanced understanding of leadership as a relational phenomenon, particularly since recent evidence points in the direction that relational capacities is an important variable for leadership effectiveness (Anderson & Adams, 2019). Despite critical voices raising concerns with leadership theory and studies being too leader-centric and normatively oriented (Alvesson, 1996, 2019; Rost, 1993), research does support the position that leadership matters as a variable contributing organizational performance and flourishing (Zenger & Folkman, 2009). Having shared these reflections, I now want to return to my research question.

My approach to the research question will be explorative. This is mainly due to the fact there does not seem to exist much research that gave first-hand accounts on how leaders themselves experienced self-disclosing in the context of workplace relationships. When I refer to *leader* in the research question, I build on an ontological understanding of leadership that is contextual and outcome-oriented (Drath et al., 2008). A leader is in this understanding a person whose practices are aimed at creating direction, commitment and alignment in a given context. This was the criteria for recruiting for participants in the study. When I refer to *subjective experience*, I refer to a person's point of view, which connects to the intention in Q-methodological studies of discovering something interesting about the subjectivity of persons (Stephenson, 1953). Furthermore, with the term *self-disclosure* I draw on Hargie's (2017) and McKay, Davis, and Fanning's (2009) definitions and distinctions on self-disclosure, who define self-disclosure as

the act of revealing information about yourself to the other. However, self-disclosure can also be understood more holistically (Reams, 2002). In this thesis I will primarily focus on verbal disclosures, since these are hypothesized to be more intentional than non-verbal disclosures such as body language and facial expressions (Hargie, 2017). I further view self-disclosure as interconnected to the notion of being relationally transparent in leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008) and Rogers' (1980) notion of being congruent in relationships (I will be returning to these conceptualizations in the next chapter). I considered using *authenticity* instead of self-disclosure, but found it more difficult to operationalize and problematic as some scholars have addressed (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Ford & Harding, 2011). *Workplace relationships* refers to the relational context in which the leader self-discloses. Since my approach is explorative, I've chosen to include both the dyadic and group level of relational context in my approach, as there may be differences with regards to self-disclosures in these contexts.

I've also raised a sub-question that I want to explore in my discussion chapter, which is:

*What factors may facilitate or limit leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships?* The reason for including this question is that I believe it opens up perspectives for exploring leader's willingness to self-disclose, as this can be of theoretical interest from the perspective of leadership practice and development, counselling education and theory development in general. I will be exploring this question with inspiration from integral thinking, which values the principle of wholeness and an understanding that psychosocial phenomena can be understood in at least four irreducible and interconnected perspectives (Reams, 2005; Wilber, 2000). Thus, this sub research question allows us to discuss my findings in with a holistic attitude and approach in the discussion chapter.

## **1.2. The structure of the thesis**

Having presented the theme and aim of this research project I will now briefly describe the structure of the thesis. *Chapter 2* provides an overview of the main theoretical perspectives that have informed my research process. *Chapter 3* is dedicated to the research methodology which the research is based upon. I will describe the research process as well as attend to important aspects related to research quality and ethical considerations. *Chapter 4* presents the results in form of an interpretation of the factors derived from the factor analysis. *Chapter 5* offers a discussion, where I will be exploring how the factors can be understood in light of theoretical perspectives to explore the research question. *Chapter 6* gives a conclusion of the thesis, as well as addressing limitations of the study, practical implications and looking at future research related to the theme of this thesis.



## **2. THEORY**

In this chapter I'll provide an overview of the main theoretical framework for my thesis. I begin by exploring how self-disclosure can be understood, before moving on to examining how leadership can be defined, as well as a literature review on research and literature related to self-disclosure in leadership. After this follows a brief look at the constructive-developmental perspective on leadership. I will also be presenting counselling theory on congruence, which is shown to be a concept related to self-disclosure. A brief review will be given on the construct of psychological safety, as well as exploring other perspectives are seen as related to leaders' willingness to self-disclose. Lastly, I look at how organizational culture can be understood and seen in connection to self-disclosure behaviors, and how workplace relationships may differ in terms of varying degrees of intimacy and relational quality. It is my aim to contextualize the theoretical perspective and make visible why I choose to include it in my thesis.

### **2.1. Self-disclosure – revealing yourself to another**

Self-disclosure can be understood as the act of communicating or revealing information about the self to another person (Hargie, 2017; McKay et al., 2009; Tardy & Smithson, 2018). Hargie (2017) argues that we can differentiate between verbal and non-verbal self-disclosure with regards to intentionality, meaning that the latter is the one we can hypothesize as having less conscious control over. There exist several different definitions on self-disclosure. Mader and Mader (1990) suggests that: "You self-disclose when you (1) intentionally give another person information about yourself (2) that the other person is not likely to get on his own and (3) that you realize could significantly affect your relationship to this person" (cited in Hargie, 2017, p. 235). This definition holds an assumption that a self-disclosure is intentional and will have relational consequences. A self-disclosure can further be conceptualized as containing four key features: it involves the use of a personal pronoun (such as "I..."); includes facts or feelings; has an object in the statement (the self or the other); and can point to events from the past, present or future (Hargie, 2017). The depth of intimacy in the disclosure can be influenced by the nature or quality of the relationship and relate to how private the content is. I have chosen to lean on this relational understanding of self-disclosure, since I am primarily interested in understanding it from the view of workplace relationships.

Traditionally, self-disclosure has often been conceptualized through Luft and Ingham's (1955) "Johari Window"-model, whereby self-disclosures expand fields of awareness between persons. The purpose of self-disclosures is often attributed to the development of relationships, as it is: "[...] the cement that binds the bricks in any relationship edifice. Without it, relational

structures are inherently unstable and prone to collapse” (Hargie, 2017, p. 267). Collins and Miller’s (1994) meta-analytic review found that there is a connection between self-disclosure and liking and discussed that this may not be directly connected to the content of the disclosure, but rather the symbolic function it represents, as self-disclosures are a way of communicating to the other that “I trust you”. By self-disclosing, the leader may experience an increased self-insight, a deepening of the relationship towards higher levels of intimacy, improved communication, a reduced feeling of guilt and release of suspended energy (McKay et al., 2009). It also seems to facilitate and model self-expression in others (Hargie, 2017) and disclosures of feelings particularly seem to be dependent on relationships having the qualities of safety, trust and respect (Collins & Miller, 1994; Edmondson, 2012).

The literature suggests using four categories of self-disclosure: feelings, personal facts, thoughts and needs (Hargie, 2017; McKay et al., 2009). *Feelings* relates to the expression of affect, which is what a person is experiencing on an emotional level in a given situation. Hargie (2017) notes that: “[...] the expression of personal feelings involves greater risk and places the discloser in a more vulnerable position” (p. 237). An implication from this quotation would be that we could suspect there exists a higher threshold for leaders to disclose their personal feelings, or at least if they are perceived as putting them in a vulnerable position. *Personal facts* relate to personal experiences from our own life narrative and can also include disclosure of our personal values. *Thoughts* go beyond simple observations and reveals judgments or evaluations about what we have experienced (Hargie, 2017). *Needs* focuses on the leader revealing his or her own needs and wants in relation to the other. An example of this could be delegation; this would in communication be formulated as a disclosure of a need. I have chosen to include these four categories of self-disclosure in my research design (see section 3.2.2.) since I am interested in seeing whether there exist differences on how leaders experience them. I will in the next section explicate my understanding of leadership, as my research also is situated in this research field and tradition.

## **2.2. What is leadership?**

There seems to be an inexhaustible amount of leadership theories generated from the previous century till now, where it appears to be as many theories as there are theorists. Alvesson (2019) refers to leadership as a “maddening concept” pointing to what meaning and assumptions scholars bring about when defining leadership is generally unclear or very general – whilst also criticizing the field of leadership studies for being too oriented towards ideology, reductionism and elitism. We find similar critiques by Rost (1993), who problematized the way in which leadership was defined: “the scholars do not know what it is they are studying, and the

practitioners do not know what it is they are doing.” (p. 8). How one defines leadership may be influenced by which academic discipline or tradition one is situated in (Rost, 1993), and Kellerman (2012) notes that there are over 1400 theories on leadership and 44 definitions of leadership. Drath et al. (2008) state that the problem with many leadership theories and studies is that the tripod ontology of leadership assumes that the relationship between leader, follower and common goal(s) constitutes leadership. For example, we see this tripod being manifested in Northouse’s (2018) definition of leadership: “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5). What Drath et al. (2008) propose is that an outcome-oriented ontology of leadership constituted by *direction*, *alignment* and *commitment* (DAC) avoids assumptions on what the processes and structures are and is more sensitive to contextual factors. The DAC-ontology acknowledges that the context of leadership may be very different from context to context; as more collaborative, interdependent and collective contexts would not fit in the more traditionally held assumptions.

Reams (2016) notes that leadership theories in general, even recent ones, can be said to be grounded in the assumption held by the aforementioned tripod, which can result in a biased and unnuanced understanding of leadership. I find this important to highlight to the reader, as I want to make my own understanding more explicit. This understanding would be sensitive to Rost’s (1993) critique on earlier definitions and theories on leadership that hold a strong individualistic perspective with heroic and normative undertones. As such, I acknowledge that leadership can have many faces (structures and processes) and can exist as both an individual and/or a collective process, which can be seen as a combination of the definition given by Rost (1993) and more recently by Ladkin (2010). Furthermore, leadership can also be viewed as an emotional process, where leaders’ express emotions and evoke emotions in employees (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002). Self-disclosures in leadership can relate to the outcomes described in the DAC-framework, for instance in how one discloses on thoughts and needs to create direction, alignment and commitment towards longer-term goals. Due to the purpose of this thesis project, I do not see it as relevant to elaborate further on theories of leadership, but I want to note that a thorough literature review was conducted and that historical and theoretical overviews of leadership theories can be found in the cited literature (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Northouse, 2018; Rost, 1993; Yukl, 2010). In the next section examine how self-disclosure is explored in leadership studies and literature.

### 2.2.1. Self-disclosure in leadership studies and literature

In my review on earlier research related to the subject of this thesis, I found literature that touches directly and indirectly upon the notion of self-disclosure in relation to leadership. A Norwegian study with 135 leaders and 207 employees showed that an experience of low relational quality between leaders and employees tended to reduce expressions of feelings, increase suppression of feelings and self-censorship (Glasø & Einarsen, 2008). Edmondson's (2012) research has shown that leaders who are willing to display fallibility with employees can have a significant effect on psychological safety in the workplace due to their often more evaluative role in the organization. Weischer, Jürgen, and Petersen (2013) found that leaders self-disclosing on their life story (storytelling) had positive effects on followers' perceptions on the leader's authenticity. Gibson, Harari, and Carson (2018) saw that the effects of self-disclosure for higher status disclosers (such as leaders) in context of task-oriented relationships could have negative implications as "status penalties", since displays of vulnerability could violate external expectations on them. Some authors have discussed how role expectations and organizational norms influence how and when leaders self-disclose, indicating that self-disclosure in leadership can backfire if poorly timed and inconsistent with organization norms (Collins & Miller, 1994; Rosh & Offermann, 2013). Bunker (1997) and Brown (2015) have argued that exposing one's vulnerabilities is a particularly important component in leadership for creating a deeper connection at the relational level. Yet, oversharing or disclosing vulnerabilities without a relational consideration is highlighted as problematic, as it paradoxically can lead to more distance than intimacy and trust (Brown, 2015; Rosh & Offermann, 2013; Taylor, 2013). I now turn my attention to a recent theoretical leadership construct that emphasizes self-disclosure to a certain degree.

It is well known that the recently developed authentic leadership theory has generated a lot of attention in the field of leadership studies (Avolio et al., 2009), where relational transparency is suggested as one of the four central components defining the construct (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Relational transparency as a construct, is in that theory described as leaders practicing an active process of self-disclosure (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005) and defined more accurately:

*Relational transparency* refers to presenting one's authentic self (as opposed to a fake or distorted self) to others. Such behavior promotes trust through disclosures that involve openly sharing information and expressions of one's true thoughts and feelings while trying to minimize displays of inappropriate emotions.

(Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 95, italics in original)



A problem with the discourse and literature generated on the authentic leadership (AL) theory construct, is that it is criticized for being primarily normative (Yukl, 2010), idealistic and based on positivistic/neo-positivistic research methods (Alvesson, 2019), and lacking a convincing ontology of the concept of authenticity (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012). However, despite these critiques, I do think that the concept of relational transparency connects to theme of this thesis: as: “The striking lack of grounded empirical research at the level of lived experience examining relational transparency has arguably led to AL being in tension with leadership practice.” (Kempster, Iszatt-White, & Brown, 2018, p. 15). I would argue that exploring leaders’ subjectivity on self-disclosure in context of workplace relationships could be an answer to the quotation above. I will in the next section turn our attention to the developmental component of leadership, as I view it as interconnected to leadership practices.

### **2.3. A constructive-developmental perspective on leadership**

Leaders, as all humans, move through stage-like developmental sequences through life, influencing their structure of meaning making (Kegan, 1994). The reason why I have chosen to include this perspective is that leadership is itself a complex social phenomenon, as recent theoretical advances have pointed out (McCauley et al., 2006). The constructive-developmental perspective has in recent decades become more explored and applied to the realm of leadership studies (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; McCauley et al., 2006; Reams, 2016; Rooke & Torbert, 2005). Kegan (1980) introduced the term *constructive-developmental* which can be explicated as follows:

The theory is “constructive” in the sense that it deals with a person's construals, constructions, and interpretations of an experience, that is, the meaning a person makes of an experience. It is “developmental” in the sense that it is concerned with how those construals, constructions, and interpretations of an experience grow more complex over time. (McCauley et al., 2006, p. 635)

In terms of leadership, research shows that leaders operate from different orders, stages or plateaus of consciousness, implying that the level of mental complexity will be qualitatively different from one stage to another stage (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016). Due to the scope of the thesis, I will be drawing on the literature built upon Kegan’s (1994) research and writings, since this is the framework I am the most familiar with and that I cannot afford to include all of them. Interested readers can however find an introduction to these models via the cited literature (McCauley et al., 2006; Reams, 2016). How can we further understand this theory in relation to leadership?

Kegan and Lahey (2009) write that there are particularly three plateaus or orders of consciousness that adults operate from or in between: the socialized mind (3<sup>rd</sup> order of consciousness); the self-authoring mind (4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness); and the self-transforming mind (5<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness). To understand what differentiates meaning making in these plateaus, Kegan (1994) uses a subject-object formulation. The implication is that what one *sees as an object* and what one is *subject to*, will be different between these developmental stages. Seeing the world through the socialized mind means that our meaning making is shaped by definitions and expectations from the environment, which one is embedded or socialized into (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). A possible implication could be that leaders at this stage will be more hesitant towards self-disclosing content that conflicts with internalized beliefs and feelings of other persons/organizations/ideologies/cultures, as the interpersonal relations is what one is *subject to* here. One way of understanding this is that in the socialized mind, meaning making is constructed from the outside-in, implying that one's sense of self is more dependent on being aligned with external influences.

The self-authoring mind however, will advance the creation of an independent self, meaning that this person will not be as *subject to* these outside sources, but be able to hold them as objects and consider them through a self-authored set of rules and principles (Kegan, 1994). One could say that a leader operating from this stage will be more inner-directed in the sense that the person is not as dependent on others approval (as in being *subject to*), which is reminiscent of Rogers' (1961/2004) descriptions of a 'fully functioning person' that is more self-directed. In the self-transforming mind, the autonomous self becomes an object, meaning that the leader is able to hold contradictions and question the limits of one's own ideology (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), which I interpret as being able to hold more contradictions ("both-and") and a higher perspective-awareness. I now turn my attention to the concept of congruence, a notion that is conceptualized as influencing leaders' willingness to self-disclose.

## **2.4. Congruence**

Congruence, or genuineness as it often is referred to, is a relevant concept in this thesis since it describes how a leader's degree of openness can be influenced by a dynamic interaction between a person's self-awareness, experience and communication. Rogers (1961/2004) wrote a great deal about the concept of congruence in relation to counselling and is recognized as being one of the most influential psychologists and thinkers in what has been described as the existential-humanistic counselling tradition (Ivey, D'Andrea, & Ivey, 2012). In Rogers' view, there was primarily one basic human motive which he named the *self-actualizing tendency*,

which is quite similar to Maslow's concept of self-actualization (Ivey et al., 2012); although we might say that Rogers focused less on the concept of basic needs (Kvalsund, 2003). Rogers used a growth-metaphor to describe this self-actualizing tendency, and he posited that the goal of any helping encounter was to create a climate of realness in which the other can become a 'fully functioning person'. Such a climate will be actualized if the core conditions of genuineness, acceptance and emphatic understanding are present in the relationship between persons (Rogers, 1980; Thorne, 2000, 2003). I suspect that an implication from this is that leaders who find themselves in a growth-promoting climate, will experience a sense of congruence, and thus hold a positive attitude towards self-disclosure behavior. Although Rogers primarily was concerned with the helping encounter, he later on asserted that his core conditions would be valid for all interpersonal relationships (Rogers, 1980, p. 45). Congruence is one of the three mentioned core conditions and thought to be the most complex and least explicated of the core conditions (Greenberg & Geller, 2001). But how did Rogers himself describe congruence?

In place of the term "realness" I have sometimes used the word "congruence". By this I mean that when my experiencing of this moment is present in my awareness and when what is present in my awareness is present in my communication, then each of these three levels matches or is congruent. (Rogers, 1980, p. 15).

As we see above, Rogers (1980) emphasized that congruence occurs when the three levels of experience, awareness and communication are congruent in the person. In Rogers view, congruence is fundamental for good communication and a basis for living in a *climate of realness* (Rogers, 1980, p. 160). As I understand Rogers concept of congruence, it not only means that a person is able to sense and be with what is present in his or hers experience, but also is able to transparently communicate the phenomena in the relational encounter. Congruence can thus be understood as a two-fold concept including these two components of self-awareness and relational transparency (Greenberg & Geller, 2001, p. 148).

It might also be of interest to discuss congruence in relation to incongruence. What are the implications of being incongruent in the Rogerian perspective? If a person is a "victim" of what Rogers describes as conditions of worth, it could imply that this person's self-concept would be negatively dependent on receiving approval or acceptance from others (Rogers, 1961/2004). A negative and disturbed self-concept, as it is conceptualized by Rogers (1961/2004), further involves that this person would be seeking validation from an external locus of evaluation. This disturbed self-concept can cause a discrepancy or incongruence to the natural organismic

experience, in which the incongruent person would not be tending to trust and accept his experience (Rogers, 1961/2004). Being incongruent may be similar to what Arbing (2010) refers to as being self-deceived. Self-deception implies that a person objectifies other people through externalization, which in turn leads to self-justification or “being in the box” as Arbing (2010) write. As such, self-deception is similar to the notion of the person being alienated to his organismic experience and sees the world, himself and others in a distorted way. This could for instance in the Rogerian perspective, be similar to a person being incongruent in the broadest sense. I also hold the understanding that Rogers’ concept of congruence is similar to what Perls (1969) writes about having a clear awareness or “figure” in the Gestalt perspective. If a person is experiencing an “unclear figure”, a growing manifestation of incongruence could be the consequence. Thus, the Gestalt view on dysfunctionality is quite similar to Rogers’ view on incongruence (Rogers, 1961/2004) between organismic experiencing and self-concept, even though it might seem less clear and complex (Greenberg, Rice, & Elliott, 1993). As shown above, congruence can be conceptualized differently; yet still appear to capture aspects of the phenomenon more or less the same. In the next section, we will explore the concept of psychological safety, which I view as related to self-disclosure behavior.

## **2.5. Psychological safety**

Edmondson (2012) has discussed the importance of feeling safe in workplace relationships to enable the full potential of learning and innovation capacities in teams and organizations. She writes that the term psychological safety “[...] describes a climate in which people feel free to express relevant thoughts and feelings. Although it sounds simple, the ability to seek help and tolerate mistakes while colleagues watch can be unexpectedly difficult” (p. 118). It is furthermore conceptualized as being a local group phenomenon and is influenced by two specific factors—the behavior of local leaders and the relational interactions in the group working together (Edmondson, 2012). How leaders respond to events influence what members perceive as appropriate or safe to do, particularly in terms of communicating an attitude of tolerance towards mistakes and self-disclosing their own fallibility. In this way, leadership is viewed as influencing the basic shared assumptions in the organizational culture (Edmondson, 2012). According to Edmondson (2012, p. 121) there are four specific risks that influence our willingness to expose ourselves; being seen as ignorant, incompetent, negative and/or disruptive. A group climate characterized as being low on psychological safety would have lower levels of intimate disclosures from members, such as sharing mistakes, and members being afraid to be humiliated, punished, embarrassed, rejected for speaking up or revealing themselves (Edmondson, 2012). The ideas underlying the concept of psychological safety may

be viewed as not being unique or new, although the research generated around it seems to validate that it is an important factor in organizational cultures and a variable influencing the degree of openness in a given group. For instance, Rogers (1961/2004, p. 357) explicitly stated that he views psychological safety as an important condition for creativity, since this would give the person a feeling of freedom and not be afraid of or fear the consequences of making mistakes. In the next section we'll take a closer look at how underlying assumptions might influence leaders' self-disclosure behavior.

### **2.5.1. Fear of speaking up**

Fear is a factor associated with self-disclosure avoidance (Tardy & Smithson, 2018) and is therefore a relevant perspective for understanding leaders' self-disclosure behavior. How fear inhibits disclosure behavior can further be understood through the perspective of implicit voice theories (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). In short, research suggest that self-censorship occurs when a person experiences the risk associated with speaking up (or disclosing) as being too high. This means that there is an asymmetrical relation between the balance of fear and the perceived potential rewards—leading to silence or lower levels of self-disclosure. The relational consequence of a leader (or a member of an organization) perceiving a negative risk of speaking up in a situation, is the likelihood that the leader's willingness to self-disclose will decrease, even though the disclosure may be constructive for the work being done (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Implicit voice theories are born out of the motive for self-protection and located as deeply seated taken-for granted assumptions in the individual, which may make it difficult to both be aware of and to override them (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). I view this perspective as relevant for my thesis, since this is one way of understanding leader's unwillingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships. As with the ideas of psychological safety being similar to the writings of Rogers (1980), so is the idea of implicit voice theories to the writings of Horney (1946). Horney described three main tendencies in which we react to perceived threats to protect ourselves when experiencing anxiety; *moving towards*, *moving away* and *moving against*. The basic postulate, as I understand Horney, is that these tendencies manifest themselves differently to each person, and that the extent in which they manifest are dependent on our feeling of safety and self-worth. *Moving away* implies that one withdraws, hides in silence and/or avoid self-disclosures. *Moving towards* takes the form of a person excessively complying, by seeking to please and appease others instead of self-disclosing their actual experience. *Moving against* is the most aggressive tendency, whereby the person mobilizes power and pushes back others through asserting controlling behavior. Horney (1946) writes that there are several types of fear that show up in our relational interactions. The most common fears are the fear of discovery, exposure, humiliation, losing equilibrium, self-control and

disregard. Kegan and Lahey (2009) assert that: “Anxiety, we have gradually come to appreciate, is the most important—and least understood—private emotion in public life” (p. 48). For instance, one could interpret avoidance of disclosures as a leadership style or related to personality traits, but the perspective of implicit voice theories, fear and basic assumptions offers us another way of understanding why some leaders might be less willing to self-disclose in workplace relationships. Besides psychological safety and self-protective structures, organizational culture is another component that can mediate leaders’ willingness to self-disclose.

## **2.6. Organizational culture and norms**

The reason I want to draw attention to the perspective of organizational culture, is that leadership in any group (or organization) could be expected to be influenced and mediated by multiple levels of an organizational culture (Schein, 2017). The implication is that self-disclosure behavior may not only be governed by individual internal factors such as basic assumptions and fear, but beliefs and assumptions developed as a product of group learning. Schein (2017) defines organizational culture in this way:

The culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to those problems. This accumulated learning is a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness. (Schein, 2017, p. 6)

As we see above, cultural factors as shared beliefs, values and norms over time becomes implicit in the sense that the members of the group internalize them as shared assumptions. Furthermore, Schein’s (2017) model operates with three levels of analysis: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2017). Artifacts, the first level, can be thought of as visible characteristics, which we can observe and describe explicitly. Second, if we for instance ask a leader a question of why she choose to share her evaluation or interpretation in a meeting, the answer given can take the form of a justification connected to espoused values. Yet, there might also be an underlying taken-for-granted assumption influencing the behavior, which is more difficult to describe or observe – this is the third and deepest, most subtle level of the culture, which Schein (2017) describes as basic assumptions. My understanding of Schein’s (2017) definition on organizational culture, is that a leader’s behavior and how the person thinks, feels, perceives, will likely be influenced by cultural

factors. Connected to the previous section on the constructive-developmental perspective, I also hold the understanding that cultural norms (from the global level of macro-cultures in Norwegian society) become internalized in the socialized mind process (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) that is interconnected to the organizational culture. The nature of workplace relationships is another component I want to address in relation to organizational cultures.

### **2.6.1. The nature of workplace relationships**

I suspect that there will exist differences among the organizational cultures in terms of norms related to intimacy and development of relationships. Schein (2017) argues that the degree of honesty and openness in a workplace relationship will be mediated by shared assumptions on what is considered as proper behavior and how one is to relate with each other and between members and persons with higher status. He differentiates these shared assumptions into four levels or forms of relationships, ranging from level minus 1 to level 3. Level minus 1 relationships are coercive and characterized by a negative and impersonal dynamic, whilst level 1 relationships are more mutual, but limited by being transactional role and rule-based. At level 2, a deeper trust and openness is developed, and at level 3 the relationship moves into the intimacy of lovers, as they are more emotionally charged and have a total mutuality. Readers familiar with counselling literature and relational philosophy will see that these levels are similar to the person-in-relation framework (Kvalsund, 1998; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Macmurray, 1961/1991) and Buber's (1959) distinctions between 'I-It' and 'I-Thou'-relationships, where the more developed relationships will be characterized by a deeper interdependency. A higher relational quality, as symbolized in more intimate and mutual dialogue between the persons in relation could, as I understand it, facilitate more genuine self-disclosures from the person. A relationship characterized by a high relational quality is also proposed as being *co-actualizing* (Motschnig-Pitrik & Barrett-Lennard, 2010), which expands Rogers' (1951, 1961/2004) self-actualizing tendency to the level of relationship systems. As I want to strive towards an integral or holistic understanding of self-disclosure in leadership, I do believe that including this collective and relational perspective will help us in achieving that goal for interpreting the data later on.

### **2.7. Summary of the chapter**

The main goal for this chapter was to present the theoretical perspectives that have informed my research process, and that I view as relevant for this thesis project. Self-disclosure in leadership is here viewed as a complex social phenomenon that may be understood through both individually and collectively located components. In the next chapter we turn our attention to the research methodology this thesis is based on and present my research process.





### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method I chose for gathering empirical data in this master project was Q-methodology. As the focus in this thesis is on exploring leaders' subjectivity on self-disclosure, I argue that the Q-methodological approach will allow me to study leaders' subjectivity in a systematic manner (Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2012), where: "[...] the emphasis is on their communicated point of view, which expresses their meaning pattern of experience on a particular phenomenon" (Svennungsen, 2011, p. 148). This approach makes it possible to find a holistic representation of leaders' subjectivity that is sensitive to subjective differences as well as the similarities between them. Other researchers have also demonstrated that this methodology can be employed in leadership studies (Fikse, 2013; Militello & Benham, 2010). My aim for this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of Q-methodology and introduce a selection of key principles in Q, whilst also elaborating on how my research process was prepared, conducted and finalized. I will also discuss research quality and address some ethical dimensions in relation to the research.

#### 3.1. Q-methodology

Q-methodology refers to both a research philosophy and a specific scientific method for studying human subjectivity (Smith, 2001; Svennungsen, 2011). In terms of scientific method, we collect and construct a sample of statements and invite people to sort them according to their own subjective viewpoint and analyze these sortings to find existing patterns in them (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). This methodology is based on Stephenson's (1902-1989) innovative approach on what is known as Spearman's method for factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Stephenson was critical to the view that humans' subjective dimensions, such as feelings, thoughts, behavior and attitudes, were to be reduced through objective generalizations and psychometric testing (Allgood & Thorsen, 2010; Stephenson, 1953, 1983). It is this alternative perspective on studying human subjectivity from a self-referential point of view we find the uniqueness of Q, and what distinguishes it from what we often refer to as R methodology, which usually employs tests or traits as variables to sample of persons (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In Q-methodological studies, we do not seek to validate or falsify a hypothesis that is set *a-priori*, strictly tied to a theoretical proposition as in the more traditional hypothetic-deductive approach (Kvalsund, 1998). Instead, we use an experimental approach with the aim of discovering something new by formulating hypotheses through abduction *a-posteriori*, which implies that the meaning of the items is inferred after the data is collected (Brown, 1980; Kvalsund, 1998; Stephenson, 1953). This is furthermore expressed in the principle of abduction, that I explicate in the next section.

### **3.1.1. Abduction and discovery**

The Q-methodological approach can be seen as an extension of Peirce's thinking: that abduction is a creative way of extending knowledge (Stephenson, 1961). To be more specific, abduction can according to Tavory and Timmermans (2014) be defined as a way of thinking in research, methods and theory that "[...] nurtures theory construction without locking it into predefined conceptual boxes" (p. 4). Traditionally we distinguish between inductive and deductive inference in research, where deduction represents a "top-down" logic and induction a "bottom-up" logic (Sohlberg & Sohlberg, 2013; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Abduction however, puts other demands on our thinking than deduction and induction as "it is a process of creating hypothesis not of testing them in the hypothetico-deductive sense" (Allgood, 1997, p. 10). Q-method represents a method primed for discovery in the way one utilizes factor analysis to discover something new and unexpected. Abduction is thus a matter of creativity and discovery, not primarily a logic of inference (Sohlberg & Sohlberg, 2013), which I find truly exciting from the position of being the researcher. Paavola (2004) made the argument that abduction is a matter of *strategy*, a way of making meaning that must be understood on its own premises. Operant subjectivity is another central principle in Q-methodology and the topic of the next section.

### **3.1.2. Operant subjectivity**

Stephenson (1953) argued that subjectivity without a visible action only remains in potentiality. This implies that in the moment we act upon the world, our subjectivity is involved and becomes manifested as *operant subjectivity*. Allgood (1997) writes that subjectivity itself is *self-referential*, meaning that: "subjectivity in the sense of self-reference is expressed through the action of referring to one's own experience or knowledge as the basis for understanding what "I" am doing in action" (p. 11). In other words, one's subjectivity stems from one's own point of view and can be seen in relation to the "Other" (Allgood, 1997; Kvalsund, 1998). On this basis, it is possible to see a resemblance between the understanding and emphasis on subjectivity in Q and phenomenology which is also oriented towards understanding human experience from the viewpoint of the individual (Taylor, Delprato, & Knapp, 1994). Where R methodology is distancing itself from the subjective dimension of reality, Q-methodology embraces and acknowledges it (Smith, 2001). Moving on, *concourse* is another central and important concept in Q.

### **3.1.3. Concourse and related terms**

In Q-methodology, *concourse* is a vital component that refers to communication of meaning between persons. *Concourse* is simply an overarching field of shared knowledge and meaning

existing in every situation and context, from which it is possible to derive a population of statements or expressions (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Wolf (2010) argues that subjectivity always is interconnected to a field of *concourse*. The concourse finds itself in a close relation to the process of *consciring*, which can be understood as the process of sharing knowledge between persons (Allgood, 1997). The concourse is further connected to the notion of *transitive thought*, meaning: “[...] the free flowing, unpredictable, and spontaneous interchange of subjective narratives” (McKeown & Thomas, 2013, p. 25). *Q-sample* is a collection of statements or other objects such as images, sounds, sculptures or other forms of expressions that are in a logical connection to the concourse (Allgood & Thorsen, 2010). This sample can further be understood as representing “the generalized Other”, so that by engaging one’s own subjectivity in relation to this sample, one is in a symbolic dialogue with the “Other” (Allgood, 1997; Kvalsund, 1998). I now turn my attention to the specific stages of the research process.

### **3.2. The research process**

There are specific procedural steps for doing Q-methodological research: one identifies the concourse; construct a Q-sample; gathers a selection or sample of persons; administer Q-sortings; conduct factor analysis; and interpret the results (Brown, Durning, & Selden, 2008; Sæbjørnsen & Ellingsen, 2015; Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). In the next sections I will outline the research process as it unfolded in this thesis project.

#### **3.2.1. Exploring the concourse and defining the Q-sample**

The first step is to explore and identify the concourse. Brown (1980) has noted that the process of generating the Q-sample is to be considered “[...] more an art than a science” (p. 186). What I understand as important is that the Q-sample should reflect a comprehensive and balanced coverage of the concourse, although: “The perfect Q set is probably a thing of fantasy and fiction” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 63). As part of this process, I began recording various statements found in the public discourse on leadership and self-disclosure early on in the process. I collected statements from various theoretical sources, as those mentioned in my theory section, and from naturalistic sources, such as from the conversational field with peers and others, who were thought to be in connection to the concourse through their leadership experience. An example of a naturalistic source is the conversation I had with a senior leader, who had decades of experience with being in different leadership roles. I also read various newspapers and journals, such as *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Ledernytt* and *Harvard Business Review*, looking for signs of how people were communicating in relation to the topic. Over a period of approximately four months I generated somewhere around 250 statements, which became the basis for the next stage in the research process.

### 3.2.2. Experimental design

The overall research design for this thesis project is experimental. It is experimental in the way the Q-sample is designed to create a representative population from the concourse, through modelling via what is known as Fisher’s principles of a balanced-block approach (Watts & Stenner, 2012). To help me with the intention of arriving at a comprehensive and satisfying balance in the Q-sample, I utilized the *Fisher balanced block design* approach (Kvalsund, 1998; Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2012). By systematically categorizing the statements in independent effects and levels, this design approach helps the researcher in creating a design with distinctive combinations based on the different effects and levels. As part of this process, each combination was designed with both positive and negative meaning as recommended in the literature (Kvalsund, 1998). I found this approach very useful in terms of creating a logical structure for the Q-sample.

Effect	Level				Cells
<b>Self-disclosure</b>	Feelings (A)	Thoughts(B)	Needs (C)	Personal facts (D)	4
<b>Experience</b>	Congruence (E)	Safety (F)	Organizational norms (G)		3
Sum combinations					4x3= 12

*Table 1: Experimental research design for the study.*

In the table above (Table 1) one can see the cell design constructed for this study. There are two effects included here, the levels of *self-disclosure* and *experience*. The effect of *self-disclosure* included the levels *feelings*, *thoughts*, *needs* and *personal facts*, and is based on McKay et al. (2009) and Hargie’s (2017) distinctions on self-disclosure categories as presented in the theory chapter. In the early stages of the research process, I considered excluding the category of personal facts, as I suspected there would not be as much risk associated with this kind of disclosure based on the literature (Hargie, 2017). However, I chose to include it as an exclusion could be seen as reducing a dimension that could be significant, particularly since my study is of a more exploratory nature. The effect of *experience* consists of *congruence*, *safety* and *organizational norms*, and is thought to represent factors hypothesized as interconnected to the experience of self-disclosing based on theory and research. The basis of including levels of experience that are pointing to different perspectives is grounded in an inspiration from what is described as the integral framework (Reams, 2005; Wilber, 2000); *congruence* represents the

individual perspectives; *safety* and *organizational norms* represent the collective perspectives. This cell design gives 12 possible combinations ( $4 \times 3 = 12$ ): AE, AF, AG, BE, BF, BG, CE, CF, CG, DE, DF, DG. With three statements per combination this arrives at 36 statements in total, constructed with a mix of positively and negatively charged statements for each combination (see appendix B).

After I had constructed this design, I continued the process by aligning my sample of statements to the different effects and levels in the design. It should be noted that I spent quite a lot of time in nuancing and revising both the design and the Q sample itself, before settling on a final set. To further increase the balance in the Q-sample, I followed Rogers' (1995) suggestion on conducting pilot sortings. I invited a peer student with leadership experience and a person with a considerable amount of leadership in the private sector to complete a sorting (not participants in this study). The feedback I received from them was helpful, and a selection of statements were adjusted as a consequence. I also completed a sorting myself, to see if I experienced the sample as balanced, as well as becoming more aware of my own subjectivity on the topic. The final Q-sample consists of 36 statements based on a combination of theoretical and naturalistic sources—an approach combining the strengths of both approaches (Sæbjørnsen, Ellingsen, Good, & Ødegård, 2016). My sample is a bit below what is recommended in the literature, which is between 40 and 80 statements, but the most important aspect is that these are tailored in alignment to the researcher's intention with the study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Even though the sample carries a meaning derived from naturalistic and theoretical sources, it is important to note that it is the informants' *own meaning* that is projected onto these items, via the sorting procedure that is central further on (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In terms of Q-samples being slightly unbalanced, this may be viewed as a problem of lesser importance, due to the fact that Q methodology is more oriented towards inductive inference and abductive logic (Kvalsund, 1998). Watts and Stenner (2012) also assert that even though the final Q-set may have significant weaknesses, it will still have potentiality to produce functional results, as the sorting procedure involves participants applying their own meaning to the ranking of the statements. In retrospect, I could have considered including more statements in my Q-set to provide my participants with “more space” to express themselves subjectively. The next stage is to recruit a sample of persons to administer the Q-sortings.

### **3.2.3. P-sample**

In Q-methodological studies we use the term *P-sample* to refer to the sample of persons included in the study (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest that the P-sample should not exceed the number of statements in the Q-sample. My research design

includes 36 statements, and the sample of 20 leaders would as such be acceptable. The P-sample in this study is primarily recruited from a theoretical interest; since it was in my interest to find persons who was familiar with the concourse represented in the Q-sample, who had a lived experience with the phenomena of self-disclosing in workplace relationships. Therefore, I primarily invited persons with experience in leadership positions, or those who were working towards generating leadership outcomes. I was able to recruit 20 persons that met the criteria set above, by utilizing my own professional network and the network from my associates in other sectors. The first contact was over mail, where an information and consent form (see appendix D) was sent in advance, giving each participant an informed basis on whether to participate or not. The final P-sample is represented with persons from different sectors, ages, gender, geographical location and a variation of leadership experience. Examples of leadership contexts here are higher education, health care, finance, voluntary organizations, student organizations, engineering consulting, municipality administration and telecommunication. The person sample varied in terms of geographical location, spread across three different counties.

### **3.2.3. Sorting condition**

I provided my P-sample with a sorting condition, which essentially gives the person sorting the statements a direction or condition for this operation. As my study follows the principles for extensive Q-methodological studies, I only needed to provide a single set of conditions (McKeown & Bruce, 2013). I considered doing an intensive study, where one usually includes a smaller P-sample and provides them with multiple sorting conditions (McKeown & Bruce, 2013). However, as I wanted to approach my research question in a more exploratory way, I found the extensive approach more suitable. The direction or condition given by me was that participants were asked to sort the statements in accordance to their personal experience with being authentic in workplace relationships (see appendix C). I chose to use the word ‘authentic’ in the sorting condition, since ‘self-disclosure’ did not translate easily to Norwegian, and was considered to be more difficult to grasp than the word ‘authentic’, although there exist critiques on the ontological basis in which leadership researchers use the word ‘authentic’ (Alvesson, 2019; Ford & Harding, 2011; Lawler & Ashman, 2012). The researcher is also advised in providing the P-sample with a set of clear instructions for the sorting procedure, which I will address in the next paragraph.

In terms of procedural specifications, I followed Watts and Stenness’ (2012) advice on constructing a good set of instructions, since most of my participants would conduct the sorting remotely. I therefore chose to include images in the instruction, that exemplified specific stages

of the sorting (see appendix C). The sorting instruction in this study asked the participants to sort 36 statements from “most like me” (+5) to “least like me” (-5) in a quasi-normal distribution curve (see Table 2 below). Although this distribution model may give the sorting a forced or restricted feeling, this model is actually highlighted as the most convenient for facilitating the item ranking process (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Least like me											Most like me				
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5					
[Empty box]															
[Empty box]		[Empty box]							[Empty box]						
[Empty box]			[Empty box]					[Empty box]							
[Empty box]				[Empty box]			[Empty box]								
[Empty box]					[Empty box]		[Empty box]								

Table 2: Sorting matrix for 36 statements

The procedural instructions first asked the participants to sort the statements in three stacks, following the categories “like me”, “unlike me” and “indifferent or ambiguous”. After this they were asked to continue with placing statements in each polarity, indicating that the statements with the highest psychological significance were placed in the tails of the curve. The principle of *psychological significance* implies that the statements which are the most salient, create the strongest reaction, or the ones they identify the most/least with for the person sorting (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Statements placed in the middle area (at 0) are usually neutral, more ambiguous and/or ambivalent to the sorter (McKeown & Bruce, 2013). After sorting all of the statements on a desk, the participants were asked to review their configuration and adjust it before finalization. 19 of the collected sortings were conducted without my presence, as they were either sent by mail or delivered individually, whilst one sorting was conducted in my presence. After I had collected all of the 20 sortings, I began the process of factor analysis.

**3.2.4. Factor analysis**

Factor analysis in Q methodology refers to: “[...] the statistical means by which respondents are grouped—or, more accurately, group themselves—through the process of Q sorting” (Bruce & McKeown, 2013, p. 51). How can we understand what a factor is? Simply put, a factor represents a group of persons (or a single person) that share a similar subjective perspective, attitude, or viewpoint on the theme (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Another way of understanding this, is that a factor represents a generalized view in society (Svennungsen, 2011). Deriving factors that are interpretable is ultimately the goal for this stage in the research process (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Factor analysis may at first appear very straightforward as a technical

procedure, but it also involves qualitative considerations (Bruce & McKeown, 2013). I will address how this process was conducted in my thesis project in the following text.

To conduct factor analysis, I utilized the computer-based software PQ-method (Schmolck, 2014). This software helped me with the mathematical calculations, in alignment with the methodological principles in Q (Brown, 1993). Allgood and Kvalsund (2010) posit that the dynamic between a whole and its parts in Q methodological factor analysis, makes it a phenomenological-hermeneutical oriented process, since the focus is on what the factors communicates in relation to subjectivity. In this stage of the research, I raise the question: “What is an acceptable factor solution?” To answer this question, Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest that an acceptable solution will be: sensitive and responsive to the data; aligned with the analytical aims and general strategy; be methodically, statistically and theoretically acceptable; as well as allowing one to make good sense of data for the reader. I plotted all the sortings into the software by hand, in accordance with their placement and values. None of the 20 sorting sheets had errors like double registration of statements or statements missing. Each sorting was then correlated in relation to the entire set, producing a unrotated factor matrix. I chose to extract factors with the principal component analysis (PCA) method, since it is mathematically precise and maximizes the explained variance in each factor (Svennungson, 2011). The PCA provided me with relevant statistical characteristics, such as correlation coefficients and eigenvalues and an unrotated factor matrix including eight factors (see Table 3 below).

<b>Factor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	9.759	1.766	1.559	1.229	1.132	0.911	0.666	0.609
<b>% expl. variance</b>	49	9	8	6	6	5	3	3

*Table 3: Unrotated factor matrix.*

From the unrotated factor matrix, I saw that there initially seemed to be a basis to explore a three-, four- and five-factor solution, given that the Kaiser-Guttman criterion suggest exploring factors with an eigenvalue in excess over 1.00 (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Brown, 1980; McKeown & Bruce, 2013). An eigenvalue is simply the squared sum of squared loadings for the factor (Brown, 1980). It was also of interest to find a factor solution that explains a considerable amount of variance, and I found that a four-factor solution explains 71.5% of the variance and that a five-factor solution explains 77.2% variance. I chose to rotate a four- and five-factor solution, using the varimax rotation method. Factor rotation is: “[...] the system by



which we ensure that each factor offers us the best possible, or most meaningful, vantage point from which to view our subject matter. This is achieved by moving or rotating the factor axes through factor space” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 142). Varimax rotation is the most used method of rotation in Q-methodological studies to achieve a simple structure, as well as interpretable factors that includes as many defining Q-sorts (high factor loadings) as possible (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This form of rotation (varimax) was chosen since it seemed most appropriate for providing me with orthogonal factors, to explain the views existing in relation to the phenomenon, as well as giving a simple structure.

Since I was interested in finding a factor-solution that explained a lot of the variance, I seriously considered the five-factor solution. After reviewing the statistical characteristics, I found that there was relatively high correlation between factor 1 and 2 in this solution (.706), weakening the argument to choose this solution, since this is above the .38 borderline of significance (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The lower the correlation is between factors, the clearer is the difference between them. However, the four-factor solution had much lower correlations between the factors with correlation values below the .2 level, essentially indicating that this solution is more acceptable in statistical terms (see Table 4 below for an overview of the factor correlations).

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>
<b>Factor 1</b>	1.000	-0.044	-0.068	0.157
<b>Factor 2</b>	-0.044	1.000	0.163	-0.114
<b>Factor 3</b>	-0.068	0.163	1.000	0.035
<b>Factor 4</b>	0.157	-0.114	0.035	1.000

*Table 4: Factor correlations for the four-factor solution.*

Factor analysis is not only a matter of considering statistical factors; one also has to look at qualitative aspects and include theoretical consideration (Brown, 1980). As such, I noticed that in the four-factor solution there were two factors (factor 2 and 4) that were defined by one variable (person), although defined by a high factor loading (see appendix E). It has been argued that there should not be less than two variables defining a factor (Fikse, 2013), but if there are qualitative reasons for including these it remains a valid argument (Brown, 1980; Svennungsen, 2011). After examining the factor configuration closely, I found such an argument to be valid, since these factors indeed portrayed a different and interesting perspective to the overall configuration. This is why I chose to include them. Had I excluded these factors, I worry that I would have risked losing valuable perspectives. Having explored the different factor solutions

and considered them in both statistically and qualitative terms, I landed on a four-factor solution being acceptable and interesting from a theoretical point of view. I should note that one of the variables did not load significantly on any of the four factors, which usually occurs when rotating the factors. Factor 1 is defined by 15 persons, factor 3 by two persons and factor 2 and 4 is defined by one person each. Having chosen a factor-solution, the succeeding stage is to interpret the factors holistically, which is addressed in the next section.

### **3.2.5. Factor interpretation**

After the factor analysis is completed, it becomes important that the researcher intentionally and subjectively interprets the factors (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953, 1961, 1983). The goal in this phase is to search for meaning and generate hypothesis through the abductive strategy (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This requires that the researcher dynamically interacts with the factor configurations, by examining statements that have a high loading in the factor, consensus statements and other aspects, and sees them interdependently in relation to the other factors (Kvalsund, 1998; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The factors are not self-explanatory, as Stephenson (1983) notes: “Understanding a factor in Q is a complex matter, involving every trick of *abduction*” (p. 74, italics in original). Brown (1980) also notes that much of this is left to the researchers’ intention, and that there is no simple solution to how the researcher interprets behavior, values and preferences in the factors. We can also see the factor interpretation as a process of entering the Q-sorters “mind” (Wolf, 2010). I started this process by examining the generated factor arrays (see appendix G), which represents an aggregate, calculating all the individual sortings defining the factor into one array (Watts & Stenner, 2012). To help me with this endeavor, I choose to utilize what Watts and Stenner (2012) refer to as crib sheets, essentially giving a systematic overview of the polarities between the factors. In chapter four I will elaborate a bit more on this part of the research process, before I present the factors. For now, I want to turn attention to another integral part of my interpretation process, which is the inclusion of post-sorting interviews.

### **3.2.6. Post sorting interviews**

Brown (1980) writes that the step of conducting follow-up interviews is often overlooked in Q-methodological studies, and advocates for including it in the research process. Conducting post sorting interviews is also recommended by other scholars (Kvalsund, 1998; Watts & Stenner, 2012). In such an interview: “[...] the subject is given the opportunity to expound on his reasoning for ranking the statements in his unique way” (Brown, 1980, p. 200). As such, the follow-up interview can be seen as a continuation of a dialogue between the “I” (the sorter) and the “Other” (represented in the Q-sample), which I understand to be a relationship characterized

by a holistic interdependency (Allgood, 1997). The interviews allowed me to “[...] search for discovering “dependent part qualities, in short, the subjective understanding as it has been operated or explicated” (Kvalsund, 1998, p. 291). With that being said, I want to note that Watts and Stenner (2012) warns me not to focus *too much* on interpretations from these interviews, or other sources than the factors themselves. It has thus been a goal for me to be aware of this during this stage of the research, and be loyal to the subjective meaning that is represented in the factor configurations. The participants with the highest loading on the factors had all given me a written consent to be interviewed, and as such they were invited and participated in an interview. The interview was primarily concentrated on examining the factor configurations for the respective factor, particularly exploring statements at the areas of higher psychological significance (+5, +4, +3, -5, -4, -3), distinguishing statements and statements at the 0-area of the sorting matrix. I found that these interviews challenged some of my hypotheses, but also gave my interpretations more nuances. In the following section I provide some comments on the topic of research quality.

### **3.3. Research quality**

All good research practice is characterized by transparency and openness, meaning that the reader should be able to get a clear understanding of how the researcher relates to earlier research, how they understand and discuss their own results, as well the methodological basis and how interpretations have been made (Sohlberg & Sohlberg, 2013, p. 20). I want to note here that the literature contends that Q-methodology is generally an extremely robust method with regards to reliability (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In terms of research quality, I have tried to take measures that promote research quality specific to doing a Q-methodological study. For instance, I decided to conduct pilot sortings and invite others in the process of designing the Q-sample. As a result, some of the statements were adjusted in the way they were phrased as well reconstructing the meaning in them to distinguish them from each of the combinations. This measure is promoted as vital in the literature (Watts & Stenner, 2012). I also spent quite an amount of time to gather a rich collection of statements before defining the Q-sample as recommended (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In the sections below I’ll discuss research quality in terms of generalization, reliability and validity, before moving on to a critical reflection on the researcher’s role and ethical considerations.

#### **3.3.1. Generalization, reliability and validity**

In quantitative research, quality is often measured in relation to generalization, reliability and validity (Ringdal, 2013). However, these dimensions are not directly applicable to Q-methodological studies (Watts & Stenner, 2012). For instance, generalization is primarily

reflected back to the concourse, as opposed to generalizing back to the population itself (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Reliability relates to the reliability of the research; can we for instance know that a reproduction of the study in the same context would produce the same outputs? The question of reliability in Q methodology has been discussed by several authors (Brown, 1980; Kvalsund, 1998). Brown (1980) writes that one can assume a test-retest reliability (reliability coefficients) of .80 and upwards based on experience. Kvalsund (1998) states that the remaining percentages (beyond .80) refer to the likelihood of errors rooted in mood, memory, inaccurate reading of a statement or other unpredictable factors. This means that a factor with only one person would still have a reliability of .80, as it is visible in table below.

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>
Number of defining variables	15	1	2	1
Average reliability coefficient	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800
Composite reliability	0.984	0.800	0.889	0.800
Standard error of factor Z-scores	0.128	0.447	0.333	0.447

*Table 5: Reliability values for the factor solution.*

Validity is also an indicator of research quality, and often refers to an internal consistency (Ringdal, 2013). One can ask the question “Is there a clear connection between the researchers’ problem formulation and chosen methodology, and are the results and discussion anchored in the empirical basis?” Fikse (2013) notes that both Q methodology and R methodology may use the same sample, factor analysis, and analysis of variance, but that the latter approach is “[...] more open to new knowledge, and does not build its discoveries on logical testing of hypotheses to the same degree” (p. 128). The implication here is that validity must be discussed and seen in relation to the epistemological and methodological basis on which Q methodology is based upon. What measures did I take to increase the validity? For instance, I made a deliberate effort in designing a clear set of instructions for the Q-sort, conducted pilot sortings to balance the Q-set and post-sorting interviews with representatives for each factor to validate and challenge my interpretations. All of these steps are examples of measures one can take to increase the validity (Kvalsund, 1998; Svennungsen, 2011). I will now reflect upon my role as a researcher.

### **3.3.2. Critical reflections on the researcher’s role**

It has been a goal for me to conduct this research with an emphasis on being a reflective researcher. Hence, I have tried to challenge my own assumptions and attitudes along the way to facilitate openness and self-awareness in myself, as a measure of reducing possible blind spots (Brown, 1996). Q-methodology, which arguably is reminiscent to qualitative research in

the pursuit of understanding the subject's subjective viewpoint (McKeown & Thomas, 2013), requires a degree of self-awareness and self-reflexivity from my end by virtue of being in the researcher's role (Patton, 2002). To help me reflect in a more structured way, I've particularly used Patton's (2002) reflexive questions in qualitative inquiry to facilitate reflection. Through this, I've reflected on the relationship and context between myself, the participants and those receiving the study (my audience) by asking questions such as: "What do I know? How do I know what I know? And what shapes, and has shaped my own perspective?" (Patton, 2002, p. 66). I would like to acknowledge the fact that my own subjectivity has played a key influence in both my interest in the theme of this thesis, as well as in research design and the analysis of the data. One needs to be mindful of possible biases that might affect the research (Watts & Stenner, 2012), and I have tried to identify possible prejudices and biases in my own meaning making. One example of this is related to my understanding of leadership, particularly after reading articles offering critical perspectives on often taken-for-granted assumptions found in leadership studies (Alvesson, 2019; Gjerde, 2018). My interest in the subject is primarily academically motivated, and most of the perspectives I take with me derive from engaging with the main curriculum body from the master's program in counselling at NTNU. This means that I may be biased towards perspectives found in this academic branch, hence influencing how I will be analyzing and interpreting the data later on. It could be that I started out with a more romanticized or idealistic understanding of leadership, but I experience that I have a more reflected and nuanced understanding after spending time with questioning my own understanding. I am also very aware of the fact that I am a novice with regards to Q-methodological research, and I have found some aspects of the research process challenging my competency and thinking. Research ethics is another important aspect of conducting research, as I will show in the following section.

### **3.4. Ethical dimensions**

A goal in this thesis project has been to conduct research in accordance with the ethical guidelines for research in the social sciences (NESH, 2016). Research ethics refer to "[...] a wide variety of values, norms, and institutional arrangements that help constitute and regulate scientific activities. Research ethics is a codification of scientific morality in practice" (NESH, 2016, p. 5). I've found it important to take internal norms like academic freedom, originality, openness and trustworthiness seriously, as this also connects to research quality of this thesis. In terms of external norms, I practiced a strict confidentiality policy whilst also emphasizing the ethics of free and informed consent. The research project was approved by *Norwegian Centre for Research Data* (See appendix A) before any contact with informants was initiated.

The first contact was made over e-mail, where each participant was contacted individually to ensure anonymity and provided with adequate information. All of the research participants have been provided with an information sheet stating the intention of the project, describing the research approach and what the consequences of an informed consent and participation involves. I also addressed issues of privacy and guaranteed that data storage was safeguarded (see appendix D). For instance, all research material has been stored in an encrypted and password protected unit to ensure confidentiality. Each Q-sorting was further anonymized by utilizing a numerical key and stored separately. There are no collaborations with external institutions in this project or any other conflict of interests. The topic of the thesis is self-chosen, and no external institution or organization have funded this research, contributing to safeguarding the principles of academic freedom and independence of research. I also avoided recruiting informants that might impose any ethical dilemmas by participating, such as current employers or family members. My conclusion would be that I view research ethics as an integral part of the research quality, and is just as important in Q as it is in qualitative research in general (Tracy, 2010). I will in the next and last section of this chapter provide a summary of the chapter as a whole.

### **3.5. Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter I have presented Q-methodology as an approach for studying subjective viewpoints and discussed how key concepts in this research tradition have been operationalized in my own research project. The chapter also provided elaboration on research quality, a discussion on the researcher's role as well as making the ethical considerations of the project transparent. This leads us to the next chapter, where we'll look at the exciting results that emerged from my factor analysis and interpretation of the factors.

## 4. FACTOR INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the results from my factor interpretation, which is the last and possibly most demanding part of the Q-methodological research process. My aim will be to answer my main research question: *What is leaders' subjective experience of self-disclosures in the context of workplace relationships?* To answer this question, I will give a presentation of the four factors representing existing subjective viewpoints from my P-sample of 20 Norwegian leaders. My interpretations are also informed by the four post-sorting interviews, which I will at some areas be referred to with the purpose of providing more nuances to this chapter. The names I will refer to in each given factor are all anonymized to ensure confidentiality, whilst also not giving detailed information about their location or names of the organization they represent.

As noted in chapter three, each factor represents an existing viewpoint. To distinguish them from each other, I've given all my factors a name, as this gives them an identity (Watts & Stenner, 2012). These are named as follows: 1.) *I feel a freedom and permission to be personal at work*, 2.) *My role is to communicate expectations and create a culture of high accountability*, 3.) *I value integrity and relational transparency, but experience norms of conformity as limiting*, 4.) *I am relationally transparent when I feel safe*.

I will present the factors in a chronological order, and for each factor I will provide the reader with relevant statistical characteristics, including a visualization of each factor array<sup>1</sup> as I believe this creates a clear and logical structure (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The reader might be curious about what criteria I've emphasized in the interpretation process. I've particularly focused on statements that signal higher psychological significance (+5, +4, +3, -5, -4, -3), distinguishing statements<sup>2</sup> (see appendix H), consensus statements<sup>3</sup>, and the statements located in the middle area (0). I will be including statements that I base my interpretations on in the text with their relative placement<sup>4</sup> as I think this creates a clear structure. I will at the end of each factor presentation give a summary of the characteristics I have interpreted as central for the factor.

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<sup>1</sup> A factor array is a composite Q-sort of the variables defining the factor (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Distinguishing statements are statements (or items) that are placed significantly different in the factors (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). In the tables with factor arrays I will mark these with grey cells and in the text with the sign "\*" in order to make them more recognizable for the reader.

<sup>3</sup> Consensus statements are statements (or items) that are not significantly different between factors (Brown, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> The numbers behind each statement is framed in parenthesis. The numbers show the position of the statement in the factor array between the factors, where the bold number refers to the position within that given factor.

#### 4.1. Factor 1 – I feel a freedom and permission to be personal at work

This factor has the most defining variables; 15 persons have significant loadings on the factor (see appendix E for an overview of factor loadings). In terms of gender, we see that it is fairly evenly distributed with 9 males and 6 females. Factor 1 is quite varied with regards to the sector the persons represent. This factor explains 47 percent of the variance and the table below presents the factor array. I conducted a post-sorting interview with Kim, who had the highest loading on the factor (0.8699), which I will be drawing on in my interpretations.

		Unlike me										Like me										
		-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5										
16	6	2	11	5	7	1	3	17	27	10												
	22	34	13	14	9	4	8	19	32													
		36	29	20	18	12	23	25														
			31	21	24	15	33															
				26	30	28																
					35																	

Table 6: Factor array for factor 1.

##### 4.1.1. High openness and trust in the organization

Factor 1 strongly identifies with an organizational culture that is characterized by high levels of openness and trust, where there exists a caring connection between members in the organization (statement \*10: 5). This view is supported by the distinguishing statement below, which shows us that factor 1 distinguishes itself from the other factors on this particular statement.

*\*10. At our workplace we have a culture characterized by openness and trust. We are sincere and care about each other. (5, -3, -5, -1)*

I also see an interesting tendency in the placement of the other statements that are related to the organizational level or dimension in the areas of higher psychological significance. For instance, the factor experiences that leaders are allowed to ask for help (statement 27: 4), and that it is accepted to bring up their thoughts in discussions (statement \*32: 4). There is an appearance of a culture valuing diversity (statement 19: 3) and the notion of being personal in relationships at the workplace (statement 6: -4), as opposed to interacting on a more transactional level with less transparency.

*\*32. The organization values discussions. It's allowed to think out loud. (4, -1, -2, -2)*

*27. Leaders are allowed to ask for help. (4, 0, 2, 2)*

*\*6. It is expected that I avoid being personal at work, we don't know each other that well even though we keep a polite tone with one another. (-4, 3, -1, 0)*

*19. It's allowed to show our differences at the workplace. (3, 0, -1, 2)*



It may seem that the experience of trust that is reciprocally shared between the members in the organization (statement \*10: 5). A deeper relational intimacy may be visible in the sense that these leaders are more positive towards interacting on a more personal level in the workplace relationships (statement \*6: -4). An interpretation from my end could be that factor 1 feels that the workplace relationships have developed the qualities of genuineness, mutuality and trust. This interpretation was validated by the participant Kim, a leader working within an engineering consulting business, in the post-sorting interview. He expressed that the workplace relationships were characterized by honesty and that they had deliberately worked towards developing and maintaining a culture of trust and openness. An interesting note here is also that Kim mentioned that his unit had a very low turnover-rate and that there were many years since someone in their unit had left.

#### **4.1.2. Acceptance towards disclosing feelings and mistakes**

Further examination of factor 1 brings us to the next topic of attention. Factor 1 is open towards revealing their own feelings to others at the workplace. This can imply both verbal disclosures, but also non-verbal disclosures per se. Sharing frustrations is experienced as safe (statement \*16: -5), as well as a positive attitude towards displaying “real” feelings (statement \*2: -3) and mistakes (statement 17: 3). This might be related to an experience of higher relational quality, where the leaders feel that it is accepted and valued to be open towards self-disclosing content of a more private nature.

*\*16. The relations between me and my coworkers are not good enough that I can share frustrations. (-5, 1, 1, 0)*

*\*2. Showing real feelings is not something I do at work. (-3, 2, -1, -5)*

*25. The relationships at work is characterized by an intimacy, both me and the others are open about our own lives. (3, -2, 2, -1)*

*17. My close colleagues and I are allowed to share our mistakes. (3, 2, 1, 1)*

*\*14. I experience that the «social code» at work says that I can't show my inner feelings. (-1, 1, 1, 1)*

*\*24. At times I can feel discomfort if I open up on something I disagree on. (0, 3, 4, 5)*

Revealing emotional reactions such as frustrations is here experienced as okay, whilst I see that both factor 2 and 3 have placed it on the other side of the spectrum and that factor 4 have placed it in the 0-area. What can explain this configuration? One way of understanding this could be connected to differences in taken-for-granted and shared assumptions in the cultures between the factors. Particularly in norms related to what is accepted as appropriate behavior for leaders. As we've seen above, the other factors do not experience their culture as open and trusting to the same degree as factor 1. When I asked Kim to interpret the placement of the statement

related to feeling discomfort with disagreeing (statement \*24: 0), he said that it simply is not relevant to him since he feels safe doing so. It could be that this openness is connected to the notion of psychological safety, but it could also be a matter of developmental maturity (as in being less *subject to* interpersonal relationships and a fear of coming to be in opposition to a group) or an abundance of implicit voice theories contributing to avoidance of self-disclosures.

#### **4.1.3. Congruence and a willingness to self-disclose thoughts, needs and personal facts**

An experience of personal congruence with self-disclosing thoughts, needs and personal facts also appears to be representative for factor 1. It seems that within these dimensions of self-disclosure there also exists lower levels of self-censorship as indicated by the placement of the statements below.

*22. I am cautious with being honest and sincere in conversations at work. (-4, 2, -3, 0)*

*8. Me and my close colleagues are often honest and direct when we give feedback.*

*(2, 0, -3, 1)*

*13. I'm very hesitant in telling my colleagues that I need support. (-2, 0, -2, -1)*

It is of particular interest to see that factor 1 appears to be the most honest and direct when it comes to giving feedback (statement 8: 2), and the least cautious with being honest and sincere in conversations (statement 22: -4). This does not necessarily mean that these leaders don't give strategic considerations for when, how and what they self-disclose. As Kim noted, his position sometimes meant that he had to be aligned with and loyal to the overarching directions in the organization. Nevertheless, this willingness to give honest feedback and valuing of honesty in communication is a distinctive feature for factor 1.

#### **4.2. Factor 2 – My role is to communicate expectations and create a culture of high accountability**

Factor 2 is defined by one person, Frits (0.8242), and explains 9 percent of the variance. Frits has held a leadership position within a hospital for over a year, whilst previously mainly working as a specialized nurse in the same unit. He participated in a post-sorting interview with me, where we explored his interpretation of the factor configuration, which I will be referring to in some places of the presentation. The table below shows the factor array for factor 2.

	Unlike me										Like me										
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5										
35	26	10	4	5	1	7	2	6	18	30											
	31	21	12	15	3	9	17	11	33												
		36	20	28	8	14	22	24													
			25	32	13	16	23														
				34	19	29															
					27																

Table 7: Factor array for factor 2.

#### 4.2.1. The importance of communicating expectations to employees

- \*30. *I'm not so occupied with pleasing and tell others clearly what I expect from them. (0, 5, 0, -1)*
- 35. *I'm not thinking about when I need to ask for help from others. (0, -5, 1, -3)*
- \*26. *I don't share my thoughts and assessments as a leader if I believe it puts me in a bad light. (-1, -4, 2, 4)*
- 24. *At times I can feel discomfort if I open up on something I disagree with. (0, 3, 4, 5)*

Factor 2 does not appear to be so concerned with pleasing others, and views it as important to disclose needs by communicating expectations (statement \*30: 5). This may symbolize that this person finds it important to be honest and direct with employees, as we also see that there is a sense of strong identification on acting with integrity (statement \*26: -4). A possible meaning here is that factor 2 works within a hospital unit, where there exist high demands on technical knowledge and competence as part of providing patient security. Mistakes in this context could in worst case have fatal consequences, and therefore it could be expected that leaders particularly focus on expectations related to this. Frits confirmed this in the interview, in that he felt the responsibility as part of his role to be clear on disclosing his needs as symbolized in operational expectations put on employees. We see this manifested in the factor configuration (statement 35: -5). It also became clear that this was a central part of his role at the time being. Although this was important to him, he did acknowledge that it could be somewhat uncomfortable, as shown in the factor configuration (statement 24: 3). Another reason behind the focus on accountability was due to the leadership behavior of a previous leader of the unit, who Frits felt had “closed her eyes” and been oriented more towards pleasing others rather than holding employees accountable.

#### 4.2.2. A culture with lower levels of openness and trust?

In terms of experience of organizational culture, Frits does not experience that employees are as open and trust each other in the same way we see in factor 1 (statement 10: -3). This might be understood as being influenced by underlying assumptions that members of the unit more or less share as part of their shared learning over many years.

10. *At our workplace we have a culture characterized by openness and trust. We are sincere and care about each other. (5, -3, -5, -1)*

6. *It is expected that I avoid being personal at work, we don't know each other that well even though we keep a polite tone with one another. (-4, 3, -1, 0)*

11. *I experience that the organization often tries to limit unnecessary "emotional noise" that disrupts the cooperation. (-2, 3, 4, -2)*

Furthermore, Frits identifies with the notion that there is an expectation of being best off with avoiding being too personal in the workplace relationships (statement 6: 3). Could it be that the norms shaping what is viewed as appropriate behavior or intimacy are contributing to this experience? Possibly. It could also be that members in the unit do not feel safe to interact in a more transparent way since there might be an associated negative risk-reward asymmetry. In terms of relational qualities in workplace relationships, it does seem to me that these are not as co-actualized or positively experienced for Frits as they are in factor 1. I was curious on this configuration and invited Frits to share some words on this in the post-sorting interview. Frits noted that some of the employees avoided being direct or confronting members even if they experienced a basis to do so, since there were incidents where members became defensive and reacted with overbearing comments when someone shared their experience honestly. In Frits' view, this cultural trait was a symptom of earlier leadership not addressing the "root problem" within the unit and holding members accountable for their behavior to other colleagues. Factor 2 also identifies with the organization avoiding "unnecessary emotional noise" (statement 11: 3), which Frits reflected on could be the matter of a "blindspot" for higher-status leader, as they were more oriented towards technical aspects of their daily operations, and hence not perceiving the culture as problematic. After reflecting on this configuration for quite some time, I do think that the interpersonal communication in factor 2 is more oriented towards tasks as opposed to the relational orientation. My interpretation is that this connects to cultural traits as taken-for-granted assumptions, influencing what is viewed as important and what is not; where sharing personal facts is viewed as inappropriate in the cultural context.

#### **4.2.3. Experiencing a need to be strategic with self-disclosures**

\*18. *I am careful with showing strong feelings with my colleagues. (0, 4, 1, 0)*

2. *Showing real feelings is not something I do at work. (-3, 2, -1, -5)*

\*7. *I give cautious consideration before sharing anything about myself, it can have negative consequences for my reputation and career. (0, 1, -3, -3)*

At first glance we may think that factor 2 is very hesitant towards revealing his feelings in general (statement \*18: 4 and statement 2: 2). This was one of my initial reactions when studying the factor. I thought that it would be somewhat logical to see such an attitude if the

leader did not experience it as psychologically safe to expose himself. Further reflection made me question this hypothesis, as there can be other socio-cultural or individual factors contributing here, as well as Frits’ interpretation of the statements. I asked what meaning Frits himself put into the statements above. To him, it was important to maintain composure in front of employees, not sharing immediate irritations or frustrations without consideration since this might be seen as less appropriate in his position. As I understand this subjectivity, it could also be about Frits being self-aware of the fact he is “on stage” when he is at work; that he is aware of that he has a certain amount of influence with his behavior. Then again, it might be mediated by role expectations on an explicit and/or implicit level held by members in the organization. It is not that clear. One can also ask the question whether or not this is a matter of personality, or mediated by role expectations and norms, or a combination of all of these factors. Frits did note that leaders above him had a tendency on focusing more on technical or concrete facets of the daily operation, rather than relationally oriented facets in the relational interaction.

**4.3. Factor 3 – I value integrity and relational transparency, but experience norms of conformity as limiting**

Factor 3 is defined by two persons, Marianne (0.7013) and Lisa (0.6949), and accounts for 8 percent of the variance. Marianne works in the public sector in a municipality and Lisa in the private sector within finance. I invited Marianne to a post-sorting interview, since she had the highest correlation to the factor. Some of her interpretations will be included in my presentation. Lisa also provided me with some comments in the survey that I will highlight in one of the sections. Below is the factor array for factor 3.

	Unlike me									Like me	
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
10		12	7	9	2	1	14	21	29	11	3
		36	8	13	4	15	16	25	33	24	
			22	20	5	28	17	26	34		
				32	6	30	18	27			
					19	31	35				
						23					

Table 8: Factor array for factor 3.

**4.3.1. A tension between “I” and “We” – a matter of norms of conformity?**

- 10. At our workplace we have a culture characterized by openness and trust. We are sincere and care about each other. (5, -3, -5, -1)
- 29. There’s an expectation in the organization to be professional, our personal life’s is private. (-2, 1, 3, -4)

Factor 3 feels that the culture at the workplace is characterized by low levels of openness, trust and sincerity (statement 10: -5), and that there exists norms or expectations oriented towards maintaining certain façade or professional distance (statement 29: 3). This configuration may imply that self-disclosure of more private reactions is best avoided in the workplace relationships. As I interpret this, the view may be connected to factor 2 not feeling a positive identification with the organizational culture, possibly experiencing it as too conform. This can pose a value conflict, where these leaders feel that being real or sincere is a personal value to them, but on the collective level this may not be as valued or at least exist as an underlying assumption that it is best to keep relationships and interpersonal communication at a more transactional and role-based level of intimacy. I believe that the statements below connect to this interpretation.

*12. My close colleagues make it possible for me to “unlock the mask” at work.*

*(-1, -2, -4, 4)*

*\*34. I feel that there is not enough room for «my whole being» in this role, the relations are characterized by being shallow. (-3, -1, 3, -4)*

*9. I keep my private life at an arm’s length distance from work. (0, 1, -2, 3)*

Factor 3 does not feel that their close colleagues make it possible for them to “unlock the mask” (statement 12: -4), that “there is not enough room for my whole being in this role” (statement \*34: 3). Yet, factor 3 does not seem to identify with a need to distance her private life from work (statement 9: -2). The post-sorting interview acknowledged this interpretation, and Marianne experienced that, although she wanted to and often found herself “getting into the ring” (being real or sincere, sharing more personal disclosures), she felt that colleagues were not as willing to do the same. This could at times bring up feelings of shame or at least a feeling that the freedom of expression was somewhat limiting her to share more intimate disclosures, such as sharing feelings of frustration. There were also cases with “elephants in the room” that no one brought up to the explicit level in conversations and meetings, and a tendency of avoiding giving direct feedback to each other. I also saw this in the factor configuration (statement \*8: -3 and statement 11: 4). More private disclosures, such as how one had experienced another person negatively in a meeting, were instead more likely to be talked about “in the hallways”, but not addressed directly to the person. To me, this is an example of how taken-for-granted assumptions in an organizational culture can influence the relational field.

*\*8. Me and my close colleagues are often honest and direct when we give feedback.*

*(2, 0, -3, 1)*

*11. I experience that the organization often tries to limit unnecessary “emotional noise” that disrupts the cooperation. (-2, 3, 4, -2)*

Either way, it does seem accurate to point out that there is an experienced tension between the individuals needs and values, and the ones of the organization. To nuance this a bit further, one of my sorters, Lisa, noted in the questionnaire (see appendix C) that working in a male-dominated environment made it difficult for her to be herself at the workplace, since she experienced an expectation to conform to cultural norms, rather than being real or authentic in the relationships. As such, I suspect that cultural norms may both be facilitating and limiting the perceived freedom of expression, all depending on the direction they give.

#### **4.3.2. Integrity is very important to me – and I am willing to expose myself for it**

*3. It's important that my colleagues know when I disagree (2, 0, 5, 2)*

*24. At times I can feel discomfort if I open up on something I disagree with. (0, 3, 4, 5)*

It is very important for factor 3 to be seen and heard on matters they disagree on (statement 3: 5). To me, this means placing a high value on personal integrity, since this can imply that the person is willing to expose themselves in order to get their views across. Yet, doing so may also bring up some feelings of discomfort (statement 24: 4). One way of interpreting this is that factor 3 is strongly identified with the value of integrity, that acting in according to this value (disclosing opinions or evaluations) trumps the risks associated with it (such as uncertainty with how the disclosure will be received and exposing one's private experience). As such, the risk-reward symmetry may be somewhat favoring silence, but the strong identification with personal values makes it possible to speak up despite a feeling of discomfort. The discomfort can be related to experiencing the other members as silent or less open to do the same. As a result, one can feel discomfort with being in an exposed or vulnerable position, after self-disclosing views. From the perspective of developmental maturity, it could also be that factor 3 is not as *subject to* interpersonal relationships, or is more empowered by her own self-authored values and identity. I asked Marianne in the post-sorting interview what this discomfort was about. She noted that it could sometimes be uncomfortable to speak up in a group where she experienced the other members being silent or unwilling to disclose their private evaluations or opinions on a particular case. From the perspective of psychological safety, this can be a matter of feeling safe to disclose conflicting or critical views, due to the leader not being afraid to be seen as negative, disruptive, incompetent or ignorant. To me, factor 3's willingness to disclose does not leave me with an impression that this is a matter of psychological safety mediating this openness. Her descriptions of the group interactions rather gave an opposite impression to me. For example, in a work group with higher levels of psychological safety, we could expect other leaders to be more transparent and willing to "get into the ring" by exposing one's fallibility,

but this was not the case in the descriptions given in the interview. However, the other person defining the factor could hold a different experience to that of Marianne.

**4.4. Factor 4 – I am relationally transparent when I feel safe**

Factor 4 is defined by one person, Bodil (0.9028), and explains 8 percent of the variance. Bodil works in an ideal organization and has a high loading on this factor. The post-sorting interview with Bodil provided me with valuable input for interpreting the factor configuration. Below is the factor array for factor 4.

	Unlike me										Like me												
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5		-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
2	29	7	11	10	1	5	3	9	12	24													
	34	35	15	13	4	8	19	20	26														
		36	32	23	6	14	21	28															
			33	25	16	17	27																
				30	18	31																	
					22																		

Table 9: Factor array for factor 4.

**4.4.1. Comfortable with disclosing feelings in close relationships**

- \*2. *Showing real feelings is not something I do at work. (-3, 2, -1, -5)*
- \*12. *My close colleagues make it possible for me to “unlock the mask” at work. (-1, -2, -4, 4)*
- 28. *It’s okay to shed a tear in front of others at work if I’m moved (1, -1, 0, 3)*

Factor 4 strongly identifies with an acceptance towards self-disclosing feelings at work (statement \*2: -5). We also see that close colleagues have an important function in helping factor 4 to “unlock the mask” (statement \*12: 4). It is also communicated a positive attitude towards being emotionally exposed at a very intimate level (statement 28: 3). What is this all about? At first glance, we might think that this person is comfortable with disclosing private feelings in most settings, but the significance of statement 12 revealed some nuances during the post-sorting interview. Bodil explained that she feels okay with disclosing her feelings to her close colleagues, but is more hesitant towards exposing herself in larger relational contexts. My initial hypothesis was that this could be strongly related to relational quality, as her relationships with her close colleagues were more developed towards a deeper trust and mutuality. Her reflections made me reconsider this. To her, this was to a certain degree influenced by her childhood experiences, where keeping a distance was a way of protecting herself, when she felt that she did not experience it as safe to expose herself as vulnerable. When she finds herself in front of a larger audience, she explained, that keeping a mask or “armor” on is a way of coping with this insecurity. But when it comes to exposing her feelings in a more intimate space, such



as in conversation with close colleagues, she allowed herself to be more exposed and vulnerable. I find this an interesting and subtle nuance in the factor configuration.

#### **4.4.2. Strategic considerations for disclosing thoughts and personal facts to a larger audience**

- 24. At times I can feel discomfort if I open up on something I disagree with. (0, 3, 4, 5)*  
*26. I don't share my thoughts and assessments as a leader if I believe it puts me in a bad light. (-1, -4, 2, 4)*  
*\*20. My life experiences that have formed me as a leader is not something I talk about. (-1, -2, -2, 3)*

Upon further inspection, we see that factor 4 might be feeling uneasy with revealing evaluations or opinions on conflicting issues (statement 24: 5), and that she gives strategic considerations when she does so (statement 26: 4). Something makes it difficult. The post-sorting interview revealed that she feels congruent when it comes to speaking up for other colleagues in meetings, but when it came to speaking up for her own, she reflected that it could be a matter of self-confidence. She commented that doing a 360-leadership feedback survey<sup>5</sup> had made her aware of a big gap between how she experienced herself and how others experienced her as a person, in the direction of scoring herself lower. One way to interpret this, is that speaking up in a larger audience with members increases an experienced risk of doing so, since the reward for doing it might be perceived as uncertain, or connect to negative experiences from the past. The threshold for doing so thus becomes higher, whilst also threatening the equilibrium or inner congruence in the leader. In contrast, when speaking up in closer relationships with higher trust and relational quality, the risk-reward symmetry changes and does not bring about a feeling of uncertainty since it “holds” a safer space. This interpretation would also be somewhat aligned to a psychodynamic perspective, since Bodil explicitly reflected on her childhood and earlier work life experiences in relation to this, as a form of “moving away” when facing threats.

- 9. I keep my private life at an arm's length distance from work. (0, 1, -2, 3)*  
*34. I feel that there is not enough room for «my whole being» in this role, the relations are characterized by being shallow (-3, -1, 3, -4)*  
*33. I spend some time talking about experiences where things went bad. I am not a glossy picture. (2, 4, 3, -2)*

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<sup>5</sup> More specifically the instrument The Leadership Circle Profile (TLCP) developed by Bob Anderson, which involves the person completing a self-assessment and inviting evaluators to complete a survey centered around 21 dimensions. The instrument provides the person with quantitative and qualitative feedback and gives a structure to compare one's own experience to that of others. For more information about TLCP, see Anderson and Adams (2019) or <http://www.leadershipcircle.com>.

Factor 4 also appears to display a level of cautiousness related to maintaining a personal distance at work (statement 9: 3). We also see that there is a hesitation towards exposing difficult experiences (statement 33: -2). To me, this does not seem to be related with the notion of relational quality; factor 4 expressed that some workplace relationships are experienced as fulfilling, which is manifested in the factor configuration (statement 34: -4). I was puzzled by this configuration, but the post-sorting interviewed provided some insights that may help us understand this. Her need of maintaining a certain distance was influenced by a relationship to a leader which did not work in the organization anymore. The relationship had been experienced very negatively and problematic. This may symbolize that leadership can have a powerful influence in shaping not only workplace cultures, but also the wellbeing and openness in other organizational members.

#### **4.5. Consensus statements**

- 13. I'm very hesitant in telling my colleagues that I need support. (-2, 0, -2, -1)*
- 17. My close colleagues and I are allowed to share our mistakes. (3, 2, 1, 1)*
- 36. I tend to be met with avoidance if I express a real need for support. (-3, -3, -4, -3)*

Being hesitant towards asking colleagues for support (statement 13 and 36) does not seem to be an issue for the four factors. It may be a matter of the participants not experiencing these statements as relevant, as this is such an important aspect in leadership as part of creating direction, alignment and commitment. This may be an explicit expectation, that all these leaders are aware of and accept as part of their role in the organization—who else is going to do this for them? For statement 36, we see that all the factors have distributed this on the negative spectrum. There is not a significant difference in how the factors have distributed statement 17 on sharing mistakes. Still, factor 1's placement of this statement is in the area of psychological significance, which is why I chose to include this in the interpretation of factor 1. From a theoretical perspective, an acceptance towards sharing mistakes does seem logical, if these leaders are experiencing a high level of trust, openness and/or psychological safety.

#### **4.6. Summary of the chapter**

This chapter presented my findings and interpretations of the four factors extracted from the factor analysis. I will in the following text be providing a summary of the four factors below before we move on to the discussion chapter, where we will mainly draw our attention to the sub-research question. My aim in this chapter was to answer the main research question for this thesis: *What is leaders' subjective experience of self-disclosures in the context of workplace relationships?* My research suggests that there exist four different subjective viewpoints among the 20 leaders, with some overlapping features.

*Factor 1* experience the organizational culture as being high on trust and openness, with relationships appearing to hold the qualities of genuineness, mutuality and trust. This was reflected in a willingness and acceptance towards giving honest feedback, sharing mistakes and revealing feelings (also frustrations). It is not clear whether this acceptance and willingness is mediated by collective external factors such as high levels of psychological safety, or individual interior factors such as developmental maturity and congruence.

*Factor 2* is committed towards communicating expectations to employees and does not seem to experience the organizational culture as open and trusting like factor 1. In terms of disclosing feelings, this did not appear to be as valued as in the other factors. The factor configuration as a whole may suggest a culture that is more oriented towards tasks, than towards relations. Workplace relationships may also be more task and role-based here, as they are not experienced as being particularly intimate or characterized by a deeper connection, which could explain the hesitation towards disclosing personal facts and feelings.

*Factor 3* experience the organizational culture as low on trust and openness, where norms related to appropriate behavior may be causing a value conflict. Yet, factor 3 seems to value integrity highly, as they are willing to disclose evaluations or thoughts that may be deemed inappropriate or controversial. There also seems to be an acceptance towards revealing one's negative experiences, without being afraid of negative consequences for one's career and reputation.

*Factor 4* communicates a positive attitude towards disclosing feelings in workplace relationships. In the relationships deemed as most intimate or developed, factor 4 did not seem to feel a need to censor disclosure content. Factor 4 is more hesitant towards disclosing personal facts and evaluations in other relational contexts than the dyadic structure, possibly due to a perceived risk-reward asymmetry.



## 5. DISCUSSION

The main goal of this chapter is to dive into a discussion on how the findings from my main research question can be explored in relation to my sub-research question: *What factors may facilitate or limit leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships?* The reason I want to answer this question, is partly connected to the emerging perspective on leadership as a relational practice, and because it can allow me to bridge perspectives from counselling to leadership. I also believe that some leadership consultants would be interested in exploring this question, since it can be of theoretical interest when designing developmental programs for leaders. Since this is a master thesis in counselling, my theoretical approach to the question will include perspectives from this tradition, whilst simultaneously including other perspectives I've explicated in the theory chapter.

I've emphasized my abductive role in the process of writing this chapter, meaning that creativity has been in the foreground in relation to theory with the intention of discovering something new or understanding something in a new light (Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The discussion process significantly challenged me to look beyond my initial hypothesis, which has been both frustrating and rewarding at the same time. This chapter is organized in themes, and the rationale behind these are to discuss aspects I experience as prominent and connecting to the holistic image in the four factor configurations. The order of the following sections is presented below.

First, I want to explore how aspects of organizational cultures influence leaders' self-disclosure behavior. I noticed that the cultural component was a prominent aspect in the factors, and this dimension is furthermore often overlooked in the research field (Schein, 1996). Then, I want to provide a critical perspective on the construct of relational transparency. I became aware in my factor interpretation that self-disclosure may not be as straightforward as some scholars propose, and I think there is potential to nuance it as a theoretical construct. We will further explore how self-disclosure avoidance can be understood, as I particularly found this relevant in relation to my interpretation of one of the factors. Then follows a discussion on if organizational norms related to conformity can present barriers to congruence, as factor 3 in particularly viewed these norms as limiting. I will also provide the reader with a visualization of what components may facilitate or restrain self-disclosure behavior, based on an integral understanding, since self-disclosure here is viewed as a complex phenomenon. A summary will also be given in the end of the chapter.

## **5.1. What role does organizational culture play for leaders' self-disclosure behavior?**

In the process of factor interpretation, I noticed that the component of organizational culture was experienced differently by the four factors. There were also differences in attitudes related to self-disclosure and how their workplace relationships were experienced. To me, this was particularly related to norms around intimacy for workplace relationships, and what is viewed and deemed as appropriate behavior. Based on this prominent aspect of the factor configurations, I now want to discuss how organizational culture may influence leaders' self-disclosure behavior. With the case of factor 1 we saw that there seemed to be a high identification with the organizational culture and workplace relationships being characterized by openness and trust. This included a willingness and positive attitude to expose themselves in this context. Factor 2 did not share this experience, as I interpreted that the workplace relationships were not having the qualities of trust and openness as in factor 1. On the contrary, factor 2 and 3 experienced their culture more negatively, in the sense that it was less perceived less leaning towards openness and trust. Factor 4 did not emphasize culture in the same way as the other factors, possibly due to other aspects being experienced as more important or relevant in their sorting.

My initial interpretation of factor 1 was that these leaders' positive attitude to self-disclose more intimate aspects of their experience seemed logical, since they experienced the culture and the relationships so positively. To me, this position corresponded with Schein's (2017) notion of having developed more intimate norms on how to relate to each other at the workplace, symbolized by having developed the relationships to what Schein (2017) refer to as level 2 relationships (he divides relational structures into four categories). This form of relationship is close to what Buber (1959) refers to as being in an "I-Thou" relationship, where the persons in a relation view each other more as *subject* than *objects*, by recognizing and valuing the other person as a unique human. Factor 1 may also seem reminiscent of what is described as a climate of realness, in the sense that these leaders are more congruent and willing to "[...] letting the other person know where you are emotionally" (Rogers, 1980, p. 160). From this understanding, an implication or hypothesis could be that leaders' willingness to self-disclose is mediated by how well the norms governing intimacy are developed in the organization, and what assumptions the leader has internalized from the culture. As with the cases of factor 2 and 3, based on the factor configurations, I suspect that these norms of intimacy are not as well developed. This implies that the workplace relationships may be less intimate and have a lower degree of openness and willingness to self-disclose. For instance, I saw that factor 2 did not

view the relationships as being oriented towards genuineness, nor that the culture was open and trusting to the same degree as in factor 1. I also saw that factor 2 was less willing to self-disclose feelings. Factor 3 viewed the norms related to relational interaction as a barrier to having more “real conversations”. These examples may be suggesting that cultural norms of intimacy do actually mediate self-disclosure behavior. There may also be more nuances to this than what I suggest, as the following text will point to.

Is there a developmental component in factor 1’s experience of organizational culture? At the individual level we may, based on various research in the field of leadership, understand that leaders have different patterns of meaning making that relate to mental complexity, action logics and leadership practices (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; McCauley et al., 2006; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Van Velsor & Drath, 2004). My impression is that Schein (2017) does not appear to take the developmental perspective into account when he discusses organizational culture, although he puts a great emphasis on the dynamic influences on culture from shared assumptions. This does not necessarily mean it is not relevant to approach the question from the perspective of developmental maturity, as McGuire and Palus (2018) note: “Cultures are holding environments for individual and collective meaning making” (p. 149). I am curious about what relationship factor 1 have to underlying norms in their organizational context. Is factor 1 an expression of self-authored meaning-making (as in deliberately constructing their own values and norms for organizational citizenship), or is it just following cultural norms that are deeply engrained in a socialized mind process (as in internalizing external values and norms)? If we see this in relation to the subject-object formulation (Kegan, 1994), we could expect that the pattern of meaning-making would be qualitatively different from one order of consciousness to another, in example from the socialized mind to the self-authored mind (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). I wanted to draw attention to this dimension, since my role as a researcher is to look for nuances in the factors. Moving on, we will next explore why it may be difficult for some leaders to be relationally transparent in workplace relationships.

## **5.2. A critical perspective on relational transparency**

Relational transparency is proposed as fostering trust between leaders and members of the organization (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Yet, recent research on self-disclosure in workplace relationships concludes that: “Our findings show that self-disclosures in workplace relationships is complicated by the status hierarchies that are ubiquitous in organizational environments” (Gibson et al., 2018, p. 39). This seems to connect to what Rosh and Offermann (2013) previously have noted, namely that:

[...] the honest sharing of thoughts, feelings, and experiences at work is a double-edged sword: Despite its potential benefits, self-disclosure can backfire if it's hastily conceived, poorly timed, or inconsistent with cultural or organizational norms—hurting your reputation, alienating employees, fostering distrust, and hindering teamwork. (Rosh & Offermann, 2013, p. 135)

This may imply that our understanding of relational transparency and self-disclosure in workplace relationships needs to be challenged in the direction of acknowledging that other contextual factors may complicate self-disclosure behavior. It is not necessarily an easy affair to just encourage leaders to be more relationally transparent. Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) problematized encouraging leaders to act in accordance with their “true selves”. Their qualitative research suggested that doing it could create identity struggles for the leaders, in that they experienced feelings of guilt, anxiety and a sense of failure “[...] in acting with the norms they are identifying with” (p. 451). Marianne, the representative for factor 3, who valued relational transparency in her workplace relationships, noted in the post-sorting interview that she had experienced negative reactions when she would present her ‘authentic self’ in the relational group context. Her act of self-disclosure possibly caused a tension when she, as I interpret it, violated organizational norms and not necessarily generated more trust. Organizational considerations, such as being loyal to overarching directions and goals for the organization, was also a topic of conversation when I interviewed factor 1 and 2. They described that it was not always easy to be relationally transparent. Initially, I did not emphasize this in my interpretations of the factors, I was not as sensitive to this dimension. Yet, the post-sorting interviews gave further nuances in my understanding, which I believe shows the value of including interviews in Q-methodological research to continue the dialogue between the person and the “Other” (Allgood, 1997). I believe that these examples show that relational transparency is not as simple and straight-forward as it may be conceptualized in the theory of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008). As a consequence, I hold the position that it is fruitful to advance an understanding of relational transparency that captures more of the “grey area” that leadership intersects, which in part is connected to contextual factors such as implicit and explicit expectations in the organization, status hierarchies and cultural norms. To summarize this section, we might say that external factors may make it difficult to be as relationally transparent as one would like to be, and not necessarily generate desirable outcomes such as trust and openness. In the next section, we will explore how internal factors in leaders may be influencing self-disclosure behavior.



### **5.3. Understanding leaders' avoidance for self-disclosure through the lens of implicit voice theories**

What makes it difficult for factor 4 to expose her thoughts and personal facts in front of larger relational contexts? In my factor interpretation I indicated that this could be influenced by implicit voice theories (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), which are internalized beliefs about when and why self-disclosing thoughts involves risk and/or is perceived as inappropriate. I believe this is an interesting perspective to consider when discussing the factor configuration. Silence can be seen as a self-protective tendency being born out of a fear of exposure or loss of control, as Horney (1946) discussed decades ago through the lens of the psychoanalytic perspective. I initially thought that factor 4 experience could be connected to lower levels of psychological safety (Edmondson, 2012), in the form of an influence from the workgroup culture contributing to an avoidance for these self-disclosures. The post-sorting interview challenged this hypothesis, as Bodil interpreted the factor configuration differently. Rather, she told me this was a matter of self-confidence. In terms of implicit voice theories, Glassenberg (2012) suggested that they are best analyzed at the individual level, and that organizational context has minimal effects on implicit voice theories. Scholars argue that psychological safety may have little effect on facilitating self-expression, if there exist deep-seated assumptions in the individual (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Therefore, it might be more appropriate to discuss this from an individual perspective, rather than attending to the theme from the collective perspectives of psychological safety and relational quality. Earlier life experiences may be contributing to the avoidance of speaking up in front of larger groups in the organization (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). As I understand it, factor 4 seemed to experience the norms of intimacy in the workplace relationships as closer to what Schein (2017) describes as “Level 2”, in the sense that she feels these relationships share the qualities of a higher interdependence and transparency. It appeared clearer to me that she felt less risk with exposing herself, in the broadest sense in terms of self-disclosures, at the dyadic level, with persons she felt a high trust towards. If we use the perspective of implicit voice theories, this can be interpreted as factor 4 feeling a lower risk-reward asymmetry in these situations and settings. Yet, in larger relational contexts, the risk-reward symmetry would become more asymmetrical, with the likelihood of silence increasing. Then, the organizational culture, however open and trusting it may be experienced, would not be enough to “override” this self-protective structure as the citation below argues.

Specifically, we argue that implicit voice theories develop from the hard-wired motive of self-protection and are thus taken-for-granted, biased toward false positives, and

rarely tested against evidence; therefore, aspects of a person's current context (such as an open boss or a decentralized organizational structure) rarely grab sufficient cognitive attention to override self-protective implicit theories.

(Detert & Edmondson, 2011, p. 484)

An interesting remark on this topic, is that Bodil experienced going through a 360-degree feedback instrument for leadership development had made her more aware of taken-for-granted assumptions or beliefs “driving the behavior” (avoiding speaking up for herself in group contexts). What I found quite interesting, was Bodil's experience of going through her debrief had made her discover and realize that she had a very different experience of herself, in contrast to the view presented by her evaluators. To me, it seemed she was able to describe the underlying assumptions or implicit voice theories with accuracy in the situation. What does this suggest and why is it worthwhile discussing here? A discovery from my end, would be that utilizing an awareness-based approach or technology to leadership development (Reams & Reams, 2015) could help leaders identify, and eventually overcome, implicit voice theories or not be as *subject to* the assumptions influencing self-disclosure behavior. The task uncovering hidden assumptions is argued as being very difficult both at the individual level (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), and at the collective level of an organizational culture (Schein, 2017). I want to note that an unwillingness to speak up or to be relationally transparent is not only thought to be connected to an intense experience of fear or uncertainty. For instance, Detert and Edmondson (2011) write that implicit voice theories might not always be experienced intensely and may be influencing behavior on a more discrete level as the person would theoretically not be as aware of them. A word of caution should also be highlighted, as I am not suggesting that this is *the only* way of understanding factor 4's reluctance to self-disclose in front of larger audiences. Rather, I found this perspective to be interesting in terms of understanding *how it may be interpreted* from the position and intention of making abductive inferences. Nevertheless, implicit voice theories, can as I have discussed here, pose a negative influence on leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships. In the next section we will look at how conformity can create a tension for relational transparency.

#### **5.4. Conformity – a barrier for self-actualization and congruence?**

I now want to turn our attention to a question I've found myself returning to and reflecting on in relation to factor 3. The reason I want to include this here is that it may be viewed as a paradox to the theoretical perspective on congruence, as it is proposed by Rogers (1980). In factor 3 we find an experience of an organizational culture being low on openness and trust, relationships at the workplace preventing them from “unlocking their mask”, and that it is not

enough room for their “whole being”. A view that was further validated in the post-sorting interview with Marianne. Factor 3’s configuration communicated a lack of freedom, in the sense that there appear to be norms of intimacy that devalues, or at least, avoids revealing feelings characterized as negative. To me, this experience seems to be contradicting what Rogers (1980, p. 160) describes as a *climate of realness*. This climate would be experienced as growth-promoting and give a feeling of freedom since the self-actualizing tendency would flow more freely. Optimally, this climate of realness would have all the three core conditions of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and emphatic understanding (Rogers, 1961/2004) for it to truly be growth-promoting. This ideal climate does not resonate with factor 3’s experience, as they do not identify with a climate high on trust and openness, or that their close colleagues invites them to “unlock the mask” at work.

Marianne provided some interesting background experiences in the post-sorting interview. She described instances where she felt that other members within a leadership group were experienced as reluctant towards revealing their reasoning at a more intimate level. Marianne mentioned that it sometimes was difficult for her to communicate more freely in terms of self-disclosures, particularly since some of the other leaders were more reluctant to “get in the ring” or break the silence in certain situations. So, in terms of climate, factor 3 may find that the work-environment is not necessarily destructive, but neither growth-promoting for the self-actualizing tendency. Yet, she finds courage to speak up and be genuine. The overall configuration of factor 3 could qualify the statement that the relationships are not unfolding the potential of the *co-actualizing tendency* (Motschnig-Pitrik & Barrett-Lennard, 2010) either, because “[...] a lack of time, trust, interest, engagement, congruence [...]” (p. 384) among other factors would work against such a quality. If this was not the case, then factor 3 would experience these relationships as enriching and holding more trust and transparency from the persons in relation, as well as feeling more whole (Motschnig-Pitrik & Barrett-Lennard, 2010). As I understand it, underlying factors such as governing norms of intimacy and conformity, and experiencing others as incongruent in relation to oneself, could not only present a barrier to self-actualization and congruence, but also to the potential of co-actualization. I could not help but feel surprised that, despite the image of the factor, Marianne did not experience it as negatively as I may have initially suspected after interpreting the factor. I suspected that she would be more hesitant to be genuine with self-disclosures in workplace relationships due to the climate. From there I started to look for alternative hypothesis on why she remained congruent.

The way Marianne shared her experience to me struck me as coming from a self-authored order of consciousness (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). I base this hypothesis on the fact that she placed a very high value on her own personal values and integrity and felt congruent with sharing opinions that would be conflicting with the consensus or disclosing content based on what she believed others wanted to hear, as would hypothetically be more destabilizing or anxiety-provoking in the socialized mind (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). The high value on personal values and integrity would be more aligned with characteristics of the self-authored mind, as we could expect such a person to think and act more independently via “their own inner compass” (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016). In relation to the Rogerian perspective, we see this as similar to Rogers’ (1961/2004) notion of being a ‘fully functioning person’, because a self-actualized person would not be dependent on others approval, pleasing others, complying to oughts’ or putting up a façade. Would it not be expected here, given the factor configuration, that Marianne would express more discontent with her work life situation, if she did not experience the organizational culture as genuine and growth-promoting? This puzzled me. Then again, I did not interview the other person loading on the factor, who can have a qualitatively different experience. My suggestion or possible hypothesis is that, based on the factor configuration and interview with Marianne, higher orders of psychological maturity could reduce the tendency for self-censorship as in conforming to organizational norms, since the person is not as *subject to them*. At least this is one way of understanding why Marianne remains seemingly congruent despite pressures from norms of conformity in the organization. With these previous sections in mind, I will now take a step back and look at the possibility of understanding self-disclosure in leadership in a holistic and integral perspective.

### **5.5. Is it possible to understand self-disclosure in leadership in a holistic way?**

I believe it is possible to understand leaders’ willingness to self-disclose in a holistic way and will now make a case for this. Overall, it may seem like the four factors willingness to self-disclose was mediated by collective factors—such as organizational culture and norms (Schein, 2017), psychological safety (Edmondson, 2012), relational quality (Schein & Schein, 2018). Individual factors—such as a person’s congruence (Rogers, 1961/2004, 1980), implicit voice theories (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), underlying assumptions (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) and psychological or developmental maturity (Kegan, 1994) could also be interconnected and influencing self-disclosure behavior. I’ve tried to synthesize this visually for the sake of presentation (Figure 1 below), as it can help give an overview of the fields I have covered in this chapter. It is important to note that the visualization represents a simplification of a complex phenomenon, since there are at least four irreducible perspectives in psychosocial phenomena

(Wilber, 2000), that also apply to the context of leadership (Reams, 2005). The exterior perspectives were covered to a certain degree, but the figure below can be seen as primarily representing the interior perspectives in Wilbers’ (2000) integral framework. This framework represents the perspectives of the individual, and collective interior and exterior. I’ve also included the exterior perspectives, although I will not be covering that many components here. I am well aware that there might be other relevant components to include, but I think this figure is one way of creatively visualizing the holistic principles I mentioned previously, in relation to my interpretation and discussion of the factor configurations. I will now provide some comments on each of these four perspectives.

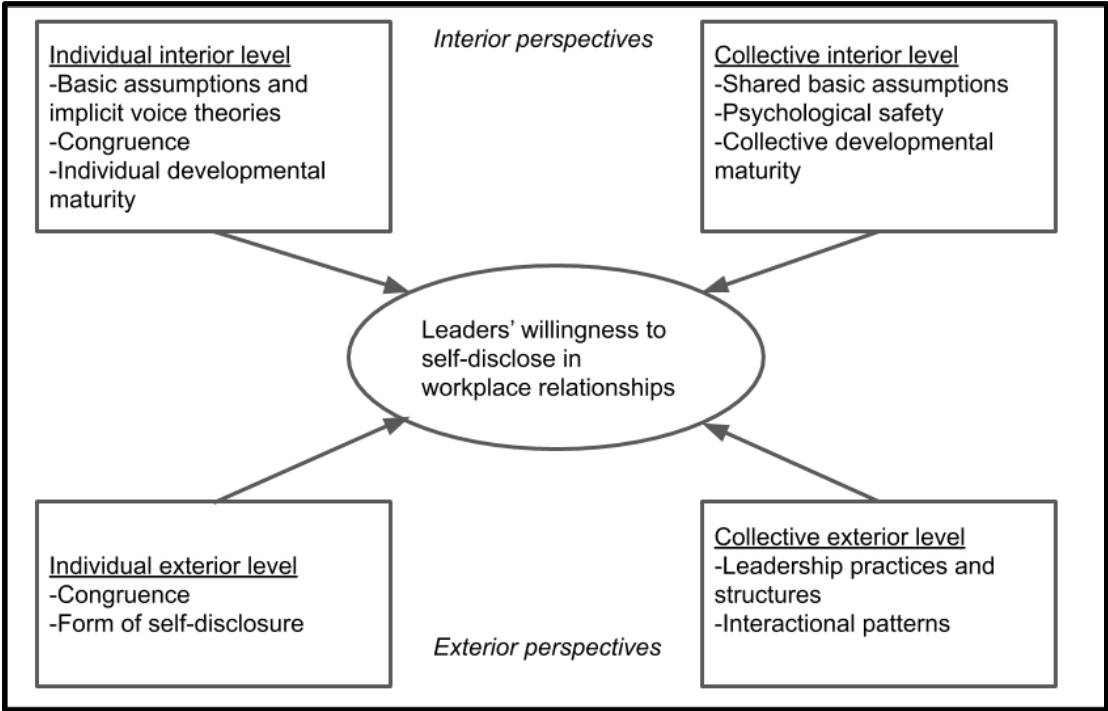


Figure 1: Integral understanding of self-disclosure in leaders’ workplace relationships.

The *individual interior level* connects to the leaders’ own basic assumptions and implicit voice theories, influencing the willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships. Basic assumptions and implicit voice theories connect to the beliefs that leaders hold, in relation to self-disclosure. For instance, does the leader perceive a negative risk-reward asymmetry? If so, disclosures may be perceived as risky, as we discussed in relation to factor 4. In terms of individual developmental maturity, a person who is leading from a higher order of consciousness would hypothetically not be as subject to others’ expectations or organizational norms, and feel safer with disagreeing or sharing negative feelings—which I believe was one way of understanding factor 3’s willingness to self-disclose despite norms of conformity. Congruence at this level relates to the leaders’ awareness of her own experience. For example,

factor 2's hesitation towards disclosing feelings a matter of not being so aware of this dimension in himself? It may be difficult to answer, but the perspective of the individual interior could be fruitful to consider when approaching this question.

At the *collective interior level*, it is possible to hypothesize that organizational culture will influence a leader's willingness or avoidance to self-disclose, as in the form of shared basic assumptions (arguably a fundamental expression of a culture). By including this level of analysis, we avoid isolating the perspective of the individual leader, and see culture as an integral component related to leaders' willingness to self-disclose. I saw that including the cultural level became particularly useful for interpreting factor 3, where Marianne felt that she violated interpersonal norms in the organization (what's perceived as 'appropriate' behavior) when she disclosed negative feelings in relation to a colleague. Psychological safety is a group level phenomenon, creating a holding environment for being relationally transparent (Edmondson, 2012), and I interpret this as interconnected to factor 1's positive attitude toward revealing mistakes and openness to feedback. I expected that this would be more clearly manifested in all the factor configurations, but it did not appear to be a dominating element in them. Collective developmental maturity is connected to the notion that organizations are "holding environments" for collective meaning making, as discussed earlier. For instance, I discussed if factor 1's viewpoint was partly an expression of a socialized mind process without arriving at any clear conclusion.

The *individual exterior level* is related to the visible leadership behavior. Congruence, for instance, is here related to leaders' ability to communicate what is going on at the interior level to the other. Rogers (1980) noted that a high congruence is connected to relational transparency, or being real with the other, therefore I interpret congruence as a phenomenon connected to both the interior and exterior level. I could've interpreted factor 2 as being more incongruent, since the sorting configuration communicated a lack of contact with one's organismic experience, but I challenged this position by reflecting more on aspects of the collective interior level. As a consequence, I believe that congruence is an integral component, rather than an isolated one. I've also included the form of self-disclosure here, as this may be expressed very differently from leader to leader. We saw for instance that factor 4 emphasized disclosure of feelings, while factor 2 was more avoidant towards this form of disclosure.

The *collective exterior level* could be influenced by explicit expectations put on leaders in terms of external expectations. An example of this can be linked to McCauley et al.'s (2008) distinctions on leadership cultures and practices. In the dependent paradigm we could expect

leadership to be more distant and centered around authority, in contrast to the interdependent paradigm, where there would be more focus on flat hierarchy and generative dialogue. For instance, it could be that factor 1's configuration is related to the more interdependent paradigm, and that factor 2's leadership practice is more oriented in the dependency paradigm. This could as I see it mediate norms on what is perceived as 'appropriate' behavior; particularly around persons with higher status. Interactional patterns relate to the patterns in which leaders interact with organizational member; these may vary. Some interact more at the dyadic level, others in larger group structures. I noted that Frits (factor 2) interacted quite a lot at the dyadic level, whilst Kim (factor 1) seemed to interact more at the group level. This also shows that the relational contexts also differ from case to case. I also believe that the collective exterior could be explored more deliberately, but my intention in this thesis project was primarily to look at self-disclosure at the individual level.

Having presented this creative and integral framework for understanding leaders' self-disclosure behavior, I want to give some final notes on this section. Figure 1 is not constructed with the purpose of generalization, as would be an error in terms of Q-methodological principles (Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Yet, it can help us to understand that the factor configuration can be interpreted in many ways depending on which theoretical perspectives the researcher holds. By approaching it with an integral understanding, we acknowledge the intricate and complex nature of the phenomenon, whilst simultaneously applying the principles of abductive logic, which is the: "[...] speculative process of fitting unexpected or unusual findings into an interpretative framework" (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 123). This concludes the last section of my discussion, and a summary of the chapter will now be given.

## **5.6. Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter, I set out to answer my sub-research question: *What factors may facilitate or limit leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships?* Based on the four factors' viewpoints, I discussed how different components could be facilitating or limiting self-disclosure within these factors. For instance, norms governing intimacy and behavior, relational quality, and psychological safety are all components I've hypothesized as facilitating self-disclosure positively (as in being more transparent). On the other end of the spectrum, I speculated how implicit voice theories, norms of conformity and a lack of intimacy in the culture and relationships could present barriers for leaders' self-disclosure behavior. Self-disclosure in leadership is here viewed as a complex psychosocial phenomenon, which could benefit from being understood through holistic principles. In the next chapter I will provide a conclusion of my thesis.





## 6. CONCLUSION

There is a calling for leaders to develop their relational capacities, as we are facing a reality with growing complexity and higher interdependency in the organizational context (Anderson & Adams, 2019; Schein & Schein, 2018). Self-disclosures are understood as one way of deepening relationships and connections between persons. Yet, my impression is that few have taken the task of exploring this phenomenon directly, in the context of leadership. My thesis can thus be seen as an extension and a contribution to this growing emphasis on leadership viewed as a relational practice. I applied a Q-methodological approach to answer my research question: *What is leaders' subjective experience of self-disclosures in the context of workplace relationships?* The empirical data I collected and analyzed from 20 Norwegian leaders' Q-sorts resulted in four subjective factor viewpoints, that were interpreted and presented in the chapter of factor interpretation. Overall, there appeared to be a dynamic between organizational culture, relational quality and basic assumptions, that differed among these four factors. In Chapter 4, the reader can find a summary of my findings that addresses the characteristics of the four factors more thoroughly. In my discussion chapter, I answered my sub-research question: *What factors may facilitate or limit leader's willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships?* I did this by examining the factor configurations through different lenses of theoretical perspectives. In the end of the chapter, I advanced the proposition that leaders' willingness to self-disclose in workplace relationships may benefit from being understood and conceptualized in a holistic and integral framework, due to its complex nature. I further believe that my research unpacks and nuances some of Reams' (2002) findings on self-disclosure, by showing that there may be a myriad of factors that influence leaders' willingness to self-disclose. In the next two sections I will look at some possible implications from the research, address limitations of the study and explore possibilities for future research.

### 6.1. Practical implications

This thesis contributes by creating a bridge between perspectives in counselling and leadership. In my discussion I proposed that an integral framework could be useful for understanding how different factors influence leaders' willingness to self-disclose. Following this holistic model, I believe that it is not sufficient to only focus on a behavioral model when designing leadership developmental programs. Instead of focusing only on competency areas like interpersonal communication skills or focusing on the normative ideal of authentic leadership; a more holistic approach could be worth considering. For instance, Nyberg and Svenningsson's (2014) discourse on leader identity struggles highlights some of the problematic nature with the normative approach to leadership development. As such, this thesis contributes in nuancing

such developmental programs, by exploring underlying individual and collective factors that I have hypothesized as being interconnected with self-disclosure behavior.

## **6.2. Limitations and critiques of the study**

Even though Q-methodological studies are suited for developing a holistic understanding of subjective phenomena, there is always a danger of overlooking important aspects of the concourse in developing Q-sets (Kvalsund, 1998). At this stage of the process, I see that I could have spent even more time exploring the concourse; through further preliminary interviews; administration of more pilot sortings; and narrowing the focus. Additionally, my study includes 36 statements, which is a bit below what is recommended in the literature (40-80) (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In terms of my research design, I included statements that were addressed at both the personal and relational level, as well as an ambition to include statements that connect with organizational norms. As such, the design may be perceived as too broad and ambitious. Also, 19 out of the 20 sortings were conducted without my presence, which of course could have consequences in terms of participants delineating from the sorting instruction (Watts & Stenner, 2012), although none of the Q-sorts were incomplete or had duplicated statements.

## **6.3. Future research**

The literature has criticized leadership theories and research for being too leader-centric, focusing mainly on the leader and the behavioral aspects, without understanding it more relationally and contextually (Yukl, 2010). My study is leader-centric, but expands the leader-centric focus by contextualizing the phenomenon in the four quadrant model I drew inspiration from (Wilber, 2000). However, in light of the aim and results from this study, and in relation to the critique above, it could be interesting to employ the same Q-set on the employee perspective. By doing this, one would include “both sides of the coin” and position the research more in the understanding that leadership is an *interactional phenomenon*, as it for example is emphasized in the leader-member exchange-theory (LMX) (Yukl, 2010). It could also be interesting to focus more on the influence from macro-cultures, to explore how it may influence self-disclosure behavior, as this was something I came to question. Warner-Søderholm (2012) suggested that Norwegian managers’ cultural values were oriented towards valuing low power distance, directness and a greater tolerance for uncertainty. One could explore this subject matter more deliberately by asking leaders to sort with a sorting condition of perceived appropriate behavior, in relation to a Q-set on self-disclosure. It could also be interesting to conduct a more intensive mode of study by including further sorting conditions—i.e. focusing more deliberately on different relational contexts, to see if and how leaders’ subjectivity differ in various relational contexts. I am curious to see how others will approach this in the future.

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## 8. Appendices

### 8.1. Appendix A – Approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)



#### NSD sin vurdering

##### Prosjektittel

Lederes opplevelse av å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere

##### Referansenummer

524365

##### Registrert

20.01.2019 av Even Elias Edvardsen - evenee@stud.ntnu.no

##### Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

NTNU Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring

##### Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Jonathan Reams, jonathan.reams@ntnu.no, (removed)

##### Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

##### Kontaktinformasjon, student

Even Elias Edvardsen, (removed)

##### Prosjektperiode

21.01.2019 - 15.05.2019

##### Status

04.02.2019 - Vurdert

##### Vurdering (1)

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##### 04.02.2019 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet

med vedlegg den 04.02.2019, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

#### MELD ENDRINGER

Dersom behandlingen av personopplysninger endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. På våre nettsider informerer vi om hvilke endringer som må meldes. Vent på svar før endringer gjennomføres.

#### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 15.05.2019.

#### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

#### PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD:  
Tlf. Personverntjenester:

(removed)

## 8.2. Appendix B – Cell design and Q-sample (original and translations)

Effect	Level				Cells
<b>Self-disclosure</b>	Feelings (A)	Thoughts(B)	Needs (C)	Personal facts (D)	4
<b>Experience</b>	Congruence (E)	Safety (F)	Organizational norms (G)		3
Sum combinations					4x3= 12

<b>AE (Feelings, congruence)</b>	<b>AF (Feelings, safety)</b>	<b>AG (Feelings, org. norms)</b>
<p>15. Jeg bruker ikke mye energi på å opprettholde en fasade på arbeidsplassen.</p> <p><i>I don't spend a lot of energy in maintaining a facade at the workplace.</i></p>	<p>12. Mine nærmeste kolleger gjør det mulig for meg å kunne «ta av maska» på jobb.</p> <p><i>My close colleagues make it possible for me to "unlock the mask" at work.</i></p>	<p>10. På vår arbeidsplass har vi en kultur preget av åpenhet og tillit. Vi er ofte oppriktige når vi tilbakemeldinger.</p> <p><i>At our workplace we have a culture characterized by openness and trust. We are sincere and care about each other.</i></p>
<p>28. Det er greit å felle en tåre foran de andre på jobb hvis jeg blir rørt.</p> <p><i>It's okay to shed a tear in front of others at work if I'm moved.</i></p>	<p>18. Jeg er forsiktig med å vise ekte følelser med mine kolleger.</p> <p><i>I am careful with showing strong feelings with my colleagues.</i></p>	<p>14. Jeg opplever at den «sosiale koden» på jobb sier at jeg ikke kan vise mine innerste følelser.</p> <p><i>I experience that the «social code» at work says that I can't show my inner feelings.</i></p>
<p>2. Å dele følelser er ikke noe jeg ofte tillater meg selv å gjøre.</p> <p><i>Showing real feelings is not something I do at work.</i></p>	<p>16. Jeg føler ikke relasjonene mellom meg og medarbeiderne til at jeg kan vise følelser som irritasjon eller sinne.</p> <p><i>The relations between me and my coworkers are not good enough that I can share frustrations.</i></p>	<p>11. Jeg opplever at organisasjonen ofte forsøker å begrense unødvendig «følelsmessig støy» som forstyrrer samarbeidet.</p> <p><i>I experience that the organization often tries to limit unnecessary "emotional noise" that disrupts the cooperation.</i></p>
<b>BE (Thoughts, congruence)</b>	<b>BF (Thoughts, safety)</b>	<b>BG (Thoughts, org. norms)</b>
<p>3. Det er viktig for meg at kollegaene mine vet når jeg er uenig.</p> <p><i>It's important that my colleagues know when I disagree.</i></p>	<p>8. Jeg og mine nære kolleger er ofte ærlige og direkte når vi gir tilbakemeldinger.</p> <p><i>Me and my close colleagues are often honest and direct when we give feedback.</i></p>	<p>32. Organisasjonen verdsetter diskusjoner. Det er lov til å tenke høyt.</p> <p><i>The organization values discussions. It's allowed to think out loud.</i></p>

<p>22. Jeg er forsiktig med å være ærlig og oppriktig i samtaler på jobb.</p> <p><i>I am cautious with being honest and sincere in conversations at work.</i></p>	<p>17. Mine nærmeste kollegaer og jeg får si ifra dersom vi har «tråkket i salaten».</p> <p><i>My close colleagues and I are allowed to share our mistakes.</i></p>	<p>7. Jeg tenker meg svært godt om før jeg deler noe om meg, det kan ha negative konsekvenser for ryktet og karrieren min.</p> <p><i>I give cautious consideration before sharing anything about myself, it can have negative consequences for my reputation and career.</i></p>
<p>26. Jeg deler ikke mine tanker og vurderinger som leder hvis jeg tror det setter meg i et dårlig lys.</p> <p><i>I don't share my thoughts and assessments as a leader if I believe it puts me in a bad light.</i></p>	<p>24. Jeg kan til tider kjenne på et ubehag hvis jeg åpner opp om noe jeg er uenig i.</p> <p><i>At times I can feel discomfort if I open up on something I disagree on.</i></p>	<p>21. Jeg opplever at det er vanskelig å ta opp enkelte tema i samtaler med medarbeidere hvis det berører noe sårt.</p> <p><i>I experience difficulties when bringing up certain topics in conversations with employees and other leaders.</i></p>
<b>CE (Needs, congruence)</b>	<b>CF (Needs, safety)</b>	<b>CG (Needs, org. norms)</b>
<p>35. Jeg tenker meg ikke om når jeg trenger å spørre om hjelp fra andre.</p> <p><i>I'm not thinking about when I need to ask for help from others.</i></p>	<p>1. Det er greit å fortelle de andre om mine behov, også hvis det innebærer at jeg setter meg selv i en sårbar posisjon.</p> <p><i>It's okay to tell others about my needs, even if it will put me in a vulnerable position.</i></p>	<p>4. Generelt holder jeg ikke igjen hvis jeg har noe på hjertet og jeg opplever at det er slik for andre i organisasjonen.</p> <p><i>I generally don't hesitate to share what I have on my heart, and experience that it's like this for others in the organization.</i></p>
<p>30. Jeg er ikke så opptatt av å behage og sier klart og tydelig ifra om hva jeg ønsker fra de andre.</p> <p><i>I'm not so occupied with pleasing and tell others clearly what I expect from them</i></p>	<p>13. Det sitter langt inne å fortelle kollegene mine at jeg har behov for støtte.</p> <p><i>I'm very hesitant in telling my colleagues that I need support.</i></p>	<p>27. Ledere har lov til å be om hjelp.</p> <p><i>Leaders are allowed to ask for help.</i></p>
<p>31. Det sitter langt inne å be om hjelp fra andre.</p> <p><i>I am very hesitant with asking for help from others.</i></p>	<p>34. Jeg føler ikke at det er rom for «hele meg» i denne rollen, relasjonene bærer preg av å være overfladisk.</p> <p><i>I feel that there is not enough room for «my whole being» in this role, the relations are characterized by being shallow</i></p>	<p>36. Jeg blir gjerne møtt med unnvikende blick om jeg åpner opp om mine egne behov.</p> <p><i>I tend to be met with avoidance if I express a real need for support.</i></p>

<b>DE (Personal facts, congruence)</b>	<b>DF (Personal facts, safety)</b>	<b>DG (Personal facts, org. norms)</b>
<p>33. Jeg snakker en del om erfaringer hvor ting gikk skeis. Jeg er ikke et glansbilde.</p> <p><i>I spend some time talking about experiences where things went bad. I am not a glossy picture.</i></p>	<p>25. Relasjonene på jobben min er preget av en nærhet, både jeg og de andre er åpne om våre egne liv.</p> <p><i>The relationships at work are characterized by an intimacy, both me and the others are open about our own lives.</i></p>	<p>19. Det er lov å vise våre forskjeller på arbeidsplassen.</p> <p><i>It's allowed to show our differences at the workplace.</i></p>
<p>9. Jeg holder privatlivet mitt på en god armlengdes avstand fra jobben.</p> <p><i>I keep my private life at an arm's length distance from work.</i></p>	<p>23. Jeg føler meg trygg nok på mine kollegaer til å kunne dele personlige erfaringer som har vært vanskelige for meg.</p> <p><i>I feel safe enough with colleagues to share personal experiences that have been difficult for me.</i></p>	<p>29. Det er en forventning i organisasjonen vår om at vi skal være profesjonelle, våre personlige liv hører mest til privatlivet.</p> <p><i>There's an expectation in the organization to be professional, our personal life's is private.</i></p>
<p>20. Mine livserfaringer som har formet meg som leder er ikke noe jeg snakker om.</p> <p><i>My life experiences that have formed me as a leader is not something I talk about.</i></p>	<p>5. Det er vanskelig å finne øyeblikk hvor kan vise mine personlige sider, jeg vil ikke fremstå svak.</p> <p><i>It's difficult to find moments where I can show my personal sides, I don't want to appear weak.</i></p>	<p>6. Det forventes at jeg skal unngå å være personlig på jobben, vi kjenner ikke hverandre særlig godt selv om vi holder en høflig tone oss i mellom.</p> <p><i>It is expected that I avoid being personal at work, we don't know each other that well even though we keep a polite tone with one another.</i></p>

### **8.3. Appendix C – Sorting instructions in Norwegian with questionnaire**

#### **Instruks for sortering av utsagn – les dette nøye for du begynner**

Du skal i denne studien sortere 36 utsagn som omhandler hvordan du som leder forholder deg til det å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere. Det er viktig at du sorterer ærlig ut fra din egen personlige opplevelse og erfaring når du gjennomfører sorteringen.

Før sorteringen ber jeg deg svare på noen spørsmål, så fremt det er greit for deg, siden det kan være verdifull bakgrunnsinformasjon til analyseprosessen i oppgaven min. Alle opplysninger som fremkommer her vil anonymiseres i oppgaven.

#### **Spørsmål før sortering**

Kjønn:

Alder:

Hvor lenge har du vært i en lederrolle– hva ville et grovt tall for dette være?

Hvilken sektor/bransje er det du jobber i nå eller jobbet i som leder?

Annen informasjon som du tenker kan være relevant for denne studien?

*Dette spørreskjemaet sendes inn sammen med sorteringsskjemaet, på e-post eller via posten.*

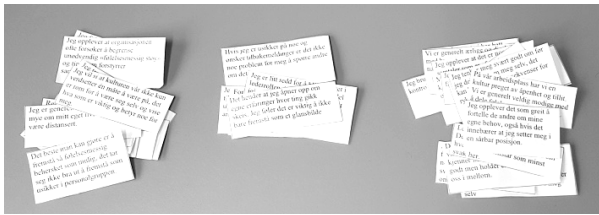


## Prosedyre for sortering av utsagn

Når du utfører sorteringen ønsker jeg at du følger stegene som er beskrevet under her i den rekkefølgen som er satt opp. Ta gjerne direkte kontakt med meg på telefon [fjernet] hvis det skulle være noe. Ta utgangspunkt i din egen opplevelse når du sorterer. Problemstillingen for oppgaven er: «*Hvordan erfarer ledere det å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere?*»

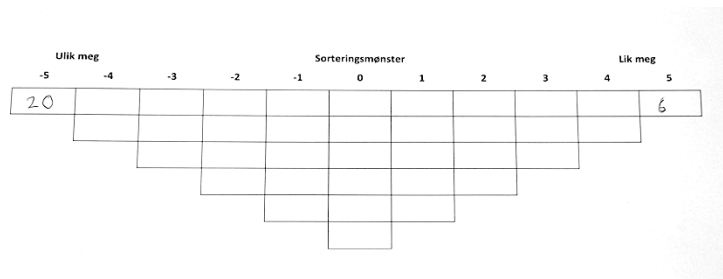
## Struktur for gjennomføring a Q-sortering med 36 utsagn

1. Les først gjennom utsagnene for å danne deg et bilde av helheten. Numrene til utsagnene er ikke relevante nå.
2. Legg utsagnene i 3 ulike bunker basert på følgende:
  - a. Bunke 1: De utsagnene som du er mest enig i eller som beskriver deg (til høyre).
  - b. Bunke 2: Utsagnene som du ikke er veldig enig eller uenig i, eller som er tvetydige, nøytrale, motsigende eller uklare (i midten).
  - c. Bunke 3: Utsagnene som du er uenig i eller som ikke beskriver deg (til venstre).



Bilde: Eksempel på fordeling av utsagn i bunker.

3. Du skal nå finne de utsagnene som du opplever er mest likt/ulikt deg basert på en skala fra -5 til +5. Ta først utgangspunkt i bunke 1 (mest likt deg) og velg det utsagnet som er mest likt din opplevelse og plasser det lengst til høyre, +5 i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet. Gjør så det samme med bunke 3 (minst lik deg) og plasser utsagnet lengst til venstre, -5 i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet.



Bilde: Eksempel på sortering av utsagn til ytterkantene.

4. Gå tilbake til bunke 1 (mest likt deg) og velg to utsagn som er svært lik deg, plasser disse til høyre på skjemaet, +4 i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet. Gjør så det samme

med bunke 3 (minst likt deg) og plasser to utsagn til venstre, -4 i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet.

- Du skal nå fordele resten av utsagnene på samme måte. Fortsett med å velge utsagn fra bunke 1 (mest lik deg) og plasser de i området +3 til +1 ut fra hvor likt det er deg. Gjør det samme med utsagn på -3 til -1 med bunke 3 (minst lik deg). Til slutt tar du for deg utsagnene som fremstår som nøytrale eller som er tvetydige og plasserer de i midten av skjemaet under tallet 0 på skjemaet.
- Du har nå sortert alle utsagnene i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet. Se over helheten og se om du er enig med din egen sortering. Det er små nyanser som kan avgjøre plasseringen din av utsagnene. Når du kjenner deg ferdig og fornøyd med sorteringen skriver du utsagnenes nummer i samsvar med mønsteret på skjemaet før du sender tilbake en kopi av utfylt sorteringsskjema sammen med spørreskjema via e-post, brev eller overlevering.

Ulik meg		Sorteringsmønster							Lik meg	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
20	4	8	32	1	29	16	33	15	36	6
	10	14	21	5	17	34	13	7	27	
		19	3	28	18	11	2	26		
			35	9	22	30	25			
				31	12	23				
					24					

Sorterer (nummer)  
16

*Bilde: Eksempel på ferdig utfylt sorteringsskjema.*

Nøl ikke å ta kontakt med meg hvis du har behov for å uttrykke noe under eller i etterkant av sorteringen. Tusen takk for ditt verdifulle bidrag til min mastergrad!

## 8.4. Appendix D – Information letter and consent form

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt:

*«Mellom det personlige og profesjonelle» – en studie av lederes opplevelse av å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere*

### Bakgrunn og formål

Studien er en masteroppgave i rådgivningsvitenskap ved Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring ved NTNU. Formålet med studien er å finne en forståelse av hvordan ledere erfarer det å være autentisk ovenfor sine medarbeidere. Autentisitet kan handle om hvordan en viser seg som ekte i relasjon til andre i hva en sier og gjør i ulike situasjoner på arbeidsplassen. Et eksempel på dette kan være at en uttrykker hvilke følelser en erfarer i en gitt situasjon til medarbeidere eller at en kommuniserer om egne verdier eller erfaringer i en samtale eller i et møte. Jeg er interessert i å forstå hvordan ledere selv erfarer dette fenomenet og problemstillingen til denne oppgaven er som følger:

*«Hvordan erfarer ledere det å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere?»*

Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring er ansvarlig for studien med Jonathan Reams som hovedveileder for studenten. Tematikken er selvvalgt og det er ingen samarbeid med eksterne institusjoner. Studien planlegges å være ferdigstilt den 15.05.2019 i form av en skriftlig masteroppgave på engelsk.

Å delta i denne studien forutsetter at du har erfaring med å være i en lederrolle ovenfor andre. Du må ikke ha en lederstilling per dags dato, men det er ønskelig at du har vært eller er i en rolle hvor ledelse er en sentral del av virksomheten din.

Hva innebærer din deltakelse i studien?

Denne studien baserer seg på Q-metode. Denne metoden innebærer at du blir bedt om å sortere utsagn som omhandler ulike påstander som relaterer seg til tematikken om det å være autentisk ovenfor medarbeidere. Utsagnene sorteres inn i en sorteringsmatrise/skjema fra helt enig til helt uenig. Eksempel på slike utsagn kan være:

- *Jeg ser det som mitt ansvar å være åpen ovenfor medarbeiderne om ting jeg usikker på.*
- *Noen ganger har jeg lyst å dele følelsene mine, men av hensyn til normer i organisasjonen velger jeg ofte å ikke uttrykke disse.*

De innsamlede dataene vil behandles i et analyseprogram som klynger sammen sorteringsmønsteret til faktorer som representerer opplevelsen til de som sorterer. De utfylte skjemaene (sorteringsmatrisene) vil behandles konfidensielt ved å bruke nummerering fremfor navn og lagres på en kryptert og passord beskyttet minnepinne.

Utover dette vil jeg be om bakgrunnsinformasjon om alder, kjønn, hvor lenge en har vært i en lederrolle og hva slags sektor/bransje en hører til i et kortfattet spørreskjema. I dette skjemaet vil det også være mulig for informanten å legge til egne kommentarer som han/hun tenker kan være relevante. Dette vil være anonymisert informasjon som kun vil brukes i tolkning av resultatene. Begge utfylte skjemaene vil lagres sammen med nummerering med hensyn til konfidensialitet.

Det spørres også om informanten kan gi sitt samtykke til å delta på et eventuelt intervju i etterkant av sorteringen. Dette intervjuet vil da gjennomføres i etterkant av analysearbeidet og fokusere på om informanten opplever den aktuelle tolkningen og presentasjonen av analysen av faktorene som representativt for han eller hennes opplevelse. Intervjuet vil tas opp med en

diktafon og lydfilen vil oppbevares konfidensielt i en passordbeskyttet og kryptert minnepenn. Deltakelse i dette intervjuet er frivillig og krever et eget samtykke.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vil informasjonen om deg behandles?**

Alt av personopplysninger vil behandles konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun prosjektleder Even Elias Edvardsen som vil ha tilgang til denne informasjonen og vil kun bruke opplysningene om deg til formålet som er fortalt om i dette skrevet.

Dette innebærer at utfylte skjema, lydopptak og personopplysninger lagres i en kryptert og passordbeskyttet minnepenn. Det er kun prosjektleder som har tilgang til dataen og har kjennskap til passordet for lagringsenheten. Koblingsnøkkel mellom personopplysninger (kontakt for intervju) og innhentet data oppbevares separat og det er kun prosjektleder som har tilgang til dette.

Masteroppgaven planlegges å publiseres i etterkant av sluttdato for prosjektet og alle informanter vil anonymiseres slik at det ikke vil være mulig å identifisere informanten i informasjonen som fremkommer i oppgaven. Dato for avslutning av prosjektet er 15.05.2019. Ved avslutning vil alle personopplysninger og identifiserbare data slettes.

### **Frivillig deltagelse**

Å delta i denne studien er frivillig. Dette innebærer at du på et hvilket som helst tidspunkt kan trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn for dette. Ved tilbaketrekning av samtykke vil alle personopplysninger slettes umiddelbart og valget vil ikke medføre noen negative konsekvenser for deg.

### **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

### **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Prosjektansvarlig og hovedveileder Jonathan Reams ved Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU) på e-post: [fjernet]
- Biveileder Hannah Svennungsen ved Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU) på e-post: [fjernet]
- Student Even Elias Edvardsen kan nås på e-post [evenee@stud.ntnu.no](mailto:evenee@stud.ntnu.no) eller telefon [fjernet]
- Vårt personvernombud: Thomas Helgesen, [Thomas.Helgesen@ntnu.no](mailto:Thomas.Helgesen@ntnu.no).
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17

Med vennlig hilsen

Jonathan Reams  
Prosjektansvarlig  
(Forsker/veileder)

Even Elias Edvardsen  
Student

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### Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Lederes opplevelse av å være autentisk i relasjon til medarbeidere*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til: (kryss av)

- å delta i en Q-metodisk sortering med utfylling av tilhørende spørreskjema
- å delta i et intervju ved forespørsel med lydopptak

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 15.05.2019.

---

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## 8.5. Appendix E – Factor loadings

Q-sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Ida	<b>0.8156X</b>	0.0559	-0.0316	0.3831
Kim	<b>0.8699X</b>	0.0529	0.0108	0.0472
Eline	<b>0.7232X</b>	-0.3791	0.1086	0.0549
Bodil	0.0326	-0.0860	0.0304	<b>0.9028X</b>
Kristian	<b>0.8280X</b>	-0.2584	0.0454	0.1268
Marianne	0.1057	0.0778	<b>0.7013X</b>	0.0630
Karen	<b>0.6939X</b>	0.0083	0.4498	0.2875
Lisa	-0.2542	0.0084	<b>0.6949X</b>	-0.1066
Ellinor	0.4955	0.5640	-0.0546	0.4609
Robert	<b>0.6939X</b>	0.0083	0.4498	0.2875
Odd	<b>0.6763X</b>	0.3741	-0.1130	0.1518
Harry	<b>0.6802X</b>	0.2515	-0.1565	0.1036
Carl	<b>0.8047X</b>	0.1003	0.1615	0.0557
Susanne	<b>0.8474X</b>	0.1149	-0.1379	0.0695
Martin	<b>0.8124X</b>	-0.1441	-0.0849	0.3364
Viktor	<b>0.7246X</b>	0.3925	-0.0784	-0.2175
Frits	-0.0822	<b>0.8242X</b>	0.1664	-0.1389
Edgar	<b>0.7812X</b>	-0.1218	-0.1218	-0.0853
Elisabet	<b>0.8212X</b>	0.1437	-0.1751	0.1561
Mari	<b>0.8239X</b>	0.3096	0.0245	-0.0529
% expl. variance	47	9	8	8

Note: In the table above, we see each correlation coefficient value for each variable for the factors. The sign “X” marks which factor the variable has the highest correlation with. 15 persons define factor 1, two persons define factor 2, and one person defines factor 2 and 4.

## 8.6. Appendix F – Q-sort values by statements

Nr.	Q-statement	F1	F2	F3	F4
1	Det er greit å fortelle de andre om mine behov, også hvis det innebærer at jeg setter meg selv i en sårbar posisjon.	1	0	0	0
2	Å vise ekte følelser er ikke noe jeg gjør på jobb.	-3	2	-1	-5
3	Det er viktig for meg at kollegaene mine vet når jeg er uenig.	2	0	5	2
4	Generelt holder jeg ikke igjen hvis jeg har noe på hjertet, og jeg opplever at det er slik for de andre i organisasjonen.	1	-2	-1	0
5	Det er vanskelig å finne øyeblikk hvor jeg kan vise mine personlige sider, jeg vil ikke fremstå svak.	-1	-1	-1	1
6	Det forventes at jeg skal unngå å være personlig på jobben, vi kjenner ikke hverandre særlig godt selv om vi holder en høflig tone oss i mellom.	-4	3	-1	0
7	Jeg tenker meg svært godt om før jeg deler noe om meg, det kan ha negative konsekvenser for ryktet og karrieren min.	0	1	-3	-3
8	Jeg og mine nære kolleger er ofte ærlige og direkte når vi gir tilbakemeldinger.	2	0	-3	1
9	Jeg holder privatlivet mitt på en god armlengdes avstand fra jobben.	0	1	-2	3
10	På vår arbeidsplass har vi en kultur preget av åpenhet og tillit. Vi er oppriktige og bryr oss om hverandre.	5	-3	-5	-1
11	Jeg opplever at organisasjonen ofte forsøker å begrense unødvendig «følelsesmessig støy» som forstyrrer samarbeidet.	-2	3	4	-2
12	Mine nærmeste kolleger gjør det mulig for meg å kunne «ta av maska» på jobb.	-1	-2	-4	4
13	Det sitter langt inne å fortelle kollegene mine at jeg trenger støtte.	-2	0	-2	-1
14	Jeg opplever at den «sosiale koden» på jobb sier at jeg ikke kan vise mine innerste følelser.	-1	1	1	1
15	Jeg bruker ikke mye energi på å opprettholde en fasade på arbeidsplassen.	1	-1	0	2
16	Relasjonene mellom meg og medarbeiderne er ikke gode nok til at jeg kan dele frustrasjoner.	-5	1	1	0
17	Mine nærmeste kollegaer og jeg får si ifra dersom vi har «tråkket i salaten».	3	2	1	1
18	Jeg er forsiktig med å vise sterke følelser med mine kolleger.	0	4	1	0
19	Det er lov å vise våre forskjeller på arbeidsplassen.	3	0	-1	2

20	Mine livserfaringer som har formet meg som leder er ikke noe jeg snakker om.	-1	-2	-2	3
21	Jeg opplever at det er vanskelig å ta opp enkelte tema i samtaler med medarbeidere og andre ledere.	-1	-3	2	2
22	Jeg er forsiktig med å være ærlig og oppriktig i samtaler på jobb.	-4	2	-3	0
23	Jeg føler meg trygg nok på mine kollegaer til å kunne dele personlige erfaringer som har vært vanskelige for meg.	2	2	-1	-1
24	Jeg kan til tider kjenne på et ubehag hvis jeg åpner opp om noe jeg er uenig i	0	3	4	5
25	Relasjonene på jobben min er preget av en nærhet, både jeg og de andre er åpne om våre egne liv.	3	-2	2	-1
26	Jeg deler ikke mine tanker og vurderinger som leder hvis jeg tror det setter meg i et dårlig lys.	-1	-4	2	4
27	Ledere har lov til å be om hjelp.	4	0	2	2
28	Det er greit å felle en tåre foran de andre på jobb hvis jeg blir rørt.	1	-1	0	3
29	Det er en forventning i organisasjonen her om at vi skal være profesjonelle, våre personlige liv hører til privatlivet.	-2	1	3	-4
30	Jeg er ikke så opptatt av å behage og sier klart og tydelig ifra om hva jeg ønsker fra de andre.	0	5	0	-1
31	Det sitter langt inne å be om hjelp fra andre.	-2	-4	0	1
32	Organisasjonen verdsetter diskusjoner. Det er lov å tenke høyt.	4	-1	-2	-2
33	Jeg snakker en del om erfaringer hvor ting gikk skeis. Jeg er ikke et glansbilde.	2	4	3	-2
34	Jeg føler ikke at det er rom for «hele meg» i denne rollen, relasjonene bærer preg av å være overfladisk.	-3	-1	3	-4
35	Jeg tenker meg ikke om når jeg trenger å spørre om hjelp fra andre.	0	-5	1	-3
36	Jeg blir gjerne møtt med unnvikende blikk om jeg åpner opp om det.	-3	-3	-4	-3



## 8.7. Appendix G – Factor arrays

Factor array for factor 1

Unlike me					Like me					
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
16*	6	2	11	5	7	1	3	17	27	10*
	22	34	13	14*	9	4	8	19	32*	
		36	29	20	18	12	23	25		
			31	21	24*	15	33			
				26	30	28				
					35					

Factor array for factor 2

Unlike me					Like me					
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
35	26	10	4	5	1	7	2	6	18	30
	31	21	12	15	3	9	17	11	33	
		36	20	28	8	14	22	24		
			25	32	13	16	23			
				34	19	29				
					27					

Factor array for factor 3

Unlike me					Like me					
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
10	12	7	9	2	1	14	21	29	11	3
	36	8	13	4	15	16	25	33	24	
		22	20	5	28	17	26	34		
			32	6	30	18	27			
				19	31	35				
					23					

Factor array for factor 4

Unlike me					Like me					
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
2	29	7	11	10	1	5	3	9	12	24
	34	35	15	13	4	8	19	20	26	
		36	32	23	6	14	21	28		
			33	25	16	17	27			
				30	18	31				
					22					

## 8.8. Appendix H – Distinguishing statements

Nr.	Distinguishing statements for factor 1	F1	F2	F3	F4
10	På vår arbeidsplass har vi en kultur preget av åpenhet og tillit. Vi er oppriktige og bryr oss om hverandre.	5	-3	-5	-1
32	Organisasjonen verdsetter diskusjoner. Det er lov å tenke høyt.	4	-1	-2	-2
12	Mine nærmeste kolleger gjør det mulig for meg å kunne «ta av maska» på jobb.	1	-2	-4	-4
24	Jeg kan til tider kjenne på et ubehag hvis jeg åpner opp om noe jeg er uenig i.	0	3	4	5
26	Jeg deler ikke mine tanker og vurderinger som leder hvis jeg tror det setter meg i et dårlig lys.	-1	-4	2	4
14	Jeg opplever at den «sosiale koden» på jobb sier at jeg ikke kan vise mine innerste følelser.	-1	1	1	1
2	Å vise ekte følelser er ikke noe jeg gjør på jobb.	-3	2	-1	-5
6	Det forventes at jeg skal unngå å være personlig på jobben, vi kjenner ikke hverandre særlig godt selv om vi holder en høflig tone oss i mellom.	-4	3	-1	0
16	Relasjonene mellom meg og medarbeiderne er ikke gode nok til at jeg kan dele frustrasjoner.	-5	1	1	0

Nr.	Distinguishing statements for factor 2	F1	F2	F3	F4
30	Jeg er ikke så opptatt av å behage og sier klart og tydelig ifra om hva jeg ønsker fra de andre.	0	5	0	-1
18	Jeg er forsiktig med å vise sterke følelser med mine kolleger.	0	4	1	0
7	Jeg tenker meg svært godt om før jeg deler noe om meg, det kan ha negative konsekvenser for ryktet og karrieren min.	0	1	-3	-3
26	Jeg deler ikke mine tanker og vurderinger som leder hvis jeg tror det setter meg i et dårlig lys.	-1	-4	2	4

Nr.	Distinguishing statements for factor 3	F1	F2	F3	F4
34	Jeg føler ikke at det er rom for «hele meg» i denne rollen, relasjonene bærer preg av å være overfladisk.	-3	-1	3	-4
8	Jeg og mine nære kolleger er ofte ærlige og direkte når vi gir tilbakemeldinger.	2	0	-3	1

Nr.	Distinguishing statements for factor 4	F1	F2	F3	F4
12	Mine nærmeste kolleger gjør det mulig for meg å kunne «ta av maska» på jobb.	1	-2	-4	4
20	Mine livserfaringer som har formet meg som leder er ikke noe jeg snakker om.	-1	-2	-2	3
33	Jeg snakker en del om erfaringer hvor ting gikk skeis. Jeg er ikke et glansbilde.	2	4	3	-2
2	Å vise ekte følelser er ikke noe jeg gjør på jobb.	-3	2	-1	-5

## 8.9. Appendix I – Consensus statements

Nr.	Consensus statements	F1	F2	F3	F4
13	Det sitter langt inne å fortelle kollegene mine at jeg trenger støtte.	-2	0	-2	-1
17	Mine nærmeste kollegaer og jeg får si ifra dersom vi har «tråkket i salaten».	3	2	1	1
36	Jeg blir gjerne møtt med unnvikende blikk om jeg åpner opp om det jeg virkelig trenger av støtte.	-3	-3	-4	-3

## 8.10. Appendix J – Statistical characteristics of the factor solution

### Factor characteristics

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Number of defining variables	15	1	2	1
Average reliability coefficient	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800
Composite reliability	0.984	0.800	0.889	0.800
SE of factor Z-scores	0.128	0.447	0.333	0.447

### Correlations between factor scores

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.000	-0.044	-0.068	0.157
Factor 2	-0.044	1.000	0.163	-0.114
Factor 3	-0.068	0.163	1.000	0.035
Factor 4	0.157	-0.114	0.035	1.000

### Unrotated factors

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Eigenvalue	9.759	1.766	1.559	1.229	1.132	0.911	0.666	0.609
% expl. variance	49	9	8	6	6	5	3	3

